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# ORIGINS



CHRISTIAN  
PERSPECTIVES  
ON CREATION,  
EVOLUTION,  
AND  
INTELLIGENT  
DESIGN

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# ORIGINS VIDEO DISCUSSION GUIDE

These six videos are companions to the book *Origins: Christian Perspectives on Creation, Evolution, and Intelligent Design* by Deborah B. Haarsma and Loren D. Haarsma (2011, Faith Alive). There are a number of different ways you can use these videos:

- Small groups or book clubs that are reading the *Origins* book will find the videos to be helpful discussion starters and summaries of the material.
- Groups can use the videos alongside other materials as part of a larger program of study on the relationship between science and Christianity.
- Other groups may rely solely on the videos to provide the material for discussion. They are helpful for exploring the topics on your own before wading into a group study.

## ABOUT THIS STUDY GUIDE

Since the majority of viewers will use these videos as part of a small group study, the study guide on the following pages is written with a small group audience in mind.

This study guide is divided into six sections, one for each video in the *Origins* series. In each section you will find quotes and discussion questions to help your group think and talk about the topics covered in the video.

We've also provided pointers to corresponding chapters in the *Origins* book where you will find more questions for reflection and discussion, relevant charts and tables, and resources for further study.

## TIPS FOR SMALL GROUP LEADERS

Thank you for being willing to lead your group through the *Origins* film series. Topics such as creation, evolution, human origins, and the relationship between science and Christianity have been sources of disagreement and sometimes mistrust within the Christian community for centuries. We believe when we take time to think and talk about the issues together, we can begin to bridge the gaps that have developed between Christians on all sides of the debate. Facilitating this much-needed reflection and discussion is an important contribution!

If you are new to leading a small group, here are a few suggestions:

- Look the discussion questions over ahead of time, and pick the questions you think will work best with your group.
- Invite everyone to share his or her view during the discussion. If one or two people begin to dominate, redirect the conversation to another aspect of the video or book. Don't be afraid to invite someone who has been quiet to share his or her thoughts.
- If the conversation lags or bogs down in one topic or a particular issue, use the questions provided in this study guide or at the end of the related chapters in the book to help spark new comments.
- When necessary, remind people not to say negative things about other Christians, suggesting that they are stupid or lacking in faith. Critique ideas, not people. In Ephesians 4:15, Paul encourages us to speak the truth in love. This verse is a helpful reminder that we should not make false or hurtful assumptions about fellow believers who disagree with our stance on any particular issue.

- If possible, end with a song and prayer to praise God and remind your group of our unity as the body of Christ. We've provided a few song recommendations below; feel free to substitute other songs that are meaningful for your group.

"The Heavens Declare Your Glory"

"God of Wonders"

"For the Beauty of the Earth"

"All Things Bright and Beautiful"

"This Is My Father's World"

"How Great Thou Art"

## COMPANION BOOK

We highly recommend that all small group participants purchase a copy of the 2011 revised edition of *Origins* (available from Faith Alive Christian Resources, [www.faithaliveresources.org](http://www.faithaliveresources.org)). Using the book in combination with the videos best prepares participants for thoughtful reflection and discussion.

## ONLINE ARTICLES

If you or members of your group wish to pursue the topics presented in any of the *Origins* videos even further, you'll find a collection of related articles on our website ([www.faithaliveresources.org/origins](http://www.faithaliveresources.org/origins)). If you are using the book alongside the videos, you'll find sidebars in each chapter directing you to specific articles on our website that relate to the topic at hand, as well as other questions for discussion and lists of additional resources.

## QUESTIONS?

If you have questions about the videos, the book, or about how to host a study on the topics covered in any of the *Origins* products, please feel free to contact us at [editors@faithaliveresources.org](mailto:editors@faithaliveresources.org).



## VIDEO 1

# IT'S NOT SCIENCE VERSUS GOD

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Take some time to reflect on your impression of the relationship between science and Christianity. How would you characterize that relationship? Consider sharing stories from your own life about how your impressions of issues like creation, evolution, and design have been shaped.
- *“Whatever truths scientists discover, those truths ultimately come from God.”* Discuss your initial reaction to this statement. How does it fit with your understanding of the world? How does it fit with your understanding of God?
- Name some things you have seen or experienced in the natural world that have sparked feelings of wonder, beauty, mystery, and curiosity. What have those experiences taught you about God?
- Describe a time when you felt pressure to choose between science and faith. Did you feel you had to choose one over the other or did you believe there must be some way to reconcile them?
- *“Our world belongs to God. . . .”* What does that statement mean to you? How might thinking of God as not just the creator but also the sustainer of the world affect the impressions we have of the relationship between science and religion?

**ADDITIONAL MATERIAL AVAILABLE IN THE *ORIGINS* BOOK:**

- Chapters 1-2
- Discussion questions on pages 35, 54
- Resource lists on pages 36-37, 55



## VIDEO 2

# IT'S NOT SCIENCE VERSUS SCRIPTURE

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *“Of course God inspired the book of Scripture, but we can also think of the natural world as a second book authored by God.”* Spend some time thinking about how God reveals himself to us and discussing this “two books” approach.
- Are there any passages in Scripture that support this approach?
- How can reading from both books—Scripture and creation—help us more fully understand and live in God’s world?
- What conflicts might arise? What can you do to resolve those conflicts?
- What techniques or methods do you use to interpret the Bible? What kinds of resources do you turn to for help with making sense of Scripture?
- What books, sermons, or experiences have helped you re-think how you interpret a certain Bible passage or verse?
- *“By listening to both nature and Scripture, we gain a fuller understanding of God’s story in creation.”* Tell the group about a time when your understanding of God was informed by something you experienced in nature.

- Read Psalm 19. Discuss how the “two books” idea is evident in the psalm.

**ADDITIONAL MATERIAL AVAILABLE IN THE *ORIGINS* BOOK:**

- Chapters 3-4
- Discussion questions on pages 68, 94-95
- Resource lists on pages 69, 95-96
- Useful chart: Two Books (p. 74)

## VIDEO 3

# GENESIS AND GEOLOGY

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Read Genesis 1 and Genesis 2. In what ways are these two creation stories different? In what ways are they similar? What do you think these two biblical stories are trying to teach us?
- If the natural world also tells us a “story” about how God created it, in what ways is that story similar to the creation accounts we find in Genesis? What new things might that story teach us?
- Loren lays out numerous ways Christians have typically interpreted Genesis 1. Which interpretations have you heard before?
- *“Genesis 1 is less concerned with the ‘how’ and the ‘when’ of creation, and more concerned with the ‘who’ and the ‘why.’”* What are some of the benefits of an Ancient Near East Cosmology interpretation of Genesis? What are some of the challenges this interpretation has to face?
- *“There are multiple, independent lines of evidence (glacial, geological, etc.) all pointing to the same story: the earth is old.”* This is an interpretation of the natural world which

many Christian scientists share. How does this interact with some of the different interpretations of Genesis 1 that were discussed in the video?

- What does it mean to you that God gives us a role to play in creation?
- What questions did this video raise for you? What ideas do you want to explore more?

### **ADDITIONAL MATERIAL AVAILABLE IN THE *ORIGINS* BOOK:**

- Chapters 5-6
- Discussion questions on pages 125, 146
- Resource lists on pages 125-127, 147
- Useful charts:
  - Summary of Several Interpretations of Genesis (p. 100)
  - Order of Creation in Genesis 1 and 2 (p. 101)
  - Order of Creation in Genesis 1, Genesis 2, and Modern Science (p. 111)
  - Days of Genesis 1 (p. 132)
  - Ancient Near East Cosmology (p. 135)
  - Egyptian Engraving of the Cosmos (p. 137)
  - Genesis 1 Versus *Enuma Elish*, (p. 139)

## VIDEO 4

# ASTRONOMY AND THE BIG BANG

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What comes to mind as you contemplate the pictures from the Hubble telescope and hear Deb and Loren talk about the expanses of the universe?
- Several things are mentioned as evidence that the universe is old. How does this fit with some of the interpretations of Scripture that you have heard?
- Why do you think God created all the amazing things in our universe: planets, moons, asteroids, stars, suns, galaxies, and so on?
- *“Loren and I believe that God used the process of the Big Bang to bring about the universe. . . . God was in charge as the universe expanded. God was in charge as particles combined together to make atoms. . . . Through these natural processes, God brought together all the building blocks necessary for life to thrive and a suitable planet to be our home.”* What are your thoughts about this explanation linking the Big Bang theory to God’s work? Is this similar to or different from how you picture God creating the world and governing everyday things like rain falling and the sun shining?

- *“As Christians, we believe that the fine tuning that scientists see is consistent with our belief that God designed the whole universe, from the beginning, planning for life.”* How does the idea that God designed the universe to self-assemble and unfold into the complex world we know fit with your notions about God and creation? Is it similar to or different from how you picture God creating each individual new plant and animal?
- God is still involved in sustaining and creating. What are some of the passages of Scripture that teach this? Is this a comfort? A cause for concern?

**ADDITIONAL MATERIAL AVAILABLE IN THE *ORIGINS* BOOK:**

- Chapter 7
- Discussion questions on page 175
- Resource lists on page 176

## VIDEO 5

# EVOLUTION

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What comes to mind when you hear the word *evolution*?
- Which of the three Christian perspectives on evolution is most similar to your personal view? Have you always had the same view or has it changed over time? What views do your Christian friends or families hold?
- Which of the five different “definitions” of evolution—micro-evolution, pattern of change over time, common ancestry, the theory of evolution, and evolutionism--have you heard of before? Which definition have you been taught to associate with the word *evolution*?
- How do you imagine God creating the world? How do you imagine God causing rain to fall and trees to grow? How do you imagine God causing species to adapt to changing environments?
- *“I can now see Genesis as teaching who created everything and the theory of evolution as describing how God created. This was God’s design from the beginning.”* Discuss how this statement fits with the various interpretations of Genesis that we have been exploring.

- How does this explanation of how evolution works differ from the idea of evolution you have been taught in the past?
- Should we expect scientific proof in nature that God is the creator and sustainer? Why or why not?

**ADDITIONAL MATERIAL AVAILABLE IN THE *ORIGINS* BOOK:**

- Chapters 8-10
- Discussion questions on pages 192, 208, 225-226
- List of definitions of “evolution” on page 180
- Resource lists on pages 192, 208-209, 226-227
- Useful chart: A Tree of Common Ancestry (p. 197)



## VIDEO 6

# HUMAN ORIGINS AND ADAM AND EVE

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Deb and Loren don't agree with each other on the issue of human origins. What do you think about that?
- What scientific issues about human origins strike you as particularly interesting or important? Which theological issues about human origins strike you as particularly important?
- What do you think it means to be created in the image of God?
- Which of the five human origin scenarios do you personally find most plausible to hold at this time? What do you think are the greatest strengths of that scenario? What are the greatest challenges that scenario faces?

### ADDITIONAL MATERIAL AVAILABLE IN THE *ORIGINS* BOOK:

- Chapters 11-12
- Discussion questions on pages 247, 271
- Resource lists on pages 248-249, 271-273
- Useful chart: Summary of Scientific and Theological Issues (pp. 252-254)

