



Lesson Guide

Lesson 5 - Science: What is True?

Introduction

In this, our fifth worldview tour, we will head northwest, enter the cavern of nature, gaze upon the jewels of creation, and establish yet another important pillar in the Temple of Truth: *Science*. In the process, we will discover that whereas “the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shows His handiwork” (Psalm 19:1) so that the Creator’s “invisible attributes are plainly seen” (Romans 1:20), mankind has nevertheless chosen to ignore the obvious truth, twisting scientific investigation into a vehicle for propagating a godless philosophy of human independence and self-determination.

Themes

Having completed our brief and cursory discussion of the nature and character of God, we turn now to consider a very different question: what does “the stuff in the box” really tell us when we honestly look at it? Dr. Tackett argues that *scientific investigation* – “the systematic study of the structure and behavior of the physical and natural world through observation and experiment” – is also a valid way of ascertaining *truth*. For when we open the box, we find that it is filled with voices that speak to us loudly about the majesty and power of the One who has created the physical universe. Everywhere we look – whether up at the grandeur of the stars and galaxies or deep into the tiny and elegantly designed inner workings of a living cell – there is evidence that the cosmos is the handiwork of an intelligent, rational mind. In the contemplation of nature, we come face to face with the truth that *God exists* and that *He has revealed Himself to us*, not only through His written Word (*special revelation*) but also through the works of His hands (*general revelation*).

Our natural reaction to this experience should be like that of a child: wonder, marvel, and praise for the Creator. But because of the effects of the fall and the polarizing influence of the *Cosmic Battle*, man shows a tendency to deny what is plain to the senses and to “exchange the truth of God for a lie” (Romans 1:25). Driven by this impulse, he transforms straightforward scientific inquiry, which properly concerns itself with *particulars*, into an all-embracing *philosophy*, which claims to establish *universals* on the basis of the “stuff in the box.” The result is the propagation of a *worldview* that “scientifically” excludes the Creator, thus “freeing” mankind from accountability to a higher authority.

Central to this philosophy are the assertions of Darwinian evolutionary theory. By keeping the details of creation’s story completely inside “the box,” evolution effectively rules out the existence of God. Herein lies the *heart* of the debate over “Intelligent Design.” Atheist C. Richard Bozarth actually goes so far as to claim that “evolution destroys utterly and finally the very reason Jesus’ earthly life was supposedly made necessary.” It is exactly this kind of *philosophical* assumption that inspires the visceral antagonism of evolutionists toward anyone who dares question the validity of their theory. This is why Darwinists so fervently assert that “evolution is no longer merely a theory, but an established *fact*.” But the truth of the matter, as

Dr. Tackett and his guest experts demonstrate in great detail, is that the theory is *not* supported by the evidence. Many inside the scientific community are beginning to recognize this. But they dare not acknowledge it publicly because of the worldview issues at stake. As Dr. David Berlinski says, “The consequences are serious.”

Points to Watch For

The essence of Dr. Tackett’s message may be summed up as follows: fallen man ignores the plain evidence of objective scientific inquiry and promotes the atheistic *philosophy* of evolutionary theory primarily because he is determined to do as he pleases without answering to a higher authority. This charge may make some group participants uncomfortable precisely because it hits so close to home. Dr. Tackett also illustrates the point that *ideas have consequences* by drawing a historical connection between Darwinian theory and the horrors of Nazi Germany. Some students may feel inclined to debate his assertions in this regard.

Discussion Questions (Pick 3 or 4 for your discussion time.)

(Make these questions your own. That is, don’t just “read” them, but become familiar with them so that they don’t appear as simply an item to get through. Go through them yourself before your group meets and ponder them.)

1) Opening question. This may be the only question that you need to ask.

A. Ask your guest to list what “jewels” they saw on the tour. Here are some of the key items: (The noisy box; God has revealed Himself plainly to all men through His creation; general and special revelation; thinking of nothing; from nothing comes everything; the great cosmological question: cosmos had a beginning or existed forever; why is there order rather than chaos; why is there music; what does the cosmos reveal: a creator or self-creation; time makes all things possible; definition of science; randomness; defining hypothesis, theory & law; Darwin’s theory of evolution presented as a fact; examination of Darwin’s theory against reality; Darwin’s criteria for rejection; Paley’s watch; recognizing intelligent design; peacock feather & blood clotting; evolution and the reality from molecular biology; Darwin’s criteria for rejection; Francis Crick & directed panspermia; the trip into the inner cell; Wald’s belief in spontaneous generation; the flagella motor; irreducible complexity; the mousetrap; evolution and the reality from the fossil record; punctuated equilibrium; a reality look at finch beaks; List your own.)

B. Ask your guest to point out the ones that were particularly interesting or striking to them and why.

Ask if this particular area struck anyone else as well. D. Ask if there were other items that they saw that stood out to them. (You may want to read back through this list if you need to.)

2) Have you ever experienced the wonder of God’s creation? If so, share that story briefly with us.

(We will revisit this in a later question.)

- 3) **Jean-Paul Sartre said that the Great Philosophical Question is, “Why is there *something* rather than *nothing*?” Is science capable of answering this question? Why or why not?**

(The point here is that science, in spite of the confidence it inspires in the hearts of many people, *does* have very definite limits. Science, by definition, is concerned only with the “stuff in the box.” It *has* to begin with the assumption that there is *something*. Questions about possible alternatives, whether conceived in terms of “*nothing-nothing*” or “*the time before the beginning*” are unthinkable within the scientific framework, dealing, as they do, with things “outside the box.”

- 4) **In Romans 1:20, the apostle Paul tells us that God’s “invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.” How is it possible to perceive *invisible* truths in tangible, physical realities? Have you ever had such an experience?**

(Wonder, majesty, grandeur, power, bounty, protection, variety, infinitude, grace – it is arguable that all of these qualities and more can be perceived in the works of nature. The idea here is to get participants to think about their own enjoyment of nature in terms of what it tells them about the nature of God.)

- 5) **In scientific terms, what do we mean by the words *hypothesis*, *theory*, and *law*? Given the definitions of these words, is there any basis for Carl Sagan’s assertion that “evolution is a *fact*?” At what point in the scientific process would such a statement become invalidated?**

(The key to this discussion is Dr. Tackett’s experiment with the jelly beans – “reaching into the bag of reality.” If your truth claim is that the bag contains only yellow jelly beans, and you pull out a green one, then your truth claim has been invalidated and must be revisited. Every hypothesis, theory, or law is a truth claim about reality that has the potential to be validated by the data or invalidated by the data. So, Sagan’s statement, along with many others, must be evaluated in light of unbiased observations of reality.)

- 6) **Discuss some of the “imaginative” ways in which scientists have managed to skirt around the problems inherent to evolutionary theory. Are their solutions tenable? Why or why not?**

(Examples given during the course of this Lesson include Francis Crick’s notion of “Directed Panspermia” [first living cell comes to earth from another planet]; “Spontaneous Generation;” and Stephen Jay Gould’s method of interpreting the fossil record in terms of “Punctuated Equilibrium.” In every case, the proposed theory ultimately fails to deal with the facts. Either it pushes the problem back to some more distant point in time [Crick], or it bases its explanation on the *absence* of facts [Gould].)

- 7) **How have evolution-based *philosophical* assumptions led to *social* abuses in our own day?** (Open the discussion up for suggestions. Obvious examples would be issues such as abortion, euthanasia, embryonic stem cell research.)

Expert Biography: Stephen Meyer

Stephen C. Meyer is director and Senior Fellow of the Center for Science and Culture at the Discovery Institute, based in Seattle. Meyer earned his Ph.D. in the history and philosophy of science from Cambridge University (1991). Previously he worked as a geophysicist with the Atlantic Richfield Company after earning his undergraduate degrees in physics and geology.

In part one of Lesson 5 of The Truth Project, Meyer remarks, "The earliest scientists ... were very strongly committed to the idea of the existence of God and to Christianity, in many cases. They were convinced that the universe bore evidence of design and that it was, therefore, intelligible to the human intellect. The idea of design was one of the inspirations for the scientific revolution because the conviction that we could study nature and make sense of it ..."

In opposition to neo-Darwinian evolutionary theory, Meyer is a staunch supporter of Intelligent Design and, like Dr. Tackett, is well aware of the worldview implications that spring forth from naturalism and belief in macroevolution. The difference, as Dr. Tackett puts it, is "between something which has been designed," as in Christian theism, "and something which is truly random."

A past recipient of a Rotary International Scholarship, the American Friends of Cambridge scholarship and a Templeton Foundation science-religion teaching grant, Dr. Meyer has recently co-written or edited *Darwinism, Design, and Public Education* (Michigan State University Press) and *Science and Evidence of Design in the Universe* (Ignatius, 2000).

Meyer has contributed articles to several scholarly books and anthologies including *The History of Science and Religion in the Western Tradition*, *Darwinism: Science or Philosophy*, *Of Pandas and People*, *The Creation Hypothesis* and *Facets of Faith and Science*. He has also authored numerous technical articles as well as editorials in magazines and newspapers such as *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Houston Chronicle*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *First Things* and *National Review*.

Dr. Meyer has also appeared as a guest on several television programs including PBS's "Freedom Speaks" and "TechnoPolitics," and CNBC's "Hardball with Chris Matthews."

Recommended Resources*

- *Darwinism, Design, and Public Education*
 - *Science and Evidence of Design in the Universe*
- Unlocking the Mystery of Life* (DVD)

Links+

Discovery Institute, Center for Science and Culture
<http://www.discovery.org/csc/>

Access Research Network <http://www.arn.org/authors/meyer.html> "By Design," article about Dr. Meyer http://www.arn.org/docs/meyer/sm_bydesign.htm

Sources

<http://www.discovery.org/scripts/viewDB/index.php?command=view&isFellow=true&id=11>

<http://www.arn.org/authors/meyer.html>

* Inclusion of an item in the Recommended Resources section does not constitute an endorsement of all the content in a resource.

+ Referrals to sites not produced by Focus on the Family are for informational purposes only, and do not constitute an endorsement of the sites' content.

Recommended Reading Lesson 5 – Science: What is True?

Please note that not everything in these suggested resources should be considered endorsed by Focus on the Family. Nevertheless, Dr. Tackett has found this material helpful. Scripture should be your first and primary resource.

- Behe, Michael J. 1996. *Darwin's Black Box: The Biomedical Challenge to Evolution*. New York, NY: The Free Press.
- Behe, Michael J., William A. Dembski and Stephen C. Meyer. 2000. *Science and Evidence for Design in the Universe: The Proceedings of the Wethersfield Institute*. San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press.
- Broom, Neil. 2001. *How Blind is the Watchmaker?* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
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- Johnson, Phillip E. 1993. *Darwin on Trial*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
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- Kaiser, Christopher. 1991. *Creation and the History of Science*. London, England: Marshall Pickering. Martin, Jobe. 1994. *The Evolution of a Creationist*. Rockwell, TX: Biblical Discipleship Publishers.

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- Morris, Henry M. 1989. *The Long War Against God: The History and Impact of the Creation/Evolution Conflict*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.
- Muncaster, Ralph O. 2003. *Dismantling Evolution: Building the Case for Intelligent Design*. Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers.
- Pearcey, Nancy R. and Charles B. Thaxton. 1994. *The Soul of Science: Christian Faith and Natural Philosophy*. Wheaton IL: Crossway Books.
- Taylor, Ian T. 1984. *In the Minds of Men: Darwin and the New World Order*. Toronto, Canada: TFE Publishing.
- Wells, Jonathan. 2000. *Icons of Evolution: Science or Myth?* Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing.
- Wiker, Benjamin. 2002. *Moral Darwinism: How We Became Hedonists*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.