What is mankind? Seminar

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Preacher: Steve Ellacott

[0:00] The particular question I want to raise is that when I put this slide up this morning, everybody suddenly looked very worried.

So I thought I was probably on to the right track here of what I got to tell you this evening. I said there's no doubt, I think, that there is some truth in the answer.
Certainly we do share most of our DNA with chimps. In fact, I think somebody pointed out that we share about 50% of our genome with tapeworms. The question is, is this the only answer, as many humanists claim?
Does this answer trump all other answers that you might give? And the Bible says no. It says that that is part of the answer, but there is much more to be said and a much more profound answer than that.
In fact, the Bible claims that this answer misses the most important point. So full disclosure, Pastor Daniel and I actually hold different views of Genesis 1.
[1:22] I think Phil's is slightly different again. I don't think I've ever discussed it with Jerome, but he's here, so you can ask him yourself if you like. So I did ask Daniel if he was happy for me to tackle the science, particularly as he wasn't here.

But he assured me that was okay. But he doesn't want to be able to listen to the recordings. So he was actually said. Why can we both be happy with that?
And let me say first of all, it's because we both hold the same view of Scripture as inspired and inerrant. You can't be an officer or teacher in this church unless you do.
You can't be an officer or teacher in this church unless you do. Sometimes people who take a very conservative sort of fundamentalist line on some of these issues accuse the others take a slightly different line as being not really believing in the Scripture.
I can assure you that's not the case. I certainly believe in the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. But at the same time, I don't always, sometimes have difficulty in understanding it.
[2:44] Sometimes we disagree. But if we don't understand or if we have differences of interpretation, let me say first of all, that's our problem, not God's problem.

God speaks clearly, but sometimes we don't understand. God speaks clearly, but sometimes we don't understand.
Some of the things that I'm discussing tonight, not all of them, but some of them dealt with in a lot more detail in this book. So if it is a question that you struggle with or an issue that you struggle with, I'd certainly recommend reading this.
By John Lennox, you've probably heard of. He's a mathematician like me, so I tend to like his books. So how should we tackle this then?
Well, basically this is how I want to structure the evening. First of all, I want to say to you that it's complicated. And we're going to look briefly at the book of Job.
[4:14] Can't do the whole book, obviously, but read some passages from the book of Job. And then we'll look at an example of how this might work.

I'm going to look at how the living cell works. So I say this is obviously not an exposition. I'm going to introduce a bit of science as well. And then much more briefly, I've looked briefly at Act 17 and how we might argue the case.
And then I'll probably stop there, but if you haven't had enough, I've got a slightly more controversial topic we could also look at, but probably better not to do that. So let's see how we get on.

So it's complicated. What's the book of Job about? I imagine most people here have at least read it some time.
But if you're not familiar with it, the book of Job consists of three sections. The first section is a prologue, quite short, and it describes a discussion between God and Satan.
[5:35] And Satan comes to God and says, look at this guy Job. He only worships you because you bless him. Look at all these riches and things you've given him.

He wouldn't worship you if you didn't bless him. And God sort of says, yes, he would. And so he puts it to the test.
So what happens in the main part of the book, there's all kinds of disasters. It's quite a lot of detail, but just basically a whole lot of disasters. Problems with his farm, his loss of family members, and struck down tragically.
His bodily health is affected. Satan comes back actually with a second go and says, yeah, he'll lose his family, but if you damage his health, he won't continue to worship you.
But so his health is affected as well. So in fact, all he does is sit in ashes and scrape his sores, try and scrape his sores.
[6:45] So that's the kind of beginning of the book. And then the main chunk of the book, the main body of the book, describes some friends who turn up to try and help.

And do need to make this point. They do try and turn up to try and help. They're not trying to get at him. It's not schadenfreude.
They're not trying to say, look, God doesn't bless you, he blesses us. They're really trying to help. But the trouble is, they can't get their head past the idea that God blesses people who do the right thing.
God only blesses... If God is not blessing you, then you must have done something horrible. That's basically what the discussion is about.
You may think that's a fairly simple question, but it takes about 30 chapters to discuss that. As they argue the point.
[7:52] Why do they need so much discussion? Well, it's essentially because what the comforters say actually seems very plausible. And even very spiritual.

Christian brothers and sisters, sometimes quote the words of the comforters as if they're words of blessing. Now I can personally recall at least two occasions of that when they've been quoted to me in those terms.
Please don't do that. The whole point of the book is that the comforters are plausible, but wrong. You shouldn't be quoting some of them as words of blessing.
Spiritual wisdom. So to cut off, it's obviously a very long story short. The last friend, who is a bit younger, does talk a bit more sense.
There are three older comforters and then the last one, who's a bit younger. Because of that, he speaks last. He does actually talk a bit more sense than the others, but Job is still not satisfied.
[8:58] And in fact, Job keeps calling on God to answer for himself. And so the last part of the book is the epilogue, where God does indeed answer for himself, but not quite the answer that Job expects.

So this is what I'd like you to read, please, then. So, Brenda, if you could read chapter 38. Turn up the mic.
Yes? Right. Job chapter 38. Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm. He said, Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge?
Brace yourself like a man. I will question you and you shall answer me. Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me if you understand.
Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know. Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set?
[10:13] Or who laid its cornerstone while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy? Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb?

When I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness? When I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place? When I said, This far you may come and no farther.
Here is where your proud waves halt. Have you ever given orders to the morning or shown the dawn its place that it might take the earth by the edges and shake the wicked out of it?
The earth takes shape like clay under a seal. Its features stand out like those of a garment. The wicked are denied their light and their upraised arm is broken.
Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea or walked in the recesses of the deep? Have the gates of death been shown to you? Have you seen the gates of the deepest darkness?
[11:24] Have you comprehended the vast expanses of the earth? Tell me if you know all this. What is the way to the abode of light and where does darkness reside?

Can you take them to their places? Do you know the paths to their dwellings? Surely you know for you were already born. You have lived so many years.
Have you entered the storehouses of the snow or seen the storehouses of the hail which I reserve for times of trouble, for days of war and battle? What is the way to the place where the lightning is dispersed or the place where the east winds are scattered over the earth?
Who cuts a channel for the torrents of rain and a path for the thunderstorm to water a land where no one lives and an inhabited desert to satisfy a desolate wasteland and make it sprout with grass?
Does the rain have a father? Who fathers the drops of dew? From whose womb comes the ice?
Who gives birth to the frost from the heavens when the waters become hard as stone when the surface of the deep is frozen?
[12:39] Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades? Can you loosen Orion's belt? Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons or lead out the bear with its cubs?

Cubs Do you know the laws of the heavens? Can you set up God's dominion over the earth? Can you raise your voice to the clouds and cover yourself with a flood of water?
Do you send the lightning bolts on their way? Do they report to you, here we are? Who gives the ibis wisdom or gives the cockerel understanding?
Who has the wisdom to count the clouds? Who can tip over the water jars of the heavens when the dust becomes hard and the clods of earth stick together?
Do you hunt the prey for the lioness and satisfy the hunger of the lions when they crouch in their dens or lie in wait in a thicket? Who provides food for the raven when its young cry out to God and wander about for lack of food?
[13:44] Thank you. Let's pass the mic over to Mark. So we won't read the whole of chapter 39 because it is quite long. If you could just read from verses 13 to 25.

The wings of the ostrich flap joyfully, though they cannot compare with the wings and feathers of the stalk. She lays her eggs on the ground and lets them warm in the sand, unmindful that a foot may crush them, that some wild animal may trample them.
She treats her young harshly as if they were not hers. She cares not that her labor was in vain. For God did not endow her with wisdom or give her a share of good sense.
Yet when she spreads her feathers to run, she laughs at horse and rider. Do you give the horse its strength or clothe its neck with a flowing mane?
Do you make it leap like a locust, striking terror with its proud snorting? It pours fiercely, rejoicing in its strength and charges into the fray.
[15:03] It laughs at fear, afraid of nothing. It does not shy away from the sword. The quiver rattles against its side, along with the flashing spear and lance.

In frenzied excitement, it eats up the ground. It cannot stand still when the trumpet sounds. At the blast of the trumpet it snorts, aha!
It catches the scent of battle from afar, the shout of commanders and the battle cry. Thank you.
I'm on again. There's a lot in these chapters, of course. I'm not going to expound them. The point of them, as you can see, is that, of course, it is the wisdom of God that does all these things.
Not that you should understand how they all work. Let me just pick out a couple of things. Verse 33 of chapter 38. It says, do you know the laws of the heavens?

[16:07] Can you set up God's dominion over the earth? The word for laws there that's used is a word that means an ordinance or rule.

It's not saying that these laws are the things that God has to work with. It's saying these laws are laws that I put there in the first place.
In other words, the laws of science, the laws of physics and chemistry are as much the word of God as the Ten Commandments. I think it's important to keep that in mind.
Sometimes we try and drive a wedge between them. Let us drive a wedge between them. God doesn't lie. If you come and study what God does in the physical universe, things like God has set a trap for you.
It never says that God sets traps. Somebody said that the creator is subtle but not malicious. You even occasionally hear people see things like suggesting that the dinosaurs never existed or something like that.
[17:25] They're just bones that God buried in the ground. That's nearly blasphemous if I may say so. God doesn't lie.

It's just that you don't understand it all. I think maybe when all the angels sang for joy God was sort of musing. How are we going to keep these stars and planets on track then?
I don't know. I think we need an inverse square law. God seems quite keen on inverse square laws actually. There are quite a lot of them in physics. And we need gravitation.
They might get to that. They think my thoughts after me. They'll be happy with that for a while. Then they'll realise that doesn't quite answer all the questions and they'll get on to quantum gravity.
That will really fox them. So these laws are the laws that God has set in the world and he doesn't lie.
[18:27] They're his words, say, as much as the laws of physics and chemistry, as much as the Ten Commandments. And then what some of you may know is my favourite verse in Job, one of my favourite verses in the wisdom literature altogether.

The wings, this is Job 39 verse 13, 13, the wings of the ostrich flap joyfully though they cannot compete with the pinions and feathers of the stalk.
And then he goes on a bit. Get it here. That's 13, isn't it?
Ostriches can't fly. You've probably noticed that. And they can't build their nest, the stalk will build their nest at the top of a tree away from the predators.
Ostriches can't do that, they can't get up there. She lays her eggs on the ground, lets them warm in the sand, unmindful that her foot may crush them, that some wild animal may trample them.
[19:41] You can say she treats her young harshly. I'm not an expert on ostriches, but the suggestion seems to be that while some birds will carefully feed their young, maybe the ostrich doesn't do it so much, I don't know.

I'm not quite sure what is meant by that verse. Certainly, she's not an obvious bird in that sense.
God didn't endow her with wisdom, he says, or give her a share of good sense.
So why is it then that there are still ostriches in the world? There were ostriches in Job's time, and there are ostriches around today.
As far as I'm aware, they're not even particularly endangered. I may be wrong about that, but there seem to be plenty of ostriches about. Some flightless birds have died out, dodo.
And yet, why have ostriches survived? Because they have a competitive advantage. And we're told about that in verse 18. When she spreads her feathers to run, she laughs at horse and rider.
[20:57] she needs her wings, she needs her light bird body, but she doesn't use them in the same way as a stork.

But God in his wisdom has found her a niche in the ecosystem where she can flourish. Now, how she actually got there may be a question worth debating.
whether it's some act of special creation or whether it's some evolutionary process, I don't think it matters very much, to be honest. All laws are laws of God, and that includes the law of survival of the fittest.
If that's true, then it's God's truth. All that, the real world is complicated.
it never quite fits our simplistic explanations. I've just said, we have Newton's law of gravity, and we were happy with that for a few centuries, until people began to realise it didn't fit everything.

[22:12] You know what they say about quantum mechanics, if you can read a book on quantum mechanics without getting a headache, you haven't understood it. people. So let's look at a bit of science to give this some bit of meaning.

I'll just put a slide for that, sorry, I should have switched the slide before. It's just those two verses. Here's a little history.
Back in the Middle Ages, when I was at school, it seems like that. Well, actually, we're probably talking 1950, 1960.
It seems a long time ago. If you looked in biology textbooks and popular science books and the like, we would come across something called the primordial soup.
This, we were told, was the origin of life. The ancient seas, we're told, contained lots of complex chemicals, and over time, enough of these came together to face form the complex chemicals like DNA, and then they somehow came together and formed life.
[23:35] You won't find that idea in the modern textbooks, because people have realised it's complete nonsense. The universe cannot possibly be big enough or old enough for that to be a plausible explanation.

The probabilities are so low that it's just not plausible. You may have seen the discussions about the infinite monkey paradox.
The idea is that if you set infinite monkeys to type, the infinite number of monkeys to type, then eventually they would type the works of Shakespeare. Well, yes, that's actually true, except for a few objections.
first of all, there aren't infinitely many monkeys in the universe. Secondly, they haven't got long enough. Thirdly, monkeys, no monkey I've met is particularly keen on typing anyway.
the infinite monkey is a paradox, really. It just doesn't understand what probability theory really says.
[24:52] Then, of course, there's what's known as Fermi's paradox, named after a physicist, somebody Fermi, I can't remember his first name. And he asked the following question.

If life arises so easily and naturally, why aren't we surrounded by aliens? Why, you know, as far as we can tell, the sun is quite a young star.
Surely there should be aliens everywhere if life arises so naturally. Yet, as far as we've been able to determine, life is only here on earth, that's the only life we've got to see, really.
Yet, obviously, life started somehow, we wouldn't be here, talking the night. At some point there was no life on earth and at some point there was.
How they got from one state to the other is a matter of debate, but it's certainly not the primordial soup. life.
[26:00] If you really go back to the Middle Ages, people used to think, in fact, there was something uniquely special about life. It wasn't a natural part of the physical universe, but something that has been sort of injected into it or imposed on it by God.

There's a physical universe and the living universe, the animals and us, and that there's not really a connection between the two. That was kind of the Middle Ages.
Then came along the Enlightenment and the rationalist philosophers and scientists argued quite convincingly that that isn't true, that life was a matter of physics and chemistry, that it was a subject to the same laws as non-alive things, non-living things.
But then people started to study how life worked in practice. And to their surprise, they found that while it is true that life works by physics and chemistry, living things in many ways, in fact, are different from inanimate objects.
They don't exactly break the laws of science, but they seem to find intensive, inventive ways to get around them, not to finesse them, as one might say. Let me give you some examples of that.
[27:25] Physics says that entropy rules. All physical systems move towards chaos, more specifically towards low temperature heat. But if Darwinian evolution is correct, then life moves not towards chaos, but towards increased order.

People have said this. Life somehow finesses the law of entropy. It can give a local reversion of entropy. entropy. That's not actually a contradiction because it's not an isolated system.
The second law of thermodynamics says an isolated system will move towards low temperature heat. But still, it doesn't kind of use the law of entropy in the way that we expect it to. What about chemistry?
Chemistry normally describes large populations of atoms and molecules. When I studied chemistry at school, we were taught about the law of mass action.
The law of mass action describes the dynamics of such molecules. You have large numbers of molecules. Statistically, in view of probability theory, some of them will come together and you will get a chemical reaction.
[28:44] The chemistry of life just doesn't work that way. We'll look at this in a bit more in a minute. chemistry of life is one molecule chemistry.

It all revolves around the one chain of DNA. There's nothing really quite like that outside the realm of life.
It doesn't exactly defy the laws of chemistry, but it somehow, as I say, finesses them, uses them differently to the physical world.
things. And then what about mathematics? I've already mentioned probability theory. I can't go into details here, but life seems to even use the laws of probability and information theory in ways that are different from the rest of the world.
people. In some ways, even geometry matters to life. The way the DNA is folded in the cell actually matters. There's a lot more about that in this book if you want to read it, but I'll say a little bit in a minute.
[29:51] in fact, people are now trying to come up with ideas as to how life might have started. And they're not using this primordial super idea, they're using mathematical ideas like information theory and complex system theory.

And a lot of the traditional biologists are not at all convinced. So let's move on then. I couldn't resist showing you this.
I asked ChatGPT to produce me a diagram of a typical living cell. And it produces a very pretty picture there.
And it's rather nice, isn't it? Nice colours. Do you see what all those labels around the side? They're actually the right labels, the right words.
Let's pick those up all right. The only thing is that half of the structures are wrongly labelled. The nucleus, for instance, is that blue blob in the middle.
[31:05] That's not where the label is. The membrane with the plasma membrane is the orange bit and the one on the outside, but it's not labelled that way.

So I sort of complained to ChatGPT and said, you've got the nucleus in the wrong place, can you correct it? And ChatGPT, if you've ever done it, it was very accommodating.
You're absolutely right. I said, can you do it again, please? And it did it again and came up with exactly the same thing, I think. I think this was the corrected version, actually.
So I gave up and said, OK, forget the labels, I'll do those myself. So this is what a typical cell looks like.
All the vast diversity of life, at least all life that we have access to, is based around this cell. There are minor variations of detail, in fact, bacteria are slightly different.
[32:27] But they're pretty minimal. In essence, all living cells work the same way. I said this morning, you know, the fact that we, maybe the fact that we share a lot of our DNA with chimpanzees is actually something that demonstrates the majesty of God.

All life works the same way, basically, at least all life that we can access and examine. as you can see, it's all rather complicated.
There are lots of structures. cells. I'll go back and come to that in a minute.
So there are minor variations in detail, but there are lots of structures. The nucleus of the cell contains the DNA.

DNA is a long molecule made up of base pairs, a language of four base pairs. into that molecule is coded all the information which the cell needs to operate.
[33:43] It's a bit like a computer program, but it's written in a language of chemistry. But it is information, and that's why a branch of mathematics that's called information theory applies.

Then let's discuss this in a bit more detail, but we haven't got time to go into it now. But if you have a computer program, you saw us struggling with the computer beforehand, making probably turn it on properly and so on.
If you have a computer program, it's not much use unless you've also got a computer. In a sense, the cell provides the computer which executes the program.
Like a computer, it has lots of other components which do various jobs. The point is, of course, that they all have to be present and functioning for the cell to work properly at all.
In fact, even the computer analogy is not really adequate. Computers don't build themselves. Living cells can.
[34:54] They can duplicate themselves. In fact, they can do a lot more than that. In a living organism, you get basic cells which are called stem cells.

You've probably come across the term. These stem cells can produce not just copies of themselves, but edited copies of themselves, as the organism requires.
It can produce skin cells or blood cells or brain cells, whatever is needed, which then go on to reproduce and produce the complex organism. Somehow coded into this are as well as all the structures that fit them together in the right way so that you don't get your brain in your fingers or your blood in the wrong place.
Blood's got to be on the inside and the skin on the outside, otherwise it won't work. That's what makes the existence of complex organisms like ourselves a reality.
These cells all have the same DNA, but they have different functions. functions. It's much more like a factory, I suppose you could say. Wouldn't you like to be a CEO of a factory like that?
[36:10] Imagine you're showing some people around, visitors around. You could be describing it. Today we're quite busy because we're making another factory because we need to ramp up production.

This factory is making a copy of itself. But tomorrow I think we'll make some cars. We'll do mass market Fords in the morning, get plenty of cars for people.
Then I thought in the afternoon it might be fun to make some Lamborghinis. That would be fun, wouldn't it? Oh, by the way, we had a call from the military.
Next week we're making some jet fighters for the Air Force. If you had a factory like that, you very soon would own the world, wouldn't you? That's exactly what the living cell does.
It's been doing it for thousands or millions of years. Such a factory would make all other factories redundant, which is perhaps why we only ever get one sort of living cell basically, because it works so well.
[37:16] There's great wisdom of God in this. things. The question is obviously, can something like this arise by simple random processes?

It doesn't seem very plausible. You have to have the whole thing together for it to work. No one can show you a primitive protocell. if they ever existed, they certainly don't exist now.
Still, conceivably, there may be some esoteric chemical or physical or mathematical process that gives rise to cells. They do exist after all. They must have got here somehow.
So, you need to be a bit careful of not the sort of God of the gaps argument, although if you're going to use the God of the gaps argument, the living cell is a good one to use.
It really is very, very hard to see how something like this can arise by natural processes, how you can actually get there from the straight chemicals. But still, conceivably, it might be possible.
[38:27] Surely, it's much better to ask the question that the Lord says to Job. Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?

Tell me if you understand. Do you actually believe that an awesome miracle as a cell can exist in this world without a designer? Whatever the mechanism by which it was produced, the whole universe is designed, in a sense, is made so that we can be here.

However it works in detail, surely there is evidence of a designer here. It seems to me that if you're an atheist, you have to have an awful lot of belief.
I'm waiting for an atheist to ask me one day, why am I a Christian? Don't you believe in evolution or something? I'm going to say, no, I don't believe that I'm too sceptical.
So that was my main point really, but just before I stop, let me more briefly deal with something else. I'll read this myself. Can you turn to Acts 17, 22 to 33?
[39:49] 33. 33. 33. 33. Do that because he's read them.

He knows what they're thinking. The key verse probably is, let's find it now. The key verse is probably verse 26.
says, from one man he made all the nations that they should inhabit the whole earth. And he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands.
you can come and preach to the Athenians because they're humans. The message is not just for Israel or for a particular ethnic group or religious group.
It's for all humans because we are all humans. Still, if you quoted that verse today, you'd probably get an objection. And the objection is, it starts from one man he made all the nations.
[41:02] people would probably query that. And if you say, well, if you do that, you could go down a bit of a rabbit hole and say, well, I don't know exactly how that fits.

I believe it's true that Adam and Eve were telling us something true. But maybe I can't understand exactly how it fits into the fossil record or something like that.
I don't claim to be able to understand everything. But let me ask you a question. Do what Jesus did when he was asked difficult questions often. He said, let me ask you a question first and if you can answer it, I'll answer the question you've given me.
let me ask you atheistic scientists a question. How is it if all these hominids and fossils and things you keep showing me, they all seem to be fossils of human-like beings, how is it then that throughout at least recorded history, there's only one species of human on the planet.
That's us, homo sapiens. What's happened to all these others? They've died out somehow. And you can go a bit further and say humans have indeed spread out all over the world, even to bits of the world that Paul and his heroes probably didn't even know about.
[42:41] The Inuits of northern Canada are humans. the Maasai of central Africa are humans.

And as you might expect, there is some adaptation. Most obviously skin colour, I guess, but there are a few others. For instance, the Inuits can tolerate much higher levels of fat than most life of us can.
Because they live on sealed meat, basically. So they've adapted to that to some extent. And you all know about the central Africans are very good runners. That's why they keep winning all these marathons.
Sorry? You think Ethiopia is not central? Okay. Yeah, still. Okay, fair point. Ethiopians aren't central Africans. But they've adapted to the environment in which they live, where in very hot conditions, dry conditions, yet they can still operate effectively.
So there does seem to be some truth in this business of natural selection, adaptation to the environment. Yet in spite of that, humans have a much lower genetic variation than any other species we know about.
[44:12] Certainly than the other primates, genetic variation of humans is very low. And what's more, an Inuit man from northern Canada can somehow or other meet up with a Maasai maiden in central Africa, and they can marry and they can have children.

We are all one species, in spite of being separated for so long and different environmental pressures. I ask the atheist scientist, can you explain that?
How is it that we haven't separated out into different species? Which is what the Darwinian theory would suggest should have happened. Answer that question and then I'll try and answer the question about why it's more of one man.
think about how you might address things. Find some common ground. We all agree that Homo sapiens is one species and then you might say, well, okay, why, what's your point, Paul?

What's the point you're trying to make here? What is the point he makes? He makes the point as we finish this morning that the answer really is Jesus. Because he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed.
[45:48] He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead. The answer is Jesus.

How do we know that humans are special in the sight of God? Because he sent Jesus to be a human, not to be an angel or a monkey or an elephant, but to be a human.
God has created us this way because he wants us this way. And he's endorsed that by sending Jesus, his own son, to be a human.
The proof of this? By raising Jesus from the dead. that's the killer argument we have. Christianity stands or falls by the resurrection.
We don't have to understand everything. We don't have to answer every question because we never will be. Now I know in part, only then will I know fully.
[46:51] That's Christianity. We know we're special because God sent his son Jesus. and as proof, he raised him from the dead. So I'm going to stop talking there.

You've probably had enough listening to me. I've got to take my pill with medication anyway. Are there any, I said I'd allow time for questions, comments? Yeah, really thought-provoking stuff.
I guess your comment you made at the beginning about, just a really interesting comment that you made about the laws of science and the laws of nature and physics being as much God's speech as the Ten Commandments.
That really got me thinking. Just thought of Psalm 19. Just thinking, and you said it's important we don't drive a wedge between those forms of revelation.
I guess I do think it is helpful to think in terms of general revelation revelation and special revelation. And I think that's helpful because having that distinction, as much as laws of science are the speech of God, we cannot be saved by them.
[48:11] Indeed. And they don't communicate the ethical will of God or who God is in terms of his ethical demand on mankind.

And I just think that's helpful because what can happen, I've heard people say, well, my church is the countryside. well, nature is where I connect with God and it can collapse into a kind of pantheism.
Yeah, indeed. And we end up worshipping the nature and the creature rather than the creator. So I think I agree with you that we don't want to drive a wedge. It's important that we, Calvin said the book of nature.
We have the book of nature and we have the book of revelation. I just think I agree, not a wedge but certainly a distinction. Yes, that's a good point. I mean, pantheism is having a bit of a moment again.
now because is the universe itself conscious? It's the question that people are asking. So yeah, I entirely agree. Thank you. Very helpful.
[49:22] Anybody else? At the back, Shema, at the back there. thank you very much for the wonderful talk.

I'm thinking about the question I have for you. Looking at science, philosophy, and physics, and all that. I think a couple of years ago, I came across a very interesting Bible study and it got my mind thinking a lot.
And it made me, I mean, I was almost questioning certain things around well, things that have to do with creation and all that, and what I have known for a very long time.
But just to ask you, there's this theory around, in terms of Christian and trying to create a scientific basis where Christianity and science have a common ground.
And that's the question of how long, I mean, how old is the earth? How old is the earth? There's the old earth theory, there's new earth theory.
[50:37] From the biblical account that we see, something that in terms of time, we're talking about maybe 6,000 to 10,000 years, what others believe, well, it could be more in terms of how time is measured.

So, also talking about other life forms and all that. But in terms of that, I just wanted to know what your thinking is around stuff like that, in terms of how old the earth is and all life forms generally.

Okay, I'll answer the question. I didn't read from Genesis 1, and I didn't explain what my view was and what Pastor Daniel's view was and what Pastor Phil's view were, because I think they're all different, actually.
And if I'd explained that at the beginning, then people would immediately, in their minds, if not out loud, immediately have said, oh, let's go for that one, that's the one I get to go for, and immediately trying to think of moving, you know, you've got to have this one, otherwise you're not really being biblical.
That's what the thinking I was trying to avoid. I'll answer the question if you like, at least briefly. Daniel believes in a six-day creation, in other words, what we call a young earth creationist.
[52:05] I believe myself that the days of creation do not refer to actual days in the sense of a day that we normally think of a day.

I could just give some arguments to justify that. I would say that how can you have a solar day before the sun was even created? The old thing, of course, of the seventh day is never closed. There are things that Jesus says that seem to imply we're still in the sixth day. There's mystery there. I'm not saying it's easy. Phil's view, as I understand it, I hope I'm not misquoting him, I think his view is slightly different again.
I think he thinks that it's not totally about chronology at all, although it does mention days. It's about the way it's structured. First of all, God creates spaces and then he fills them.
That's why it's structured in that way. We can agree to disagree. It's something we need to think about. I'm not suggesting we shouldn't think about it at all.
[53:15] If you're not careful, you'll end up generating a lot of heat and not much light. That's my answer. Mike in the back there.

Got the mic? Give Mike the mic. Stephen who?
Stephen who? Keep it near you. Did I have it near me? Hello? Can you hear me now?
Oh yeah, that's better. I must have touched a bunch. Have you heard of Stephen Meyer? I don't think so. Have I heard of them? No. Yeah, he's a brilliant American physicist, Christian apologist.
I was listening to him this afternoon, and also John Alex, and also both of them in conversation with atheistic apologists like Dawkins and such like.
[54:17] And one thing you know when they converse and share, there's something you feel about their disposition and what I think is their heart. And while you were speaking, I wrote a little poem to address that.

It's something like this, I think. My glasses. Are you going to read something? I was invited to grasp at the stars, reach through my feet to the worms, lay in the breeze, buffeted in storms, traced patterns in stones, traced a pattern in bones of forebears, offered my plea in death.
When then did I lose my voice? When then did I lose my child's heart? Actually, I wrote, when did my child's heart lose? Such is the kingdom of heaven.
That makes any sense. I don't have just place to stop. Thank you for that. I do need to take my medication, but let's sing again.
I can offer you a choice of three things I've got links for. If you want to sing something different.