

Water, Earth & Sky

When God Speaks – Part II

Job 38:1-18

Introduction

Perhaps the best known scientific celebrity of the past couple of decades was Carl Sagan. He was a renowned astronomer, not to mention antagonistic atheist who seemed bent on destroying any belief in biblical creationism and theism. He became the leading voice for naturalism – that everything has a natural cause and a natural explanation.

Sagan's tribe has increased over the years. I recently read one religious leader's attempt to explain away the miracle of Jesus walking on the water by postulating that Christ was walking on floating pieces of ice. How does anyone suggest that and keep a straight face?! Instead of walking on the waves of the storm, Jesus was evidently surfing on pieces of floating ice over to the disciples' boat – and none of that is a miracle?

This is naturalism. It is the twin sister of evolution – that all there is can be explained by natural processes.

However, these systems of belief require faith – faith in the universe itself. It is not surprising then, that Carl Sagan was led to give the universe divine attributes. Listen to the words he repeated on every show that aired on television each week, and I quote, "The universe is all that is, or ever was, or ever will be."

Ladies and gentlemen, all the scientists in the world, including Carl Sagan, could never scientifically measure all that was, and all that is, and all that is to come. This does not matter – they will take the leap of faith and attribute omniscience and

omnipotence to the universe – to Mother Nature – she gives life, she orders life, she created all there is.

This is nothing less than the religion of nature. This is the deification of the universe. It really does not get rid of an omniscient eternal being, it just changes who that being is.

Sagan looked at the universe and came to the conclusion that nothing was greater than what he saw.¹

If you fell asleep seventy-five years ago and woke up today to learn of our politically correct views regarding origins and the evolution of man and the deification of nature, you would be convinced that our intelligence is not developing forward but going backward.

It is true – Paul said it would be a sign of digression in any culture to cast off the Creator and deify creation. So today, for people in our world to consider a tree or the sun to be self-conscious relatives of the human race, is simply another step downward.

Two recent transcripts that came across National Public Radio were related to a journalistic contest that invited articles on a person's values and beliefs.

One elderly, retired woman, who grew up just like you and I, and went to a mainline Protestant church most of her life, wrote,

I am sitting on our small deck knitting and resting old legs, entertained by my spiritual sister, an equally old pine tree. She is at least as old as I am. She leans a bit; so do I. We both soak in the sun and the air and are trying our best to live lightly in our worlds. One day

in the not too distant future, she will fall and fertilize the earth, and so will I. It is a consoling thought. (What about this exactly is consoling?) I have lost my traditional heaven and hell beliefs . . . there are those who want to give my life more importance than the tree, but I don't believe them. (Never mind that she is sitting on a deck of wood as she writes this.) They think there is a special place for me somewhere for eternity, but I don't believe them. I believe my tree and all other living things believe and feel in their particular living way.ⁱⁱ

Another author, this one a published poet and professor at the University of New Mexico, writes in her article dated, July 8, 2007,

I believe in the sun. ("s - u - n") In the tangle of human failures of fear, greed and forgetfulness, the sun gives me clarity. The sun is our relative and illuminates our path on this earth. Humans are vulnerable and rely on the kindnesses of the earth and the sun. (Do you hear the way the creation is given divine attributes when the Creator is denied?)

One day recently, I walked out of a hotel room just off Times Square at dawn to find the sun. It was the fourth morning since the birth of my fourth granddaughter. I had bundled up the baby and carried her outside. I held her up and presented her to the sun, so she would be recognized as a relative, so that she wouldn't forget this connection, this promise, so that we all remember the sacredness of life.ⁱⁱⁱ

How tragic to not understand that to give the sun the attributes of God is to void the sacredness of life. Mankind becomes nothing more than an animal with no more dignity and personal worth than a pine tree.

Paul wrote of this in Romans 1:21-25, saying that the unbeliever,

. . . becomes futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart is darkened . . . they suppress the truth of a Creator and elevate creation . . . (paraphrased)

In 1996, Carl Sagan died. Less than three weeks before he died, he was interviewed by Ted Koppel on "Nightline". Sagan knew he was dying and Koppel asked him, "Dr. Sagan, do you have any pearls of wisdom that you would like to give to the human race?"

To this, Sagan responded bleakly, "We live on a hunk of rock and metal circling a humdrum star that

is one of 400 billion other stars in the Milky Way . . . this is well worth pondering."

Is that it?

Yes, because the religion of naturalism and the faith in evolution and even the mystical reach of pantheism lead ultimately to the utter insignificance of humanity, which then naturally leads to despair. All that we and the trees are going to do is die and fertilize some plot of ground.

Listen to the despair, utter sense of insignificance, and panic from a book published near the end of Carl Sagan's life, in which he wrote these words that never get any press, and I quote, "Our planet is a speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark. In our obscurity, in all this vastness, there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves."^{iv}

If only Carl Sagan had read Job.

There is help! There is hope!

God eventually speaks to Job. The encounter we have longed for and fully expected has come to pass.

The amazing thing is that God begins by giving Job a lesson on creationism, not suffering. Instead of answering Job's questions, and ours, about why bad things happen to good people and good things happen to bad people, God reveals His power and providence over all that He created.

Evidently, to the mind of God, understanding that He alone is the Creator of all that is, brings a person back from the edge of despair, utter insignificance, and bitterness, and breathes new perspective and fresh faith into their heart.

These chapters of Job are for believers, ladies and gentlemen. They will not breathe faith into the unredeemed. They will only breathe more skepticism and more unbelief. However, for those of us who believe, this tour around God's creation will bolster our faith and give us fresh new joy in the greatness and glory of God – which then has a way of settling our fears and quieting our heart.

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee . . . Isaiah 26:3 (KJV)

God speaks to Job out of the whirlwind, in Job 38:4-7.

Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding,

Who set its measurements? Since you know. Or who stretched the line on it?

On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone,

when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Would you notice that God does not begin four chapters of a response by proving to Job that He was the one who created the earth? He just begins in these verses with the reminder that Job was not there when He did it!

God was the eyewitness to the beginning. Because of special revelation – the inspired scripture we hold in our laps – we have been given the only eyewitness account of the beginning of time – from the Creator Himself.

It was Herbert Spencer, the philosopher and early enthusiastic advocate of Darwin, who outlined five scientific ideas that he believed categorized everything that science could investigate. These were:

- time,
- force,
- action,
- space,
- matter.

Spencer believed that everything that could be known could fit into one of these five categories. However, as with all naturalistic, dead end theories, he had to give at least one of these categories eternity, since no evolutionary process could account for the origin of any of them. At least one of them must be eternal in order to spawn the other four, so to speak.

Even though Spencer could not account for the origin of time, force, action, space, and matter, he believed correctly that these five can categorize everything.

In the opening lines of God’s special revelation, Genesis 1:1, we actually have the origin of all five of Spencer’s categories.

- “In the beginning” – this is time;
- “In the beginning, God” – this is force;
- “In the beginning, God created” – this is action;
- “In the beginning, God created the heavens” – this is space;
- “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” – this is matter.

In these few opening words, God reveals the origin of everything.^v

Nehemiah, the rebuilders of Jerusalem, prayed in Nehemiah 9:6,

You alone are the Lord. You have made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything . . . (NIV)

Earth (Job 38:4-7; 18)

“Job,” God asks,

Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? . . .

. . . set its measurements? . . . stretched the line on it?

. . . sunk its bases [foundations]? . . . laid its cornerstone,

(Job 38:4-6)

God is speaking in the language of an architect and builder. The site for the building was traced or surveyed. A measuring line (“qaw”) was stretched out to ensure the exact measurements were followed. Who made sure the foundations were dug and the block laid correctly and the cornerstone squarely?

In other words, “Job, were you there to check My blueprints? Did I need you or anyone to make sure the precise measurements necessary for the sustaining of life were followed?”

Now Job has already delivered the staggering truth in Job 26:7,

He stretches out the north over the empty space and hangs the earth on nothing.

God did not do this on the back of a huge turtle; on the back of an elephant; on the shoulders of Atlas – but on nothing.

Job is revealing amazing scientific truth. The north pointing axis of the earth is extended indefinitely beyond the boundaries of the earth’s surface, pointing to the polar star and orienting both the geography of the earth and the stars in the heavens.

One believing scientist writes, “Job is telling us not only that the earth was suspended in space, but also that it rotates about its north projecting axis, maintained in its orbit by a mysterious force we call gravity, which could just as rationally be called nothing – or perhaps better yet, the will of God.”^{vi}

Since no human being was there to see God do this, we either believe the record of God or come up with our own manmade theory.

It is interesting to live long enough to hear that the rock solid theory of the Big Bang has developed cracks – not that it was ever easy to believe.

In John MacArthur's book, *Battle for the Beginning*, he writes of one popular theory known as the Big Bang. Scientists who hold to the Big Bang theory must explain how a universe full of matter appeared out of nowhere in an instant. An article in the Los Angeles Times reported:

The Big Bang theory is looking more supernatural all the time. About twenty years ago, the late Carl Sagan famously said that Big Bang science would eventually show that the universe was created without any creator. Since then, the picture has changed quite a bit. Now there is a growing theory within Big Bang thinking called cosmic inflation, which holds that the entire universe popped out of a point with no content and no dimensions, expanding instantaneously to its current size. Now being taught at Stanford, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and other top schools, this explanation of the beginning of the universe bears haunting similarity to the traditional theological notion of creation "out of nothing".

This article quoted one of the world's foremost astronomers, Allan Sandage, of the Observatories of the Carnegie Institution in Pasadena, California, who recently proposed that the Big Bang could only be understood as "a miracle," in which some higher force must have played a role.^{vii}

Can you imagine being dead for only eleven years and MIT and the Carnegie Institute saying, "That's all wrong; in fact, the Big Bang doesn't remove the necessity of a divine being, it reveals the necessity for an original cause."

If we want to know how the world began, we must get the information from the only source who can tell us. No human observed the process, and no human can repeat the process.^{viii}

Notice that there were other eyewitnesses to the details of earth's creation, mentioned in Job 38:7.

When the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

In Job chapter 1, "the sons of God" are a reference to angels who came to present themselves, and Satan was among them.

This is poetic parallelism – "the morning stars" are the same individuals as "the sons of God".

In fact, according to the account given in Genesis 1, physical stars we see in the sky were not created until the fourth day.

Exodus 20 adds to the testimony of Genesis 1 that all things created were created during the six days of creation. So angels were not created eons before Genesis 1.

For angels to be able to rejoice over the creation of the earth on day three, according to Job chapter 38, we can safely assume, though we are not specifically told, that angels were created during the first day of creation, along with light.

This host of heaven was created, fully capable and willing to sing the glories of their Creator God. In the same way Adam and Eve were created fully grown and mature, capable of communicating, worshiping, carrying on their God-given assignments, the angels were created, fully capable and ready to sing and serve their Creator's bidding.

John Hartley wrote in his New International Commentary on Job, "In ancient times, the laying of a foundation stone for a public building such as a temple was a high occasion and was commemorated by a celebration with music and praise. God informs Job (in chapter 38) that on the occasion of laying earth's cornerstone, the angels were assembled as an angelic chorus to sing praises to God the Creator for the glory of His world."^{ix}

This would also mean that at some point between day one and the temptation of Eve in the garden of Eden, Satan would try to seize the throne of God as he lead an uprising which resulted in the fall of millions of angels, still led to this day by Lucifer – whose destruction is ever nearer.

Sea (Job 38:8-11; 16)

God moves now from questions regarding the origin of earth, to questions regarding the sea.

Notice Job 38:8.

Or who enclosed the sea with doors when, bursting forth, it went out from the womb;

Several ancient Near Eastern myths attempt to explain the origin of the sea, or the ocean; such as the "Enuma Elish" from Babylon and the Baal Cycle from Ugarit that recount the fierce battle in which their supreme deity won his right to rule by defeating the sea god. Epoch battles took place for the gods and/or goddesses to conquer the sea.^x

In total contrast to mythical thought, the sea in Job 38 is spoken of as an newborn infant (verse 8), on which God put a diaper of darkness and pajamas made of clouds (verse 9), and He put it in a playpen designed by Himself and put up a baby gate (verse 10). He placed restrictions to which the sea immediately submitted (verse 11), for God said,

. . . Thus far you shall come, but no further; and here shall your proud waves stop?^{xi}

We know that our Creator has instituted all the necessary secondary causes to keep the tides consistent with His plan to care for the ecosystems of our world.

Science has discovered the amazing effect of the moon upon our ocean tides.

Ocean tides are caused by the moon's gravitational pull. The moon circles the earth and completes a full orbit around the earth every 27.3 days, traveling a distance of almost a million and a half miles each month. It drives faster than I do!

As the moon orbits around the earth, it causes the earth to swell ever so slightly. The earth actually bulges out toward the moon, and this is what affects the water level of the oceans. As the earth rotates on its axis, these bulges move across the face of the earth – creating two high and two low tides every day.

Just this one characteristic of planet earth and its bodies of water is absolutely vital to sustaining life on the planet.

Scientists have now spent nearly twenty billion dollars trying to answer the question of how the moon evolved. The record of scripture tells us it was accomplished by the creative power and word of God on the fourth day.^{xii}

Job is reminded by God, in Job 38:8-11, that the movement and boundaries of bodies of water are determined and directed, even in their ebb and flow, by His creative handiwork.

God now moves from questions about the earth (Job 38:4-7) and questions about the sea (Job 38:8-11) to questions about the sky (Job 38:12-15).

Sky (Job 38:12-15)

Notice God's question to Job in Job 38:12.

Have you ever in your life commanded the morning, and caused the dawn to know its place,

“Hey Job, have you ever created a new day?”

One author provoked my thinking regarding this question by bringing up the context of Job's ancient world. On the first day of creation, God commanded the light into existence (Genesis 1:3-5). Each dawn thereafter was considered a reenactment of that first day. The ancients did not view nature as a system of mechanical laws; did not consider the succession of days guaranteed, but believed that God spoke each new day into existence.^{xiii}

God is virtually asking Job, “Job, can you call into existence the miracle of light? Can you create a new day?”

Of course the answer is, “No.”

Today we understand that the heavenly bodies of light – primarily the sun – were created by God in the heavens on the fourth day, and the precise tilt of the earth's axis and the exact make-up of the sun create new dawns and dark nights.

God's perfect handiwork is an amazing thing to further discover.

Today we know that the rotation of the earth on its axis is what determines a twenty-four hour day. The moon's orbits around the earth determine our months. And the earth's revolutions around the sun determine our years.

Even the precise tilt of the earth's axis is vital in maintaining earth's seasons. One author wrote,

Imagine how different life would be if the earth suddenly began rotation at one-third its current speed. Days would be three times longer. (How many moms of two years olds like the sound of that?) We would be forced to stagger our sleep so that sometimes we would sleep during sunlight hours and remain awake during long hours of darkness. The variation in daytime and nighttime temperatures would be dramatically altered. Every rhythm of our lives would be overthrown. But all life on earth is perfectly suited to a twenty-four hour day, and according to Scripture, that is because the same Creator who made all living things also determined and fixed the length of our days.^{xiv}

Charles Boyle, a brilliant thinker and devoted Christian, was fascinated with Kepler's and Newton's discoveries about planetary motion and the intricate design of the universe. Boyle hired a watchmaker to design an actual working mechanical model of the solar system that demonstrated the motion of the planets around the sun. They all moved mechanically according to the pattern of their orbit. It was an

incredible display of skill and precision. On one occasion Boyle was showing the model to an atheistic scientist, who was very impressed with the clockwork model. The atheist said, "This is a very impressive model. Who made it for you?" Boyle responded with a grin, "No one made it . . . it just happened."^{xv}

Conclusion

By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host [stars and planets].

He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deeps in storehouses.

Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.

For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast. . . .

The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of His heart from generation to generation.

Psalm 33:6-11

Earth, water and sky – created by the word of the Lord and the breath of His mouth.

The conclusion of every believer – we stand in awe of Him!

We find our hope in Him.

We find our peace and joy in Him.

We find the answer to our questions in Him.

We find our future securely bound in His plan.

For these angels who rejoiced at the creation of the earth celebrate at the conversion of every sinner and the new creation of a believer in Christ. They also shall sing around the throne of God, along with all the redeemed, as we praise this Creator God who has set us free forever.

And the world who does not believe? They continue on in their ever increasing panic to find an answer other than God.

One brilliant physicist wrote an article, published in the *Wall Street Journal*,

The latest data from space satellites are unmistakable; the universe will eventually die. As the universe accelerates, temperatures will plunge throughout the universe. Billions of years from now, the stars will have exhausted their nuclear fuel, the oceans will freeze, the sky will become totally dark, and the universe

will consist of dead neutron stars, black holes and nuclear debris. It seems as if the iron laws of physics have issued a death warrant. But there's still one [hope]. Leave the universe itself. Do the laws of physics allow for the creation of wormholes connecting our universe to a younger, more hospitable universe? In 2021, a new space probe will be launched which may be able to prove or disprove these conjectures. There is no choice. Can a gateway be built to connect our universe with another? Either we leave for another universe, or we die in this one."^{xvi}

He has the right idea – leave this universe for another one. He just does not know how.

He is right in a way. Planet earth and the universe around us will not last forever.

Again, the revelation of God, which informs us about the origins of this world, informs us about the end of this world. Peter writes these astonishing words that not only agree with the record of Genesis and Job, but give further revelation about the future,

. . . by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water,

through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.

But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

. . . of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!

But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

(II Peter 3:5-7; 12-13)

We really do want to leave this earth – a gateway has been built from this world to the next. However, it is a narrow gateway and not many people are willing to stoop to enter it.

Perhaps you have. Perhaps you will today, by God's redeeming grace. And when you come to God, in awe of who He is and what His Son accomplished for you on the cross and through that empty tomb, you will surely leave this earth only to one day inherit a new earth and a new universe where you will live with all the believers of all the ages and all the hosts of heaven and with our Creator God forever.

I highly recommend you make plans to leave this | world – for the new world which is yet to come.

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 10/28/2007 by Stephen Davey.

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- ⁱ John MacArthur, The Battle for the Beginning (W Publishing, 2001), p. 12.
ⁱⁱ Ruth Kamps, National Public Radio, “Living Life With Grace and Elegant Treeness,” Aug. 15, 2005.
ⁱⁱⁱ Joy Harjo, National Public Radio, “A Sacred Connection to the Sun,” July 8, 2007.
^{iv} MacArthur, p. 14.
^v MacArthur, p. 40.
^{vi} Henry Morris, The Remarkable Record of Job (Master Books, 1988), p. 40.
^{vii} MacArthur, p. 94.
^{viii} Morris, p. 102.
^{ix} John E. Hartley, The Book of Job (Eerdmans, 1988), p. 495.
^x Ibid., p. 496.
^{xi} Morris, p. 166.
^{xii} MacArthur, p. 111.
^{xiii} Hartley, p. 496.
^{xiv} MacArthur, p. 114.
^{xv} Ibid., p. 114.
^{xvi} “Huddled up with LISA,” The Wall Street Journal Online (Jan. 20, 2005).