

## Evolution vs. Creation

### Lesson Five

#### *Science, Part II: Blind in Both Eyes*

April 2, 2006

- What is epistemology? – the nature and ground of knowledge (how we know what we know)
- What types of questions can science answer?
  - something observable in the present – sight, sound, touch, taste, smell
  - a theory that can be repeatably tested
  - an inference from known principles
- What types of questions are beyond the ability of science to answer?
  - something that happened in the past (not observed)
  - something that happened only once (not repeatable)
  - something that is beyond the reach of observation – metaphysical
  - something that will happen in the future
- Today we live in the “information age” – but how accurate is the weather forecast?
- Three ultimate questions the people have faced since the beginning:
  - where did I come from?
  - why am I here?
  - where am I going?
- Our worldview (evolution vs. creation) provides the answer to these three questions
- There are three types or sources of knowledge:
  - science – truth through empirical observation
  - philosophy – truth through human reason
  - religion – truth through divine revelation
- The assumption we live under today is that science is the source of *all* truth. This implies that science is also the source of *authority*.
  - science, philosophy, and religion are all searching for ultimate truth, and must ultimately arrive at the same destination
  - science, religion, and philosophy are often in contradiction; moreover, each one will often be in contradiction with itself
  - where contradictions exist, truth has not yet been settled – we’re still on the journey toward the truth
- The debate between creation and evolution is not a debate about *facts*, but a debate about *interpretation* of the facts
  - what we see happening today becomes a grid by which we interpret facts that pertain to the past (e.g., uniformitarian processes)

- do fossils come with labels?
- fossils give us very few facts, yet “scientists” are quick to fill in the details for us
  - when it lived
  - why it died
  - what came before it (ancestry)
  - what came after it (descendants)
  - what color it was
  - what kind of noise it made
  - what it ate
  - how fast it moved
  - etc.
- how much could we learn from George Washington’s bones if we didn’t know anything else about him?
  
- What is a paradigm? (a model or pattern; a belief system; a grid for interpreting the world around us)
  - What do paradigms have to do with science? (“theory” is just another word for paradigm)
  - What is a paradigm shift? (drastic change in beliefs; often occurs suddenly)
  - Why do paradigms shift? (new information helps eliminate incorrect belief systems – things are not always what they appear to be or what we *want* them to be)
- Science is the search for truth, and is subject to constant revision (imagine using a science textbook from the 19<sup>th</sup> century!)
- Facts may tend to accumulate in a somewhat linear fashion, but the theories used to explain the facts often advance by quantum leaps; new information puts more pressure on old theories until they finally snap
  
- Example from astronomy:
  - Ptolemy (2<sup>nd</sup> century) – *earth* at the center of the universe; everything else revolves in circular orbits
  - Copernicus (16<sup>th</sup> century) – *sun* at the center of the universe; everything else revolves in circular orbits (but couldn’t explain the retrograde motion of Mars)
  - Kepler (17<sup>th</sup> century) – recognized that planets must travel in *elliptical* orbits in order to explain retrograde motion; but couldn’t prove *why*
  - Newton (17<sup>th</sup> century) – showed that the laws of gravitation are what allow planets to travel in elliptical orbits
  - Einstein (20<sup>th</sup> century) – showed that the units we use to measure the universe are *not* constant: mass, length, & time depend upon the speed you’re traveling; also showed that mass and energy are equivalent ( $E = mc^2$ )
  
- Science has never been shaken so severely as in the modern age

- new discoveries are pushing us to the limits of scientific knowledge; scientists now recognize there are questions that may never be answered
- new knowledge is being discovered so rapidly that it risks obsolescence before it can be published
- Natural realm vs. supernatural realm – supernatural is ultimate reality, but outside the reach of empirical science
  - is it fair to assume that something we can't observe or measure must not exist?
  - if science is the source of authority, what is the basis for morality?
- One of the great dangers of trying to put religion on the science bandwagon is that it's likely to be stranded when science changes (science is no firm foundation!)
- What type(s) of knowledge does the Bible include? All three!
  - science: historical narrative (observation of current or past events)
    - Matt 27:45 – darkness came over the land at midday
  - philosophy: wisdom literature (human reason and experience)
    - Ecc 1:12-18 – everything is meaningless; wisdom brings grief
  - religion: theology (the nature of God; the spiritual realm; prophecy)
    - Eph 6:12 – our battle is against unseen spiritual forces
- Paul showed that philosophy is not sufficient for the wisdom and knowledge of God:
  - 1 Cor 1:21-25 – world does not know God through wisdom
  - 1 Cor 2:6-9 – God's secret wisdom
- Paul states that spiritual truth is spiritually discerned
  - 1 Cor 2:14 – man without the Spirit cannot understand spiritual things