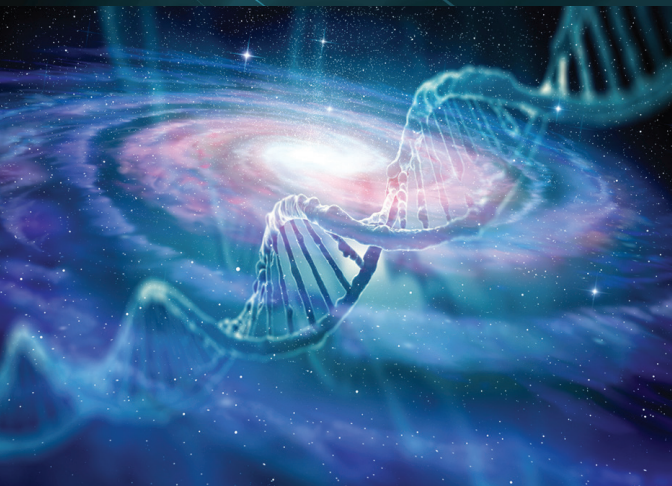


A BIBLICAL VIEW ON
GOD AND SCIENCE



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GOD AND SCIENCE



Today, we live in a world where skeptics have promoted the idea that either you believe in science or you believe in God. That dichotomy didn't always exist, especially with the rise of modern science. Many historians of science argue that it was a Christian view of the world and creation that was important to the development of modern science.

This booklet will follow the gen-

eral outline from Dr. Stephen Meyer's book, *Return of the God Hypothesis: Three Scientific Discoveries That Reveal the Mind Behind the Universe*. We have done a lengthy interview with him on the radio program and believe it makes a significant contribution to the discussion of God, science, and intelligent design.

Belief in God and Rise of Modern Science

The Greek view believed there was order in nature but due to a self-existent principle rather than from a mind or divine being. The Judeo-Christian doctrine of creation helps liberate Western science from this view by promoting: (1) the contingency of nature and (2) the intelligibility of nature.

These early scientists were Christians or, at least, were theists. They believed that God created the world as He decreed. The contingency of nature meant that God was sovereign and free to create this world. As histo-

rian of science Ian Barbour explained, “The doctrine of creation implies that the details of nature can be known only by observing them.”

The scientists also assumed that nature was intelligible. In other words, it could be understood by human intellect. If they studied nature carefully, it would reveal its secrets. Isaac Newton thought that the specific arrangement of matter gave evidence of the design of an “intelligent and powerful being.”

Christian theologians even started to refer to nature as a book: the book of nature. We can find support for this in Psalm 19 (in the Old Testament) and Romans 1 (in the New Testament). They also talked about the “laws of nature.” An Oxford historian of science explained, “For Newton, as for Boyle and Descartes, there were laws of nature only because there had been a [Divine] Legislator.”

Historian Alfred North Whitehead explained that this idea of the lawful-

ness of nature came from the Christian doctrine of creation. He did not mean that everyone at that time was a committed Christian, but that they lived within the intellectual framework of a biblical worldview.

Rise of Scientific Materialism

This worldview began to change during the Enlightenment when the focus was on reason and rationalism. David Hume, for example, argued against miracles. Auguste Comte proposed a dichotomy between science and religion. Immanuel Kant argued against the cosmological argument.

Perhaps the best illustration came from the presentation by Pierre Laplace on celestial mechanics. Napoleon, upon hearing about his latest book, wondered why in his large book on the system of the universe, he never mentioned the Creator. Laplace responded, "I have no need of that hypothesis."

Then came Charles Darwin, Karl

Marx, and Sigmund Freud. These three figures established a comprehensive materialism. Darwin, from biology, told us where we came from. Marx, with a secular eschatology, told us where we are going. Freud, with psychology, told us what to do with the human condition. Thus, Stephen Meyer concluded, "By the end of the 19th century, you had this materialistic worldview that answered all the basic questions that Judeo-Christian religion had always answered."

Return of the God Hypothesis

In his book on *The Return of the God Hypothesis*, Stephen Meyer talks about three scientific discoveries that reveal the mind behind the universe. The first one is the discovery of the Big Bang. Dating back to classical antiquity, most philosophers, such as Aristotle, thought that the universe had existed forever. Jewish and Christian philosophers argued that the idea of creation *ex nihilo* implied that the universe had a beginning.

As we entered the twentieth century, astronomers started to argue that the universe could not be infinite. For example, Edwin Hubble, using the most powerful telescope in the world, calculated that the Andromeda galaxy and other galaxies were receding from earth. Other scientists reported that the light from these galaxies was shifted to the red part of the spectrum. This was evidence of a doppler effect.

Scientists Robert Wilson and Arno Penzias also measured the background radiation from the original explosion. This evidence (along with other evidence) confirmed the idea of the big bang theory. Therefore, astronomers had to conclude that the universe was not eternal and had a beginning.

A good summary of the implications of this can be found in the book by Robert Jastrow. In the last chapter before the epilogue in *God and the Astronomers*, he writes: "For the

scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries."

A second scientific discovery was the fine-tuned universe. Some have referred to it as the "Goldilocks Universe." Astronomer Sir Fred Hoyle in determining how the element carbon might have formed in stars discovered many fine-tuning parameters. Physicists began to discover that many properties of the universe fall within extremely narrow and improbable ranges for life to exist.

Sir John Polkinghorne asked students to imagine finding a "universe-creating machine" responsible for the fine-tuning of the universe. Stephen Meyer extended that by asking students what they would think

if one dial click, either way, resulted in catastrophic consequences. To use a different analogy, some scientists explain that the fine-tuning of the universe is on a knife-edge.

A few of the examples of fine-tuning that Stephen Meyer mentions are the fine-tuning of the expansion rate of the universe and the cosmological constant. The laws of physics do not explain the reason we have the laws of physics. A finely tuned universe suggests a "fine-tuner" or "superintellect" of some kind.

A third scientific discovery was occurring in the field of biology. Ever since Darwin, evolutionists have assumed that they could explain "design without a designer." That view began to change as we used powerful equipment to look inside the cell and analyze those component parts.

The discovery of the structure of DNA by James Watson and Francis Crick began to unravel the materialist understanding of life. The chemi-

cal subunits of DNA function just as letters in a written text of digital characteristics in computer software. Software developer Bill Gates says that “DNA is like a computer program” but also admitted it is more complex than the codes his company writes.

For a short time, scientists proposed scenarios to explain how these molecules could have formed by chance. Professor Dean Kenyon (author of the book, *Biochemical Predestination*) argued that molecules self-organized without DNA, but he began to question his theory.

In Stephen Meyer’s book, *Signature of the Cell*, he calculated the probability of the origin of even a single functional protein or functional gene. In his book, *Darwin’s Doubt*, he explained how the Cambrian explosion of life was a challenge to Darwin’s theory in that century and continues to challenge the theory of evolution today. He says that infor-

mation explosions provide evidence of intelligent design.

Conclusion

Now that we have discussed these scientific discoveries, what inferences can we make from the data? In his book, Stephen Meyer turns from science to philosophy to explain how to assess a metaphysical hypothesis. Which worldview provides the best explanation?

Three questions lead to four worldviews. Does God exist? If the answer is no, then naturalism is the conclusion. Is God personal or impersonal? If impersonal, that leads to pantheism. If personal, did God act once? That would be deism. But if God acted through history, that worldview would be theism. The scientific evidence suggests a theistic worldview.

Science and even philosophy can only take us so far. When we pull all the evidence together, we can see the possibility of a God behind the

origin of the cosmos. But we need revelation to know more about that God. Of course, that is what we have with the Bible, which provides us not only with proof of God but so many verses that describe the attributes of God.

We are living in a time which could accurately be called “the return of the God hypothesis.” Christianity gave rise to modern science and was the worldview that motivated these scientists. Secular scientists thought they could explain the world without God. The latest scientific evidence points to this God hypothesis.

We shouldn't be surprised that science is revealing what the Bible has been teaching for millenniums. Psalms 19:1 says, “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands.” Romans 1:20 says that God's “invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation

of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.”

Design implies a designer. Whether we look through a telescope into the far dimensions of space or look into a microscope in the small dimensions of space, we see evidence of design. From the distant stars to the smallest cell, we see the fingerprints of God.

Additional Resources

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