



Adelaide College

Fear the Lord and be wise

The Young Earth
Lecture 10: Final Considerations

The Bible Under Attack

The Bible believer has been under attack for a long time. Rejecting evolution leads to the Christian being branded uneducated, irrational, opposed to reason and unscientific. Evangelical Christians in particular are regarded as over the top. Even if this is not actually said, Christians nevertheless feel it to some extent. They may even have an unspoken fear of science and evolutionary theory, and be wary of public opinion.

Christians respond to this in a variety of ways: some choose to ignore the problem, others tackle it on scientific grounds, but many, perhaps the majority, go for some sort of middle ground, which is what theistic evolution is all about. The idea is to bring both God and evolution together as one integrated view, the underlying motive quite possibly being to make the Bible, faith in God and creation intellectually respectable. But in these lectures we have taken the stance that God did not use evolution as a tool to create the universe and life on earth.

The fact is that Genesis Chapters 1 & 2, as they stand, rule out any possibility of evolution being correct, so theistic evolutionists have to find a way around this problem. This is achieved by some Christians telling us, “The Bible isn’t a science text book, and it is a book of faith”. That may be true, but the fact is that theistic evolutionists, in effect, make out Genesis 1 & 2 to be unhistorical. They imply, if not openly say, that the creation story is scientifically inaccurate and is not to be taken literally. Often there will be a reluctance to mention and accept certain fundamental doctrines, such as the Garden of Eden as an actual place, Adam and Eve as real people, with a playing down of the fall of Adam and Eve into a state of sin and spiritual death, and so on. But if Adam and Eve are no longer around to blame, this makes God the source of all pain, evil and death, not man, and without the belief that we are condemned under sin, the cross of Christ is rendered useless and meaningless.

All this ignores the fact that evolution is not really science, as we have made plain in this course of lectures. It is a theory and not fact. There is no real, hard proof for evolution, despite the claims of evolutionists, and so Christians need not to be intimidated by it. There is plenty of scientific evidence for creation based on design when the fossil record is interpreted in a natural and right way, but not for evolution, because evolutionary ideas have to be forced on to the fossils. Such a procedure cannot be regarded as science,

since science is supposed to be conducted in an impartial and objective way.

Signs of Life in the Universe

Evolutionists are keen to bolster up their theory by finding signs of life in the universe other than on planet earth. They assume that because the universe is so vast there must be other 'earths' or similar planets supporting life in one form or another, which may be more advanced, or less so, than terrestrial life.

In recent times a great deal of attention has been focused on our close neighbour, the planet Mars. This really began in 1877, when Giovanni Schiaparelli produced the first 'modern' map of Mars, on which he showed a system of what he called canali. Although canali in Italian means "channels", without the implication of being an artificial feature, the word was commonly translated into English as "canals", and that was the beginning of the belief that this was evidence of the existence of intelligent life on the planet. In 1910, the astronomer Percival Lowell captured the imagination of the public with his book *Mars As the Abode of Life*. He painted a compelling portrait of a dying planet, whose inhabitants had constructed a vast irrigation system to distribute water from the polar regions to the population centres nearer the equator; but actually it is recognised today that it was more his active imagination than scientific observations which led to this conclusion. Even so, his imagination fuelled the public imagination.

Even at the dawn of the space age Mars was still considered to have an atmosphere about a tenth the density of our earth, with water, ice polar caps that waxed and waned with the seasons, and an annual "wave of darkening" that was often interpreted as growing plant life. Most researchers now, however, concede that the chances that life exists on Mars are not good. This view has come about partly through the two Viking biology experiments that were carried out in the 1970s, and through other means. All attempts so far to find life on the planet have failed and visibly disappointed the scientists, but that has not affected the determination of some to find evidence at least of past life. The theory now is that the planet had a considerable amount of water in an earlier phase of its history, and so signs of extinct life may be there. This shows how evolutionary thinking can control the minds of scientists, even to the point of obsession.

The determination to find evidence of life in the universe has led to the more recent claim that new radio telescopes may be able to pick up TV transmissions from alien civilisations! It is thought by some that any aliens within 1,000 light years of earth could be detected by spotting their leaking television signals; these will be visible as "spikes" in the radio spectrum. So, from the point of view of some scientists the future is exciting!

This is, of course, the stuff of science fiction, and while sci-fi has proved to be prophetic occasionally in predicting innovations which now exist, now much of the sci-fi literature is purely fiction. And yet it has a strong hold on the minds of many and has resulted in extreme ideas leading to great confusion, including the belief that Jesus was an astronaut. Such way-out ideas need not surprise us since the sci-fi culture has its roots in evolutionary theory, which is in itself a tale of fiction.

The Bible, Evolution and Miracles

Some reject creationism because of the miraculous / supernatural elements in it. But evolution contains miracles too. A miracle is something that happens that is contrary to natural law – the physical laws that govern this world. At the bottom line evolution has to concede that life arose from non-life by a process called “spontaneous generation”. Since that is an idea, which is contrary to the physical laws that govern the universe, evolutionists, if they are honest, should be willing to admit that their theory is based on a miracle that has no convincing explanation.

Science means knowledge, not speculative philosophy, and yet the theory of spontaneous generation is precisely that. The essence of the scientific method is measurement, observation, and repeatability. A hypothesis must, at least in principle, be testable and capable of being refuted, if it is truly scientific. Neither evolution nor creation are scientific in this sense. Neither one can be tested; for the simple reason that we cannot repeat history. The Bible doctrine of creation, therefore, is as worthy of study and acceptance as any other view of the origin of all things, and the only other view available is that of evolution. In spite of this there are some supporters of evolution who demonstrate a true missionary zeal in their efforts to promote their beliefs and rubbish religion in particular. They can be extremely blind and dogmatic.

Richard Dawkins

Clinton Richard Dawkins was born in 1941. He is an eminent British ethnologist (one who studies varieties of the human race), an evolutionary theorist, and a popular science writer and speaker, appearing in a number of television and radio programmes. He is also a professor in the Public Understanding of Science at Oxford University. He first came to prominence with his 1976 book *The Selfish Gene*, which popularised the idea that genes are at the centre of the evolutionary process. He introduced the term “meme” into the lexicon. A meme, he says, is a piece of mental information, which is transferable from one mind to another, like a catchy tune, or a catch-phrase, and extends to, for example, clothes fashions, ways of making pots or of building arches. He contends that a meme, or groups of memes, propagate and influence behaviour. Those who support this theory suggest that memes evolve via natural selection in a way very similar to biological evolution.

Is that last point true? Does this theory of memes make sense when linked up with biological evolution?

Dawkins is an outspoken atheist, humanist and sceptic. He is regarded as being among the English-speaking world’s best-known public intellectuals, and so he is a formidable opponent of Christianity and all religions. He professes his astonishment that religious faith is gaining ground in the face of what he considers to be rational, scientific truth based on hard evidence, and his fairly recent two-part Channel 4 series, *Professor Dawkins* challenged what he described as “a process of non-thinking called faith.”

His definition of faith as “non-thinking” is not right, since some of the world’s greatest intellectuals have been people of faith.

1. Science, based on scepticism, investigation and evidence, must continuously test its own concepts and claims, whereas faith, by definition, defies evidence: it is untested and unshakable, and if therefore in direct contradiction of science.

Faith, if it is true faith, is unshakable, but does that mean that the truths of faith are contrary to science?

2. He also believes that though religions preach morality, peace and hope they bring intolerance, violence and destruction. The growth of extreme fundamentalism in so many religions across the world not only endangers humanity but, he argues, is in conflict with the trend over thousands of years of history for humanity to progress; to become more enlightened and more tolerant.

Though it is true that religion has caused a great deal of suffering through the centuries, Dawkins would be hard-pressed to prove that over the years, even thousands of years, people have become more enlightened and tolerant. One needs only to think of the wars of the 20th Century, which were inspired by politics, not religion.

3. He explores the state of the three religions, which trace their origin back to Abraham, from the political influence of rich and powerful Christian fundamentalist institutions in American to the deadly clash of Judaism, Christianity and Islam in the Middle East. He describes the Holy Land as the least enlightened place in the world, a small world that threatens rational values and civilisation, influenced by religion, whose irrational roots, he says, are nourishing intolerance and murder. He cites examples of individuals who spread hatred.

The Middle East has always been a place of unrest and will remain so, as the Bible predicts, until Jesus returns.

4. Then he mentions desperate people, like those carrying burdens of disability or disease, which are among the 80,000 people a year who make the pilgrimage to Lourdes. Dawkins does the maths: out of millions who, over a century, have placed their faith in a miracle restoring them to good health, there have been only 66 authenticated cures. This is hardly a strong record, he says, arguing that it is better for us to embrace truth than false hope.

We are not in a position to defend what goes on at Lourdes, but even so we should thank God for whatever healings do take place; also Dawkins seems to be ignorant of the fact that many healings take place through quiet Christian ministry all over the world.

5. Drawing on such examples, it is not difficult for Dawkins to demolish the claims of religion as fairytales, and dangerous ones at that. "How is it", asks Richard Dawkins, "that despite science having exposed old religious myths, militant faith is back on the march?" His answer is what he describes as the mechanism for perpetuating beliefs, which lead to murderous intolerance, and by imposing religion on children who are too inexperienced to judge it for themselves. He argues that we segregate children in sectarian religious schools, where they are taught superstitions drawn from ancient scriptures of dubious origin, which promote a "contradictory and poisonous system morals." He compares all

this to the spreading of a virus.

His belief that science has exposed the myths of religion is only his belief. It is not fact. The education of children with evolution teaching. The words he uses to describe Christian teaching, such as “superstition” and “virus” says more about his closed mind, and therefore, his inability to evaluate Christianity in an objective manner.

6. Dawkins is dismayed that the number of faith schools is increasing. More than half the Government’s proposed City Academies will be run by religious organisations and there are a growing number of private evangelical Christian schools. The education system known as “ACE” – Accelerated Christian Education – has developed a curriculum, which includes a mention of God or Jesus on every page of its science textbook.

This observation by Dawkins shows that there is real concern in the UK among Christians about the failing moral and education standards in our schools. This failure of the educational system has not been due to Christianity but to the deterioration of standards in post-Christian Britain.

7. Among other points Dawkins say that’s transmitting such a ‘warped reality’ as hellfire and damnation young people, amounts to indoctrination. Children are uniquely vulnerable and if they fail to question and shake off such superstition, they remain in a state of perpetual infancy. He talks to a woman on one of the programmes who was brought up in a strict Christian sect. She describes the terror of eternal damnation, which dominated her childhood, as a form of abuse.

One can always find someone to defend a point, such as the woman question, but what about all the children over the centuries who, as adults, have been inspired to live in right way because they knew that one day they would be answerable to God? A big part of the cause in the UK today for all the violence and immorality is the fact that people no longer believe there is a God that they will have to answer to.

8. Dawkins cites the physicist and Nobel prize-winner Stephen Weinberg, who describes religion as an insult to human dignity. “Without it,” he says, “You’d have good people doing good things and evil people doing evil things. But for good people to do evil things, it takes religion.” Dawkins agrees. It is more moral, he says, to do good for its own sake than out of fear. Morality, he says, is older than religion, and kindness and generosity are innate in human beings, as they are in other social animals. He says the irony is that science recognises the majesty and complexity of the universe while religions lead to easy, closed answers.

The physicist quoted by Dawkins has just as much of a jaundiced view of religion as Dawkins himself. Morality is not older than religion, because in the very beginning Adam and Eve were answerable to God.

9. “Is there no more than just this life?” asks Richard Dawkins. How much more do you want? We are lucky to be here, he says, and we should make the most of our time on this world.

The Bible speaks of those in this world who are without God and without hope. It has always been so. It is not especially modern to believe only in this world, as though that were based on an informed scientific outlook. The Bible tells us that the human mind is at enmity with God. Dawkins displays that spectacularly, and the observations which he made in the two Channel 4 programmes has nothing to do with science but everything to do with his enmity towards God as a fallen and sinful person.

Conclusion

The content of this lecture: the Bible under attack, the relentless but hopeless search for life in the universe, the opposition to the supernatural and miraculous events which are the basis of Christianity, and the opposition of Richard Dawkins and others like him, all these things show that “our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Eph. 6:12).”

It is not so much science that is our enemy but the misapplication of science. When science and religion are allowed to work together, hand in hand, we see that they answer two fundamentally different but complimentary questions. Science seeks to answer the question “How?” Religion answers the question “Why?” Science deals with the five human senses and the natural world. Religion deals with the supernatural world of the spirit, which involves the human senses but goes beyond them.

Trouble arises only when scientist meddles in religion – a sphere, which they are, not qualified to assess. Being an expert, like Richard Dawkins, in a particular field of science does not give any scientist the right to pass authoritative judgments on religion. The opinion of Dawkins on religion is worth no more than any other person’s opinion who has no real knowledge and understanding of the subject. Research into religion, more than any other subject, requires a sympathetic and sensitive approach, but someone like Dawkins, with his very strong, hostile bias, can never hope to arrive at a balanced evaluation of anything to do with faith.

We as Christians can, therefore, be confident about the Bible and every aspect of our beliefs derived from the Bible. We have nothing to fear from science, and we do not need science to confirm anything, which we believe, although it is nice when science comes up with something, which is favourable to Christianity. In this respect the science or archaeology has played a significant role over the years in bringing to light various aspects of life and in the ancient world, and in confirming the historicity of Bible texts. And the proper use of science in the field of creation science, as we have seen, leads to the confirmation of earth’s earliest ages being as recorded in the book of Genesis. A non-biased approach to the earth’s fossil record shows that it offers a clear testimony to design in creation and to the existence of a Designer. That was the position of many naturalists up to the time of Darwin, and that is the position, which we can still maintain today.

The testimony of the Bible is that we live on a young planet in a young universe. The earth is approximately 10,000 years old. We do not inhabit an old earth of 4.5 billion years. Scientists have arrived at that old date from the earth’s rocks. So far scientists

have not found a way to determine the exact age of the earth directly from earth rocks because earth's oldest rocks have been recycled and destroyed by the process of plate tectonics, which must have happened at the time of Noah's flood. They date the earth from moon rocks by radiometric dating methods, which are known to produce erratic results, as we have seen in these lectures.

The fact that our earth is a young planet means that life on earth could not have come about through an evolutionary process, since that theory requires billions of years to produce life as we now know it. Our young planet bears testimony to the fact that:

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”.

And that:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made”.

