The Books of Moses Fact or Fiction?

Session 1

Origin of our Earth and the Universe

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Our concept of where earth—and our universe—came from, where we came from and why we are alive affects every decision we make. This makes it critical that we clearly understand what these underlying beliefs are based on and how they modify our behaviour.

Introduction

The Books of Moses are the first five books of the Bible, named Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. They are called Moses' Books as he was credited with compiling the earlier material leading up to his time into the Book of Genesis, which means Beginnings in Greek, and then writing the next four books about events that mostly occurred during his lifetime.

In these nine sessions, we will concentrate on some of the major miracles of these books, looking at evidence for and against the Biblical origins of Earth, our solar system and our universe, the origin of life and complex organisms, the entrance of sin and the Fall, leading to death, the Great Flood and its consequences, the division of languages and peoples, the Exodus from Egypt and Israel's encounter with Jehovah at Mount Sinai.

We will have a fifteen minute afternoon tea break about halfway through the two hours, and 15 to 20 minutes of discussion time at the end of each session.

This week we will start at the beginning:

The Origin of Our Universe: Intelligent Design or a Big Bang?

We will look at these two major—and opposing—models: Special Creation as outlined in the Bible and the Big Bang Theory.

The most basic difference between these models is their belief systems:

Everyone who accepts Biblical Special Creation believes there is an eternal God of unlimited intelligence and power who created everything.

Most of those who accept the Big Bang believe there is NOT an eternal God of unlimited intelligence and power who created everything, so everything had to arise spontaneously from natural things.

If there is such a God, and the Bible is His Word to us, then it should provide us with the basics of how He made our universe and created life on Earth, plus provide a reasonable history of how our world became like it is today.

If there is NOT such a God, then those who do not believe in Him must be able to provide plausible explanations for the origin of our universe and life on Earth and provide a reasonable history of how our world became like it is today, all by non-miraculous physical means.

The main point here is that BOTH are Belief Systems. Dictionary.com defines a religion as "a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature, and purpose of the universe."

Therefore both belief systems are religions. One religion is called Biblical Theism, which teaches that our God deliberately created earth to be our home, that He loves us and wants to give us everlasting life. The other religion is called Atheism, also referred to as Naturalism. Naturalism is defined as "the philosophical belief that everything arises from natural properties and causes, and supernatural or spiritual explanations are excluded or discounted."

Atheism teaches that there is no God and our earth is just an ordinary planet in a meaningless universe which will eventually die. Even our lives have no ultimate meaning, and when we die, death is total and permanent. These faiths can be summarised as a belief in Life versus a belief in Death.

So this, and the other Origin sessions in this series, are not contrasting science with religion, but are looking at what support science and history bring to each of the models of these belief systems, and to what extent science and history undermine each of these two models.

These are the two opposing positions. There are many intermediate positions, where people try to blend various parts of

each model, and even other models/religions with quite different details. This series will focus on the Biblical and Naturalism models.

My intention is to provoke deeper thought about these beliefs and the issues they raise than is commonly provided in the popular press and TV.

Special Creation

First, let's review the outline of Special Creation of our Earth, solar system and Universe in Genesis:

Day One: Earth Formed

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1

This verse indicates that before this beginning there was no physical universe, not even empty space. In Matthew 7:23, Jesus (Jeshua) tells us that there was also a beginning of time as we know it, which likely also refers to this beginning. First, God created space, also known as the expanse of the heavens. In the centre of that empty space, God created our Earth. This shows that Earth is not an insignificant planet, but instead is the centrepiece of the universe, and is the first material object that God made. The special nature of Earth and God's intentions for Earth will come up often throughout these studies.

And the earth was formless and empty, and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God hovered on the face of the waters Genesis 1:2

Now we get the first details of earth's formation. God chose to not create it instantly as a complete system, thriving with life.

Instead, it is like a blank canvas, or more precisely, like a perfectly smooth sphere which was devoid of life. "The face of the deep" tells us that the surface of earth was also at about room temperature, as the entire surface of this mountainless earth was covered with deep water. As we will see later, the surface of earth beneath the waters was the mantle. We also know that the earth already had an atmosphere, or else the water would be boiling away into space.

Finally, the Spirit of God hovering on the waters indicates that God's Spirit was likely doing something in its hovering, possibly agitating the waters to pulverise some of the surface rock to later provide soil, and also waiting to fulfil the next stage of forming the earth

And God said, "Let there be light." And there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning: Day One. Genesis 1:3 to 5

This is one of the surprising aspects of the Creation Week, as we are later told that the Sun was not created until Day 4 (Figure 1). It is not specified in Genesis what the source of this light was, or just how it was divided from the darkness. However, John 1:1-5 indicates that the Light was actually Jeshua (Jesus) the Anointed (the Christ). Jeshua will also be the light of the New Jerusalem in Rev 21:23. But during the Creation, we could now see Earth, and that it had a day side and a night side, which indicates that the Light was coming from a specific place and the earth was spherical. And the fact that earth could also have evenings and mornings shows that it was already rotating. There is no reason to doubt that it was rotating at about the same speed as it does today, giving a similar day length.

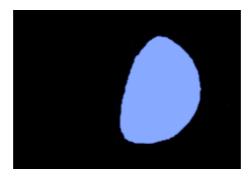


Figure 1: Earth near the end of Day One. There is light, but only water can be seen.

Day Two: Waters Divided

And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." And God made the expanse, and divided the waters which were under the expanse from the waters which were above the expanse. And it was so. Genesis 1:6

Expanse is translated from the Hebrew word רָקִיעַ Raqiya, primarily meaning "extended surface (solid), expanse, firmament". It is derived from Raqa, which means "to spread or hammer out". Verse 7 tells us that at this point God made this expanse and used it to divide the waters, so some of the water remained above the expanse, and the rest was beneath it. It was commonly taught from the 1960's to late 90s that this expanse was our atmosphere, and the waters above it formed a vapour canopy. As we will see in the Flood session, the canopy theory was unworkable, and misinterprets this expanse.

The Hydroplate Theory (HPT) proposed by Walt Brown (see In the Beginning at www.creationscience.com), claims that earth's granite crust was this expanse, and it was mostly supported by a layer of pressurised water beneath it. The same general idea was proposed long ago by Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus (A.D. 80–118) who said "the earth is spread upon the water just like a ship which floats in the midst of the sea."

The hydroplate theory proposes the initial crust was about 100 km (60 miles) thick, with about 1.5 km (1 mile) of water above it and 2.5 km (1.5 mile) of water below it. At this point, it is worth remembering that the Spirit of God was still hovering over the surface of the water. The Spirit's purpose may have been twofold. The first was to form powerful currents in the water which pulverised the top meter or two of rock, which would soon become soil and also form sediments which would be devoid of any fossils, as there was still no physical life, not even microbes, on earth. The second purpose, we will soon see.

And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning: Second day. Genesis 1:8

Verse 8 seems to make the expanse equals crust idea false until we realise that our Earth was created to become Heaven, the place of God's Throne. If you doubt this, recall that Jehovah God lived on the Earth until the Fall, where He walked and talked on this expanse/crust with Adam and Eve each day (Genesis 2:15-25 and 3:8), so it is very reasonable that it was also called Heaven. And in the Restoration, Earth will again become God's Throne (Revelation 21:1-7).

Day Three: Land, Oceans and Plants

And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be collected into one region, and let the dry land be seen." And it was so. And God called the dry land Earth and the collection of the waters He called Seas, and God saw that it was good. Genesis 1:9 & 10

First, notice that it is the water under the heavens, in plural, that are collected together. These are the waters above the expanse/crust. The hydroplate theory proposes that this collecting was done by pushing down sections of the crust to where it contacted the mantle beneath. This both stretched the crust and created greater pressure on the subterranean water, which worked together to lift up other sections of the crust, forming the dry land, hills and mountains of the pre-flood earth. These lowered places where the crust and mantle contacted became the pillars or foundations on which the crust of the earth was mounted, as shown in Figure 2. (1 Samuel 2:8, Job 9:6, Job 26:11. Psalm 75:3, Isaiah 48:13).

Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus also had this to say: "Until the third day of creation, the earth was level as a plain and water covered the whole earth. When God said [Genesis 1:9], "Let the waters below the heavens be gathered," the mountains and hills arose and other parts became depressions. The waters filled these depressions and they were called seas."

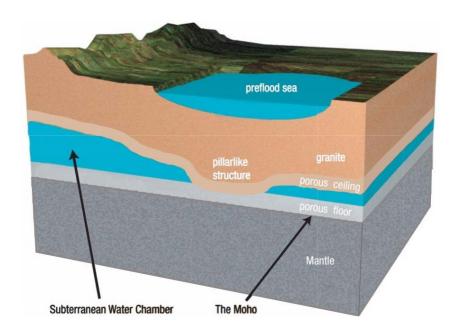


Figure 2: Pre-flood structure of the Crust, or Expanse. Note the sea on the surface and the sea beneath the granite crust. From *In the Beginning*.

Notice that verse 10 says that on the surface there was only one ocean, which suggests that there was also only one large continent which was surrounded by that ocean. But God called the waters Seas, not Sea, which indicates that He was also calling the water below the crust a sea as well.

By now, God has used more than two of His six days of creating the universe just making our Earth and preparing it for putting life on it. It is not until the formation and shaping of the expanse/crust is completed that God declares this work Good. He then spends the rest of Day Three putting in place His life-support system for the creatures He will make: All of the green plants (and microorganisms), needed to purify our air, soil and water, provide us with food and shelter and recycle worn-out material. But we will explore this in later sessions.

These verses may help explain why Earth was so important to Him:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. Colossians 1:15 to 17

It seems that God was preparing Earth as a gift for His Son Jeshua. And also for His own enjoyment:

the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:

"You are worthy, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honour and power; for You created all things, and for Your pleasure they exist and were created." Revelation 4:10 & 11

Day Four: Outer Space

And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to divide between the day and the night; and let them be for signs, and for appointed times, and for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so. And God made two great lights and the stars: the greater light for ruling the day, and the lesser light for ruling the night. And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

And there was evening and there was morning: Fourth day. Genesis 1:14 to 19

The first thing to mention is that this time it is "the expanse of the heavens" rather than the expanse called Heaven. This is a different expanse to the earlier expanse between the waters. This 'expanse of the heavens' includes our atmosphere and the space between the heavenly bodies. As we shall see, this expanse of space is initially merely gigantic and will then be expanded enormously.

The existence of this earth also tells us that God had, in creating it, converted massive amounts of energy into sophisticated elements composed of precisely designed subatomic and atomic particles and capable of complex chemical reactions. The Table of Physical Constants (Table 1) list the specific values of these constants that God selected and which were required to make the matter and set the properties of our universe. Even tiny changes to most of these constants would result in a universe unable to support life. Physicists refer to this by saying our universe is "finely tuned for life".

These Genesis 1 verses show that the elements needed for rocks, water and air were all required, so we have oxygen, silicon, aluminium, calcium, sodium, magnesium, potassium, hydrogen, nitrogen and carbon as a minimum. Genesis 2:11 and 4:22 tell us that the range of elements included the metals iron, copper, zinc, tin and even gold, with its atomic mass of 199. And also that these metals existed in ores concentrated enough on the expanse/crust to enable mining, purification and use.

Quantity	Symbol	Numerical value	Unit	Relative std. uncert. u_r
speed of light in vacuum	c, c_0	299 792 458	$\mathrm{m}~\mathrm{s}^{-1}$	exact
magnetic constant	μ_0	$4\pi \times 10^{-7}$	NA^{-2}	
	<i>p</i> =0	$= 12.566370614 \times 10^{-7}$	$N A^{-2}$	exact
electric constant $1/\mu_0c^2$	ϵ_0	$8.854187817\times 10^{-12}$	$\mathrm{F}\ \mathrm{m}^{-1}$	exact
Newtonian constant of gravitation	G	$6.67408(31) \times 10^{-11}$	$m^3 kg^{-1} s^{-2}$	4.7×10^{-5}
Planck constant	h	$6.626070040(81)\times10^{-34}$	Js	1.2×10^{-8}
$h/2\pi$	\hbar	$1.054571800(13)\times10^{-34}$	J s	1.2×10^{-8}
elementary charge	e	$1.6021766208(98) \times 10^{-19}$	C	6.1×10^{-9}
magnetic flux quantum $h/2e$	Φ_0	$2.067833831(13)\times 10^{-15}$	Wb	6.1×10^{-9}
conductance quantum $2e^2/h$	G_0	$7.7480917310(18) \times 10^{-5}$	S	2.3×10^{-10}
electron mass	$m_{ m e}$	$9.10938356(11) \times 10^{-31}$	kg	1.2×10^{-8}
proton mass	$m_{ m p}$	$1.672621898(21) \times 10^{-27}$	kg	1.2×10^{-8}
proton-electron mass ratio	$m_{ m p}/m_{ m e}$	1836.152 673 89(17)		9.5×10^{-11}
fine-structure constant $e^2/4\pi\epsilon_0\hbar c$	α	$7.2973525664(17) \times 10^{-3}$		2.3×10^{-10}
inverse fine-structure constant	α^{-1}	137.035 999 139(31)		2.3×10^{-10}
Rydberg constant $\alpha^2 m_e c/2h$	R_{∞}	10 973 731.568 508(65)	m^{-1}	5.9×10^{-12}
Avogadro constant	$N_{ m A}, L$	$6.022140857(74)\times10^{23}$	mol^{-1}	1.2×10^{-8}
Faraday constant $N_A e$	F	96 485.332 89(59)	$C \text{ mol}^{-1}$	6.2×10^{-9}
molar gas constant	R	8.314 4598(48)	$J \text{ mol}^{-1} \text{ K}^{-1}$	5.7×10^{-7}
Boltzmann constant R/N_A	k	$1.38064852(79) \times 10^{-23}$	$\mathrm{J}~\mathrm{K}^{-1}$	5.7×10^{-7}
Stefan-Boltzmann constant				
$(\pi^2/60)k^4/\hbar^3c^2$	σ	$5.670367(13) \times 10^{-8}$	${ m W} { m m}^{-2} { m K}^{-4}$	2.3×10^{-6}
N	on-SI units ac	ecepted for use with the SI		
electron volt (e/C) J	eV	$1.6021766208(98) \times 10^{-19}$	J	6.1×10^{-9}
(unified) atomic mass unit $\frac{1}{12}m(^{12}C)$	u	$1.660539040(20)\times 10^{-27}$	kg	1.2×10^{-8}

TABLE I An abbreviated list of the CODATA recommended values of the fundamental constants of physics and chemistry based on the 2014 adjustment.

As we will see later, there are sound reasons to believe that God's 'good' Creation did not include radioactive isotopes. The elements in the rest of our universe are built in the same way from the same subatomic particles. They are shown in Table 2.

If we assume that the 'lights' are created in the order listed, the first thing God does on this Day is to create the rest of our solar system.

First, the greater light, our Sun, is created and ignited, as shown in Figure 3. This is a miraculous process, as physicists believe it takes photons almost 20,000 years to move from the Sun's center where the nuclear fusion reactions are happening to its outer edge. Only then can the light be seen. But our Sun was emitting full-strength light within twelve hours. This rapid creation to light emission process appears to have been applied to all the stars God created, as we will see shortly.

Table 2: The Magnificent Design of Our Elements

Periodic Table of Elements 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 1 Ho Synton 2 Li Be 1 Ho Liquid Ho Gas Rel Unknown Rel U

Like our Earth, our Sun is not merely an average Star. It is a highly stable white light radiation source that varies in intensity by less than one percent. This light range and stability is necessary for life to flourish on earth. It was also created at precisely the right distance from earth to maintain comfortable temperatures on most of the sphere.

Next, the lesser light, our Moon, was created. Our moon moderates Earth's wobble around its axis, stabilising our climate. And it accounts for two-thirds of our tides, which refresh the water near our ocean coasts and their river estuaries. The hydroplate theory (HPT) postulates that the pre-flood moon had a virtually circular orbit and was not pockmarked with craters. Brown suggests that at Creation the earth had a lunar month of precisely 30 days and a solar year of exactly 360 days, explaining why we still mark a circle in 360

degrees. HPT also explains how both of these values were changed to their current values as a result of the Great Flood. The Biblical Months are still linked to the lunar cycle, with each month beginning when the crescent New Moon is observed.

So yet again, all this work was designed to make Earth an excellent place to live.



Figure 3: Evening in Europe, featuring our Sun and Earth - NASA

Though they are not explicitly mentioned, one can reasonably assume that the other planets and regular moons of our solar system were created at this time. HPT claims that the irregular moons, asteroids, comets, meteors and Trans-Neptune Objects did not exist until after the Flood

Now we get to those three little words "and the stars." This is the most amazing understatement of all time. There are currently believed to be about 2×10^{23} stars in the universe. This is 200,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 stars, or 200 billion trillion stars. Our sun is thus an almost unnoticeable portion of this mind-boggling number. Yet it is our solar system, and especially our earth, that God devotes virtually all of His attention to during Creation Week.

What follows generally agrees with John Hartnett's model of the creation of the stars, as detailed in *Starlight, Time and the New Physics* (2nd ed, 2010), with supporting equations derived from the 5D relativity physics of Moshe Carmeli.

Stellar creation begins at the outer surface of a sphere with a radius of about eight million light years, centered around Earth. As each 'layer' of stars, galaxies, etc are formed, they are drawn out into distant space. This is Jehovah 'stretching out the heavens':

Indeed My hand has laid the foundation of the earth, and My right hand has stretched out the heavens; when I call to them, they stand up together. Isaiah 48:13

This Isaiah passage shows us that Jehovah's right hand, who is His son Jeshua, was given the wondrous job of stretching out the heavens (Acts 2:33, Ephesian 1:20, Colossians 3:1, Hebrews 12:2, etc).

God also says this:

It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in. Isaiah 40:22

This is a beautiful description of the stretching of a compact, folded-up tent into a large, spacious structure. The various superclusters such as Laniakea—which includes our Milky way, as well as the Great Wall, Sloan's Great Wall, and the BOSS Great Wall, etc, are all massive structures each composed of many hundreds to thousands of galaxies, like incredible shining curtains. Barry Setterfield (<u>setterfield.org</u>) suggests that these galaxies appear to be

strung along strings like beads, reflecting their formation along massive primordial plasma filaments.¹

The first, outermost 'layer' of galaxies are stretched out to the limits of our universe, about 13.7 billion light years away. This is a 1 to 1725 expansion factor. The creating zone slowly shrinks, moving towards earth as the day progresses. And the most recently created layer of stars are progressively moved less far into space to reach their final locations. Thus the first stars created are moved the furthest out into space, resulting in them having a higher apparent velocity away from us, which shows up as a greater redshift of their light. The nearest stars to us are therefore the last ones to be created and have the shortest distance to move to their present locations. For example, the core of our Milky Way may only have had an expansion factor of about 50 times.

The Galaxy Redshift Surveys show the lovely distribution of galaxies seen from Earth, with what certainly looks much like a concentric distribution centered around Earth. The following Figures 4 to 13 show some of the beautiful structures found throughout our universe, mainly in order of increasing size and complexity. Most of the images are supplied by NASA and ESA.

Dr. John Hartnett's book explains the fascinating results of applying Carmeli's relativity physics to this rapid expansion of the universe on the fourth day. The expansion not only alters space but also time. The faster the expansion, the faster time runs. On earth, there was no expansion, so time continued normally. But the farther the stars and galaxies were stretched out, the faster their clocks ran. His calculations show that the rate of expansions were such that distant light from the furthest galaxies would be visible on earth within a day.

¹ However, there are some details of Setterfield's *Cosmogony and the Zero Point Energy*, and also his claim that many of Earth's fossils were formed over three thousand years, that I disagree with.



Figure 4: Saturn taken with the Hubble Space Telescope. Its rings can only have been formed in the last few thousand years.

He also presents equations which indicate that the Cosmic Microwave Background is the result of this rapid expansion. The model also explains the rapid rotation of galaxies, etc, so dark matter and dark energy are not required in this model of the universe.

The model also means that when created, the initial star density was quite high in each layer. This would allow the rapid formation of binary star systems, galaxies, massive black holes and galactic clusters, which would tend to remain associated when stretched due to their strong electromagnetic and gravitational bonds.

The above accounts can be criticised for where they add more details than given in Genesis, for example in the way the stars were created near earth and then expanded out. But it seems reasonable as the Bible certainly teaches that God created the stars and that He then stretched them out. Further research will show if Brown and Hartnett's theories are correct.



Figure 5: Westerlund Star Cluster, plus gas and dust structures - Hubble.



Figure 6: Globular Star Cluster M13 - Hubble



Figure 7: Spiral galaxy NGC5457, similar to our Milky Way - NASA



Figure 8: Galaxy NGC4414, with significant amounts of dust - NASA



Figure 9: Fireworks Galaxy NGC6946, another work of art - NASA



Figure 10: Galaxy M82, behind a red nebula - NASA

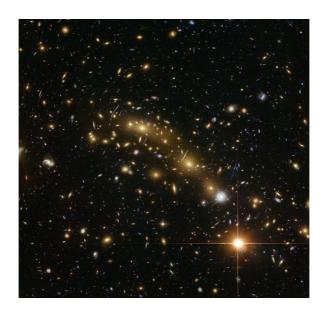


Figure 11: Galaxy Cluster MCS-J0416 - ESA

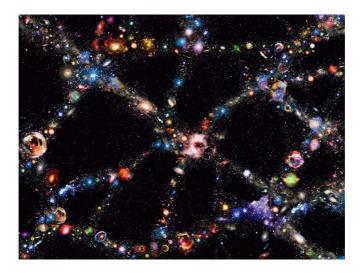


Figure 12: BOSS Great Wall Super-cluster of galaxies - Smithsonian

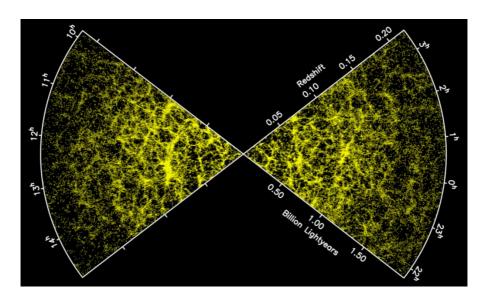


Figure 13: Galaxy Distribution, 2dF Survey, showing structure even at the largest scale.

Magic, Miracles and God

This may be a good time to distinguish between these three. Magic requires only saying the right spell, in the right way, to make what you want instantly happen. A miracle is something which we as humans are unable to do. It is beyond our powers, and often goes beyond what we think could ever be possible. Jehovah God is an eternal being with unlimited intelligence and abilities. Jehovah does not use magic. His miracles are indeed beyond our abilities, but not beyond His. To create the matter of the universe, He did not begin with absolutely nothing as the Big Bang proponents must. He has access to an infinite amount of energy, and converted some of that energy into matter. He also directly applied massive amounts of energy to His new physical universe, using that energy to begin the revolutions of moons around planets and planets around suns and

suns around the cores of their galaxies. He used more energy to spread out the galaxies. This was not instantaneous magic. It was all the precise implementation of careful, intricate designs. We will soon see that the same can be said for the origin of life on earth. Each organism was immaculately designed before it was made. This time God began with the matter He had already made, and rearranged it into magnificent organisms, complete with all the biomolecular machines they would need to live and reproduce. Then He brought them to life. Jehovah God and His Son devoted six full earth days to converting His designs into our living Earth and our universe.

Similar comments can be made for the various miracles of Jeshua. When He converted water to wine, Jeshua did not start with empty containers. First, He had them filled with water. Then He transformed some of the water matter into wine matter. This is beyond our normal physics, as some of the oxygen and hydrogen had to be transformed into carbon and other elements, and then combined into the various biomolecules that make up a great wine (John 2:1-11). Likewise, healing the blind required repairing the defects in their eyes, optic nerves and brain and restoring their image processing centre. This was done without any obvious surgery that we could see or understand, but the transformations needed were within the ability, or authorisation, of Jeshua, and the wonderful results were acknowledged by all (Matthew 9:27 to 31).

One last comment. God did not merely make these things, He made them all beautifully. He is a wonderful artist as well as an amazing designer and engineer, as is His Son Jeshua.

Now for the Big Bang Model.

The Big Bang

First, let Stephen Hawking describe it: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gs-yWMuBNr4

A good summary of the Big Bang theory is given on Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_Bang

The Big Bang history of the universe is shown in this NASA graphic: https://map.gsfc.nasa.gov/media/060915/index.html, shown as Figure 14.

The Big Bang scenario is critically analysed in a three part video series by Bob Enyart called *Evidence Against the Big Bang*.

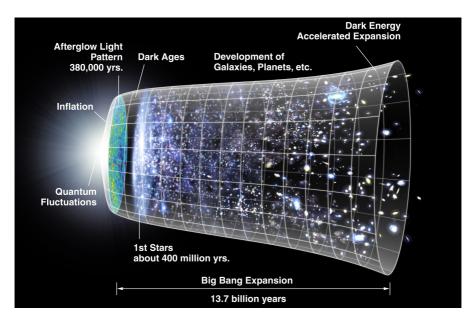


Figure 14: NASA's Summary of the Big Bang hypothesis.

The Big Bang, or more properly the Lambda-CDM model, essentially meaning *dark energy—Cold Dark Matter*, did not expand in one direction as the NASA graphic shows, but went in all directions, somewhat like a hydrogen bomb would do. The theory says that the expansion was by far the fastest at the start and then slowed down to today's relatively slow rates over billions of years. The diameter of the funnel indicates the proposed diameter of the universe at each time. It also shows that for the first 400 million years, there were no stars formed. This indicates that our universe should be like a huge hollow sphere that is almost empty inside. But there is absolutely no evidence that our universe has a hole in its center. Instead, it appears that our Earth is at or very near to its center, as we will see later.

Wiki: *The earliest phases of the Big Bang are subject to much speculation.* You will be amazed at how much speculation there really is!

Nothing Explodes

Hawking proposes that the singularity is the logical consequence of "running our universe backwards", which results in everything being compressed into a tiny point. But that is only proposed as an idea to make the singularity seem possible, and not as a likely scenario. It does not explain why there would ever have been a singularity in the first place, as he actually believed there was nothing before the 'singularity' and they believe our universe is expanding and there is no evidence that it will ever contract back into such a compressed state, or that is has ever done so.

He further states that just before the singularity appeared, "there was no time and no space. There was absolutely nothing." How could nothing suddenly become a point filled with the massive amount of energy needed to form our entire universe? They have no

answer for this. So the origin of their singularity is the first of many miracles required by the Big Bang Theory.

Then this singularity, with its unbelievably concentrated and enormous energy content—all arising from nothing—'explodes'. It initially expands at many times the speed of light. Time and space now come into existence. How can raw energy produce time and space? They have no answers for this either. Two more miracles, and again without a miracle-worker, are required by the Big Bang.

This period of phenomenal expansion is, by normal physics, impossible as the incredible density of the singularity would not allow expansion. It's massive gravity means it should have remained an enormous black hole. This problem is solved by inventing "Cosmic Inflation", which 'adds' an unknown repulsive energy to the mix that allows it to rapidly 'inflate' instead of 'expand'. This is not science, but creative story-telling, and can only be described as another miracle! As Big Bangers claim that the normal laws of physics do not apply to the first 10⁻¹⁰ seconds, they can "invent" anything that appears to produce the results they need.

But at the end of the inflation, the energy is too cool to form matter, so it conveniently reheats itself to high enough temperatures to form matter. So the first time it cools without forming matter, but the second time it cools it does form matter? Two more miracles are required!

So, after 10⁻¹⁰ seconds the energy intensity of the expanding Big Bang is adjusted to the point where it begins to form sub-subatomic particles (quarks and gluons), and then they combine to form electrons and protons. But why would this pure energy convert into matter instead of simply continuing to dissipate into the depths of space? Why is the massive energy released in the cores of the stars and hydrogen bombs not being converted back into matter instead of being released as energy? It seems there are no answers for this either.

Matter and Anti-Matter

Next we have some ingenious slight-of-hand. The laws of chemistry and physics dictate that the Big Bang energy, even if it could produce anything material, would have created exactly equal amounts of matter and anti-matter. The result of this is, of course, no physical universe whatsoever. The matter and antimatter would annihilate each other and be converted back into energy, which again would just dissipate into space. But some more fiddling with the equations makes it look like there might be one billion and one matter particles for each one billion antimatter particles. Yet another miracle! But to produce our universe's matter, we now need a Big Bang which is two billion and one times as large as the one first proposed. The Big Bang proponents, as they have no better solution for this problem, just quietly accept this 'explanation'. This is not science, it is desperate manipulation to hide the unpleasant reality that the Big Bang Theory does not work. And their problems keep coming...

So, let's pretend that we now have a universe forming protons and electrons. Why would it form exactly the protons and electrons that we have, which are precisely engineered so they can work together to form elements capable of the chemical reactions necessary for life?

A neutron is formed by a proton and an electron joining together to form a neutral particle. Protons and electrons have opposite charges and thus attract each other. But they still need to have a powerful directed energy force them together so tightly that the 'strong force' then binds them together to form neutrons. But why would only some of the protons and electrons join up to form neutrons and not all of them? And if all we had was neutrons, we would not have any chemical elements, and life would be impossible.

So now we have things cooled enough (only a billion degrees Kelvin!) that these elementary particles can come together to form elements. But the many problems with this idea are not explained. By now, the universe has been expanding for a few minutes, so the

distances between the particles are becoming significant, with a density similar to air. Neutrons are required to enable more than one proton to be added to the nucleus to form all elements more complex than hydrogen. But why would precisely the right proportions of electrons, protons and neutrons be randomly formed to later merge to make all of our elements? And why would each of these particles have exactly the right properties to form stable elements (with a few exceptions, called radioactive isotopes) with the astounding chemical properties of carbon and oxygen? Can our blind luck really be that good, or is this actually another uncredited miracle of impeccable design?

Big Bang theory says that at this point only hydrogen, deuterium, helium and lithium are formed, and they claim their theory was able to correctly predict their ratios in the early universe. Though a good claim, the reality is that they already had the data on those ratios, and then fiddled with their maths again until they got similar results. This is not prediction, but merely ad hoc compensation. And even now, they still can't account for the actual ratios of the lithium 6 and 7 isotopes.

Not to be outdone by the Bible, the Big Bangers also propose that until now the energy flux has been too high to have visible light. After 380,000 years of further cooling and expansion, it drops to a level where light becomes possible and suddenly the universe is flooded by a brilliant burst of light, their version of God saying "Let there be light." We are told that the result of this burst of light is the cosmic microwave background. More on that later...

Dark Matter

As these gases continue to blow away from the site of the original Big Bang blast at enormous speed in every direction, we are told that these now incredibly thin gases stop spreading and instead begin to gather together to form suns after 400 million years. Then come solar systems which group together into galaxies and then into

galaxy clusters. But Big Bang theorists finally admit that they can't get their original maths to work, so they invent 'dark matter' in halos around the galaxies to provide enough gravitational repulsion (they propose that dark matter will repel actual matter, because that is what they need it to do) to stop the galaxies from flying apart. And not just a little bit: they need at least five times as much dark matter as normal matter, and they need it to conveniently form itself in halos around actual matter galaxies. And what are the other properties of this dark matter? Well, it is transparent and undetectable by every proposed way to measure it trialled so far. In every other field of physics and chemistry, dark matter would be dismissed for what it is: an utter fabrication being used to prop up a failing theory.

Dark Energy

Matter, both dark and real, also creates more problems for the Big Bangers. Their theory does not have enough energy left by this time to continue to expand their universe and it instead begins to collapse back to its origin. But as they know the universe is not collapsing and it has in fact expanded far beyond what they can allow for, they now invent 'dark energy'. The dark energy is supposed to continue pushing the galaxies apart, so the universe can keep expanding. But despite dark matter's reversed properties, it pushes both dark and normal matter the same direction with the same force. And there are no prizes for guessing that their dark energy accounts for most of the energy in the universe and is again undetectable by every proposed way to measure it trialled so far. Now they claim that real matter, which they have relabelled baryonic matter, only accounts for 4.6% of the energy and mass of our universe. Again we have another utter fabrication being used to prop up a failing theory, as shown in Figure 15. And as a result, we also require a Big Bang that had to start with at least 40 billion times the amount of real energy and mass we have in our present universe. And this mythology, propped up by ludicrous, self-serving and unprovable 'physics', is called science?

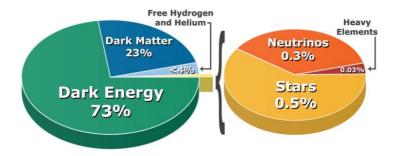


Figure 15: Big Bang's big requirement for mythical Dark Energy and Dark Matter. Graphic by Ben Finney

The Multiverse

Some cosmologists now suggest that our universe is only one of billions of universes that were born in the Big Bang, a concept called the Multiverse. They say ours just happens to be the one that had the exact 'fine-tuning' required to allow life to develop in it. But as we will see later, even in our finely-tuned universe, they can still not explain how life originated or evolved. Of course—yet again—there is absolutely no evidence that any other universes exist. It must be accepted on faith. And now they need a Big Bang with enough energy in it to form more than 40 billion, billion universes the size of ours. That is an awful lot of energy coming from nothing! It is very difficult to see how this is science rather than completely blind faith.

The theory also has problems with the actual observations of distant stars and galaxies. Part of the theory suggests that the elements heavier than lithium are formed in stars and released when the stars die in supernovas. Successive generations of stars should have more of the heavier elements like iron. But even the most distant galaxies we can see, and thus by the Big Bang theory the oldest, tend to have stars with compositions and apparent ages much like the stars near us, suggesting they were all made at the same time.

Also, distant stars should not have had time to form complex and large galaxies and galaxy clusters. And again, there are numerous examples of very distant and very large galaxies and clusters, which had to be formed too soon after the Big Bang.

Heavy Metals

Big Bang theory was that the elements heavier than iron were made in supernovas. However, recent analysis of supernovas has shown that they are not producing any heavy metals. They are now scrambling to find an alternate source for these heavier elements. Many heavy elements, such as copper, zinc, molybdenum and iodine are essential for human life.

Planets

The formation of planets is also a major problem for Big Bang cosmology. Our solar system has many details of its planets that they cannot explain.

And the more we learn about the other planets and moons in our solar system, the more flaws appear in their solar system formation theories. Saturn's rings could not exist for the time they claim since Saturn was formed, there should be no water or ice left on Mars and various moons, etc, etc. And the new planets that have been discovered around other stars have shown that all of their current theories for planet formation are flawed. And all of these planets confirm how entirely unique Earth is.

Earth

Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Earth) gives the current secular account:

Earth formed around 4.54 billion years ago, approximately one-third the age of the universe, by accretion from the solar nebula. Volcanic outgassing probably created the primordial atmosphere and then the ocean, but the early atmosphere contained almost no oxygen. Much of the Earth was molten because of frequent collisions with other bodies which led to extreme volcanism. While Earth was in its earliest stage (Early Earth), a giant impact collision with a planet-sized body named Theia is thought to have formed the Moon. Over time, the Earth cooled, causing the formation of a solid crust, and allowing liquid water on the surface.

There are many insoluble problems with this account. First, the ignition of the sun would have started up the Solar wind, which would have blown the dust which was supposed to accrete to form Earth away into interstellar space. Accretion from meteors would have released enough energy to make the entire earth molten several times over. This high-temperature melting would have allowed all of the heavier metals to sink to the core and boiled most of our atmospheric gases and water away. And though some claim that comets were the source of water once the earth's surface cooled, they have twice the deuterium of earth's water, so that doesn't work either. They say the early earth had almost no free oxygen, but there is evidence that the earth's atmosphere has always had a substantial proportion of oxygen.

Earth's Moon

Our moon is also a big problem for Big Bangers. If it had been formed by collision with the mythical Theia (it sounds more real if you give it a name), it would have a highly elongated orbit, not it's almost circular one. And a 2017 analysis of moon rocks suggests the moon is 4.51 billion years old, making it almost as old as they claim the earth is.

Can Earth be 4.54 Billion Years Old?

Earth's ancient age is a critical piece in the Big Bang/evolution scenarios. But as we will show, there are numerous features of Earth that demonstrate it is much younger than they claim.

Moon Recession and Killer Tides

The moon is slowly getting farther from the earth due to tidal acceleration. If we extrapolate this process back in time, the moon gets closer and closer to the earth. 1.2 billion years ago, the moon would have been so close that it would cause tides 12.8 km high, massive earthquakes and violent volcanism. Earth's day would also have been only about 4.9 hours long. Land-dwelling life, and likely any life, on such an earth would have been impossible. At just a fraction of the supposed age of the earth, they would have torn each other apart. Obviously the earth and moon are much, much younger than claimed.

Moon Dust and Debris

If the Moon were billions of years old, it should have accumulated a layer of dust and debris from meteoritic bombardment over three kilometers deep. But the US moon landings found that the Moon has a layer of dust and debris less than ten meters deep and nearly all of

that is pulverised moon rock, not meteoric. A 2014 NASA report confirmed that the moon is currently accumulating dust at one mm per thousand years. This means the moon must be less than ten million years old, and if the accumulation rate was higher in the past, it would then be even younger. If the moon is young, it is likely that the Earth is also young.

Coral Growth

It has been claimed that many coral atolls, which have been slowly subsiding and thus require new coral growth to maintain their water depth, grow very slowly. Therefore this has been happening for perhaps a hundred thousand years or more. But new research has shown that these corals can grow quite rapidly, and the entire depth of the coral structures may have taken only three to five thousand years to form.

Stalagmites and Stalactites

Most cave tour guides like to tell you how ancient their cave formations are. But their long ages are based on current rates of formation. Most caves have numerous features which indicate that in the past they had major flows of calcium saturated water through them which carved them out, followed by the rapid formation of their larger displays. A good example of this is the Kelly Hill Cave on Kangaroo Island (Figure 16). Today there is only a single slow drip which would have taken many thousands of years to bring in the volume of the formations in the cave system. But today's slow drip could never carve out the large caves nor form the huge calcified flow structures on most of the lower surfaces of the cave.

Volcanic Eruptions

Each year, on average, volcanos eject almost one cubic mile of material into the atmosphere. At this rate, all of the volcanic ejecta in our sedimentary rocks would have accumulated in 100 million years. And if past volcanic activity was much higher, as the massive volcanic igneous provinces indicate, it would have accumulated far more quickly.

And if the Earth was really 4.5 billion years old, the earth should now be totally cold inside. Volcanos would not be happening.



Figure 16: Kelly Hill Cave, Kangaroo Island, SA. Though claimed to be hundreds of thousands years old, the large flowstones (mid to bottom-right) and other features are only consistent with relatively rapid formation within the last few thousand years.

River Sediments

More than 27 billion tons of river sediments enter our oceans each year. If erosion has been constant, the sediments now on the ocean floor would have accumulated in only 30 million years.

Dissolved Metals in Oceans

Rivers carry dissolved elements, such as copper, gold, lead, mercury, nickel, silicon, sodium, tin, and uranium into oceans at very rapid rates when compared with the small quantities of these elements already in the oceans. There is less than a million years' worth of these metals dissolved in the oceans, and little to no evidence of these elements precipitating out of the water.

Helium in Zircons

Helium diffuses (or leaks) from zircon crystals at known rates. Because helium escapes so rapidly and yet so much helium is still in zircons, they (and Earth's crust) must be less than 10,000 years old. This is thoroughly documented in *Radioisotopes and the Age of the Earth*, edited by Vardiman, Snelling and Chaffin.

Human Footprint on Squashed Trilobite

Although Trilobites are supposed to have died out 240 million years ago, there is a rock fossil found near Delta, Utah which looks like someone wearing shoes or sandals squashed one (Figure 17). Much more on fossils in the Flood Session.



Figure 31: Humanlike Footprints with Trilobite. In 1968, 43 miles northwest of Delta, Utah, William J. Meister found this and other apparent human shoe prints inside a 2-inch-thick slab of rock. Also in that slab were obvious trilobite fossils, one of which was squashed under the "heel." The 10-inch-long shoe print is at the left, and its rock mold is to its right. According to evolutionists, trilobites became extinct 240 million years before humans evolved. Notice how the back of the heel is worn, just as most of our shoes wear today. The heel was indented in the rock about an eighth of an inch deeper than the sole. Others have since made similar discoveries at this location, although this is the only fossil where a trilobite was inside an apparent shoe print.

Figure 17: Squashed Trilobite, from In the Beginning.

Proteins and Soft Tissue in Dinosaurs

Laboratory studies have repeatedly shown that even under favourable conditions, biomolecules will decompose within ten thousand years. Yet over the last twenty years, dinosaur proteins, soft tissue, blood compounds, and other complex organic matter have been found preserved in dinosaur bones (Figure 18). Rather than admit the dinosaur remains cannot be 45 to 80 million years old, they now reject the careful lab work and use the claimed ages of the dinosaurs to 'prove' that DNA can stay largely intact for millions of years.



Bone cells discovered by Schweitzer, showing classic appearances including nuclei and connecting fibrils—from a *Brachylophosaurus* allegedly 80 million years old!

Figure 18: Dinosaur Soft Tissue, still recognisable.

Earth and Venus

Comparing Earth with Venus, our 'twin' planet, also reveals massive problems for atheism. Both have almost the same size mass and composition. Both Earth and Venus are within the 'habitable zone' around our Sun. But Venus has a toxic carbon dioxide atmosphere covered with sulfuric acid clouds and a surface pressure 92 times that of Earth. Its average surface temperature is 462°C, so it is a waterless planet. It rotates in the opposite direction to earth, and takes 243 days to rotate once, though its solar day is 117 earth days

long. Its axis inclination is 3.4 degrees, meaning that it would have no noticeable seasons. Unlike Earth, which has our solar system's fifth largest moon, Venus has no moon. Venus also has no magnetic field. In contrast, Earth's protective magnetic field is 200 times the strength of **all** the other planetary magnetic fields in our solar system combined (Figure 19).²

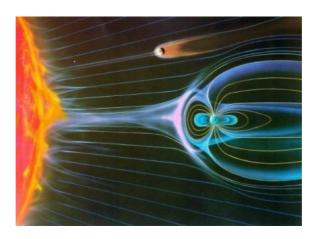


Figure 19: Comparison of the Earth's and Venus' magnetic fields.

Venus also has the most circular orbit of all the planets, suggesting it has never been struck by large impactors like asteroids. It seems that Venus exists to show us how very special our Earth is. I have a little sympathy for atheistic astrophysicists trying to create a model that can explain both of these planets (Figures 20 to 23).

² By the way, Earth's magnetic field is rapidly decaying. If we extrapolate backwards, by 22,000 BCE the field would be so strong it would have destroyed earth's core. This means that earth is much younger than that



Figure 20: Our Earth and its Moon, showing earth's transparent atmosphere, water clouds, continents and oceans - NASA



Figure 21: Venus from space, showing its opaque covering of toxic sulphur dioxide clouds - ESA



Figure 22: Earth's Amazon, showing the abundant life on earth - NASA

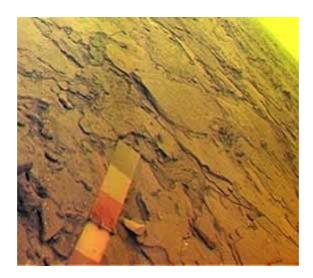


Figure 23: Surface of Venus, revealing its harsh lifelessness - Russian Space Program.

Cosmic Microwave Background

The Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB), which is claimed as another successful prediction of Big Bang theory, was discovered before the Big Bangers 'predicted' it. And they have two huge problems with the CMB. First, they believe the CMB comes from the outer reaches of the universe, and the galaxy clusters between us and there should block the CMB and cast shadows. But no shadows can be found.³

A viable alternative, presented earlier, is that the Cosmic Microwave Background is due to the rapid expansion of the universe from the relatively small sphere of space when God initially created the stars

³ Recent research (2018) suggests that there may be valid reasons why there are missing shadows, so this point may need to be removed if that is verified. But the other problems all remain.

and before Jeshua spread them out. This CMB would be between us and the now-distant galaxies, so no shadows would be expected.

The second CMB problem is even worse for them. There are variations in the CMB which divide it into two hemispheres that align perfectly with the ecliptic plane of our Earth's orbit, and even suggest that Earth is at the center of the CMB. Atheist astronomers call this the *Axis of Evil*, as they are horrified that 'their' CMB actually shows that Earth is definitely not simply another insignificant planet. But this is again consistent with Biblical Origins.

So there are many reasons to believe that the Big Bang theory still exists only because the one viable alternative origin is Special Creation, which is anothema to atheists and naturalists. As stated earlier, this is a conflict of faith systems, not science.

Even many evolutionist astrophysicists admit it is a failed theory, as this statement shows:

An Open Letter to the Scientific Community

<u>CosmologyStatement.org</u> (Published in New Scientist, May 22-28 issue, 2004, p. 20):

The big bang today relies on a growing number of hypothetical entities, things that we have never observed —inflation, dark matter and dark energy are the most prominent examples. Without them, there would be a fatal contradiction between the observations made by astronomers and the predictions of the big bang theory.

In no other field of physics would this continual recourse to new hypothetical objects be accepted as a way of bridging the gap between theory and observation. It would, at the least, RAISE SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT THE VALIDITY OF THE UNDERLYING THEORY

But the big bang theory can't survive without these fudge factors. Without the hypothetical inflation field, the big bang does not predict the smooth, isotropic cosmic background radiation that is observed, because there would be no way for parts of the universe that are now more than a few degrees away in the sky to come to the same temperature and thus emit the same amount of microwave radiation.

Without some kind of dark matter, unlike any that we have observed on Earth despite 20 years of experiments, big-bang theory makes contradictory predictions for the density of matter in the universe. Inflation requires a density 20 times larger than that implied by big bang nucleosynthesis, the theory's explanation of the origin of the light elements. And without dark energy, the theory predicts that the universe is only about 8 billion years old, which is billions of years younger than the age of many stars in our galaxy.

What is more, the big bang theory can boast of no quantitative predictions that have subsequently been validated by observation. The successes claimed by the theory's supporters consist of its ability to retrospectively fit observations with a steadily increasing array of adjustable parameters, just as the old Earth-centred cosmology of Ptolemy needed layer upon layer of epicycles.

44 The Books of Moses: Fact or Fiction?

This statement has now been signed by over 400 scientists and engineers.

Conclusion

Both 'models' require many miracles to explain the origin of the Universe, and especially our Earth and its solar system. But only the Biblical Special Creation has a Creator with the intelligence and ability to perform the required miracles. And our observed universe fits far better with this Biblical Special Creation model than with the Big Bang model as the following Summary Table indicates:

Summary-Consistent With Special Creation or the Big Bang?

Property	Special Creation	Big Bang
Requires Eternal God	Yes	No
Explains Origin of Energy/Matter	Yes	No ³
Consistent with Fine Tuning of Universal Constants	Yes	No ³
Consistent with origin of hydrogen and helium	Yes	Yes
Consistent with origin of elements to iron	Yes	Partly ³
Consistent with origin of elements from iron to gold	Yes	No ³
Consistent with distribution of elements on Earth	Yes ¹	No ³
Consistent with lack of antimatter	Yes ²	Perhaps ³

Property	Special Creation	Big Bang
Consistent with lack of dark matter	Yes ²	No ³
Consistent with lack of dark energy	Yes ²	No ³
Consistent with Distant Starlight	Yes ²	Yes
Consistent with Cosmic Microwave Background	Yes ²	Partly ³
Consistent with Earth-centered CMB	Yes ^{1,2}	No ³
Consistent with rapid rotation of galaxies	Yes ²	No ³
Consistent with Galaxies distributed around Earth	Yes ^{1,2}	No ³
Consistent with Earth's structure	Yes ¹	Partly
Consistent with young Earth Indicators	Yes ¹	No¹
Consistent with Moon's properties	Yes ¹	Partly ¹
Consistent with thin dust on Moon	Yes ¹	No ¹
Consistent with Saturn's Rings	Yes	No
Consistent with Venus' properties	Yes	Partly
Consistent with extensive radioactive decay	Yes ¹	Partly

Notes: All of the Special Creation results are either directly stated in the Bible or are logical consequences of the Biblical accounts. **1:** See Walt Brown's *In the Beginning* for details. **2:** See John Hartnett's *Starlight, Time and the New Physics* (2010) for details. **3:** See Bob Enyart's *Evidence Against the Big Bang* for details.

Radioactive dating, sedimentary rocks, fossils and the Age of the Universe will be examined further in the Great Flood section.

Next Session:

The Origin of Life: Special Creation or a Natural Process?

Bruce Armstrong M App Sci

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- **Origin of the Universe and Our Earth**—How did Earth and our Universe Originate? Both the Biblical and Big Bang Models are presented. Evidence for and against the models is also presented.
- Origin of Life—How did Life Originate on Earth? Both the Biblical Special Creation and Evolutionary Neo-Darwinian Models are presented. The Biblical Model covers the creation of plants and aquatic and flying organisms, while the Evolutionary model investigates the Origin of the First Cell. Evidence for and against the models is also presented.
- Mankind and Evolution of Life—How did complex life, including humans, originate on Earth? Both the Biblical and Evolutionary Models are presented. The Biblical Model covers the creation of land animals and the first man and woman, while the Evolutionary model investigates what is required for their First Cell to evolve into complex organisms. Evidence for and against the models is presented.
- **The Fall of Creation**—What is the Fall of Creation on Earth, and what was its Impact? The Biblical Account is presented, including sin, death and the banishing of Adam and Chavvah (Eve) from the Garden of Eden. Evidence for and against this account is presented.
- **The Great Flood, Part 1**—Was there a Great Flood during Noah's life? The Biblical Account explains why there was a Great Flood, Noah's role in it and the extent of the Flood. This session ends with Noah and the animals leaving the Ark after the Flood.
- **The Great Flood, Part 2**—What events followed the Great Flood during Noah's life? Where did the Ark land? It also looks at many of the objections to the Great Flood and shows evidence that it was a real event which shaped the world we live in.
- **Shinar, Nimrod and the Tower of Babel**—What did mankind do after the Flood? Where is the Plain of Shinar and where was Nimrod's first Kingdom, including the location of the Tower of Babel? Why did God intervene and create a myriad of new Languages?
- **The Exodus from Egypt**—Historical and Scientific information relating to the Israelites' Exodus from Egypt is presented, analysing several proposed pathways to Midian, including crossing the Soph (Red) Sea.
- **To Mount Sinai and God's Instructions**—After crossing the Soph Sea, where did the Israelites go until their arrival at Mount Sinai, and where is this mountain? This article includes Jehovah God giving them His Instructions there. Historical and Geographical information is presented, some of it new and previously unpublished.
- **The Holy Bible CHCoG Translation**—From the original Hebrew and Aramaic. It is accurate and readable, giving you a clear understanding of God's message.