

Shades of Creationism 2

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Preacher: Luke Batty

- [0:00] All righty. All righty. Well, it is that time again. So why don't I open us up in prayer?
- Father God, thank you for this day. Thank you for allowing us this time to come together and to think about you and learn about you, Lord.
- I ask that this class would be edifying and that it would glorify you and that we would come away better able to love each other in unity.
- We love you, Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen. Okay, so as I'm one to do, let's start with preamble.
- Okay, so the preamble today is that I have tried my best to find easy and accessible ways to break these different views of interpreting Genesis up.
- [1:09] And I'm trying to use language that makes sense and I'm attempting to use language that the adherents of this particular view use themselves.
- So, but unfortunately, it's not usually that easy. So I have had to make up some terms. But I've tried my best to stay to real terms when possible.
- And secondly, I will say that some of these terms are often used pejoratively, but that's not my intention in this class.
- My intention is clarity. So try to divest any of these terms that may have connotations to you. Just sort of ignore those.
- That's not the point. The point is to understand each other. So let's get going. So the first thing, I'm going to do a little crash course in the basics of hermeneutics.
- [2:11] And I'm going to use, to start off with, just some of the insights that have come from studying communication in a field called speech act theory.
- So in speech act theory, they try to understand communication by dividing it into three different types, three different parts. So the three components of communication are one, the locution, two, the illocution, and three, the perlocution.
- Okay. Lots of acutions there, but really, these are just ways, fancy academic ways, of saying the locution is the form of the speech, the grammar, the syntax, that kind of thing.
- The illocution is the meaning that you're trying to get across, and the perlocution is actually the understanding of the audience. Okay. So these are the three parts of speech.
- But you know what? Actually, before I get going too far, do you have the time? 903. 903. Isn't that interesting? I asked you guys, do you have the time?
- [3:34] And nobody said yes or no. Everybody is looking in their pockets trying to find their watch, right? Because they know that I'm not actually asking you, do you have the time?
- Like, are you aware of what the time is, right? Because according to the locution, the correct answer to that question is yes or no, right?
- You could not know what the time is. So the correct answer is either yes or no. But because of the context and because of the way I'm speaking it, we all know what I'm really asking.

I'm really asking, can you tell me the time? Right? But nobody asks somebody, well, I guess some people ask people, do you know the time? Right? Or can you tell me the time?

And so this is just an illustration of how sometimes the locution, the form of the sentence, doesn't equal the illocution, what I'm trying to convey to you.

[4 : 34] Right? And it's not just in this situation. I could change the tone of my voice and use the exact same words and have a totally different effect. So I first ask, do you have the time?

And you're looking for your watch and you want to tell me what time it is. If I'm talking to my daughter, I say, do you know the time? Suddenly she's thinking, oh my goodness, I didn't know it's bedtime.

I need to be going to sleep now, right? Or do you know what time it is? Right? Now it's like, oh, what's going on? Oh, it's the football game. Let's go sit down and watch the football game. Right? In none of these situations is the meaning of my communication the actual grammatical form of the communication.

Okay? And this is important. Right? Because of biblical inerrancy. Right? As Christians, we affirm that the Bible is the word of God and is therefore inerrant, meaning all of its truth claims are affirmed and it is without error in any of these truth claims.

Right? But, not all interpretations of the Bible are inerrant. Right? And so our goal, if we're looking for, so using some of our new terms, if we want to understand what we're talking about inerrancy, is that the illocution of the Bible is inerrant.

[5 : 58] The meaning of the Bible is always inerrant. It's true in all of its forms. However, sometimes the Bible is using idiom. Sometimes it's using poetic language.

Sometimes it's using analogical language. Sometimes it's using scientific language. Right? And so it's our job as the audience to match our perlocution with the illocution of the Bible.

Right? That's what we're trying to do in interpretation. Right? That's our job in hermeneutics. However, there are a lot of different philosophical predispositions and views that determine a lot of times how we are understanding the text.

How it's hitting us. Okay? And this is especially relevant to our discussion here today about different interpretations of Genesis 1 and how that relates to whether intelligent design or theistic evolution is a possible view.

Right? Because today our goal is to understand the question why are we even talking about this? Right? Why are we even having a discussion about intelligent design and theistic evolution?

[7 : 11] Right? Because Genesis 1 is so clear. But I'm going to talk about today how different Christians understand Genesis 1 and how that either does not allow room for an evolutionary mechanism or allows room for.

Right? And we'll talk more about that later. But let me first talk about sort of how I'm going to be framing our discussion today.

Okay? Last week I talked about how the scientific method developed. Right? And part of that was Christians understanding that God is a will.

God is a person who has a will and can do anything he wants in creation. And so because he's not constrained he has the ability to do things other than you might think.

So we can't just reason by first principles what must be true of nature. We have to actually investigate nature to understand what it is that God did. So God is often described as having written two different books.

- [8 : 14] We have one, the book of nature, which is called general revelation. and this is what we can learn about God just from observing nature by introspection, by reason, by philosophy, these kinds of things.
- Right? This is the kind of revelation that's generally applied to everyone in the whole world across time. Right? Everyone is in connection to the book of nature, to general revelation.
- He also wrote, most famously, the book of scripture. scripture. Right? Special revelation. This is what we can learn about God from his own self-revelation in his word.
- Right? And so, we know that we have these two kinds of books, but there are a variety of different ways to balance the book of nature and the book of scripture.
- What I'm going to call general and special revelation for the rest of the class, just because the book of is kind of long. So, we're going to talk about general and special. Special being scripture, general being nature.
- [9 : 27] So, we as Christians hold scripture to be our highest authority. Right? Scripture is breathed out from God. It is self-revelation.
- It is the clearest form of communication between us and God. But that being said, scripture itself points to the trustworthiness of the book of nature, especially when it comes to the world.
- Right? It says in Romans that God's attributes are clearly seen in his works in nature. Right? And that the heavens declare the glory of God in the Psalms.
- So, we are expected as individuals, in fact, in Romans, we are held responsible for the truths that we can gain about God from nature.
- Right? So, scripture itself, which is our highest authority, has a high view of what we can understand from the book of nature. Right? So, how do we balance them? Right?
- [10 : 25] Because what if what we learn in the book of nature from our understanding conflicts from what we learn in the book of scripture? Right? So, that is the first tension in creationism.
- Okay? So, I'm going to go through six different views, which I am going to describe in a spectrum. Six different views, philosophical views, about how we balance general and special revelation.
- Okay? Because this is going to be a major part of how we approach Genesis 1. Right? It's going to be a major part of how we are dialoguing with our fellow Christians who may have different views.
- Okay? And rarely, this is actually what we're talking about. Usually, we're talking about, we think we're talking about something else, but in actual fact, a lot of times we actually are talking about this. So, the first view is what I'm calling, and this is my own term, science skeptics.
- Okay? Now, science skeptics, again, I'm not using, I'm not trying to have pejorative understandings here, but just try to wipe away any connotation that you're feeling.
- [11 : 43] But a science skeptics believe that special revelation is really the only authority. Right? Special revelation is the only authority, they are not really that sanguine about what we can actually learn from science.
- Okay? This is not a very common position, but it's characterized just by flippancy about what science can do. Right? They don't particularly think that it's a reliable method of understanding information, especially when it comes to understanding the origins of the world and the way that it works.
- So if I was to imagine a scale in which we are balancing general and special revelation, a science skeptic may be on this end of the spectrum.

Right? So special revelation is the scales all the way down, and really general revelation is not really doing much in terms of their interpretation of the world or how they balance things.

Okay? So this is again not a very common position, mainly because in our everyday life we're sort of living with the fruits of a lot of the endeavors of scientists, you know, our cell phones, our automobiles, etc.

[13:12] And so a lot of times it's sort of hard to be in this position cognitively, but it is a position I want us to be aware of. The next position is far more common.

I'm calling this concordists, and so what concordists believe, and I'm not, so this is an actual term, I'm not making this up, so I'll try to make that clear as we go along.

But concordists, they emphasize special revelation in understanding how nature came to be, but they also have a high view of what we can learn from general revelation.

information. So another way of understanding this is that in general, these Christians believe that the Bible is intending to communicate scientific information at a certain level.

And again, within the concordist group there's going to be disagreement about to what level. But in general, the reason I can fit these together is that they try in general to fit information that we get from science into a biblical framework, their biblical framework.

[14:17] So they say, okay, the Bible is communicating scientific information, and I have the scientific information over here, so therefore they must be the same. And so they are trying to fit their view of science into their biblical interpretation.

And so, you know, mostly special revelation, but general revelation actually has some weight in this group. Okay? So there's a little bit more of a balance.

This third group I'm calling harmonists, and I didn't make that up, but it's not very common. So a harmonist approach is they try not to privilege special or general revelation when they're explaining nature.

Basically, they think that the goal is to understand these different areas of information on their own terms, right?

And then when there is conflict apparent, they try to smooth it out. They try to harmonize those conflicts as they appear. But they, in general, don't try to use special revelation in applying it to general, and they don't use general revelation to apply it to special.

[15:37] They say that these are two groups that are talking to each other, but they have their own ways of communicating. And so you would imagine that this group would be special revelation, general revelation, sort of in parity when it comes to understanding nature, again.

Because remember, I don't want to confuse anybody with these scales. As Christians, special revelation is the highest authority, right? But when it comes to understanding the way nature works and how it came to be, there was going to be a balance.

So again, just to make that clear. Then we have accommodationists. This is in the term I came up with, and it's not actually entirely pejorative.

So people who hold this view call themselves accommodationists, and this view, you can imagine them as sort of the reverse image of a concordance. they privilege general revelation when it comes to understanding nature.

They have a high view of special revelation, and what can be learned about nature there. And so what is characteristic of this group is usually they try to de-emphasize the scientific implications of scripture, and try to focus more of their effort on understanding the sort of the spiritual or moral import, or theological import of scripture.

[17:05] And so you would say here when it comes to nature, they're weighting general revelation a little more strongly than special revelation. Right? And finally, the last group, because there are five groups, not six.

The sixth group is just secret, it's just for me. The last group I'm calling biblical skeptics. Okay? I came up with this term. I don't think anybody would call themselves a biblical skeptic.

But in terms of this discussion, they would hold that really general revelation is the only real authority when it comes to understanding nature. And that the Bible is not meant to convey scientific information at all.

And it's really there for moral information, theological information, and is not a reliable scientific witness, as it were.

And so, this group we would see here, general revelation is just kind of all the way down. So, with these five broad philosophical views in mind about how we balance general and special revelation, right?

[18:18] Let us go to scripture itself. Let's talk about what it is that we learn about creation, about origins in Genesis 1, 2, and 3.

And this is just going to be a very quick overview. I did an even quicker overview, like a year ago, actually, when we did the overviews of each of these books.

So, I don't know which one is going to be quicker, but this is going to be pretty quick. So, let's talk about the biblical data that we have in front of us. Okay?

So, we have Genesis 1. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and the earth was without form and void, and there was darkness over the surface of the waters.

That's off surface of the deep. Okay. I've read it a bunch of times, so I kind of remember. And God said, let there be light, and separated the light from the darkness, and that is evening and morning, the first day.

[19:24] one day. Or, depending on how you translate it, one day. Some people put a lot of emphasis on the fact that there is no definite article on the first five days.

I don't know. Anyways, the first day sounds better. And so, on day one in Genesis, we see the separation of light versus dark.

And so, I'm filling in this table to sort of illustrate how the six days of creation mirror each other. Right? Because we have the first three days, which are often described as forming days, where God is creating the space for these different kingdoms, these different domains, as you were.

Separating light from dark. On day two, he's separating the waters from the sky, so he's creating waters, he's creating the air. And then day three, he's separating water from the land.

And on the land, there is a special creation on day three, the creation of vegetation on the land. Okay? So you can imagine, in this forming column, we have the creation of spaces, the creation of domains.

[20:43] And then, on the filling days, day four through six, we're going to be filling these different domains with their inhabitants. Right? So on day four, we have the creation of the luminaries.

So we have the sun, the moon, the stars. These are the inhabitants of the light and dark. Right? They are the inhabitants of day and night.

Moving forward, on day five, we have the creation of the fish and the birds. And the fish and the birds, they live in the waters and in the sky. Right? These are the spaces that God has created for these creatures on day two.

And on day six, we have the creation of land creatures in general, animals and bugs and anything that crawls and creeps on the land. And a special creation on day six of human beings as separate from the animals.

And this is the pinnacle of the creation week. Okay? The entire creation week is building up to human beings.

[21 : 51] Right? And there's a beautiful part where we get into strictly poetic language. It says, God created them in his image.

In the image of God, he created them. Male and female, he created them. Right? So it's a triple emphasis on the creation of human beings in the creation week as the pinnacle of his creation.

And in fact, if you look at the description of the luminaries, why did God create the luminaries? God created the sun and the moon to watch over the day and the night and for signs and for seasons.

Right? And who's watching for signs and seasons? That's us. So we're showing here in the creation account the creation of a world meant for human beings.

It's an anthropomorphic creation. No. Anthropocentric? That's the word. Anthropocentric creation. We're the big deal here.

[22 : 56] In the creation, God is the big deal and the one doing it, obviously. And on day seven, God rests. There's no morning and evening with the implication that God's rest continues on.

And so this is God's Sabbath and in the same way that God rests on the seventh day, we, and delights in his creation, saying that it's very good, we as human beings later in Exodus and in Deuteronomy, we are expected to rest on the Sabbath day, on the seventh day, keep it holy to glorify God in his creation and to worship him.

Right? So this is sort of showing us, giving us a pattern of why it is that on the seventh day that we rest and glorify God because on the seventh day, God rested. Right? That's the direct implication of Moses in Exodus when he is giving Israelites the law.

So this is the major biblical data when it comes to use a weird term. I'm a scientist. Sometimes I use data when I shouldn't.

But anyways, the biblical information, the biblical witness in Genesis 1, this is the big, where most of the controversy lies in terms of interpreting Genesis and applying it to the science and faith discussion.

[24 : 22] But I don't think we should give Genesis 2 and 3 short shrift because these are also incredibly important for understanding how we parse out these different views.

So in Genesis 2, we zoom in to discuss the creation of man. Adam is made specially by God in his image.

He's given dominion over the animals. He's tasked with multiplying, subduing the earth. We're given the creation mandate. And Eve is presented to Adam.

The first marriage is recorded. God's plan for creation is on track to being completed. Now he has his vice regents here on earth to subdue and to participate in God subduing and ruling over the earth.

But we're all aware of what happens in Genesis 3. In Genesis 3, the narrative continues with the great cataclysm that we call the fall. The serpent deceives Adam and Eve to disobey God by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the one tree that God said do not eat from.

[25 : 45] And don't we know as parents how that is, right? The one place you tell them not to go. That's the place they want to be. Anyways, one of these days I'll tell them not to eat broccoli and we'll see if that works.

So this disobedience results in their death. Not immediately, but eventually. Their death, they are individually cursed, the serpent, the man, and the woman.

And now the relationship between God and man has been ruptured. And there is condemnation. Although, we have a promise of redemption already in the, pretty much in the middle of the curses, right?

They have just disobeyed God. You know, they have marred his beautiful creation. He's cursing them, but in the middle of the cursing is a parenthetical, by the way, I'll take care of this, right?

So, this is our biblical information. If you guys remember back to the biblical theology courses that we were just going through, the creation, fall, and the beginning of redemption history is a major theme in all of these different strands that fly out from Genesis throughout the Bible.

[27 : 08] These different strands that are connected and ultimately find their consummation and conclusion and climax, let's say, in Jesus.

Sorry, I was just thinking that. I just did three C words and it wasn't even on purpose. So, it's important. This is important. And this is why there is a significant amount of controversy over the interpretation of these passages, because it's not just how did God create the world.

It is the sort of the bedrock assumptions and set up for really the entire biblical worldview. Right?

So, just remember that when we're having these discussions with each other, and we're disagreeing with each other on these different views, a lot of the heat comes from our innate view, our innate desire to protect the witness of Scripture.

Right? Because that's what we're told to do in the Bible, to protect the witness of Scripture and to preserve the witness handed down by this.

[28 : 27] I don't know. I'm trying to quote a verse, and it's not working. Yeah, there you go. That's what I'm going for. The faith once for all. Yeah, exactly.

Delivered to the saints. Okay. So, this is our biblical data. This is what everybody's reading. Okay? These, I'm about to go through a variety of different interpretations of Genesis 1, with the implications for 2 and 3, but usually a lot of the discussion is on Genesis 1.

And so, we all don't have different Bibles, right? We're all reading the same Bible. And so, it's important to take into consideration that we're all looking at the same stuff.

And the question is, how do we understand it? What is Genesis attempting to convey to us? So, let me start with probably one of the more famous and well-known views, which is young earth creation interpretations.

I'm going to abbreviate that Y-E-C. I'm not entirely sure why, because I think this is the only time I use it. But the young earth creation view basically takes the face value understanding of Genesis as we read it.

[29 : 43] You know, as modern people, we read Genesis 1, and there's an initial understanding of what we see in our mind when we read it, and that is generally what the young earth creation view attempts to put forward is what you read is what you get, basically.

They take a face value understanding. They believe that the creation account is straight history and is meant to be understood that way. And further, usually they believe that science done correctly will prove that the earth and universe is in fact young as is described in scripture.

Now, of course, you may be thinking, oh, Genesis 1 doesn't give us an age of the earth. But if you take Genesis 1 as straight history, and then you add up all the genealogical years going through Genesis all the way up to Abraham, you get an age range, right?

So 6,000 to 10,000 depending on how you add it up. So this is, they are believing, this is the witness of scripture, and therefore the earth and universe must in fact be young, and that science incorrectly will show that it's young.

This is the young earth view. Oh, man, it's snowing. That's beautiful. The second group, I'm going to put these into four different groups, and these groupings are largely my creation, although I am cribbing off of a variety of different sources.

[31 : 20] But this next group I'm calling the ancient science interpretations. And what these groups have in common, I thought that was thunder, I was like. So, yeah, exactly.

Oh, thank you. Wouldn't that be nice? I would love that. All right. So I've grouped these under this heading of ancient science because they share in common the belief that the Genesis account is intending to convey what God did and how God created the world, and that understanding it correctly, it will fit with the sort of the modern scientific view of the world.

So the first group in this group is the appearance of age idea. And so basically what the appearance of age interpretation says is that the young earth understanding of the Bible is correct, except that the world does appear old.

but it is merely appearing old because it was created mature. Right? And so you can see that there is, you may be thinking, what's the difference between that and young earth creationism?

What young earth creationists would believe that science done correctly will show that the earth is young and the universe is young. A person who takes the appearance of age approach would say, I am taking the witness of scripture at face value, and I recognize that science seems to indicate that the earth is old, and the way I reconcile that is by positing that the earth is merely appears old.

[33 : 07] Similar, and they use this example, similarly, God created Adam as a full adult human being. Right? You know, do they have a belly button? You know, who knows?

Right? But the idea is, Adam was created adult, and so we can imagine a scenario in which the universe is created, in a sense, adult.

Right? And fully grown, and that, when we do science, it sort of appears as if it's old, but really it's not. That's one view. The next view in the ancient science interpretations is the gap theory.

So basically, the gap theory says that Genesis 1 to 2, sorry, Genesis 1, 1 to 2, describes sort of the initial creation event, and when it says that the earth was formless and void, that the correct way to understand that is to say the earth became formless and void, and so the idea is that God initially created the whole world, the whole universe.

This is where we get all of the age that we see implicated in science, but then due to the fall of Satan, this world that God created initially falls into dissonance, disrepair, it becomes formless and void, and there's extinction events on earth, etc.

[34 : 43] And then in Genesis 1, 3, and continuing in the Genesis account, we find the straight history of how God recreated the world. He created the world, he re-separated things, he created the light and the dark, and the sun, and all these things, and that the earth is in fact, or the universe is in fact very old, but Genesis is describing the straight history.

Does that make sense to everybody? I will mention that the gap theory sounds really good to our ears, but most biblical scholars, the reason that it's not very popular is most biblical scholars don't find the grammatical connection in verses 1 to 2 to 3 as being legitimate, so saying that it became formless and void.

A lot of scholars will say it doesn't actually say that grammatically. The better way to understand it is the way that we translate it, but this is a view, it actually was very popular like 150 years ago.

But there are still people who would affirm this, and they have their own arguments. The last of the ancient science interpretations that I'm putting forward, I just want to make it clear that this is not exhaustive.

I'm only showing you a, what I hope to be a representative sample of a lot of the interpretations of Genesis, but there's like a whole bunch, way, way more than this.

[36 : 10] Actually, not that much more. Let me like double. But I feel like this is, this covers the ground. A lot of them are sort of the nuances, they're very close to each other. So the third one is we have the day-age theory, and this takes the Genesis account to be describing how God created, but takes the less common understanding of the word day, when we're talking about one day, a second day, a third day, evening, morning, etc.

They take the word day to indicate a long period of time. Now, in the Bible, there are usages of the word day in the, that's used in Genesis 1 to describe a long period of time, like the day of the Lord, right?

These are usages of the word day that indicate a long period of time, or just an indeterminate amount of time, right? And so a day-age theorist would say that Genesis 1 is straight history, but we're meant to understand the day described in these different days as a long period of time and age, right?

Which is how we get this view. But they, this allows them to take sort of a mostly literal approach to understanding Genesis, but allows for the universe to be very old, right?

So you can see that these three different views, they are taking some of the information that we get from general revelation, and they are saying that the Bible is attempting to convey this information in the text, right?

[37 : 48] Which is why I call it ancient science, right? The Bible is telling us something scientific. This third group, creation poem interpretation. So I grouped these two together because they both posit that the Genesis is using figures of speech and literary conventions to convey God's activity in creation.

And so these views usually allow for a variety of different hows of how God created, but they all are indicating that the Genesis passage is telling us what God did in creation.

Okay? Does that make sense? So the first view I'm going to talk about is the analogical day theory. In this view, God is using analogical language to compare himself, his activity in creation to a craftsman and his work week, right?

So he's using the language of just like a craftsman in his work week does this, God as the ultimate craftsman makes the entire world and the last day rested.

So it's using analogical language in the sense that it's describing what God actually did. He did create the light and the dark and the sun and the moon and et cetera, but it's using figures of speech to describe it.

[39 : 11] And so in that sense, we're not wedded to the specific hows of God is, of how God is doing these different things. In fact, we're not necessarily saying that the creation week is using chronological time and maybe taking things out of order to make a theological point, but it's still saying what God actually did.

This other group is the framework view crowd. This framework view relies heavily on what I described in Genesis 1, which is that symmetry in the creation account, in the forming and the filling and the Sabbath.

This is basically what everybody acknowledges is going on in the Bible. And so they say, well, based on that, Genesis 1 is using a literary framework to describe God's creation.

It's not really trying to tell us anything about how God did any of this stuff. It's not trying to tell us chronology or what came after what. It's just saying it's using a literary framework.

There's really no better way to say it. That's why they call it the framework view. And so Genesis is outlining the structures of creation and what is going on, God's creation of the different domains and the people who live in the domains, but it's not really telling us how he's creating these in detail.

[40:39] Okay. Does that make sense? Okay. And finally, this last group I'm calling the religion only interpretations. And basically this group I'm putting together because they don't believe that Genesis is meant to describe what or how creation happened, but really the who and the why, right?

So these interpretations are describing who God is and why God is creating the world. And it's using different, and we'll see, different ways of understanding what Genesis is conveying in the what, but in no case is the what meant to be taken as history.

So the first view here is the proclamation day view. So in this view, God in his throne room is proclaiming his acts of creation sort of in a transcendent state.

He's in his throne room. He is proclaiming what he is doing in creation to the angels in heaven. And it really has no correspondence to actual history.

It's just saying that God is saying, I'm going to create the sun. I'm going to create light and dark, et cetera. And then on earth, as it is actually carried out, it's going to look completely different.

[42:03] So we're meant to understand that in Genesis, we're reading a description of God in his throne room describing what he's going to do. That's the proclamation day view. The kingdom temple view.

So this view says that God in Genesis 1 is indicating a literal week in history in which God is inaugurating his creation.

Right? So God created however it is that he created, but in a week in the real world, God is saying, I am inaugurating the light versus the dark.

I am inaugurating this as my kingdom or temple, depending on how you understand these verses. Right? So I'm inaugurating this part of creation to be this function in my temple, in my kingdom.

Again, it's not meant to actually convey anything about the natural world. It's not telling you how God did anything. He's just saying that this is what God did and this is why, or this is who God is and why it's there and why it's describing this way is to help us in worshiping him.

[43:13] And finally, believe it or not, this is the last one, the alternative cosmology view. Okay? So this view says that Moses is actually borrowing the word picture and narratives of the surrounding cultures, you know, in Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Canaan.

And by borrowing from these different sources, he is attempting to contrast the God of the Bible from the false gods. Right? And so see how they're similar, but look how they're different.

That's the idea. Right? And so he's trying to present to Israel how their God is different from the gods in the surrounding cultures, but is not really challenging the ancient world picture that they had in their mind, you know, of the world on columns, on a flat place with the mountains holding up the sky, all these different ideas that we have that the ancient people had about what the physical world was really like.

So he's saying he's not challenging that. He's using that word picture as a way to emphasize the true God versus the false gods around them. Okay. So that was a lot.

But how are we going to compare all these different views? Right? How, what makes us compelled by one view versus another?

[44 : 43] So what I'm going to do here is I'm going to go through the general categories. I'm not going to go through every single one again, but the general categories, and I'm going to see how those earlier groups that we talked to, those philosophical groups, how they are usually, how they cash out in these different views of creation and what makes them open to these different views.

Right? So in general, the young earth creationist interpretations are held by either the science skeptics who say, really, we're not really meant to understand anything from science, or we can't really.

And concordists, right? Believe that the, that the biblical account is attempting to give us scientific information and we should, we'll be learning about that and we should be applying science to understand the Bible in that way.

Right? These ancient science interpretations, these are going to be held primarily by concordists. They believe that the Bible is attempting to convey scientific information and that we as Christians are meant to use the information from general revelation and special revelation and make them concord.

In the creation poem interpretation, you're going to find a wide variety of different people who find this convincing, from concordists all the way to accommodationists with harmonists sort of in the middle as they always are.

[46 : 10] And so, in this view, they, they may believe that the Bible is attempting to convey poetic information, a concordist might, but believe that it's still conveying scientific information at a certain point.

Or you may be an accommodationist who says that, you know, it's not really meant to give us any information about the world as it really is, but it's using figures of speech. Right? And then finally, in the religion-only interpretation you're going to find pretty much those groups that, that weigh general revelation much higher in the harmonist to biblical skeptics view.

And I will say that when we're looking at these different ways of understanding, this philosophical, these philosophical views of understanding nature and creation, I try not to put my own views in the class.

I'm trying to help us understand it, but I will say as an editor that I think that the science skeptics view and the biblical skeptics view are not well acquainted with the Bible, basically.

I think that those views are difficult to hold when taking the Bible seriously or taking science seriously. If you take the Bible seriously, you should be taking science at least a little seriously, like we talked earlier, right?

[47 : 34] So I think these are difficult to hold, but there are people who hold them, so this is helping, trying to help us to understand. So let's go through. You're talking to one of your fellow Christians, and you hear them talking about the kingdom temple view of their interpretation of Genesis 1, and maybe they're somewhere on this spectrum, right?

In their views of how you balance these things. and you are over here, right? Your visceral reaction to discussing with them is that you believe that they are compromising the authority of Scripture in their interpretations of the Bible because they're weighing general revelation more, right?

So you're saying, look, special revelation, it's getting lighter, right? It feels like they are accommodating, they are compromising their view, and I think that may contribute to that feeling of, oh no, I need, we are meant to protect the witness of Scripture, and I feel like you're copping out, essentially, on this, right?

And it goes the other direction, right? If you're over here, and you hear a group over here talking, you may be thinking, wow, do you not care what the Bible says about what we can learn from nature?

Do you think that really there's nothing that we can learn? So there's almost a friction there about almost like an anti-intellectualism. You're like, oh man, they don't really, they don't really get it, you know, they're not thinking very clearly, et cetera, right?

[49:17] But oftentimes, these are in the background, right? In our mind, and we're really dealing with the interpretations, right? We're talking about Genesis 1, we're talking about the best way to translate it, et cetera, when in reality, a lot of the heat, a lot of the rancor is coming from this.

I don't believe that you are taking the Bible seriously, or I don't believe that you're taking the nature seriously, right? And that is what's causing the discussion.

So what I would suggest when we're having these discussions is bring it up, right? Bring up these, you don't have to use this language, but bring it up and say, this is what I believe about how we are meant to understand nature in special revelation, you know?

Think about these different views. Think about, I'm sure as you're sitting here, you're listening to me talk and you're saying, ah, wow, I identify more with this group than with another group, right?

Maybe this is the first time you've ever thought about it. But it's important for us to think about it because this other group is going to have a different view and as Orthodox Christians, as many people who hold these views are, you're not going to have a productive dialogue if we're, we are questioning each other's motives, right?

[50:34] So that's my goal in this entire class is how can I bring the information from these debates to us in a way that can help us to maintain unity in the body, okay?

And so you may be asking yourself, what on earth does this have to do with the telenovels design of theistic evolution, right? I thought this is what this class is about. Well, you'll find that it is actually central, okay?

Because if you, if you, your view of Scripture as an Orthodox Christian, when we believe that Scripture is our highest authority, our interpretation of Scripture provides the boundary line of what is possible, what is possibly true, right?

It creates a window in which certain things can be true and other things have to be false, right? This is just how, just how it works. And so, if you take a, either a young earth creationist or maybe an, a ancient science interpretation of the Bible, oftentimes, this interpretation of the Bible essentially makes any kind of evolutionary mechanism untenable, right?

It's un-, it's unimaginable. The Bible is, the witness of the Bible is this, and therefore, any kind of evolution is not going to be allowed for Christians.

[51:59] And you often hear Christians talking this way, who hold these kinds of views, right? the Bible clearly says that evolution is impossible, or et cetera. And they may be right, right?

But that's, that's them talking from their philosophical position based on their interpretation and what is possible and what is not possible. You know, flipping the, flipping the coin here, if you have a creation poem or religion-only interpretation of the Bible, that really, logically, at least, leaves open the possibility of some sort of evolutionary mechanism, right?

Because the Bible isn't saying it's not happening, right? So it could have been happening, right? We're just saying that in these different interpretations, we're just saying Genesis isn't telling us one way or the other whether some sort of evolutionary mechanism or not happened, right?

So you can imagine somebody who is a theistic evolutionist who holds one of these interpretations and they have a sort of a different window of what is allowable, right? And so these are going to be, these are going to be the first barrier in any conversation between Christians on intelligent design or theistic evolution, what is allowable, right?

And so having a discussion of what I believe is allowable based on Genesis is a helpful discussion, right? And doing it without, you know, attacking each other and being, you know, generally mean.

[53:26] Not to say you can't be vigorous, you know? Me and my brothers, I have eight, I have, no, I don't have eight brothers, I have six brothers. Not a huge difference, right? But, you know, we disagree, we argue back and forth, you know, sometimes vehemently, no blows are thrown, but we can argue rigorously without declaring anathema on each other.

That's the goal, right? So, that is today's class. How do you balance general and special revelation?

What does that allow? What interpretations of Genesis do these different philosophical views tend to support? And how that can help us in our discussions with each other.

So, next class, I'm going to be actually comparing intelligent design and theistic evolution on the merits, hopefully. and then talking about the second tension in creationism, which is really the philosophical position that is going to decide between, well, actually, I shouldn't say that.

It's going to be the philosophical position that predisposes you to find one more compelling than the other. Although, that may be a little more simplistic. We'll talk about it next week.

[54:43] But with that, anybody have any questions? Questions? It indicates last week's recording, because I had the mic, was the best we ever got.

So, appreciate your patience with this process. As a scientist, I wonder, how do you evaluate this current science?

And, because the science today is different than the science 50 years ago, different than the science 100 years ago, whereas God's word is infallible, will always be correct, but not to say that their intention, but how do you have a healthy skepticism of, as a scientist, and evaluating the evidence and what general revelation has to teach us.

So, how do I have a healthy skepticism? Very easily. By being a scientist. If you, if you, I don't know how many, if there are any scientists in the crowd here, but once you get into science, you start to see, like, oh, wow, okay, so people are wrong a lot, all the time.

And people are, are not, you know, we try to imagine science as sort of this ivory tower sort of deal where, you know, you have old, wizened men discussing with each other in clear, you know, calming tones, but in reality, you know, human beings are the same everywhere, right?

[56:16] So you may have a, a advanced degree in some sort of, in some scientific endeavor, but you're going to have your own predispositions, your own biases, your own reasons for wanting this specific interpretation of data to be true, right?

I don't, I can't tell how many times I've, I've listened to a talk from somebody who is arguing for some sort of interpretation of the evidence, and is primarily weighing whether it's true or not on whether he discovered it or not, right?

So, and next week, I'm going to start off similarly to how I started off today about understanding hermeneutics and what are we looking for, right? There is a meaning to scripture as Christians that we believe is 100% true.

Our job is to align our understanding of scripture to that meaning, right? And that is our goal as Christians in the same way in the sciences, okay?

A lot of, and this is causing a lot of confusion for non-scientists, and I don't think it's because of their ignorance, I think it's because a lot of scientists are bad communicators or want to inflate their own sense of value, but I digress in the sense that there is a reasonable way that we can look at the evidence and withhold judgment about necessarily what the interpretation of that evidence is, right?

[57:54] It's not like science is different than other fields in which the correct answer just presents itself, you know, you're looking in a microscope and it says, this is the right way to understand this, right?

It doesn't happen that way. We see evidence, we collect evidence using specific devices that are meant to collect specific kinds of evidence, and then using that, trying to pool it, we get what we think is an interpretation that makes sense of everything.

That's the idea. And yes, you're right, over the history of science, there have been wild, wildly wrong interpretations of the evidence, but what I will say is there has rarely ever been a situation in which the evidence itself has been wrong.

Okay? So that's the distinction I want to make. Interpretation versus evidence. Right? Okay. I just want to point out that the same question could be asked of the Bible.

Our interpretations of the Bible have, you know, to put it politely, say, matured over the years. You know, so I, you know, I grew up in, you know, the creation, you know, seven-day.

[59:22] Right, yeah. Right, and then as I've matured and, you know, heard the different evidence, largely because I've been parts of, you know, different, you know, faith communities.

Right. Been able to go, well, you know, it's plausible, you know, and see merit for all the views.

Yeah. Yeah, I think it's, sorry, go ahead. Yeah, so I'm just saying, like, you know, you can ask, you know, somebody who was, like, all on the science end of things could ask a Christian the same question, is my main point, is that on both sides of the aisle on this issue, we need to be open to maybe we're wrong.

Yeah, and I think that's a good point. What I was trying to get across in the beginning of this class is the difference between the biblical information that we have, that we all share, and our different interpretations of the text, how we understand them.

Right? There is a difference. Now, I will say that scripture does have a leg up on science, because scripture is verbal communication, and verbal communication is, I would say, lends itself to perspicuity.

[60:47] Am I saying that right? Yes. So I can't even say it, I'll explain what it means. Basically, it lends itself to understanding, ease of understanding. Right?

It's easier, so I mean, we all experience this, right? It's easier for us to be taught something than for us to go out and learn it for ourselves. That's the whole reason we have teachers, right?

And so if we think of the Bible as a teacher, then just in the sense that it is verbal communication, it has a leg up in terms of ease of understanding, right?

But you're right in the sense that we as the audience still have a job of interpreting, right? As is true in any kind of communication.

I would say science has one leg away in terms of the effort that's required to understand what's going on. But no matter how it is, you're never going to have the correct understanding of something just plopped into your head, right?

[61:51] Outside of the work of the Holy Spirit, right? And that's part of what we believe as Reformed Christians is that the perspicuity of Scripture is a result of the Holy Spirit working in our hearts to understand what's going on.

And that generally applies to the big major themes of the Bible, redemption, the nature of Jesus, etc. That's not to say that you're not a holy Christian if you have difficulty understanding passages.

Everybody does, right? There are passages that are difficult for anybody to understand no matter where you are on the creation spectrum, right?

But yeah, that's something we have to be aware of. I think especially in some circles in the church, there is an over reliance or an over estimation of the clearness of Scripture, right?

And that's something we have to guard against. Where would you put a non-overlapping magisteria sort of view on your little spectrum?

[63 : 02] So that would be, I would say, that would probably fit best in the religion-only interpretations of the Bible. Basically saying that the Bible and science are completely different epistemic endeavors, right?

Totally different ways of knowing, and therefore because they're totally different ways of knowing, they never overlap, right? There is no possible way that Scripture could ever be contradicted by science, and vice versa, right?

They're completely separate. I think that that is not a high enough view of Scripture, and I think the reason for that is because Scripture itself puts forward itself as history.

So by using the non-overlapping magisteria, you wouldn't be able to say that, oh, Jesus really existed in real life, in history, right?

Because the study of history is its own little thing, and we can't really use the study of history to apply itself to Scripture. And maybe they would say, no, history is just as bad as Scripture in terms of understanding, and we're talking about hard science here, right?

[64 : 16] But I think that that is the problem. Where do you place history? Because Scripture is undeniably history, in some places at least, right?

You know, there's discussion whether Job is a real person that lived in the real world, or is it a poem describing whatever, right? So there are places in Scripture where we argue, like, oh, is this meant to be history, or is this meant to be a parable?

But there are parts that are definitely history, or meant to be history. And so depending on where you put history in your magisteria, that's going to make major problems for Christians, right?

And usually I've found that the non-overlapping magisterium is put forward by scientists generally, who just don't want to deal with Christians.

That's been my thought, like, oh, yeah, but really they're just totally separate, so we don't have to argue about it. It's like, okay, well, I don't think that does Scripture justice. Hey, Luke, thanks so much.

[65 : 28] I had a question about your further reading section in your handout, and I've only, I mean, some of these authors I've read a little bit from, I don't know if I've read, I think I've read one or two of the resources, but something that struck me, at least in my not, you know, perhaps not representative sampling, was that they didn't seem to do what you're recommending we do.

Like, they didn't seem like they were really dealing with the deeper issues, they were just kind of stating their view, sometimes making really good observations, but then I also felt like there were a lot of weaknesses in their views, that they weren't really attending to or acknowledging.

Anyway, I was wondering if you could give a little overview of these further reading resources or potential ones that might do, maybe do what you're doing, or maybe none of them do. Yeah, yeah, no, I'm not that good.

I didn't print out the further reading for myself. Somebody hand me that to me? Yeah. Thank you. Excellent. Okay, so closest thing I would say on the further reading list for an overview is the John Lennox book, *Seven Days That Divide the World*.

This is John C. Lennox, he's a famous Irish apologist slash evangelist. He's a really smart guy. Also, he sounds really cool when he talks.

[66:53] Yeah, he's Oxford trained. He spoke here. Did he really? Of course, I wasn't here. Anyways, so John C. Lennox, his *Seven Days That Divide the World*, that's an overview book.

He talks about the different views. And I think he does touch a little bit on the philosophical issues of why we would believe one versus the other. Okay? These different resources I have here are specific arguments for one particular view.

And so, like I was talking about earlier when we're having discussions with Christians, oftentimes we have our own view and we're arguing for that view with these philosophical issues not really in view.

view. view. And so, you're going to find that in these different books. I have found myself that the books by C. John Collins, who takes the analogical day view, he does interact more with other views and explain why sometimes people come to one conclusion versus the other.

But it's not the primary part of his book. The primary part of his book is, this is why I'm right. Or this is the correct way of understanding it.

[68:06] And I think there's a place for that. I think, obviously, there has to be a place for that. We have to argue, we have to come to a conclusion and argue for our view. And that's true of everything that I think. You should make up your mind about what you believe and why you believe it.

So, I don't want to come across as somebody who says that, you know, really, we're all right and, you know, we should just hug. I think we all have our own views and we have potentially good reasons for the way that we think about things and that the only way we're going to become, you know, better and more mature Christians is if we are sharpening each other iron style, right?

But I can't think of any other big overview books other than the seven days that divide the world. My reading is actually quite limited. No, I mean, I've read, sorry, I've read a lot of books on the different views, but I haven't read that many books about the views about the views.

Does that make sense? Yeah. This is, which is why I thought it was helpful to do the class this way, right? Because there's so many resources out there for any particular view, but trying to understand why we come to the conclusions we do is, yeah.

It sounds like you have a job to do then. I think you've got to write this book. I hope not. Somebody who's a writer should be doing that. I'm a, I'm a, I'm more of a talker.

[69:34] I talk better than I write. Yeah, yeah. Maybe I'll do like a C.S. Lewis style, I'll do a bunch of radio things and then eventually somebody will transcribe it into a book.

I hope not, man. Nobody should ever listen to me in anything I say. Cool, any other questions?

All righty. Well, thank you guys so much for coming. I hope to see you next week. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.