

Worldview: Natural vs Supernatural

July 23, 2017

Recall from last week: 3 motivations

1 Corinthians 2:14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Romans 12:1-2 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. (2) Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Recall from last week: A Biblical worldview presupposes:

1. There is a God.
2. He is Perfect – without fault or error.
3. He has revealed Himself in the Bible.
4. The Bible is the inerrant, infallible Word of God.
5. His Word is Truth
6. Contradictions to His Word are false

Natural Worldview (Naturalism)

From Wikipedia: In philosophy, naturalism is the "idea or belief that only natural (as opposed to supernatural or spiritual) laws and forces operate in the world. Adherents of naturalism (i.e., naturalists) assert that natural laws are the rules that govern the structure and behavior of the natural universe, that the changing universe at every stage is a product of these laws.

Atheism is based upon a materialist philosophy, which holds that nothing exists but natural phenomena. There are no supernatural forces or entities, nor can there be any. Nature simply exists. **Madalyn Murray O’Hair – founder of American Atheists**

“The biological evolutionary perception of life and of human qualities is radically different from that of traditional religion, whether it's Southern Baptist or Islam or any religion that believes in a supernatural supervalence over humanity”. **E. O. Wilson – has been called “the father of sociobiology” and “the father of biodiversity”**

Presuppositions of the Natural Worldview (my assessment)

1. There is no God.
2. The Bible does not contain absolute truth.
3. There is no “standard” for right and wrong.

The Naturalist's view of the Supernatural

“Belief in the supernatural reflects a failure of the imagination”. **Edward Abbey – American author and essayist noted for his advocacy of environmental issues.**

“The question of whether there exists a supernatural creator, a God, is one of the most important that we have to answer. I think that it is a scientific question. My answer is no.” **Richard Dawkins – evolutionary biologist**

“Science operates in the natural, not the supernatural. In fact, I go so far as to state that there is no such thing as the supernatural or the paranormal”. **Michael Shermer – founder of The Skeptics Society.**

"Religion is regarded by the common people as true, by the wise as false, and by the rulers as useful."
[adapted] Edward Gibbon – **English historian, writer and member of Parliament**

Supernatural (Biblical) Worldview

The Bible presupposes a God who can create out of nothing

Genesis 1:1-2 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (2) The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Natural worldview: Barring the supernatural, we didn't just appear at the behest of a deity. Our explanation as to how man exists involves millions of years of evolution.

Supernatural worldview: God formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed life into his nostrils.

Naturalism invading the church: Denial of literal Adam; Evolution

The Bible speaks of God destroying the earth with a global flood

Genesis 6:13 And God said to Noah, "I have determined to make an end of all flesh, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

Natural worldview: the age of the earth can be determined by examining rock, layers of sediment, canyons, caves, etc.

Supernatural worldview: Scientific research may be skewed by dismissing fact as fiction. What impact does a global flood have on the earth? What does water “prevailing above the mountains, covering them fifteen cubits deep” do to the earth?

Naturalism invading the church: From BioLogos: The scientific and historical evidence is now clear: there has never been a global flood that covered the entire earth, nor do all modern animals and humans descend from the passengers of a single vessel.

Biologos mission statement: BioLogos invites the church and the world to see the harmony between **science** and biblical faith as we present an evolutionary understanding of God's creation.

The Bible speaks of God saving his people from slavery through the use of ten plagues

Exo 4:21 And the LORD said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go.

Rom 9:17-18 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." (18) So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills.

Natural worldview: things attributed to God can be explained through natural processes

Supernatural worldview: The Bible does not say that God used toxic fresh water algae to give the appearance of blood to the Nile. It says God turned the water to blood.

Naturalism invading the church: see Telegraph article on the plagues.

The Bible speaks of God manipulating the sun

Joshua 10:12-14 At that time Joshua spoke to the LORD in the day when the LORD gave the Amorites over to the sons of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, "Sun, stand still at Gibeon, and moon, in the Valley of Aijalon." (13) And the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, until the nation took vengeance on their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jashar? The sun stopped in the midst of heaven and did not hurry to set for about a whole day. (14) There has been no day like it before or since, when the LORD heeded the voice of a man, for the LORD fought for Israel.

2Ki 20:8-11 And Hezekiah said to Isaiah, "What shall be the sign that the LORD will heal me, and that I shall go up to the house of the LORD on the third day?" (9) And Isaiah said, "This shall be the sign to you from the LORD, that the LORD will do the thing that he has promised: shall the shadow go forward ten steps, or go back ten steps?" (10) And Hezekiah answered, "It is an easy thing for the shadow to lengthen ten steps. Rather let the shadow go back ten steps." (11) And Isaiah the prophet called to the LORD, and he brought the shadow back ten steps, by which it had gone down on the steps of Ahaz.

Natural worldview: no scientific proof this has happened; the earth moves around the sun – not the other way around. From the 1960 movie, *Inherit the Wind* "If what you say actually happened – if Joshua stopped the sun in the sky – the earth stopped spinning on its axis, continents toppled over one another, mountains flew into space, and the earth, shriveled to a cinder, crashed into the sun. Now, how come they missed that little tidbit of news?"

Supernatural worldview: Colossians 1:17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Naturalism invading the church: perhaps it was an eclipse or some other rare occurrence

The Bible speaks of Christ's resurrection

Mat 28:1-10 Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. (2) And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. (3) His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. (4) And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. (5) But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. (6) He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see

the place where he lay. (7) Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you." (8) So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. (9) And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. (10) Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me."

Natural worldview: Matthew 28:11-13 While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. (12) And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers (13) and said, "Tell people, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.'"

1 Corinthians 15:12-13 Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? (13) But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised.

Supernatural worldview: 1 Corinthians 15:16-17 For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. (17) And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins.

Naturalism invading the church: according to an April 2017 article, a survey conducted indicates that 25% of British Christians do not believe in Jesus' resurrection.

Conclusion

Comment on Facebook: If you're a Christian, you that on an actual day in the future, a day which is 24 hours nearer since yesterday morning, every human who has ever lived is going to bodily reconstitute and climb out of the ground or sea to meet Jesus to be judged. You believe some insane stuff. Spend a little less time jockeying for credibility in the eyes of the unbelieving world, whom your incarnate God said would hate you and call you an idiot.

"The picture of fallen man as given in Scripture is that he knows God but does not want to recognize him as God". Cornelius Van Til

Preparation for next week

Read John 17. What did Jesus mean when he prayed "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth"?

Memory Verse

Proverbs 1:7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Biblical plagues really happened say scientists

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/science/science-news/7530678/Biblical-plagues-really-happened-say-scientists.html>

The Biblical plagues that devastated Ancient Egypt in the Old Testament were the result of global warming and a volcanic eruption, scientists have claimed.

Researchers believe they have found evidence of real natural disasters on which the ten plagues of Egypt, which led to Moses freeing the Israelites from slavery in the Book of Exodus in the Bible, were based. But rather than explaining them as the wrathful act of a vengeful God, the scientists claim the plagues can be attributed to a chain of natural phenomena triggered by changes in the climate and environmental disasters that happened hundreds of miles away.

They have compiled compelling evidence that offers new explanations for the Biblical plagues, which will be outlined in a new series to be broadcast on the National Geographical Channel on Easter Sunday.

Archaeologists now widely believe the plagues occurred at an ancient city of Pi-Rameses on the Nile Delta, which was the capital of Egypt during the reign of Pharaoh Rameses the Second, who ruled between 1279BC and 1213BC.

The city appears to have been abandoned around 3,000 years ago and scientists claim the plagues could offer an explanation.

Climatologists studying the ancient climate at the time have discovered a dramatic shift in the climate in the area occurred towards the end of Rameses the Second's reign.

By studying stalagmites in Egyptian caves they have been able to rebuild a record of the weather patterns using traces of radioactive elements contained within the rock.

They found that Rameses reign coincided with a warm, wet climate, but then the climate switched to a dry period.

Professor Augusto Magini, a paleoclimatologist at Heidelberg University's institute for environmental physics, said: "Pharaoh Rameses II reigned during a very favourable climatic period.

"There was plenty of rain and his country flourished. However, this wet period only lasted a few decades.

After Rameses' reign, the climate curve goes sharply downwards.

"There is a dry period which would certainly have had serious consequences."

The scientists believe this switch in the climate was the trigger for the first of the plagues.

The rising temperatures could have caused the river Nile to dry up, turning the fast flowing river that was Egypt's lifeline into a slow moving and muddy watercourse.

These conditions would have been perfect for the arrival of the first plague, which in the Bible is described as the Nile turning to blood.

Dr Stephan Pflugmacher, a biologist at the Leibniz Institute for Water Ecology and Inland Fisheries in Berlin, believes this description could have been the result of a toxic fresh water algae.

He said the bacterium, known as Burgundy Blood algae or *Oscillatoria rubescens*, is known to have existed 3,000 years ago and still causes similar effects today.

He said: "It multiplies massively in slow-moving warm waters with high levels of nutrition. And as it dies, it stains the water red."

The scientists also claim the arrival of this algae set in motion the events that led to the second, third and forth plagues – frogs, lice and flies.

Frogs development from tadpoles into fully formed adults is governed by hormones that can speed up their development in times of stress.

The arrival of the toxic algae would have triggered such a transformation and forced the frogs to leave the water where they lived.

But as the frogs died, it would have meant that mosquitoes, flies and other insects would have flourished without the predators to keep their numbers under control.

This, according to the scientists, could have led in turn to the fifth and sixth plagues – diseased livestock and boils

Professor Werner Kloas, a biologist at the Leibniz Institute, said: "We know insects often carry diseases like malaria, so the next step in the chain reaction is the outbreak of epidemics, causing the human population to fall ill."

Another major natural disaster more than 400 miles away is now also thought to be responsible for triggering the seventh, eighth and ninth plagues that bring hail, locusts and darkness to Egypt.

One of the biggest volcanic eruptions in human history occurred when Thera, a volcano that was part of the Mediterranean islands of Santorini, just north of Crete, exploded around 3,500 year ago, spewing billions of tons of volcanic ash into the atmosphere.

Nadine von Blohm, from the Institute for Atmospheric Physics in Germany, has been conducting experiments on how hailstorms form and believes that the volcanic ash could have clashed with thunderstorms above Egypt to produce dramatic hail storms.

Dr Siro Trevisanato, a Canadian biologist who has written a book about the plagues, said the locusts could also be explained by the volcanic fall out from the ash.

He said: "The ash fall out caused weather anomalies, which translates into higher precipitations, higher humidity. And that's exactly what fosters the presence of the locusts."

The volcanic ash could also have blocked out the sunlight causing the stories of a plague of darkness.

Scientists have found pumice, stone made from cooled volcanic lava, during excavations of

Egyptian ruins despite there not being any volcanoes in Egypt.

Analysis of the rock shows that it came from the Santorini volcano, providing physical evidence that the ash fallout from the eruption at Santorini reached Egyptian shores.

The cause of the final plague, the death of the first borns of Egypt, has been suggested as being caused by a fungus that may have poisoned the grain supplies, of which male first born would have had first pickings and so been first to fall victim.

But Dr Robert Miller, associate professor of the Old Testament, from the Catholic University of America, said: "I'm reluctant to come up with natural causes for all of the plagues.

The problem with the naturalistic explanations, is that they lose the whole point.

"And the whole point was that you didn't come out of Egypt by natural causes, you came out by the hand of God."

The Ten Plagues of the Bible will be shown at 7pm on Sunday 4 April on the National Geographic Channel