

Joe Megacz - In the Beginning

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Today we're going to consider two questions and the answers given to them by science and the answers given to them by the Bible. The first question is, how did the universe come into existence? The second question is, how did life on Earth begin? And as we consider the answers to these two questions given by science in the Bible, we'll find there is more harmony between them than you might have otherwise thought. Let's begin question number one.

How did the universe come into existence? The short answer offered by science is just three words. The Big Bang. Let's dig a little deeper. The concept of the Big Bang begins with a phenomenon we learned about in high school called the Doppler Effect.

I'll demonstrate it for you in a 10 second video. This worked in rehearsal. We'll see if it works now.

As the car came toward the observer, the pitch of the horn was higher than it was as the car passed and sped away from the observer. One of the many descriptions of the Doppler effect in words is this. The increase or decrease in the frequency of sound waves as the source and observer move towards or away from each other. An increase of frequency sounds like a higher pitch or tone, whereas a lower frequency sounds like a lower pitch or tone. Another illustration of the Doppler effect has two observers with a sound source moving toward one away from the other.

Both observers hear the same sound, but to one it sounds high pitched, while to the other it sounds low pitched. They both hear the same sound, but if you ask them to describe it, you would give two very different descriptions. Yet they both heard the same thing. The perception of the observers depends on their frame of reference, that is where they are standing relative to the moving sound, and so perhaps this difference of perception based on your frame of reference relative to the event is a lesson that we can apply in many circumstances of life.

So what does the Doppler effect have to do with the Big Bang? Well, the same thing that happens with sound waves also happens with light waves, except that light doesn't emit any sound. But light does emit color. Let me repeat that. The same thing that happens with sound waves, the Doppler effect also happens with light waves, except that light doesn't emit any sound, but it does emit color.

When a light source moves away from an observer, just as with sound, the waves are expanded or stretched apart and the color of the light appears to become more red. When a light source moves toward an observer, just as with sound, the light waves are compressed together. Together and the color of the light appears to become more Blue. Now, scientists don't call this the Doppler effect. When talking about light waves.

Instead, they call it the red shift. Now we're getting closer to the Big Bang. When we look up at the stars. They all look like they're the same color, white. But when scientists look at the stars and the galaxies in the universe with special instruments.

They see a small variation in color. From one star or galaxy to another. Some appear a little more blue than their neighbor, and some a little more red. Which means that the stars and the galaxies Are not stationary relative to one another.

They don't stay in the same place. Rather, the stars and the galaxies are moving relative to one another. Just like that car with a blaring horn that we heard a few minutes ago. Moving toward and

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then away from the observer on the side of the road, and from that conclusion that the stars and the galaxies are moving relative to one another.

And I'm oversimplifying here. Scientists theorize that there is a frame of reference, a place in the universe. Where, if you could stand there. All the stars and galaxies would be moving away from you. That is, the universe is expanding relative to this one point.

If you could find it and stand. A common illustration of the expanding universe is to take a balloon, ordinary balloon, paint dots all over it. Now blow up the balloon, and as you blow up the balloon and the balloon expands. The dots on the surface will all move away from each other.

And from the center of the inside of the balloon. Now, scientists say, suppose we theoretically reverse the expansion of the universe. You can't really do it. But if you could theoretically, say, let's rewind time of the universe. So that instead of expanding, we go backwards in time.

Now the universe is shrinking, shrinking and shrinking, shrinking, getting smaller, come together like the balloon. If you slowly let the air out of it. What would the universe look like when all of the air is out of the balloon?

How long ago would that be, and what would the universe look like? Well, the Big Bang theory holds that just prior to the big bang, about 13.8 billion years ago. All the matter we see in the entire universe. All the stars, all the galaxies, all the planets, all the Earth, the dirt, the iron, the chemicals, the elements, all of it was compressed the size of a pinhead and unimaginably hot.

And then it exploded and expanded and expanded and expanded. As it expanded, it cooled, and as it cooled, matter began to condense in the dark, empty void of space. Kind of like raindrops condense in the atmosphere and fall as rain. These droplets of Matter after the Big Bang were at first very small particles, smaller than atoms.

And as the expansion and cooling and condensation continued for billions of years, according to the theory, light first appeared and then atoms were formed like hydrogen, helium and iron. Then molecules were formed, and ultimately, billions of years later, the stars and the planets that we see today came into existence, all from this condensation of matter as a result of the universe expanding and cooling after the Big Bang, that initial explosion.

But, and this is important, scientists cannot say why the Big Bang happened, and this Big Bang, a singularity as it is called, is an event that never happened before and will never happen again. So that was a rather technical but I hope you understand with my illustrations. Science's answer greatly oversimplified to our first question. How did the universe come into existence?

The Big Bang. Now let's look at the second answer to this question, the Bible answer, which is also only three. God created it, and we find our answer, of course, in Genesis chapter 1. I'll read Genesis 1:1 and 2.

In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth, and the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. Simple, direct and contradictory to science's answer to the question. But can we find a harmony between science's answer and the Bible answer? Yes, we can, and full disclosure.

Much of what I will present in finding a harmony between science's answer and the Bible answers comes from Volume 6, Chapter 1, titled in the Beginning, and in that chapter, Brother Russell

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expounds upon the two questions we are considering. So if you like anything I present today, read volume six, chapter one. You'll like that even better. The first paragraph of volume six, chapter one says, many are Jehovah's agents and innumerable his agencies in the creation of the universe.

So it is not unreasonable to say that the Big Bang was God's agency in bringing about the creative work described in Genesis 1:1. In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth. Further, the theories of science as the how light, matter, the elements, and the stars and the planets all came into being are not incompatible with the wording of Genesis 1:2, and the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the water. Those few words can easily be understood to describe the enormous development of the physical universe, theorized to have taken almost 13.8 billion years after the Big Bang up to about 50,000 years ago.

Now, the Hebrew word translated moved in Genesis 1:2 means to brood, and it has the thought of to flutter or to move or to shake.

Good words to describe all the creation of atoms and molecules and matter, even light itself, as the explosive expansion of the universe, under God's creative supervision, was moved or shaken or stirred or brooded after the Big Bang.

So we can harmonize science and the Bible's answers to our first question with this illustration. Genesis 1:1 describes the big Bang used by God to begin the creation of the universe, and Genesis 1:2 describes the following period of time, perhaps 13.8 billion years, perhaps more, perhaps less, during which all matter came into being and formed the stars and galaxies and planets and moons that we see in the heavens today. In that volume six, Chapter one, that I referred to earlier, Brother Russell goes on to say, examining the Genesis expressions critically, we discern that a distinction is made between the creation of the heaven and the Earth, verse one, the Big Bang, and the subsequent regulations or ordering of these and the further creations of vegetable and animal life. It is these subsequent operations that are described as the divine work of six epochal days.

Verse two tells us that in the very beginning of the first day of that creative week, the earth was, though without form, order and void, empty waste, empty and dark. This important item should be distinctly noted. If recognized, it at once corroborates the testimony of geology thus far, and as we shall be obliged to dispute the deductions of geologists on some points, it is well that we promptly acknowledge and dismiss whatever does not need to be contended for in defense of the Bible. The Bible does not say how long a period elapsed between the beginning when God created the heaven and the earth and the beginning of the creative week used in perfecting it for man.

That's the period of Genesis 1:2. Nor do geologists agree amongst themselves as to the period of this interval. A few extremists indulge in wild speculations of millions of years. Wild speculations of millions with an M years. I guess inflation has not only increased the price of everything we pay for today, but it has also increased the age of the universe.

But note the statement, the Bible does not say how long a period elapsed between the beginning when God created and the heavens and the earth and the beginning of the creative week and perfecting it for man. Thus, Brother Russell also saw in the Genesis account an unknown period of time before God said, let there be light in Genesis 1:3. He thought that period was short in cosmological terms. But Perhaps the current thought of 13.8 billion years following the Big Bang is not unreasonable or extreme, and as Brother Russell well said, it is well that we promptly

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acknowledge and dismiss whatever does not need to be contended for in defense of the Bible anyway, we will all know in the Kingdom how long that period of time, from Genesis 1:1 to Genesis 1:3.

Actually, let's move on now to our second question. How did life on Earth begin? But I'll start with an even more basic side question, namely, what is life? How do we describe the difference between something that is alive and something that is not? What is the difference between a piece of rock that looks like a frog, a living frog?

Science says something is alive if it exhibits what science calls the seven life processes, which are respiration or breathing, excretion or eliminating waste, sensitivity to stimuli such as light or sound or touch, movement, growth and reproduction. Even the simplest of living things, a single celled amoeba, does all seven of these. Here's a picture of a microscopic amoeba reproducing by dividing itself into two, and as an intriguing side point to this question, a virus does some, but not all seven of the life processes. The biologists and doctors struggle with the question, is a virus alive or not?

Now, remember this definition of what it means to be alive when we get to the Bible's answer to this second main question. So back to our second main question. Science's answer, overly simplified, is one word, evolution, which is usually defined, and I'll read this slowly, translators don't even bother trying to translate this. Evolution is a change in the heritable characteristics of biological organisms over generations due to natural selection, mutation, gene flow and genetic drift, and again, I'm not going to try to explain any of those terms, but that's the standard scientific definition, evolution.

And what is familiar to most of us is that Charles Darwin, an English biologist, is generally credited with laying the foundation of evolutionary biology when he published his treatise entitled on the Origin of the Species. The title is much longer than that. It goes on to say, by means of natural selection or the preservation of favored races in the struggle for life, and he published that treatise in the year 1859.

Darwin's theory can be summarized more or less into five key premises in what quickly came to be called Darwinism or evolution, and here they are.

Individuals in a population vary significantly from one another. Now, that much is true. Some people are tall and some people are short. We won't argue with that premise. Premise number two, much of this variation is heritable.

Or can be inherited, and again, that's also true. Tall parents often have tall children and short parents often have short children, and so on. Premise number three, individuals less suited to the environment are less likely to survive and less likely to reproduce.

Now, this is also true to an extent. It was probably more so true in Darwin's day, before there were the invasions, advances in medicine, because back then a sickly child often died before he reached adulthood and can have children. But advances in modern medicine since Darwin's day in the 1850s have increased the longevity of even those who suffer from catastrophic illnesses that were once deemed terminal. Premise number four. Individuals more suited to the environment are more likely to survive and more likely to reproduce and leave their heritable traits to future generations, which produces the process of natural selection.

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And this is where we start to disagree, because Darwin indulges in a wild speculation here without any supporting data or demographics to prove this premise, and lastly, premise number five, this slowly affected process results in populations changing to adapt to their environments and, and ultimately these variations accumulate over time to form new species. Baloney. I'd use a stronger word, but this is a church meeting.

A catchphrase later coined to simplify Darwinism was survival of the fittest, which came to have horrific consequences 80 years later when the Nazis ruled Germany and began a program to have young, healthy German adults possessing the best physical traits breed children who would grow up to become the master race on Earth. Survival of the fittest. Now, just as astronomers have their diagram of the origin of the universe with the Big Bang and its subsequent developments, and so too evolutionary biologists have their diagrams of the origin of life. Here is one progressing from the very beginning of time and life at the bottom up to mankind as we know it today, and here's another.

Similarly, in the form of a curve on the left side is again the origin of life, and all the way down to modern times in the lower right corner. But ever since Darwin's publication of his treatise, evolutionary biologists have struggled to explain the very beginning of the evolutionary chain in these two diagrams. The origin of life. What was that very first living organism? Where was it?

How did it come into existence? Like astronomers, biologists needed to find their own big bang long before that term had been coined, and just as astronomers theorized a rewinding of the ever expanding universe back to its origin in The Big Bang 13.8 billion years ago, biologists needed to rewind the ever evolving species of animals back to the first living thing on Earth. Because unless there was a credible starting point of the evolutionary chain. The entire theory of evolution is invalid now.

In Darwin's day, biologists had long known of the existence of the simplest living thing, the single celled animal amoeba that I referred to earlier in an attempt to explain how the first amoeba came into existence. Biologists suggested that ocean water was the key. The saltwater oceans are abundant with minerals and nutrients capable of supporting life. Indeed, astrobiologists who peer into the heavens today looking for life on other planets, first look for water and then the element carbon. So here's a factoid for you.

Our human blood, the essence of life itself, is 70% ocean water.

So to evolutionary biologists, on Darwin's day, an ancient ocean looked like a promising place for the origin of life on Earth. They suggested that a bolt of lightning striking ocean waters just in the right place at the right time brought together the minerals and nutrients floating about. That was a small bang, by the way, not a big bang, and energized this mixture into an amoeba. Lightning struck the water and shazam. An amoeba.

It sounds naive and unscientific today, but I want you to remember that first attempt to explain how life began. When I read more from volume six, chapter one, it will surprise you. Well, time passed, science advanced, and later it was suggested that bacteria, a life form even more primitive than the amoeba, were the first living thing on Earth. But the mechanism by which that first bacterium came into existence still escaped discovery. In my favorite news journal, the Week magazine, I recently read the most current theory and the beginning of life on Earth.

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And it suggests, quote, the prevailing theory of the origin of life on Earth holds that about 4 billion years ago, a molecule that's even smaller than a bacteria, which is smaller than an amoeba, a molecule called rna, took a crucial step. It generated a copy of itself. This copy made another copy, which over millions of years, led to the creation of DNA and proteins, all leading eventually to the first cell. Once again, the theory fails to explain how the first molecule of RNA came into existence, or how it came to duplicate itself, or how proteins led eventually to the first cell.

Time and again, evolutionists trying mightily to answer the question, how did life on Earth begin Run into an insurmountable hurdle called irreducible complexity? Which means that the thing they say is the beginning of life, first the amoeba, then bacteria, and now an RNA molecule leading in some unexplained way to the first living cell are all still too complex. As simple as they are, they are all still too Complex to have spontaneously sprung into existence or even evolved from something simpler, and this concept of irreducible complexity is well explained in a book by Michael Behe entitled Darwin's Black box. Now, the expression a black box is used to describe something that we understand what it does, but we have no idea what's inside and how it does what it does.

To many of us, a car is a black box. We know how it works. You press the button, it starts, you shift in the drive, step on the gas and it goes. But what's underneath the hood, all those wires and pipes and hydraulics, we don't understand what that is. It's a black box.

Well, this concept of irreducible complexity is well explained in the book, as I mentioned, and to Darwin, the amoeba was a black bot. He could not explain how it came into existence or how it acquired the ability to do what it does.

He could see that the simple amoeba was too complex to have evolved from something simpler. According to those key premises of evolution theory that I listed earlier, Darwin himself in his theory, if you read his writings, starts with the amoeba already existing and then goes on from there because he can't explain that first origin of what to him was the beginning of life on earth.

Michael Behe, at one time a staunch evolutionist, also recognized the irreducible complexity of the amoeba and ultimately conceded that the amoeba, and therefore all living things, are the result of what he called intelligent design. Now, Behe was, as I said, a staunch evolutionist, and he could not get the words out of his throat, say God created it. He couldn't say those words, so he had to say intelligent design. You don't have to admit that God exists if you say intelligent design because you don't really define what intelligent design is.

But that's the phrase that he used, and it began, became quite involved with some biologists. But as an aside, the reason why Behe and others became atheists and evolutionists, I think, is a little bit enlightening. As I said, Behe was raised in a Catholic home, and he was taught the traditional Catholic view of God as a God of vengeance who condemns his human race and children to a hell of eternal torment for small infractions of priestly dogma, and so Behe decided that if that was God, he'd rather believe there was no God.

And many other intelligent people brought up with those errors come to the same crisis of intellectual where they say, if that's what God is, I'd rather live in a world where there is no God, and so now they have to find answers to how we humans and all life on the lower planes came into existence, and so they adopt a belief in evolution.

Let's move on now to our final consideration.

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The Bible's answer to the question how did life on earth begin? And a harmony between them, if there is one. The Bible's answer to our second question, you can probably already guess it is also one word creation. Let's read the account of creation of sea life and land animals in Genesis 1:20, 21, 24, 25, and God said, Let the earth bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

And God created great whales and every living creature that moveth which the waters brought forth abundantly after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind, and God saw that it was good. The account of creation of human life is our well known Genesis 2:7, and the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

Here we have the Bible's answer to that basic side question I asked earlier, namely, what is life? How do we describe the difference between something that is alive and something that is not? It's the familiar formula body plus spirit or breath equals a living soul, a living being, and note also the important difference in creative work between the animals in Genesis chapter one and human beings in chapter two. The seas and the earth.

What does it say brought forth sea and land animals. But God breathed into man the breath of life, and in this difference between the creation of the animals and man In Genesis 1 and 2, we have the basis for a partial harmony between science and the Bible on this question. So let's explore this partial harmony found once again in volume six, this time page 35. Let us not contend for more than the scripture record demands.

The Bible does not assert that God created separately and individually the myriad kinds of fish and reptiles, but merely the divine influence or spirit brooded, and by divine purpose the sea brought forth its creatures of various kinds. The processes are not declared. Now listen to this. One species may, under different conditions have developed, evolved into another, or from the same original protoplasm, different orders of creatures may have developed, evolved under differing conditions.

No man knoweth, and it is unwise to be dogmatic. So brother Russell concedes that evolution may have occurred among the lower orders of animals, but if it did, that evolution was God's method, his agency of creating the myriad kinds of species of sea and land creatures. Now, if that concession surprises you, wait until you hear this. The paragraph continues on pages 35 and 36. It is not for us to dispute that even the protoplasm of Paleozoic slime may not have come into existence through chemical action of the highly mineralized waters of these seas.

Remember that lightning bolt. Brother Russell is saying it could have happened. What we do claim is that all came about as results of divine intention and arrangement, and hence were divine creations, not evolution. Whatever were the channels and agencies. The quote ends and we claim that this is shown by the facts of nature, no less than by the words of Genesis, that however the creatures of the sea were produced, they were brought to the condition in which each is of its own kind, where the lines of species cannot be overridden.

This is God's work by whatever means brought about. So here's my conclusion. The Partial harmony of Science and the Bible on the question how did life begin on earth? Is this 4:1 the origin of the first living cell may well have been by a bolt of energy such as lightning striking nutrient rich seas, but that occurrence would have been an act of creation by God, not a random event. At least that was brother Russell's thinking in his day.

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Point 2 evolution may well have occurred, and likely did occur among the lower animals as God's mechanism for creating the thousands of species of animal life we see today. Point three that process of evolution ended when God's design for the animal kingdom was completed. There are no active evolutionary processes today. End point 4 Man, however, was directly created by God and did not evolve from a lower animal such as the great apes.

Our time is up. I'd like to close with a reading of Psalm 19, verses 1 to 4, which speaks of the majesty of God's creation, and our closing hymn is based on these verses. Psalm 19:1 4 the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto a night showeth knowledge.

There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world, and may the great Creator of the inanimate universe and all living things on earth be praised. Amen.