

# THE BIBLE VS. EVOLUTION

Slide  
#5-1

## LESSON 5. HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU KNOW?

**KEY SCRIPTURE:** ""The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." Prov 9:10 (NKJV)

### Preparing to Teach the Lesson:

We saw in the last lesson that the issue of creation vs. evolution is crucially important to Christians. But just because we want creation to be true doesn't mean that it is. We need to look at the scientific evidence to see whether it supports or contradicts creation. We also need to examine some basic assumptions underlying our world view to see if the assumptions are trustworthy.

Recommended Resource: Ian Taylor, *In the Minds of Men: Darwin and the New World Order*, 1987, TFE Publishing, Toronto. Many consider this the single best book ever written on the subject of creation and evolution. It contains a great deal of technical information in layman's terms, as well as important background information on the subject of "ape men" referred to in this and later lessons. It would be a valuable addition to your church or home library.

Before beginning the lesson, you should read the next few pages carefully. Before you ask the class to give some examples of things they think they know, you yourself should be ready to give some examples in each category.

### Today's Aim:

We should not blindly accept every statement made in the name of science. At the conclusion of this lesson the students should:

- (1) Understand how to examine evidence critically;
- (2) Recognize the underlying beliefs of evolution;
- (3) Know how to examine statements made in the name of science to see whether they line up with the Word of God.

### Introducing the Lesson:

In recent years there has been a carefully orchestrated attempt to persuade the public that science cannot possibly support creation, and that all serious scientists believe in evolution. Organizations such as the so-called "National Center for Science Education" have sprung up for the express purpose of discrediting creation. Anyone who doubts evolution is portrayed as incompetent or superstitious. As a result, many people are under the impression that creationists have to ignore the mountains of scientific evidence that favor evolution.

This is not true. In this lesson we will see that:

- The creationist and evolutionist world views are each logical systems based on a series of untestable assumptions.
- Both sides look at exactly the same evidence, whether it be a piece of bone, a gene sequence in DNA, or the light from a distant star. The difference is not in the evidence itself but in the way we interpret it.
- In any area of investigation, there are at least three potential problems with evidence. Since the creation/evolution controversy is such an emotional issue, we need to be cautious about what we accept as evidence.

Slide  
#5-2

1. Both creationists and evolutionists use exactly the same evidence, but interpret it according to our **presuppositions** (also called postulates or axioms).

To show the students that everyone is biased, even themselves, use slide #3-3 and 3-4, which contain a sentence familiar to anyone who has ever learned to type: “Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their country.” However, on the slide the words “for” and “the” are doubled.

Slide #5-3

Tell the class that you are going to show them that they are biased. Display slide #3-3, which has a covered up area. Tell them you are going to give them one second to read what it says. Do a “Page down” to show slide #3-4 for a second, then do “Page Up” to go back to slide #3-3. Ask how many think it said, “Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their country.” Most will raise their hands. Tell them they are biased but you will give them another chance. Repeat the process and give them about two seconds to read #3-4, go back to #3-3. Ask them if they still think it says, “Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their country.” Most will probably raise their hands again. Tell them that they are really biased. Uncover the words and read them aloud, emphasizing the doubled “for” and “the.”

Slide #5-4

Since the sentence “Now is the time for all good men to come to the aid of their country” is familiar to anybody who ever learned to type, that’s what they expected to see. Because they were biased, they overlooked several words that were right in front of them. They ignored the evidence that didn’t fit their presuppositions.

Scientists sometimes do the same. Whether it consists of fossils or the signals coming in through a radio telescope, creationists and evolutionists use exactly the same evidence. The difference is in the way each side interprets that evidence.

## HOW CAN WE KNOW ANYTHING? (Including what happened in the past?)

**THIS IS PERHAPS THE SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT THING STUDENTS CAN LEARN FROM THIS CLASS.** They will probably not remember all the technical details about scientific evidence, but if they learn the right kind of questions to ask, they will be equipped to deal with almost any objection to Christianity they ever encounter.

Since we cannot scientifically prove creation or evolution, we have to rely on circumstantial evidence, much as a lawyer would in a court case. Because such evidence may be incomplete, withheld, or falsified, we should exercise a healthy skepticism about supposedly scientific statements we can’t verify for ourselves. We should always ask, “How do they know that?”

First, let’s be sure we understand what it means to “know” something. The word can mean different things to different people. (The following was inspired by Michael Behe’s wonderful book *Darwin’s Black Box*.) It will be much more effective to have your class give you examples for each of the following categories rather than you just telling them.

Slide #5-5

You should have something to write down class input, for example, a whiteboard. Ask the students to tell you something they know or something others might try to persuade them that they know. Write down at least fifteen or twenty of their examples. They will probably be confused about what you are asking for. As a starter, you could write several items such as “what a bee sting feels like,” or “my name” or “my

birthday.” The goal is to show them that the word “know” may mean at least six different things.

After you have gotten enough input from them, go through the following six slides one at a time, as you go through their statements. After slide 3-6, go their list and write a number “1” by all the sense experience. After slide 3-7 write a number 2 by all the authority statements, after 3-8 write a number 3 by all the logic, etc. Some items may fit in more than one category.

## POTENTIALLY VALID KNOWLEDGE

Slide #5-6

2. We know many things because we have experienced them through our five **senses**.

For example, I know a bee sting hurts; I know how to drive a car.

As long as a person’s five senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste) are functioning normally, he or she can experience sensations in more or less the same way as others do. Some may have better sight, hearing, and so on, but their sense experiences will be more or less the same as each other.

Obvious examples of this type of knowledge would be bee stings, sounds, colors, and the like. (Color blindness comes from senses that are not functioning normally.)

This type of knowledge is important in the experimentation phase of the scientific method.

Slide #5-7

3. We think we know many things because we hear them from an **authority** we decide to trust.

I know the sun is 93 million miles away because astronomers say so; I know Jesus loves me because the Bible says so.

An obvious example: how do you know when you were born? Because your mama told you. And how do you know she really is your mama? Because she told you that too. You just decide to trust her.

Most of what we say we know in science is actually based on authority. The textbook says it and I believe it.

Slide #5-8

4. We think we know many things because they seem to make sense though **logic**.

I know  $2 \text{ billion} + 2 \text{ billion} = 4 \text{ billion}$  even though I’ve never counted that high; I know I have a brain even though I’ve never seen it myself. All humans have brains; I am a human; therefore, I have a brain. It just makes sense to me!

Logic is used in science in formulating hypotheses and drawing conclusions.

Slide #5-9

5. Some of the things we think we know are because of a “gut feeling” or **intuition**.

I know she’s the one for me; I know God has called me to the ministry.

This is not the same type of knowledge as that which we obtain through the five senses. While intuition may be correct, it is NOT part of the scientific method.

## FALSE “KNOWLEDGE”

The next two claimed types of knowledge are not knowledge at all, though people will try to make themselves or others believe they are.

Slide #5-10

6. People sometimes falsely claim to know something that is actually only **wishful thinking**.

I just know these are the winning lottery numbers; I know that famous movie star will fall in love with me if I give her these flowers.

In this case there is at least a possibility that the statement could be true, and the person really wants it to be.

Slide #5-11

7. Sometimes people deliberately lie to get us to believe things for some ulterior motive. This is nothing but **bluffing**.

You should buy these tickets from me because – trust me on this – this team is going to the Super Bowl this year. I know evolution is a fact.

This sort of statement usually comes from someone who doesn't believe it himself, but has a vested interest in getting others to believe it. For instance, they may be trying to get money from someone or may be trying to keep their job as a professor of evolutionary biology despite the problems they see in their area of expertise.

The scientific method is a good system because it involves not one but three different types of knowledge.

Slide #5-12

When doing research, we look for **authority**.

When doing experiments, we should obtain **sense experience**.

When drawing conclusions, we use **logic**.

Science requires observation. Any statement that is not based on personal experience of the observer or an authority who claims to have personal experience cannot be considered scientific. Even those that do fit in the category of authority should be examined carefully.

Slide #5-13

(a) In order for a statement based on authority to be trustworthy, the original authority everybody else relies on must have had personal experience. That is, there must be a primary source somewhere.

Almost all evolutionists rely on Darwin as an authority. But did he ever have any personal experience with evolution? Of course not. Therefore, the whole chain of authority is unreliable.

Slide #5-14

(b) There is one book, the Bible, that claims to be the eyewitness account of the God who was there at the beginning and did the process of creating. There are NO books written by ancient authorities claiming to have observed the beginning of everything, the evolution of apes to humans, etc. It is not possible to ever obtain such an account because even if evolution did happen (it didn't), the only eyewitnesses would have been apes. Apes can't write.

What about category 3, **logic**? Logic has its place in science -- most notably, in setting up hypotheses and drawing conclusions -- but until we can move a concept from "It makes sense to me" to direct observation, it is only storytelling.

In order for logic to be reliable, two conditions must be met.

Slide #5-15

- First, **the logical structure must be correct**. Suppose we say, "If I am at Victoria Falls, then I am at one of the highest waterfalls in the world." This is true. However, if we reverse the "if" and "then" parts to the converse, "If I am at one of the highest waterfalls in the world, then I am at Victoria Falls," the statement

is no longer reliable.

This happens all the time in evolutionary circles. Without realizing it, most evolutionists follow the thought process, "If our story of evolution is correct, then the universe would exist." This is true: evolution is one of the possible explanations for the origin of the universe. However, they then reverse the "if" and "then" parts to say, "If the universe exists, then our story of evolution is correct." This is absolutely unreliable. Evolution is not the only possible explanation!

Slide #5-16

- **Second, the premises must be correct.** For instance, we might say, "All dogs bark. Fido is a dog. Therefore, Fido barks." But suppose Fido happens to belong to the Basenji breed of Africa? Basenjies don't bark! Since our premise is erroneous, our conclusion is unreliable. Fido doesn't bark after all.

Slide #5-17

To illustrate the nature of both creation and evolution as systems of logic, we can compare the study of origins to the study of geometry. Anyone who has ever taken a class in this branch of mathematics will remember that it is based on twenty-three postulates, statements that we accept as true without proof. Once we accept these postulates, the rest of geometry follows logically. Likewise, belief in creation and evolution are based on opposing sets of postulates or presuppositions that we accept without proof. Once we accept either set of presuppositions, the belief system based on it follows logically.

Creationists freely admit our presuppositions, but evolutionists try to hide theirs. They know that once they come to light it will be obvious that evolution is every bit as religious as creation is.

8. Presuppositions of	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>EVOLUTION</b></p> <p>a. Everything must be explainable by purely <b>natural</b> processes. (Either there is no God, or if there is, He does not get involved in nature.)</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>Even Darwin admitted that if God has to be brought in at any stage in evolution, it is worthless as a scientific theory. Many evolutionists have thus turned science into a quest to eliminate the need for God. They recognize that if God is necessary at any point they have no logical basis to reject divine creation.</p> </div> <p>b. <b>Evolution</b> is the only possible explanation for the origin of everything.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>If you look carefully you will find presuppositions "a" and "b" underlying almost any evolutionary statement you ever hear.</p> </div>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CREATION</b></p> <p>a. Since the God who created the universe is not limited to natural processes, some things may require a <b>supernatural</b> explanation.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>We should not give up too easily when searching for natural explanations, but we should recognize that sometimes there may not be one.</p> </div> <p>b. Since God is all-powerful, He could have used any process He wanted to. He could have used evolution, or He could have created everything the way the <b>Bible</b> says.</p>

Slide #5-18

	<b>CREATION</b>
<p>Slide #5-19</p> <p>c. The universe and earth have to be <b>billions</b> of years old.</p> <div data-bbox="232 289 818 472" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>This is essential because evolution is supposed to proceed very slowly. It could not happen unless the earth were extremely old.</p> </div>	<p>c. Creation in and of itself does not require the earth to be any specific age.</p> <p>i. Recent Creation: the earth is <b>thousands</b> of years old.</p> <p>ii. Gap Theory/Progressive Creation: Because evolutionists must know what they are talking about, the earth has to be <b>billions</b> of years old.</p> <div data-bbox="881 632 1414 800" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Because those who accept these ideas think only fools believe otherwise, they accept the ages evolutionists demand.</p> </div>
<p>Slide #5-20</p> <p>d. There has never been a worldwide <b>Flood</b>.</p> <div data-bbox="232 926 818 1312" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Though perhaps not obvious, this is necessary because the evolutionary time scale rests on a geological doctrine called <i>uniformitarianism</i>. This is the belief that the earth's geologic layers built up a tiny bit each year for millions of years. If there was a worldwide flood it would have piled up a great deal of sediment in a short time, destroying the time scale.</p> </div>	<p>d. Recent Creation: <b>One</b> worldwide flood.</p> <p>Gap Theory: <b>Two</b> floods.</p> <p>Progressive Creation: <b>No</b> floods.</p> <div data-bbox="881 1014 1414 1255" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Genesis tells of one worldwide flood, while evolution says there have been none. The Gap Theory attempts to compromise between one and zero by postulating two. It fails to satisfy either side.</p> </div>
<p>e. Similarities between living things are due either to common <b>ancestry</b> or random chance.</p> <div data-bbox="232 1476 818 1644" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Since evolutionists have already decided that God cannot be involved in nature, they have to rule out common design.</p> </div>	<p>e. Except in closely related groups that belong to the same kind, similarities between living things are due to common <b>design</b>.</p>
<p>Slide #5-21</p> <p>f. The majority opinion of <b>scientists</b> is the final authority on everything.</p>	<p>f. Recent Creation: the Word of <b>God</b> is the final authority on everything.</p> <p>Gap Theory: the Word of God is the final authority on everything except the age of the earth and when <b>death</b> entered the world.</p>

EVOLUTION	CREATION
<p>Science has become many people's god. They look to it for all the answers. But when there is a disagreement among scientists, which ones do you listen to? The ones that happen to agree with you! (Until they change their minds next year!)</p>	<p>Throughout the Bible we read that death entered the world only after Adam sinned. Since Gap Theorists believe billions of animals and humans died in a pre-Adamic flood, they cannot take the Bible literally on this point.</p> <p>Progressive Creation: the word of God is the final authority only on <b>spiritual</b> matters.</p> <p>Remember, Progressive Creation is just the "Punctuated Equilibria" version of theistic evolution. It accepts the word of scientists in everything.</p>

It should be clear that both creationists and evolutionists view the scientific evidence through our biases. Did you or your students see any of your presuppositions in this list?

### How to Approach the Creation/Evolution Controversy.

Slide #5-22 Before we start to examine specific bits of evidence, let's consider exactly what we are trying to do. Since the scientific method is limited to things we can observe, repeat, and test, we cannot scientifically "prove" either creation or evolution. Instead, we need to approach the controversy the same way we would a court case concerning a legal matter. Both sides use exactly the same evidence, but then interpret it according to their presuppositions. We need to hear the circumstantial evidence that each side presents in support of its belief, then decide which case is stronger. Whichever we decide in favor of, creation or evolution, we have to take a step of faith.

### Problems With Evidence.

Being aware of our own biases will help us to evaluate the evidence more objectively. However, it doesn't guarantee that the evidence itself is reliable. There are at least three potential problems to keep in mind.

Slide #5-23 9. Evidence may be **incomplete**, **withheld**, or **falsified**.

### Incomplete Evidence.

Have you ever watched a murder mystery where five minutes before the end you knew who did it? Four minutes before the end you were really sure. Then three minutes before the end you got one more piece of evidence that showed you were wrong: the butler did it, not the chauffeur! The reason you drew a wrong conclusion was that you had incomplete evidence.

The same kind of thing happens to scientists. Since they don't know how much evidence exists about what happened in the beginning, they don't know how much is missing. One more crucial piece of information could show up next week and turn their theories upside down.

If you have not bought Ian Taylor's book *In the Minds of Men*, you are missing out on a wonderful resource. The following information is from pp. 231-233.

"Nebraska Man" is a good example of a mistake due to incomplete evidence. In the early 1900's a single fossil tooth that seemed somewhat human-like was discovered in Nebraska. Noted paleontologist Henry Fairfield Osborn, among others, decided that it belonged to an extinct species of ape-men christened *Hesperopithecus*. The *Illustrated London News* even ran a double page spread showing an artist's conception of Mr. and Mrs. *Hesperopithecus* in their native habitat, complete with camels and trees.

To the great embarrassment of evolutionists, a few years later an identical tooth was found still embedded in the jaw of its owner. It belonged not to a human but to a pig!

Slide  
#5-24

10. An example of incomplete evidence: "Nebraska Man" or *Hesperopithecus* was built up on the basis of a single tooth. The tooth later turned out to be from a **pig**.<sup>8</sup>

Some say that this was a case where a pig made a monkey out of the evolutionists. It happened because that they started with incomplete evidence and interpreted it according to their presuppositions.

Since we have no way to know how much evidence about the beginning is missing, how could we be sure to draw correct conclusions? We would have to start with the word of a reliable eyewitness. There is no such account for evolution. Genesis, on the other hand, claims to be God's eyewitness account of what happened. Though it doesn't give many details, it does give us a broad overview. If it is accurate we can use it as a starting point for further investigation; if not, we can never be sure one way or the other.

### **Withheld Evidence.**

The next problem with evidence: it may be deliberately withheld. (From Taylor, *In the Minds of Men*, pp. 221-225.)

Remember Ernst Haeckel of the embryonic recapitulation fraud? He believed that man had evolved in the area around the South China Sea, and that fossil ape-men might be found there. One of his medical students at Jena University, Eugene Dubois, was convinced that Haeckel was right. In 1887 he left his medical practice in Europe to enlist in the Dutch army in the East Indies, with the understanding that when not occupied with his medical duties he would be allowed to search for fossils. Before long, he was digging full time with a crew of up to 50 men.

Between September of 1891 and October of 1892 his crew found an apelike skullcap, two teeth, and a humanlike thigh bone by the Solo River in Java. Dubois contended that all the bones came from the same individual, an ape-human transition he called *Pithecanthropus erectus* ("upright ape man"), commonly known as "Java Man." Upon returning to Europe he met with a great deal of skepticism. He



became offended and stopped letting anyone see the fossils.

For thirty years he hid the fact that he also possessed two human skulls found 60 miles away in the same rock layer. According to standard geologic dating, objects in the same layer are roughly the same age. This would make these human skulls contemporary with *Pithecanthropus*, destroying his claim that the humanlike thigh bone belonged to “Java Man” rather than to true man. He avoided the problem by hiding the skulls under the floor boards of his house! Even after he finally revealed their existence, he continued to maintain that *Pithecanthropus* was an ape-human transition about the size of a large gibbon. His mind was made up. He didn’t want to be confused with the facts.

Slide #5-25

11. Withheld evidence: Eugene Dubois, discoverer of *Pithecanthropus* (“Java Man”) for thirty years hid the fact that he had discovered **human** skulls in the same rock layer. <sup>9</sup>

### Falsified Evidence.

The third problem: evidence may be deliberately falsified. (From Taylor, *In the Minds of Men*, pp. 225-229.)

Ernst Haeckel was not the only scientist who ever perpetrated a fraud. In 1912 an amateur fossil hunter named Charles Dawson presented to the British Natural History Museum an apelike lower jaw and pieces of a humanlike skull he had found in a gravel pit near Piltdown, England between 1908 and 1912. Though the jaw was rather large, it fit the skull perfectly. A dental anatomist who examined it in 1916 reported that the teeth had been filed; nevertheless, British scientists looking for evidence to support Darwinism immediately accepted the collection as the remains of an ape-man called *Eoanthropus dawsoni*, better known as “Piltdown Man.”

For over forty years encyclopedias and museums presented Piltdown Man as a missing link between ape and man. Finally, in 1953, a team of scientists used the newly developed technique of fluorine dating to determine its age. The skull was a few hundred years old, and the jaw was almost brand new! They reexamined the whole collection and found that the skull fragments came from a human skull that had been stained to look old, while the jaw was an ape jaw filed to fit the skull.

No one is sure who was responsible for the hoax. It may have been Dawson, or it may have been someone who knew he regularly searched for fossils in gravel pits and put the doctored parts where he was certain to find them. The point is that scientists’ ready acceptance of Piltdown Man, despite the obvious filing of the teeth, should serve as a warning to us: Beware of falsified evidence.

Slide #5-26

12. Falsified evidence: “Piltdown Man” (*Eoanthropus dawsoni*) consisted of a human skull stained to make it look old, and an **ape** jaw filed to make it fit the human skull. <sup>10</sup>

How does all this relate to evolution?

- First, someone who says he knows evolution is a fact cannot appeal to personal experience.
- Second, he cannot appeal to an authority who claims to have personal experience (a primary source), because no scientist has ever reported observing any type

of living thing evolve into a different type.

- Third, we saw earlier that the logic of evolution is based on unprovable axioms. Since all the rest of the structure rests on these axioms, if any one of them is false the whole system collapses. In addition, much of evolutionary logic is based on the invalid use of converse statements, making it totally unreliable. Therefore, the claim that evolution is proven fact is nothing more than bluffing, often from someone who makes his living by teaching evolution.

When we hear a statement made in the name of science, determining which of these categories it fits will help us decide if it is reliable. Your students can do this by asking questions such as the following. (Note: this is not a list to be memorized, but a set of tools to be used whenever doubts arise.)

Slide  
#5-27

13. When we hear a supposedly scientific statement we cannot test for ourselves we should ask questions:

- a. **WHO** says they saw it? (WERE YOU THERE?) Does someone claim this is an eyewitness account?

If not, what authority claims to have seen it? Are they reliable?

- b. **WHAT** did they actually see? (How much is data and how much is guess-work?)

Scientists routinely *extrapolate*, that is, they draw conclusions that go beyond the data. This is how astronomers determined that the sun is 93 million miles away; they made certain measurements and then calculated the distance using accepted principles of geometry. A certain amount of extrapolation is reasonable. However, scientists frequently draw conclusions about evolution that go far beyond what the data justify. Remember Nebraska Man, built up on the basis of a single tooth.

- c. **WHAT** are they **NOT** telling us? What assumptions (presuppositions) does the statement depend on? How reasonable are they? Is there bias involved?

Suppose a TV program tells you that 63 million years ago an asteroid hit the earth and killed off all the dinosaurs. This statement is based on at least two obvious assumptions: (1) The earth is at least 63 million years old, and (2) We can accurately determine when things happened in the distant prehistoric past. There is no way to verify either assumption. They are statements of belief, not science.

- d. **HOW** can we repeat and test it? If it can't be tested, it's not science.

Finally, in evaluating a statement about the past we should ask,

- e. How does it compare with the word of **GOD**, the only one who was there and knows for sure what happened?

God was there and knows everything; the scientists were not and are only guessing. His Word must be the final authority in every area of a Christian's life.

### Memory Aid.

Another way you can approach this is by using a simple memory aid. Though this may seem childish, it gives even adults an easy to remember tool. Have your students trace an outline of one of their hands, then write each of the following words or phrases on one of the fingers: WHO, WHAT, WHAT NOT, HOW, and GOD. Here's what it means.

Slide #5-28

- a. **WHO** says they saw it? Were you there? Who, if anyone, claims to have observed whatever you're talking about? Is the alleged witness reliable?
- b. **WHAT** did they actually see? Is it enough to justify their conclusion? How much is evidence and how much is interpretation - an educated guess?
- c. **WHAT** are they NOT telling us? What assumptions are involved? How reasonable are they? Is somebody deliberately withholding evidence? Is there some sort of hidden bias? (For instance, if a tobacco company publishes a study that says cigarettes are not harmful to our health, might we not suspect a little bias on their part?)
- d. **HOW** can we test it? If there is no way to test it, we can't apply the scientific method. It's not part of science.
- e. What does **GOD** have to say about it? How does this compare with the Word of God? He was there and knows for sure what happened. The scientists were not and are only guessing.

### Practical Application.

Even young children can understand that a policeman holds up his hand to stop a car if he is suspicious about it. Likewise, if we are suspicious about a statement we can hold up our hand and say "Stop!" so we can investigate. For example, remember the "Mars rock"? In 1996 the media were abuzz about a meteorite found in Antarctica in the early 1980's, which NASA suddenly claimed came from Mars and showed that life might have existed there billions of years ago. Let's hold up our hand and check out this claim. (Refer to the slide as you go through this.)

Slide #5-29

- (a) WHO saw life on Mars, or even saw the rock come from there? Nobody. This is not an eyewitness account.
- (b) WHAT did they actually see? A meteorite that contains a mix of gases similar to those the Viking lander found on Mars, and a number of chemicals called *aromatic hydrocarbons* that can be produced by living things.

Is this enough to justify their conclusion? No, especially when we consider the next question:

- (c) WHAT are they NOT telling us?

First, the rock is supposed to be billions of years old - yet it contains gases similar to the *modern* Martian atmosphere instead of the mix of gases that would have been present billions of years ago.

Second, life is only one of hundreds of processes that can produce aromatic hydrocarbons.

Third, they are assuming that life can spontaneously spring into existence anywhere the conditions are right. We will see in a later lesson that this is highly unlikely.

Fourth, NASA was due to lose hundreds of millions of dollars from its budget.

NASA scientists desperately looked around until they noticed this meteorite that had lain on a shelf for 13 years. They proclaimed that it showed the possibility of life on Mars and, voila, the funding was restored. Might there be just a little bias here?

- (d) HOW could we test it? There is no way. The statement that the rock shows the possibility of life on Mars is storytelling, not science.
- (e) What does GOD have to say about it? While the Bible does not absolutely rule out the possibility of physical (as opposed to spiritual) life in space, it strongly implies that it exists only on earth. See Lesson 10.

The hand technique shows us that statements about this rock showing life on Mars are not part of science and should not be given much weight. Likewise, we can use the method to evaluate any other suspicious claim.

## **LESSON REVIEW:**

- We “know” things through sense experience, authority, logic, and intuition. In science, we rely only on the first three.
- No living person has sense experience about the beginning of everything.
- There is no possible way to obtain the statement of an authority who was present at the beginning, except for the word of God, Who was there. No humans were. Even if we evolved from apes (we did not!), There could never be an eyewitness account because apes can’t write.
- Logic only yields reliable conclusion if the structure is correct and the axioms (postulates or presuppositions) are true.
- Almost every statement having to do with evolution is built on postulates, assumptions that are accepted without proof. The most important ones are:
  - (1) Everything must be explainable by purely natural processes, and
  - (2) Evolution is the only possible explanation.
- Even when an evolutionary statement seems plausible, we must be aware that evidence may be incomplete, withheld, or falsified. In such cases it is easy to draw wrong conclusions.
- In order to evaluate statements made in the name of science about anything we can’t observe ourselves, we should ask questions such as:
  - (1) WHO says they saw this? Is it supposed to be an eyewitness account? (Were you there?) If it claims to be, how reliable is the alleged eyewitness?
  - (2) WHAT did they actually see? In other words, how much is data and how much is interpretation?
  - (3) WHAT are they NOT telling us? What assumptions (presuppositions or postulates) does it depend on? How reasonable are they? Is there bias?
  - (4) HOW could the event described be repeated and tested? If it can’t be tested, it’s not science.
  - (5) How does the statement compare with the word of GOD, the only one who was there and knows for sure what happened?

Those who develop the habit of asking the right questions will be hard to deceive.

#### **LESSON 5 REFERENCES**

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