

Introduction

Grade Levels: 8th through 12th

About this Course and Supplement Pack

This set of documents can be used as an introductory course to the concepts of the Big Bible History approach. It can also be used as a supplement pack to a Big History curriculum. The core idea of a Big History curriculum is using the 13.8 billion year history of our universe as the overall context for understanding the place of mankind in history. More information can be found at <https://www.oerproject.com/Big-History>. There are several Big History curricula that have been developed to date.

As a supplement pack, this Big Bible History course adds an important perspective to a Big History curricula. This additional perspective is based on the fact that the Creator of the universe has given us a description of 14 physical events in the first chapter of the book of Genesis in the Bible. And it can be shown that these 14 physical events in Genesis 1, the first chapter of the first book in the Bible, now harmonize quite well with mainstream science. This harmony between mainstream science and Genesis 1 becomes profound when we understand that Genesis was written over 3000 years ago and claims to be inspired by the Creator of the universe. The fact that the physical events described in Genesis 1 are in harmony with descriptions from mainstream science for events that happened billions of years ago would strongly suggest that Genesis 1, and by implication the Bible, were authored ultimately by the Creator of our universe.

This course describes the harmony between science and Genesis 1 in some detail. Separate files which we denote as different chapters cover the following aspects of this harmony between Genesis 1 and science.

1. Introduction – This introductory chapter that you are now reading
2. Background – Covers the historical and philosophical background of naturalism
3. Foundations – The foundational assumptions used in analyzing Genesis 1
4. Categorizing Genesis 1 – Every passage in Genesis 1 is put into one of 3 categories
5. Physical Event 1 in Genesis 1 – The Big Bang
6. Physical Event 2 in Genesis 1 – Early Earth Formation
7. Physical Event 3 in Genesis 1 – Dark Clouds over a Water Covered Earth
8. Physical Event 4 in Genesis 1 – Dark Clouds Become Less Dense over Early Earth
9. Physical Event 5 in Genesis 1 – Water Cycle on the Earth
10. Physical Event 6 in Genesis 1 – Appearance of Continental Landmasses on the Earth

11. Physical Event 7 in Genesis 1 – Appearance of Plants on the Earth
12. Physical Event 8 in Genesis 1 – Atmosphere of the Earth Becomes Clear
13. Physical Event 9 in Genesis 1 – Appearance of Large Sea Animals
14. Physical Event 10 in Genesis 1 – Appearance of Flying Birds
15. Physical Event 11 in Genesis 1 – Appearance of Mammals for Livestock
16. Physical Event 12 in Genesis 1 – Appearance of Ground Mammals
17. Physical Event 13 in Genesis 1 – Appearance of Wild Mammals
18. Physical Event 14 in Genesis 1 – Appearance of Homo Sapiens
19. Summary of Course

This harmony between science and Genesis 1 is based on the approach of progressive Old Earth Creationism. Many of the foundational concepts used in this harmony have been understood since the 1980s or earlier. But this course gathers and updates these concepts to make them easier to use in the context of a Big History curriculum.

The harmony between Genesis 1 and science is not to say that the Bible is a textbook of science. The descriptions of physical events in Genesis 1 are quite short and might leave many questions unanswered about exact details. Biblical descriptions may even use metaphor and poetic language. But where Genesis 1 does speak clearly about physical creation events, it can be shown that these physical events also have corresponding descriptions that are now well accepted in the scientific community. This growth of harmony between the Bible and science is quite significant in the history of mankind. That significance is examined in greater detail in the next chapter file titled Background, with a brief historical survey of a philosophy called naturalism.

Overcoming Skepticism of this Approach

For probably a myriad of reasons, the harmony between the Bible and science has not yet been well understood or embraced by a majority of people. To some believers in the Bible it may not seem believable or acceptable to believe that metaphor is mixed with actual events in Genesis 1. The Foundations chapter file concerning metaphor will hopefully bring greater clarity concerning that issue. The Foundations chapter also explains a few other concepts that are important for this perspective to be understood.

Perhaps to some other people the science behind Old Earth Creationism is too difficult to comprehend or it seems like the science is being twisted to conform to the descriptions in Genesis 1. In such a case, coupling a study of the chapter files covering Events 1 through Events 14 with appropriate searches using AI, search engines, or the scientific literature should bring more clarity about the strong harmony being outlined here in a consistent and straightforward manner.

The Origin of the Ideas Informing This Approach

The main ideas in this supplement pack were originally inspired by the writings of Hugh Ross and the work of the Reasons to Believe organization at <https://reasons.org>. Reasons to Believe began in the 1980s to promote the Old Earth Creationism perspective. This course is an effort to combine Old Earth Creationism with the work of the Big History Project. The Big History Project is an educational project started about 1990 to set human history in the context of the entire history of the universe. Old Earth Creationism adds an additional perspective by including the Creator of the universe when describing the place of humankind in the entire history of the universe. Combining these two approaches can be quite helpful when addressing our profound existential questions about our purpose and the meaning of life. This course is a beginning attempt at an educational curriculum that harmonizes the Big History approach with Old Earth Creationism. Further details can be found at the <https://big.bible> website.