

July 2017

## Recent Science and Spiritual Empiricism Point to God

By Dan W Reynolds

This month I discuss 4 topics that point to God or agree with Genesis, including evidence the early earth was completely covered by water, problems for big bang inflation, why you are not related to *Homo naledi*, and spiritual empiricism. The segment on *spiritual empiricism* relates to how we can know God through communication with Him and contains my testimony.

### Oceans Covered a Flat Earth Before Plate Tectonics According to Geologists<sup>1</sup>

According to secular geology, the earth is 4.6 billion years old. According to theory, the early earth was initially molten and too hot for liquid water for the first few hundred million years. Zircon crystals have been found in western Australia dated with the uranium-lead method at 4.4 Ga. They contain trace elements consistent with crystallization from molten igneous, but not sedimentary rocks. Sedimentary rock is thought to have been generated from collisions of the continents when mountain ranges were forming. So these zircons presumably formed before plate tectonics was active. And if before plate tectonics, then presumably before mountains ranges and at a time when most of the surface of the earth was relatively flat. And as soon as the earth had cooled enough, the oceans formed. So, the zircon evidence is being interpreted as indicating the early earth was relatively flat and completely covered by water! Presumably, plate tectonics would not begin for another 300 Mys during a heavy bombardment of meteors and comets.<sup>2</sup> Genesis 1:1-13 says that the earth was covered by water until day 3 when the dry land first appeared.<sup>3</sup> It's amazing how God's Word proves true (Proverbs 30:5, ESV)

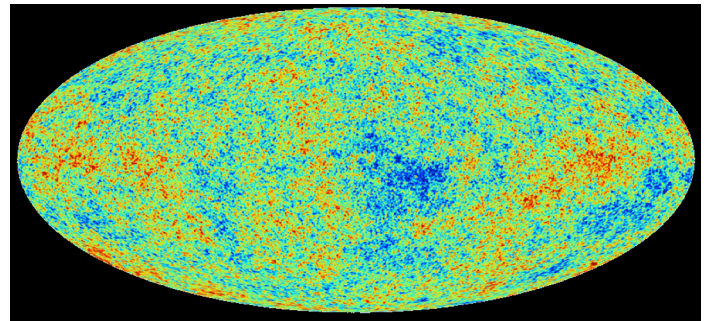
<sup>1</sup> Burnham AD Berry AJ Formation of Hadean granites by melting of igneous crust. *Nature Geoscience* (2017), doi:10.1038/ngeo2942

<sup>2</sup> New Scientist staff and Press Association (2017 May 28) Early Earth was covered in a global ocean and had no mountains. *New Scientist*. <<https://www.newscientist.com/article/2130266-early-earth-was-covered-in-a-global-ocean-and-had-no-mountains/>> Accessed 2017 Jun 11

<sup>3</sup> Coppedge DF (2017 May 09) Early Earth was flat and ocean-covered, secular scientists claim. *Creation Evolution Headlines*. <<https://crev.info/2017/05/early-earth-flat-watery-sphere/>> Accessed 2017 Jun 11

### Big Bang Inflation in Trouble: Multiverse is Really a "Multimesse"<sup>4</sup>

Figure 1



Cosmic microwave background radiation (Planck, ESA)

A recent article in *Scientific American* says that the failure to detect the predicted polarization of the cosmic microwave background radiation (CMB) by the Planck probe shows the most probable versions of the theory of inflation are wrong.<sup>5</sup> According to accepted theory, quantum fluctuations resulted in matter-energy and space-time coming into existence 13.8 billion years ago—the famed Big Bang. Then, after the matter-energy had come to thermal equilibrium, the universe expanded (inflation) at a rate much greater than the speed of light, then slowed down to a rate similar to what we observe today.<sup>6</sup> It would be 400,000 years before the hot plasma cooled enough to allow the first atoms to form. The formation of these atoms released radiation that the Planck satellite was able to recently detect in the microwave region of the electromagnetic spectrum (Figure 1). The whole sky picture taken by Planck is presumably a look at the distribution of matter in the early universe. The CMB presumably shows that the matter distribution and temperature in the early universe was very uniform, with only slight differences from place to place. But, according to theory, these differ-

<sup>4</sup> Herbert J. Big bang blowup at *Scientific American*. <<http://www.icr.org/article/10023>> Accessed 2017 Jun 11

<sup>5</sup> Ijjas A, Steinhardt PJ, Loeb A (2017) Pop goes the universe. *Sci Am*, 316(2):32-39

<sup>6</sup> The cosmic speed limit for objects moving through space is the speed of light, *c*. However, this does not apply to the expansion of space.

ences were enough to allow gravity to eventually form galaxies, galaxy clusters, and stars.

Inflation is thought to explain the uniformity of the distribution of matter and energy in the universe. Secular scientists reason that the universe is too big and too young for light from one end of the universe to have reached all other places in the universe; this is known as the *horizon problem*. And that is what would have to have happened to explain the uniform temperature and distribution of matter. Theory says the initial quantum fluctuations would not be expected to generate a uniform distribution. So, to get the uniform distribution from a non-uniform initial state and account for the universe's apparent size and age, an initial period of equilibration followed by a brief period of enormous expansion were proposed.

The most probable versions of inflation theory predict that the gravity waves generated by the expansion would have left a tell-tale fingerprint on the CMB. But Planck did not detect this fingerprint. The predicted scale of the effect and the sensitivity of Planck were sufficient to facilitate detection of the fingerprint if it had been there. As a result, all that remain are improbable versions of inflation theory. Unfortunately, inflation theory can't determine the initial conditions (before inflation), and it is the initial conditions that determine what kind of a universe you get after the inflation period. So, all initial states are possible and so every kind of universe could result from inflation. Hence inflation theory predicts a *multiverse* where there are an infinite number of universes, each with a different set of laws, geometries, and constants. The authors referred to the *multiverse* as the *multimes* since our universe is not explained.

The authors of the article believe inflation is hence a poor scientific theory. Theories that predict everything explain nothing and can't be falsified. And it is reasonable to ask if theories that can't be disproved by observations can be properly considered scientific. What needs explanation is the specific state and nature of our universe—why, exactly, is our universe the way it is? Inflation's explanation is essentially that "stuff happens" and is not very satisfying; it has little explanatory power. To be sure, there are scientists who take issue with this assessment of inflation theory,<sup>7</sup> but they fail to refute the main thrusts of the article in my opinion.

Inflation is a pillar of modern cosmology. Without it, cosmology is in trouble.

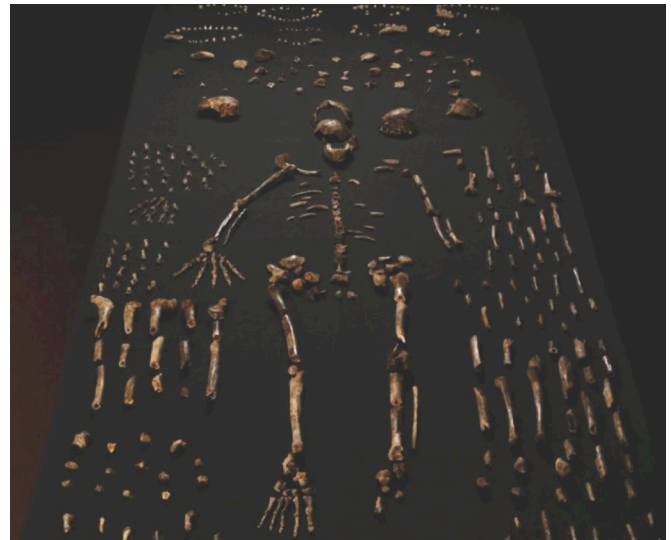
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<sup>7</sup> You J, Bickel C, Sokol J (2017) A cosmic controversy. *Science*. 355(6329):1013. doi: 10.1126/science.355.6329.1013. A *Scientific American* article about the theory of inflation prompted a reply from a group of 33 physicists, along with a response from the article's authors. See: <<https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/a-cosmic-controversy/>> Accessed 2017 Jun 11

Alternatively, an omniscient and omnipotent creator would understand how and have the power to start with very improbable initial conditions and unfold His creation in a way that resulted in our universe with all its details. This is the explanation that materialists refuse to consider for fine-tuning.

### ***Homo naledi* Is Not Your Great Grandfather**

Figure 2



*Homo naledi*

Skeletal remains of 15 hominid individuals were found in 2013 in a cave in South Africa (Figure 2). The find was reported in 2015.<sup>8</sup> The creature had a relatively small brain and curved fingers. No other skeletal remains were found at the site suggesting it may have been a burial ground. A second, nearby cave with the remains of two more related individuals was found. In both caves, the skeletons had characteristics of apes and modern humans. Could this species be the missing link between primates and modern humans?

The date of find was uncertain. The remains were speculated to be as much as 3 million years old, in accord with evolutionary expectations. But subsequent dating has suggested a younger age, only 300 Kys,<sup>9</sup> excluding the possibility of the species being an evolutionary ancestor of modern humans. In fact, for secularists, this date opens the real possibility that *Homo naledi* and *Homo sapiens* lived at the same time!

Some say *Homo naledi* may have evolved millions of years ago and then remained the same (stasis). Hence older ex-

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<sup>8</sup> Berger LR, Hawks J, de Ruiter DJ, Churchill SE, Schmid P, Deleuzene LK, Kivell TL, Garvin HM, et al. (2015) *Homo naledi*, a new species of the genus *Homo* from the Dinaledi Chamber, South Africa. *eLIFE*, 4: doi: 10.7554/eLife.09560.

<sup>9</sup> Dirks PH, Roberts EM, Hilbert-Wolf H, Kramers JD, Hawks J, Dosseto A, Duval M, Elliott M, et al. (2017) The age of *Homo naledi* and associated sediments in the Rising Star Cave, South Africa. *eLIFE*, 6: e2423, doi: 10.7554/eLife.24231

amples of this species may be found some day, they claim. This would still not put *Homo naledi* in our ancestral line, however.

No DNA has been found yet.

*Homo naledi* is probably just one more racial variant of our own species; stay tuned.

### ***Spiritual Empiricism: Can God Be Perceived Without the Five Senses?***

Materialism, the philosophy that holds that the physical realm is all that exists, is intellectually and spiritually bankrupt, yet our secular culture assumes it implicitly. Physical processes are unable to explain the origin of the universe, the fine tuning of physics, the origin and nature of physical law, the origin of life, the origin of consciousness, the Cambrian explosion of the fossil record, the origin of sexuality, or the origin of the information found in the genomes of all living things. Materialism denies the essential roll of intelligence in producing the information in nature, especially in biology and physics. Moreover, materialism must deny the spiritual and has nothing to say about morality or values. Indeed, a consistent materialism must deny human free will, and with it love, justice, meaning, dignity, and purpose. Of course, no one, not even atheists, live as if life has no meaning or as if they have no choices. Atheists vote, express opinions, choose their friends and spouses, love their children, choose their vocations, etc. But how do atheists *know* there is no God? What evidence do they have? As mentioned above, there remain many enigmas about which science can merely speculate. So it takes faith to be an atheist! One must believe that science will find the answers someday. But what if science is already pointing us towards intelligent causes? Many believe, as I do, that science has found the fingerprints of intelligent design in nature. And archeology, the internal and external consistency of the scriptures, the fulfillment of prophecies, etc. have demonstrated that the historical truth claims and divine inspiration of the Bible can stand up to scrutiny. And of course, the Bible is unrivaled in explaining the nature of man (selfish yet valuable), the state of the world (war, division, greed, hedonism, etc.), and offers the only real help (divine wisdom, love) available for humanity's problems. But is there any way an honest skeptic could *know* firsthand if God is real and the Bible is His Word? I think the answer is yes, and it comes from the Bible itself.

Have you ever thought about how you know what you know? Have you ever questioned your reality, value, or possibility assumptions? How did you resolve any doubts that emerged? There is a branch of philosophy dedicated to this subject called epistemology.

When I was a boy, I was taught that God of the Bible was real and the Bible was true. I never doubted this until my late teens when I took an agnostic view. I could not believe a merciful God could send anyone to a place of eternal punishment. Earlier, I had begun to consider reli-

gions other than Christianity. I became a Bahai<sup>10</sup> when I was 14, but eventually lost confidence in it. I later came to realize I had accepted the Bahai faith because my best friend at the time was Bahai, not because I was convinced it was true. I had also taken on many of the values of the hippy movement: world peace, "if it feels good do it," "tune-in, turn-on, drop out," "make love, not war," free love, rock-n-roll, etc. I considered myself a utopian socialist. I grew long hair. I became very idealistic and proud: *our generation would eliminate war and prejudice once and for all as we escaped the emptiness of the greed and materialism (manifested in the "military-industrial complex") of our parents and the West.* By the time I went to college, however, I was agnostic and a psychology major. I was confused about the nature of reality—the existential dilemma. How could I really know what was true about existence? It seemed that all belief was based upon unprovable assumptions, that certain knowledge of reality was unavailable. Drugs, booze, and sex lost their luster. I came to realize how self-centered and selfish I really was, and this selfishness was inescapable. Even when I did good things I realized the selfishness of my motivation—it was still for me. I learned to hate myself. Psychology turned out to be an empty intellectual shell; it did not even begin to address the questions of meaning and purpose in life. I was a psychology major for over three years. It was during this time in college that I became a Christian for real; I have not doubted the Bible or who God is since then.

So what convinced me of the validity of the Bible and the reality of Christ? Ironically, answered prayer. While on a month long trip to see America by bus at the age of 20, I encountered a man named Dave on a street in Washington, DC who simply told me that he was into the Truth and that the Bible was trustworthy. He invited me to ask God to reveal Himself to me, which I did (what did I have to lose?). Dave gave me a Bible. I went with Dave that night with some of his Christian friends to a nearby mall to handout tracts about Jesus. One of the men with him previously had been put in jail for witnessing ("disturbing the peace") at the mall. Undeterred, he was back at the mall witnessing again. I respected their commitment. After DC, I met a woman in a bus station who gave me cards with memory verses on them. In a town in Tennessee, I looked up a random place in the yellow pages that turned out to be a Presbyterian student union. I arrived in Colorado Springs just as the bus station was closing for the evening. I went outside and asked the first people I saw if they knew a place I could spend the night ("crash"): they directed me to a place run by Christians. In my hippy days, I had become convinced that the college students living on the west coast held the secrets to true living; they were the people who had it "all together." After spending the night on a park bench in downtown Seattle, I asked a long-haired man if he knew of a good place to stay. He directed me to a group that turned out to be a cult. They

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<sup>10</sup> The major prophet of the Bahai faith, Bahauallah, claimed to be the second coming of Christ.

had a “prophet” who was their leader. They allowed men and women to cohabit and then to separate and find someone else if things did not work out. They all lived together. They invited me to join them. Honestly, I was tempted, but I knew that their practices did not match what the Bible taught, so I reluctantly refused. After spending the night, I walked out the front door to get on a bus. As soon as I walked out, the door was slammed shut behind me as if to say “and stay out!” I was sad. As I got on the bus to leave, another traveler, apparently aware of the situation, looked at me and said, “The kingdom of God is within and not on a hill in Seattle!” God was showing me that He, and not some spiritual sounding hippies on the west coast, had the Truth. There were other similar events, but I think you get the idea: I would meet Christians in bus stations, on the street, and end up in Christian “crash pads” in various cities across the USA *without seeking them*. God was showing me He was real, sovereign, and the God of the Bible. I had an inner certainty that I had not had before—reality at last! God was communicating with me! It would take another five years before I completely gave up drinking and smoking and began to meet with other Christians regularly and was baptized. I know the Bible is the Truth because God has shown it to me. Since then God has answered hundreds of my prayers, some of which I never audibly verbalized; Someone, the Living God, can read my thoughts! The Bible explains who we are, why we exist, what our options are, what has meaning and what does not. It shows our problem (separation from God) and the only solution: Jesus Christ.

I am sure that every Christian can give a similar testimony about answered prayer. I like to think of this way of knowing as *spiritual empiricism*. This way of finding and knowing God is well preceded in the scriptures. Consider Gideon (Judges 6) and Thomas (John 20:24-29). In both cases, God met them where they were in need. Gideon and Thomas both asked for evidence from God, the former for guidance in battle, the latter for confirmation of Christ’s resurrection—both were answered.

Consider Acts 17:24-28. The Apostle Paul is addressing (non-Christian) Greeks about their altar “to the unknown God.”

The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. **And He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him.** Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, for “In Him we live and move and have our being”; as even some of your own poets have said, “For we are indeed His offspring.”...[ESV]

God in His omniscience has sovereignly placed each of us at the best location and time in history for us to *feel* after Him. The Greek word for “feel” is ψηλαφάω, which transliterated is psēlaphāō,<sup>11</sup> which means to handle, touch, or *verify by contact*. God wants us to seek and feel after Him, to verify His reality experimentally, through experience hence empirically, by contact!

Consider the following verses:

O taste and see that the LORD *is* good: blessed *is* the man *that* trusteth in him. (Psalm 34:8, KJV)

Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. (Isaiah 55:6, KJV)

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. (Matthew 7:7 KJV)

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. (Revelation 3:20, KJV)

But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” (Romans 10:8-11, ESV)

God is available to anyone who will call upon Him. And all those who call upon Him are given the evidence of His existence and nature and are given eternal life.

The rational-empirical inductive-deductive philosophy of modern science is based on the assumption that the universe behaves in a consistent and predictable way that can be understood. It assumes that our five senses and the rules of logic can be applied to grasp reality. But where do these assumptions come from? Historically, science emerged in a culture based on a Christian worldview which held that a reasonable creator would have created a reasonable universe that can be understood by His creatures endowed with reason. Modern science emerged in Christian Europe. However, once people came to realize that much of what can be observed in the physical realm is explicable by natural law, some jumped to the unfounded and self-contradictory conclusion that nature could account for its own existence and that a creator was no longer required. It was thought that the full evidence of this would eventually be discovered. However, centuries of scientific investigation have made the case for a creator stronger than ever for anyone who is honest with the data.

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<sup>11</sup> Greek Strong’s Number: 5584

If anything, science has bumped up against the limits of what it can know and explore. For example, decades of investigation into the origin of life have shown that chemistry and physics plus time and chance do not and cannot account for abiogenesis or the information found in DNA (although few admit this). Scientific research has shown that the information in DNA is consistent with chemistry and physics, but can't be explained by (reduced to) them. Hence there is some other principle or law that science has overlooked. And of course, that cause is intelligence. The capabilities of intelligent agents such as human beings are amenable to the scientific method. Humans can create information, whereas chemistry alone cannot. Hence it is reasonable and within empirical science to assert that some aspects of nature must be the result of the operation of intelligence. It is as simple as that, but don't expect most scientists to become believers. And why not, if the evidence is strong for a creator, and it is. So what's the problem? Apparently something other than lack of evidence is involved. In fact, the whole materialistic evolutionary tale is really a smoke screen to cover up disdain for God:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. (Romans 1:18-23, ESV)

Man's heart is the issue (Jeremiah 17:9-10). We come with a sin nature which does not care for the truth. And we hide that fact behind philosophies we think justify us, but they don't.

Everyone has faith in something or someone. We can trust man's philosophies or God's Word and power (1 Corinthians 2:4-5). Evidence for God is abundantly available in nature and through communication with Him. God proves himself to exist and be true to His Word to all that seek Him. ☞

## Another Reason to Believe a Biblical Age of the Earth

Every time a comet passes the sun in its orbit, it loses mass, which can be seen as the comet's tail. Comets lose so much mass in each pass that they would have completely evaporated after a few hundred thousand passes, so the comets we see could not have been orbiting for millions of years.

### COMING EVENTS

**Thursday, July 13, 7:00 pm, Providence Baptist Church,  
6339 Glenwood Ave., Raleigh, Room 207**

We will watch and discuss most of the new film (in theaters earlier this year) *Is Genesis History?* In the film, Tel Tackett, creator of the *Truth Project*, interviews several PhD scientists, each a young-earth creationist, on topics such as geology, theology, the Bible, astronomy, biology, fossils, dinosaurs, macro and microevolution, and intelligent design. The film is suitable for teens on up. For a trailer, additional videos, and other free downloads go to [isgenesishistory.com](http://isgenesishistory.com). Invite your family and friends, even the skeptical one.