

VOLUME 21

NUMBERS 135

**THE
BIBLICAL
ASTRONOMER**

WINTER 2011



PRODUCT LIST

(Continued from back cover.)

The Gravitational Analog of a Rolling Ball on an Elastic Membrane, by J. Hanson. The underlying mathematics and physics is presented for simulating gravitational trajectories by a ball or disk moving on an appropriately deformed elastic membrane. \$8.50

The Copernican Revolution: A Fable for Educated Men, by G. Bouw. A collection of responses submitted in response to Danny Faulkner's "Geocentrism and Creation," promoted by Answers in Genesis. Each response was submitted to *Creation Ex Nihilo* but was rejected for publication for queer reasons. (Illustrated, glue bound.) \$8.50

Both of the above technical papers \$11.00

What Happened to Our English Bible? By T. Unruh. A gentle, yet cogent look at the demise of the Authorized English Bible and the men behind that demise. (Illustrated) \$8.50

He Maketh His Sun to Rise: A Look at Biblical Geocentricity, by Dr. Thos. Strouse. A critique of Creationist arguments against geocentricity as well as theological insights into geocentricity. \$8.50

Subscriptions to the *Biblical Astronomer* are \$20 per year (\$28 outside the USA). Membership is \$30 per year, (\$35 outside the USA). Members are allowed a 15% discount on all materials published by the *Biblical Astronomer*. Offerings to make possible additional publishing and research projects are gratefully accepted. Foreign orders please send either cash or cheques drawn on a United States bank. Credit cards are acceptable only on the Internet through PayPal's secure payment service. The product list, including items not listed in this issue, is at <http://geocentricity.com/geoshop/index.html>.

Editor: Gerardus D. Bouw, Ph.D.
4527 Wetzel Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44109
U.S.A.
E-mail address: gbouw@geocentricity.com
<http://geocentricity.com/>

Front Cover: The earth and moon as photographed by Mars Orbiter.

THE BIBLICAL ASTRONOMER

Volume 21, Number 135
WINTER 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Editorial</i>	3
<i>Scriptural Passages Teaching Geocentrism III</i> Robert Sungenis, Ph.D.	4
<i>The Biblical and Scientific Dishonesty of Some Christian Textbook Publishers</i> Ron Nelson	27

EDITORIAL

This belated issue will conclude Dr. Robert Sungenis' three-part article on the Geocentric scriptures from a Roman Catholic perspective. The reader is reminded, because I do get called on the carpet for it, that I do not necessarily support either the translations of the scriptures presented by Dr. Sungenis, nor his Catholic reasoning anymore than he would support my approach to Scripture. The purpose of presenting the article is to expose the reader to the Catholic view.

Work is slowly progressing on the revision of *Geocentricity*. My wife, Beth, is proofreading the book for grammar, spelling, and style. The biggest snag is the assembling of biographical information about modern geocentrists. Next to that is the editing of some of their information to present the person as a human being instead of a list of facts. The book has 39 chapters and six appendices.

Strangely, several refereed and published papers in the past few months have drawn geocentric conclusions. Some find that the earth is located at or near the center of a group of extragalactic objects. The alignment of the cosmic background radiation with the ecliptic had confounded attempts to find non-geocentric explanations. Instead, the geocentric case is strengthening. Then, too, the long-awaited Gravity Probe B satellite observations are finally published. The Lense-Thirring effect—which in 1918 was derived from geocentric assumptions (that the universe is a rotating shell about the earth)—has been confirmed and claimed to be a proof of relativity, but it proves geocentricity, instead; at least, that claim is sounder than the proof of relativity claim.

In the next issue, D.V., we will report on the newest evidences and theory of the firmament. It will likely take up the entire issue.

On a personal note, Beth and I are now officially grandparents. Our first grandchild, William, was born on 30 May to our son, Benjamin, and his wife, Rachel. Baby boy William is already showing a special talent in longitudinal¹ wave theory by generating acoustical waves, especially in his room at night.

¹ Longitudinal waves are also called compression waves, or in extreme cases, shock waves.

SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES TEACHING GEOCENTRISM Part 3

Robert A. Sungenis, Ph.D.¹

Here is the third and final installment of Dr. Sungenis' "Scripture Passages Teaching Geocentrism." In the first installment, Dr. Sungenis covered Joshua's Long Day in detail as well as the related passage in Habakkuk 3:11. The second installment continued to examine mostly isolated verses. This installment finishes to isolated verses, then looks at alleged heliocentric verses, the firmament, and ends with a survey of Magisterium proclamations on Geocentrism.

Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) 43:1-10

¹The pride of the heavenly heights is the clear firmament, the appearance of heaven in a spectacle of glory.

²The sun, when it appears, making proclamation as it goes forth, is a marvelous instrument, the work of the Most High.

³At noon it parches the land; and who can withstand its burning heat?

⁴A man tending a furnace works in burning heat, but the sun burns the mountains three times as much; it breathes out fiery vapors, and with bright beams it blinds the eyes.

⁵Great is the Lord who made it; and at his command it hastens on its course.

⁶He made the moon also, to serve in its season to mark the times and to be an everlasting sign.

⁷From the moon comes the sign for feast days, a light that wanes when it has reached the full.

⁸The month is named for the moon, increasing marvelously in its phases, an instrument of the hosts on high shining forth in the firmament of heaven.

⁹The glory of the stars is the beauty of heaven, a gleaming array in the heights of the Lord.

¹⁰At the command of the Holy One they stand as ordered, they never relax in their watches.

¹ Excerpted from the book: *Galileo Was Wrong: The Church Was Right, Volume II, The Historical Case for Geocentrism*. Second edition, published February 2008, ISBN: 9780-9779640-9-3. For purchase, contact CAI Publishing, Inc. at cairomeo@aol.com

This passage provides confirmation of the sun's circular course around the Earth. Ecclesiasticus (or Sirach) was written late in Israel's history (circa 180 B.C.). About two-thirds of the original Hebrew of the book has been recovered, the other one-third is dependent on the surviving Greek translation. The time period of its writing is significant for the simple reason that the Greek philosophers during this period were debating amongst themselves whether the Earth was fixed with the sun revolving around it or vice-versa: *e.g.*, the Pythagorean school of heliocentrists: Plato, Philolaus, Pliny, Aristarchus, and Seleucus versus the geocentric school of Aristotle, Hipparchus, Theon of Smyrna, Appolonius.² The Hebrews maintained their belief in the geocentric cosmos so as to remain in the tradition received from their inspired writings. Identical to the writers which came a millennia or so before him, Sirach makes a seamless presentation of scientific facts, treating the sun as a body which moves with tremendous speed at the same time that he describes it as a marvelous heat-producing machine, both he considers as scientific facts. At no time does any biblical writer treat the sun's movement as unscientific or illusionary or treat its heat as the only firm scientific fact about its nature or task.

Job 9:6-10

- ⁶who shakes the earth out of its place, and its pillars tremble;
⁷who commands the sun, and it does not rise; who seals up the stars;
⁸who alone stretched out the heavens, and trampled the waves of the sea;
⁹who made the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades and the chambers of the south;
¹⁰who does great things beyond understanding, and marvelous things without number.

The shaking of the Earth here refers to the land mass of the Earth, since the Hebrew word for "Earth" is עֶרֶץ (*erets*) which can refer to "land" or "Earth." In other words, Job is describing an earthquake. This is confirmed by the fact that it is the "pillars" of the Earth that are specifically stated as "trembling." But if one were to insist that *erets* refers

² Other Greeks include: Anaximander, who held to a central Earth surrounded by spherical heavens; Parmenides held to a central Earth with evenly spaced concentric spheres surrounding it; Xenophanes held to a central Earth and stars that moved rectilinearly; Empedocles also held to a central Earth but an infinite universe; whereas Hiketas Heraklides and Ekphantus held that the Earth rotates in a non-moving heavens.

to the whole Earth, this would only strengthen the geocentric argument, since in order for the whole Earth to be shaken out of its place it must have had a place in which it was previously at rest. If the Earth were in orbit and the orbit were disturbed, the appropriate language would be “shaken out of its path” or “shaken out of its course” not “out of its place.”

The other geocentric dimensions to the passage are the fact that the sun is viewed as a moving object (“who commands the sun, and it does not rise”) and that the constellations (“the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades”) produce their respective forms only when viewed from Earth, whereas outside of Earth the forms do not exist.

Job 22:13-14

¹³Therefore you say, “What does God know? Can he judge through the deep darkness?”

¹⁴Thick clouds enwrap him, so that he does not see, and he walks on the vault of heaven.”

This passage is important because it speaks of “the vault of heaven.” The word “vault” is the Hebrew noun **חֹג** (*chog*), which appears only three times in the Old Testament. The other two references are Pr 8:27 (“circle on the face of the deep”) and Is 40:22 (“circle of the Earth”), both of which refer to a “circle” or “circuit.” The verbal form appears once in the Qal perfect in Jb 26:10 as “described a circle” (see Jb 26:10 below). The important point to be gleaned from these passages is that the heavens are said to have a circle in which God moves (Jb 22:14) but the Earth has a circle over which God sits (Is 40:22). In the former God is moving, while in the latter he is stationary. Since the Earth does not move, God can remain at rest above it.

Job 26:7-9

⁷He stretches out the north over the void, and hangs the earth upon nothing.

⁸He binds up the waters in his thick clouds, and the cloud is not rent under them.

⁹He covers the face of the moon, and spreads over it his cloud.

The above verses are part of the answer that Job gives to Bildad the Shuhite who has accused Job of being unjust and therefore deserving of the calamities that God has allowed to come upon him. Bildad’s ending words in Jb 25:4-6 are quite stinging:

⁴How then can man be righteous before God? How can he who is born of woman be clean?

⁵Behold, even the moon is not bright and the stars are not clean in his sight;

⁶how much less man, who is a maggot, and the son of man, who is a worm!

In his opening response, Job affirms God's greatness by remarking on his creative actions. Similar to the Psalms, Job speaks of environmental phenomena in a scientific sense, yet in simple language (*e.g.*, vr. 8: water accumulates in clouds and yet the cloud does not tear itself apart or drop from the sky because of its weight). The unique dimension that Scripture gives to these events is that God is behind them all and thus they are not mere brute forces of nature. Where the dividing line between God's action and natural events actually exists is not discussed, however. It is just assumed by both the writer and reader that ultimately God is the cause of all we see in nature.

Verse 7 begins the listing of God's astounding feats by stating that he "stretched out the north over the void." The verb "stretched" is a Qal participle (נָטָה) referring to a past action that was in progress at one time, namely the beginning days of creation in Gn 1:1-2. The word "north" is the normal Hebrew word but there is no article, thus it can serve both as the north direction and as a synecdoche for the heavens.³ It is the heavens or firmament that Scripture refers to as being "stretched out."⁴

The Earth is understood as separate from the north or heavens. While they are stretched out, the Earth is held motionless. Moreover, the Earth is not said to hang in the heavens, rather, it hangs on "nothing." In fact, Scripture never says that the Earth is in the heavens or is part of the heavens. It is suspended in a neutral position that is not part of the cosmos. This unique position is also immovable, since the word "hangs" denotes that once the Earth is placed in its special position it remains there by God's constant power.⁵ Scientifically speaking, we

³ The Hebrew sentence is as follows: עַל־הַדָּוָה (over the void) נָטָה (he stretched) צָפוֹן (north) (the stretched out north). The coupling of "north" and the heavens is also noted in Is 14:13: "I will ascend to heaven...in the recesses of the north."

⁴ Jb 9:8: "who alone stretched out the heavens"; Ps 104:2: "he stretched out the heavens like a tent"; Is 42:5: "who created the heavens and stretched them out"; Is 45:12: "it was my hands that stretched out the heavens" (see also Is 40:22; 51:13; Jr 10:12; 51:15; Zc 12:1).

⁵ "hangs": Hebrew: תָּלָה, Qal participle representing a continuing action. It would seem from the grammatical form chosen for Jb 26:7 that God continually works to keep the

noted earlier that if the Earth is the center of mass for the entire universe, all forces are neutral at the center; and whatever is placed in the center is immovable. As Newton himself put it: “That the center of the system of the world is immovable....This is acknowledged by all, although some contend that the Earth, others that the sun, is fixed in that center.”⁶ Moreover, if there is no single force holding the Earth in its position then the Earth cannot be revolving around the sun, for in that case the sun’s gravity would determine the position of the Earth.

Job 26:10-11

¹⁰He has described a circle upon the face of the waters at the boundary between light and darkness.

¹¹The pillars of heaven tremble, and are astounded at his rebuke.

Proverbs 8:27-30

²⁷When he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,

²⁸when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains of the deep,

²⁹when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth,

³⁰then I was beside him, like a master workman; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always.

As is the case with most of the wisdom literature of the Old Testament, the writers have a knack for putting scientific truths in poetical form with just the right amount of rhythmical cadence. To express such profound truths with such an economy of words that never lose their aesthetic or alliterative appeal is truly the mark of good writing. Moreover, the common man can easily confirm these truths since, for example, he is quite aware that the sea stops at the shore line; that the tides go in and out like clockwork; and that the water/land boundary is so

Earth in its immobile position. “Nothing” is the common Hebrew word בלי (beli) meaning “without,” combined in construct form with the indefinite pronoun מה (mah), meaning “anything” or “aught.”

⁶ Isaac Newton, *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*, Book 3, “The System of the World,” Proposition X. In Proposition XI Newton adds: “That the common center of gravity of the Earth, the sun, and all the planets, is immovable. For that center either is at rest or moves uniformly forwards in a right line; but if that center moved, the center of the world would move also, against the Hypothesis.”

precisely marked that all life on Earth is sustained by its delicate balance.

The truth that is expressed both in Jb 26:10: (“a circle upon the face of the waters between the boundary of light and darkness”) and Pr 8:27: (“he drew a circle on the face of the deep”) is spoken from a geocentric perspective. The “circle” would correspond to either the equatorial line separating the hemispheres of the Earth (and its corresponding lines of latitude), or the meridian line separating east from west (and its corresponding lines of longitude). When one half of the Earth is light, the other half is dark. In this sense, the Earth can be viewed as a spherical grid that can extend itself outward to point to every sector of the universe, and it could only do so if it was in the exact center of the universe and at the immobile fixed point upon which all coordinates are based.

Wisdom 7:15-22

¹⁵May God grant that I speak with judgment and have thought worthy of what I have received, for he is the guide even of wisdom and the corrector of the wise.

¹⁶For both we and our words are in his hand, as are all understanding and skill in crafts.

¹⁷For it is he who gave me unerring knowledge of what exists, to know the structure of the world and the activity of the elements;

¹⁸the beginning and end and middle of times, the alternations of the solstices and the changes of the seasons,

¹⁹the cycles of the year and the constellations of the stars,

²⁰the natures of animals and the tempers of wild beasts, the powers of spirits and the reasonings of men, the varieties of plants and the virtues of roots;

²¹I learned both what is secret and what is manifest,

²²for wisdom, the fashioner of all things, taught me.

The author states that God has given him knowledge of the inner workings of the cosmos. But it is not just mere knowledge, it is “unerring knowledge.”⁷ Part of the unerring information he knows is the “structure of the world,” which we might assume contains the data of whether or not the Earth is the center of the universe’s structure. If the “knowledge” contained information that the Earth was in the center and was immobile yet this was not a scientific fact, then it could not be considered “unerring.” Knowledge that contains no error must be factual and cannot be excused by appeals to phenomenology. If the details of

⁷ Greek: ἴωσιν ἀψευδῆ, literally, “knowledge without falsity.”

the cosmos that he knows unerringly include such things as “the activity of the elements,” “the alterations of the solstices,” “the changes of the seasons,” and the “constellations of the stars,” surely it must contain the data of whether these seasons and solstices are caused by the universe rotating around the Earth or the Earth rotating and revolving within the universe. As it stands, the writer of Wisdom who claims to have “unerring knowledge” gives us no evidence of moving Earth; but consistently refers to the heavenly bodies as those that move, *e.g.*, Ws 13:2: “the circle [or circuit] of the stars.”

1Esdras 4:34 (apocryphal)

³⁴The earth is vast, and heaven is high, and the sun is swift in its course, for it makes the circuit of the heavens and returns to its place in one day.

Here the sun’s daily movement in a 360 degree circuit is given in stark detail. It is treated as a scientific fact. It is buttressed by two other scientific facts, namely, the Earth’s vastness and the height of the heavens above the Earth (*cf.* Jr 31:37; Jb 38:33).

Passages Purported to Support Heliocentrism

Job 38:12-14

¹²“Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place,

¹³that it might take hold of the skirts of the earth, and the wicked be shaken out of it?

¹⁴ It is changed like clay under the seal, and it is dyed like a garment.

Far from supporting a moving Earth, this passages actually strengthens the argument against it. Prior to God’s “shaking” or “changing” of the Earth, the writer assumes that the Earth’s normal state is one without any disturbing motions. Even in the highly metaphorical language employed by this writer, he specifies that it is only when the wicked reach a point of divine judgment that God even considers setting aside the Earth’s normal state and separating the wicked from the Earth by shaking it. There is certainly nothing in this passage which suggests that the normal state for the Earth is one of movement (*e.g.*, rotation and revolution). Even the words used in the metaphor do not necessarily denote a disturbing movement, since the word

“changed” is from the Hebrew word that preponderantly refers to an internal change rather than a change of position in space.⁸

Psalm 82:5

They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

Psalm 99:1

The Lord reigns; let the peoples tremble! He sits enthroned upon the cherubim; let the earth quake!

As we noted previously in the analysis of Ps 96:10 above, these two Psalms are speaking about the disruptions that occur inside the Earth intermittently, not the cessation of an assumed rotation on an axis or revolution around the sun.

Isaiah 13:13

Therefore I will make the heavens tremble, and the earth will be shaken out of its place, at the wrath of the Lord of hosts in the day of his fierce anger.

Isaiah 24:19-23

¹⁹ The earth is utterly broken, the earth is rent asunder, the earth is violently shaken.

²⁰ The earth staggers like a drunken man, it sways like a hut; its transgression lies heavy upon it, and it falls, and will not rise again.

²¹ On that day the Lord will punish the host of heaven, in heaven, and the kings of the earth, on the earth.

²² They will be gathered together as prisoners in a pit; they will be shut up in a prison, and after many days they will be punished.

²³ Then the moon will be confounded, and the sun ashamed; for the Lord of hosts will reign on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem and before his elders he will manifest his glory.

⁸ “changed”: Hebrew: **תהפך**, to turn or transform. The root word **תפך** appears over 75 times in the Old Testament, mostly in the Qal tense signifying an “overthrowing” or changing of form (e.g., Lv 13:3; Dt 29:23). Only in the Hithpael participle does it refer to an actual movement, which occurs 3 times (Gn 3:24; Jg 7:13; Jb 37:12).

Once again, identical to Jb 38:14, the two Isaiah passages assume that the normal state for the Earth is one of non-motion and non-vibration, the precise scientific requirements for geocentrism. It is only an extraordinary event that could alter that state of rest. In this case, the language is obviously apocalyptic and thus points to one specific day in which the cosmos will be disrupted from its normal course.

The Constitution of the Firmament

Job 37:18

Can you, like him, spread out the skies, hard as a molten mirror?

During the seventeenth-century investigations of the Congregation of the Holy Office into the Copernican theory, a Carmelite friar by the name of Fr. Paolo Foscarini was censured in 1615 (prior to the Galileo case) for his heliocentric cosmology. Little known is the fact that he was also censured for his belief that the heavens were “very thin and tenuous.” Among other things, the censor stated:

On page 45 he says that the heavens are very thin and tenuous, not solid and dense. This is clearly contrary to Job 37 ‘Together with this you have created the heavens which are most solid and spread out like the air.’ This cannot be explained as an appearance (as the author indicates) because the solidity of the heavens is not apparent to us.⁹

Obviously, the Catholic censor was treating Job 37:18 the same way the Catholic Church was treating the geocentric verses – they were taken at face value and considered factual truth, regardless of what subject matter they addressed. Here we see that even the particulate constitution of the space constituting all of the heavens is not considered a trivial and obscure point that can be ignored. It is regarded with the utmost divine authority and the basis for rejecting Foscarini’s whole approach to Scripture. The battle ground here, as we will see in Chapter 14, is: can Scripture be trusted to give us factual information about the cosmos in addition to its already accepted infallible authority on faith and morals? The answer of the Catholic Church of the 17th century was

⁹ The censor’s document is titled: *Judicium de spistola F. Pauli Foscarini de mobilitate terrae* (Lerner in *The Church and Galileo*, p. 24) and the text is provided by Richard J. Blackwell in *Galileo, Bellarmine and the Bible*, pp. 253-254. We have changed “Tobit 37” to Job 37 since Blackwell, or from whomever he copied it, apparently misread the original Latin.

an unequivocal and unqualified ‘affirmative,’ as it was for the sixteen centuries prior.

Accordingly, Job 37:18 has some very interesting features that support the censor’s contention against Foscarini. The Hebrew sentence reads as follows: עָמַו תִּרְקִיעַ (“can you beat out or spread out”) (“with him”) לְשָׁהֲקִים (“the sky, the heavens”) חֲזִקִים (“hard”) כִּרְאִי (“like a mirror”) מִיִּצֵּק (“cast”). The first word, תִּרְקִיעַ, is a verb appearing twelve times in the Hebrew bible and normally means “to spread or stretch out.”¹⁰ It is very similar to the noun רִקִיעַ, which is translated as “firmament” in Genesis and the Psalms.¹¹

The word לְשָׁהֲקִים (“the sky, the heavens”) is from the root שָׁהַק and appears twenty-one times as either “sky”,¹² “clouds”,¹³ “heavens”,¹⁴ or even “dust”,¹⁵ with a notable difference between “sky” and “clouds.”¹⁶ All in all, it carries the idea of a finely-grained substance that fills the sky, and by extension, the rest of the space of the firmament.

The word חֲזִקִים (“hard”) appears over forty times and is translated as “strong” (Ex 13:9); “mighty” (Ex 32:11); “hard” (Ez 3:9). The word מִיִּצֵּק (“cast”) is from the root יִצַק and is translated variously as “cast” (Ex 25:12); “pour” (Lv 2:1); “forms” (Jb 38:38); “firm” (Jb 41:23-24); “attached to” (Ps 41:8); “molten” (1Kg 7:16). The literal meaning is that the sky, heavens or firmament, is not a tenuous, vaporous entity. Although ostensibly it is transparent and pliable, on another level (implied is the subatomic level), Jb 37:18 indicates the heavens are composed of an extremely dense material substance. At the beginning of creation it was expanded to fill the firmament, or perhaps became the firmament once it was expanded. As we noted in Volume I of *Galileo Was Wrong: The Church Was Right*, modern science has corroborated these biblical truths with a plethora of scientific data showing that space is not a vacuum but is filled with an extremely fine but extremely dense particulate matter.

The firmament, רִקִיעַ, constitutes the entire space between the Earth’s surface and the edge of the universe, and into which the stars

¹⁰ Ex 39:3; Nm 16:39; 17:4; 2Sm 22:43; Jb 37:18; Ps 136:6; Is 40:19; 42:5; 44:24; Jr 10:9; Ez 6:11; 25:6.

¹¹ Gn 1:6-8, 14-17, 20; Ps 19:1.

¹² Dt 33:26; 2Sm 22:12; Jb 37:18; Ps 18:11; 77:17; 108:4; Is 45:8; Jr 51:9.

¹³ Jb 35:5; 36:28; 37:21; 38:37; Ps 36:5; 57:10; 78:23; Pr 3:20; 8:28.

¹⁴ Ps 68:34; 89:6, 37.

¹⁵ Is 40:15.

¹⁶ 2Sm 22:12; Ps 18:11.

and other heavenly bodies are placed. This is in distinction to other Hebrew words, such as רָאֵץ (*reyach*), which refer to “space” (e.g., Gn 32:17, not to be confused with רוּחַ (*ruach* = spirit, e.g., Gn 1:2; Ex 13:10)) or רָחֹק (*rachok*), which refers to spatial distance,¹⁷ words that the Hebrew writer did not choose to describe the substance of the heavens. Accordingly, many biblical translators have utilized the English word “firmament” (or its foreign equivalent) for the Hebrew רָקִיעַ in order to denote a firm but pervasive substance to represent the constitution of the heavens.¹⁸ In other passage *raqia* appears as “hammered”;¹⁹ while in others it is “stamped”;²⁰ as compared to “beaten” or “crushed” in 2Sm 22:43.

Essentially, Scripture tells us that the heavens are both flexible and rigid. Apparently, Foscarini’s censor, by nothing more than a simple declaration from Holy Writ, accepted the dual nature of the firmament, one nature observable and the other unobservable, with the latter nature being one in which “the solidity of the heavens is not apparent to us.” Conversely, a solid-shell model of the firmament, which is popular among more traditional Protestant Biblicists, ignores these atmospheric and celestial dimensions, and consequently, does not do proper justice to the Scriptural language.²¹

How Much Authority Does Scripture Possess?

Harvard historian I. Bernard Cohen gives us the secular world’s view of the inevitable clash that would occur between Copernicanism and Scripture:

One necessary consequence of his system was the position that the literal interpretation of Scripture cannot be the ultimate test for scientific explanation of the observed phenomenon of the world of nature around us. Like it or not, *De Revolutionibus* could not avoid constituting a challenge to authority. A significant feature of the Scientific Revolution was to base knowledge on experiment and observation and to disdain any authorities other than nature herself. The motto of the Royal Society, founded a little over a century after the publication of *De Revolutionibus*, was “Nullius

¹⁷ Joshua 3:4; Ps 22:2.

¹⁸ Gn 1:14, 15, 17, 20; Ps 19:2; 150:1; Ez 1:22-26; 10:1; Dn 12:3.

¹⁹ Ex 39:3; Nm 17:3; Jr 10:9.

²⁰ Ez 6:11; 25:6.

²¹ See “Is the *raqiya*’ (firmament) a solid dome?” at answersingenesis.org/docs/4169.asp, James Holding versus Paul Seely, first published in *Technical Journal* 13(2):44-51, 1999.

in verba” (On the word of no man). Whether or not Copernicus was actually a major figure in this revolutionary tilt of knowledge away from authority, he has come to symbolize the first mover in this direction of science and it is an honourable role...In arguing for the ‘reality’ of his own system, and in not going along with those for whom ‘reality’ was not a central question, Copernicus was certainly a rebel. It is even reasonable to call him a revolutionary.²²

Someone once said, “Scripture is not a science book.” Although there is a certain degree of truth in that statement, unfortunately it has been badly misrepresented in arguments dealing with the Galileo affair. It has been used to politely take Scripture out of the jury room on whether Galileo’s hypothesis was correct. Advocates of the heliocentric theory often make a glib reference to a certain Cardinal Baronius who in 1598 is said to have made the following summation of the supposed dichotomy between science and Scripture: “The Holy Spirit tells us how to get to heaven, not how the heavens go.”²³ Various strains of this sentiment have been used throughout the last few centuries to silence theologians who seek to extract various truths from Scripture with which to build an understanding of the universe. For example, Catholic author George Sim Johnston writes:

Galileo accepted the inerrancy of Scripture; but he was also mindful of Cardinal Baronius’s quip that the bible “is intended to teach us how to go to heaven, not how the heavens go.” And he pointed out correctly that both St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas taught that the sacred writers in no way meant to teach a system of astronomy. St. Augustine wrote that:

One does not read in the Gospel that the Lord said: I will send you the Paraclete who will teach you about the course of the sun and moon. For He willed to make them Christians, not mathematicians.

²² I. Bernard Cohen, *Revolution in Science*, p. 492.

²³ Galileo wrote it quite poetically in his native Italian to Madama Cristina di Lorena: “...ciò è l’intenzione dello Spirito Santo essere d’insegnarci come si vadia al cielo, e non come vadia il cielo” (“that is the intention of the Holy Spirit which is to teach us how to go to heaven, and not how the heavens go”) and attributes it as coming from “Io qui direi quello che intesi da persona ecclesiastic constituita in eminentissimo grado” (“Here I refer to the understandings of an ecclesiastical person in a very eminent position”), who most suppose is Cardinal Cesare Baronio (*Le Opere di Galileo Galilei*, 1968, vol. 5, p. 319, lines 25-28).

Unfortunately, there are still today biblical fundamentalists, both Protestant and Catholic, who do not understand this simple point: the bible is not a scientific treatise. When Christ said that the mustard seed was the smallest of seeds (and it is about the size of a speck of dust), he was not laying down a principle of botany. In fact, botanists tell us that there are smaller seeds. He was simply talking to the men of his time in their own language, and with reference to their own experience.²⁴

It frequently occurs that in arguments defending Galileo various quotes are extracted from famous prelates and saints but often without thinking them through. Such is the case here. Although Scripture certainly does not reach the level of a science book, that does not mean it cannot, or does not, address scientific issues on various occasions. The difference is subtle, but it is very important. For example, we can all agree that the *Declaration of Independence* and the *United States Constitution* are not religious documents. Most categorize them as political documents. But every American will agree that when either of the two documents address a matter of religion, such as when the *Declaration of Independence* says: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness,” all ears stop to listen, since everyone acknowledges that the *Declaration* is giving factual and authoritative statements about religion that form the basis of the country’s foundation of government. The *Declaration* is certainly not a religious treatise, but it is, nevertheless, addressing an important area of religion in this particular instance, and it holds the same authority in that instance as it does when it speaks about political and governmental issues.

In the same way, although Scripture is not a science book and thus does not employ formulas such as $E = mc^2$ or $F = ma$, nevertheless, when it touches upon an area of science, men need to listen, for it is giving factual and authoritative statements that form the basis of our cosmogony and cosmology. Discovering the scientific formulas that coincide with those foundational truths has been assigned to man’s labor under the six days God has given him to work by the sweat of his brow, and as such, man’s science can safely complement divine revelation. Revelation does not seek to impinge upon man’s freedoms and intellectual pursuits, but only to save him from the heartache and frus-

²⁴ George Sim Johnston, “The Galileo Affair,” *Lay Witness*, Vol. 14, No. 7, April 1993, p. 5. Johnston’s claim that the mustard seed upsets the inerrancy of Scripture is shortsighted and fails to contextualize. Jesus was referring to the known seeds of the land of Palestine, for in that region the mustard seed was, indeed, the smallest seed.

tration of proceeding down the wrong scientific path, especially in areas regarding the creation of the world that no human being was present to witness, or with the structure of the cosmos from which no man has a high enough platform to determine which bodies are moving and which are not. As Pope St. Pius X once wrote:

Human science gains greatly from revelation, for the latter opens out new horizons and makes known sooner other truths of the natural order, and because it opens the true road to investigation and keeps it safe from errors of application and of method. Thus does the lighthouse show many things they otherwise would not see, while it points out the rocks on which the vessel would suffer shipwreck²⁵

Or as Gregory of Nazianzus once put it:

We, however, who extend the accuracy of the Spirit to the merest jot and tittle, will never admit the impious assertion that even the smallest matters were dealt with haphazardly by those who have recorded them.²⁶

Accordingly, God drops small and precious rose petals of knowledge down from heaven to guide man in the paths of truth about the cosmos. It is only when we ignore this sweet-smelling flora that we soon go off into the myriad of conflicting theories man has concocted since the time of Copernicus, and which, as we have shown in the first volume of *Galileo Was Wrong: The Church Was Right*, are unfortunately being added to the unhealthy diet of modern science on a daily basis.

In light of these principles, Johnston's appeal to St. Augustine's statement: "I will send you the Paraclete who will teach you about the course of the sun and moon. For He willed to make them Christians, not mathematicians,"²⁷ actually speaks more against Johnston's case than for it. Notice first that Augustine reaffirms that the sun and the moon move, not the Earth. Obviously, Augustine does not intend to go against all the statements he made in his other works affirming the

²⁵ Pope Pius X, encyclical of March 12, 1904, *Iucunda Sane*, 35.

²⁶ *Orations*, II.

²⁷ Another version is: "we do not read in the Gospel that the Lord said: I will send you the Paraclete to teach you how the sun and moon move. Because he wished to make them Christians, not mathematicians" (Paul Newall, "The Galileo Affair," The Galilian Manuscripts Library, www.galilean-library.org, p. 8, citing *De Actis cum Felice Manichaeio*, I, 2).

Earth's motionlessness and the sun's movement.²⁸ Second, Augustine's concern regards only that the Lord did not intend to teach how the sun and moon move in their courses, not that the Lord did not intend to teach that the sun and moon move. That is, the Lord did not desire to give us detailed information as to what pushes or pulls the sun and moon around the Earth, or how it is that they keep such precise time year after year. But we can certainly conclude from the Lord's teaching that the sun and moon move. Christians don't have to become "mathematicians" in order to know the simple fact that the celestial bodies revolve around the Earth. A child could understand it. Mathematics is necessary only when one wants to calculate such things as how fast the sun and moon accomplish their appointed tasks or how far away they are from Earth. Hence, because the Lord taught them in Scripture that the sun and moon move around the Earth, it was for that very reason that St. Augustine and St. Thomas were both geocentrists, in opposition to the Greeks and Indians who were promoting heliocentrism.

Johnston's attempt to commandeer Augustine to support heliocentrism is common among Catholic authors who are seeking some way to counter the magisterium's condemnation of Copernican cosmology and Galileo's support of it in the 1600s. All these attempts, of course, are done in the face of the fact that Augustine, as we will see later, believed firmly in geocentrism and defended it vigorously. Ignoring these facts, heliocentric advocates will often appeal to Augustine's general hermeneutical principles concerning the need to be cautious when science and Scripture seem to clash, or they will take Augustine's comments out of context and make it appear as if he is saying one thing when, in fact, he is saying quite another. For example, Galileo historian, Annibale Fantoli, in his 1997 book *Galileo: For Copernicanism and for the Church*, introduces an argument from Galileo that makes it appear as if Augustine had no commitment or interest in geocentrism and would much prefer dealing with matters of salvation. Fantoli writes:

But, comments Galileo, the mobility or stability of the Earth or of the Sun are not questions of faith or morals, and as to those who uphold the mobility of the Earth none of them has ever wished to abuse the sacred texts by making use of them to bolster his own opinion. And the opinion of the Council, Galileo adds, is in agreement with the attitude of the Fathers who considered it useless to try to solve the problems of nature, as seems to in the case of St. Augustine who, when confronted with the question as to

²⁸ See Chapter 13 for a list of detailed citations from Augustine and other Fathers on geocentrism.

whether the heavens are fixed or move, answered (*De Genesi ad Litteram*, L.2, c.10):

To them I answer that these things should be examined with very subtle and demanding arguments to determine truly whether or not it is so; but I do not have the time to undertake and pursue these investigations, nor should such time be available to those whom we desire to instruct for their salvation and for the needs and benefit of the Holy Church (V, 337; trans. By Finocchiaro 1989, 109).²⁹

The problem is that, in context, Augustine is not talking about whether the sun revolves around the Earth, or the Earth revolves around the sun. Augustine is concerned only with the question of whether the firmament itself revolves around the Earth or if the stars revolve around the Earth while the firmament remains fixed. Chrysostom posed this very question. He posited that the heavens are immobile, but the sun and stars revolve around a fixed Earth:

The heaven, for instance, hath remained immoveable, according as the prophet says, 'He placed the heaven as a vault, and stretched it out as a tent over the earth.' But, on the other hand, the sun with the rest of the stars, runs on his course through every day. And again, the earth is fixed, but the waters are continually in motion; and not the waters only, but the clouds, and the frequent and successive showers, which return at their proper season.³⁰

Rest assured, Augustine has no doubts that either the firmament or the stars and sun are revolving around a stationary Earth. As such, we can then understand the context of *De Genesis ad Litteram* L.2, c. 10 more clearly. Augustine writes:

With regard to the motion of heaven, certain Christian writers have enquired whether it is in reality stationary or moving [e.g., Chrysostom]. If it is moving, they say, in what sense is it a firmament? But if it is stationary, how do the heavenly bodies that are thought to be fixed in it travel from east to west and the stars of the Wain complete their smaller orbits near the north pole? They present the picture of heaven turning either like a sphere, if

²⁹ Annibale Fantoli, Galileo: *For Copernicanism and the Church*, translation by George V. Coyne, S. J., second edition, 1996, p. 203.

³⁰ *Homilies to Antioch*, Homily XII, PG 49, 128

we suppose another axis not visible to us extending from another pivotal point, or like a disk, if there is no other axis.

Augustine then states what Galileo quoted above, (although the translation is slightly different in this version):

My reply is that there is a great deal of subtle and learned enquiry into these questions for the purpose of arriving at a true view of the matter; but I have no further time to go into these questions and discuss them, nor should they have time whom I wish to see instructed for their own salvation and for what is necessary and useful in the Church.

The remaining part of Augustine's paragraph (that neither Galileo nor Fantoli quote from the passage) confirms that Augustine's concern is whether the firmament revolves around a stationary Earth, or the stars revolve around a stationary Earth:

They must certainly bear in mind that the term "firmament" does not compel us to imagine a stationary heaven: we may understand this name as given to indicate not that it is motionless but that it is solid and that it constitutes an impassable boundary between the waters above and the waters below. Furthermore, if the evidence shows that the heavens actually are immovable, the motion of the stars will not be a hindrance to our acceptance of this fact. The very scholars who have devoted the most exhaustive study to this subject have concluded that if the stars alone were moved while the heavens were motionless, all the known phenomena observed in the motions of the stars might have taken place.³¹

Suffice it to say, the above attempt by Galileo and his modern supporters to commandeer Augustine to their cause is a typical example of how the great saint's words are often twisted to teach Copernicanism when, in fact, Augustine is teaching the exact opposite. Unfortunately, Augustine's respect of science is often an easy target for abuse by those seeking to boost the ideas of modern science (*e.g.*, evolution and heliocentrism). In the process, little attention is paid to Augustine's devotion to Scripture as the final authority on such matters and neither are his warnings heeded against the false claims of science. He writes:

³¹ *The Literal Meaning of Genesis in Ancient Christian Writers*, editor: Johannes Quasten, translated by John Hammond Taylor, S. J., Vol. 1, NY, Newman Press, 1982, pp. 60-61, from Book 2, Chapter 10, Para. 23: "The motion of heaven and the meaning of the firmament."

But since the words of Scripture that I have treated are explained in so many senses, critics full of worldly learning should restrain themselves from attacking as ignorant and uncultured these utterances that have been made to nourish all devout souls....But more dangerous is the error of certain weak brethren who faint away when they hear these irreligious critics learnedly and eloquently discoursing on the theories of astronomy or on any of the questions relating to the elements of this universe. With a sigh, they esteem these teachers as superior to themselves, looking upon them as great men; and they return with disdain to the books which were written for the good of their souls; and, although they ought to drink from these books with relish, they can scarcely bear to take them up.³²

The Language of Fact versus the Language of Appearance

Before we address the particular Scriptures that are associated with geocentrism, we will tackle a common objection that is levied against using Scripture to teach geocentrism. Both scientists and modern biblical exegetes claim that when Scripture employs language such as “the sun rises” or “the sun sets,” it is merely attempting to express the motions of the heavenly bodies in figurative or phenomenal language since a rising or setting of the sun is the view that a person standing on Earth would observe, but it is not the true reality. The astronomer will argue that even though he sees the sun rise over the horizon, he, being a knowledgeable scientist, knows that in reality it is the Earth rotating on its axis that makes it appear as if the sun is rising. Likewise, the biblical exegete will often point to figurative language employed hundreds of times in Scripture (*e.g.*, Psalm 98:8: “Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together”) and insist that the sun’s “rising” is of the same linguistic genre and thus it need not be interpreted literally. The Catholic may even refer to the words of Pope Leo XIII in his teaching about the interpretation of Scripture:

The unshrinking defense of the Holy Scripture, however, does not require that we should equally uphold all the opinions which each of the Fathers or the more recent interpreters have put forth in explaining it; for it may be that, in commenting on passages where physical matters occur, they have sometimes expressed the ideas

³² *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, Book 1, Chapter 20, Para. 41, Ancient Christian Writers, *ibid.*, p. 44.

of their own times, and thus made statements which in these days have been abandoned as incorrect.³³

He may also quote Pope Pius XII for the same purpose:

For of the modes of expression which, among ancient peoples, and especially those of the East, human language used to express its thought, none is excluded from the Sacred Books [The Bible], provided the way of speaking adopted in no wise contradicts the holiness and truth of God, as, with his customary wisdom, the Angelic Doctor already observed in these words: ‘In Scripture divine things are presented to us in the manner which is in common use amongst men.’ For as the substantial Word of God became like to men in all things, ‘except sin,’ so the words of God, expressed in human language, are made like to human speech in every respect, except error.³⁴

³³ The 1893 encyclical: *Providentissimus Deus: On the Study of Holy Scripture*, “Natural Sciences,” Boston, Pauline Books and Media, p. 24. All in all, Leo XIII reinforced the traditional “literal” approach to Scripture interpretation, as noted in the following statement of the same encyclical: “For Sacred Scripture is not like other books. Dictated by the Holy Spirit, it contains things of the deepest importance, which, in many instances, are most difficult and obscure” (p. 8); “Now we have to meet the Rationalists...who...set down the Scripture narratives as stupid fables and lying stories” (p. 12); “The Church...renewing the decree of Trent declares...the true sense of Holy Scripture...whose place it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the Scriptures; and, therefore, that it is permitted to no one to interpret Holy Scripture against such sense or also against the unanimous agreement of the Fathers” (pp. 16-17); “But he must not on that account consider it is forbidden, when just cause exists, to push inquiry and exposition beyond what the Fathers have done; provided he carefully observes the rule so wisely laid down by St. Augustine – not to depart from the literal and obvious sense, except only where reason makes it untenable or necessity requires; a rule to which it is the more necessary to adhere strictly in these times, when the thirst for novelty and unrestrained freedom of thought make the danger of error most real and proximate.” (pp. 18-19); “But it is absolutely wrong and forbidden to narrow inspiration to certain parts only of Holy Scripture or to admit that the sacred writer has erred...because (as they wrongly think) in a question of the truth or falsehood of a passage we should consider not so much what God has said as the reason and purpose which He had in mind in saying it – this system cannot be tolerated” (pp. 25-26); “Let them loyally hold that God, the Creator and Ruler of all things, is also the Author of the Scriptures – and that, therefore, nothing can be proved either by physical science or archaeology which can really contradict the Scriptures” (pp. 28-29).

³⁴ The 1943 encyclical: *Divino Afflante Spiritu: The Promotion of Biblical Studies*, “The Importance of mode of writing,” Boston, Pauline Books and Media, p. 21. Pope Pius XII also added this important warning: “Hence the Catholic commentator, in order to comply with the present needs of biblical studies, in explaining the Sacred Scripture and in demonstrating and proving its immunity from all error, should...determine...to what extent the manner of expression or the literary mode adopted by the sacred writer may lead to a correct and genuine interpretation; and let him be convinced that this part of his office cannot be neglected without serious detriment to Catholic exegesis. Not infrequently – to

Although we will address this topic in greater depth in Chapter 14, for now we point out that Catholic biblical exegetes who seek to counter the geocentric declarations of past popes and cardinals frequently appeal to the above papal statements for support of their position. They will conclude that both Leo XIII and Pius XII were teaching us that we are to interpret Scripture's references to the movement between the Earth and sun by the model of heliocentrism advocated by modern science. As far as these exegetes are concerned, the case is closed, since the popes did not require us to interpret descriptive phrases such as "the sun rises" in a literal fashion, but wanted us to see them as either ancient expressions of uneducated peoples or phenomenal language from the point of view of an observer on the surface of the Earth. In either case, it is assumed that the popes were accepting heliocentrism and denying geocentrism.

Upon closer examination, however, this conclusion is more an eisegesis of what Leo and Pius actually said than a fair and accurate understanding of their words. First, in each of the above papal citations, neither pontiff makes a specific reference to Scripture's cosmological passages, thus no explicit claims can be made that the popes were referring to the movements of either the sun or the Earth. The popes could have been referring to any number of instances in which Scripture speaks in phenomenal language.³⁵

Second, Scripture's phenomenal language (*e.g.*, the "sun rises" or the "sun sets") also applies to the geocentric system. In the geocentric system the sun does not actually "rise" or "set"; rather, it revolves around the Earth. When the geocentrist sees a sunset he does not say: "Oh, what a beautiful revolution of the sun," just as a heliocentrist does not say: "Oh, what a beautiful rotation of the Earth." The geocentrist and the heliocentrist know that the sun "rises" or "sets" only with respect to the Earth's horizon, and therefore, reference to a "rising sun" in Scripture is just as phenomenal in the geocentric system as it is in the heliocentric. On that basis alone neither Leo XIII's nor Pius XII's above directives can be commandeered to support heliocentrism, especially in light of the fact that three previous pontiffs, based on stricter criteria, denied heliocentrism and endorsed geocentrism, as the historical records show quite clearly.³⁶

mention only one instance – when some persons reproachfully charge the Sacred Writers with some historical error or inaccuracy in the recording of facts, on closer examination it turns out to be nothing else than those customary modes of expression and narration peculiar to the ancients..." (pp. 21-21).

³⁵ *E.g.*, Nm 11:7; 1Sm 28:14; Ez 1:5; 8:2; Dn 8:15; 10:6; Jl 2:4; Am 5:8; Mt 16:3; 28:3; Mk 8:24; Lk 12:56; Ap 4:1; 15:2.

³⁶ Pope Paul V in 1616; Pope Urban VIII in 1633; and Pope Alexander VII in 1664.

Third, Pius XII's above quotation from the words of the "Angelic Doctor," Thomas Aquinas, namely, "In Scripture divine things are presented to us in the manner which is in common use amongst men," cannot be interpreted as Pius' attempt to promote heliocentrism since it is a fact of history that Aquinas was an avowed geocentrist who never entertained the possibility of heliocentrism.³⁷ Obviously, then, Thomas could not have intended his insights on biblical interpretation to be used either to deny geocentrism or promote heliocentrism. These insights were merely his general teaching on the various modes of speech employed by the authors of Scripture, which can be applied to many and varied phenomena in nature and everyday life, but certainly not celestial orbits.

Lastly, although it is safe to say that phrases such as "the sun rises" or "the sun sets" are to be considered phenomenal from both the heliocentric and geocentric perspectives, this does not mean that Scripture *always* limits itself to phenomenal language when it addresses the movement of the heavenly bodies. The language of appearance only applies to expressions when appearance is the intended feature. One can easily surmise from language such as "the sun rises" or "the sun sets" that although Scripture may express the appearance of the movement from the perspective of the observer on Earth, nevertheless, Scripture confidently affirms the scientific fact that, of the two bodies, one of them moves and the other does not. In that particular scientific category, Scripture is adamant that it is the sun that moves, not the Earth. Hence, it is the sun that is the circling body that causes the *appearance* of the sun rising or setting over the horizon, not the Earth rotating. As we will see, there are many other passages of Scripture that are much more specific concerning the movement of the sun and the immobility of the Earth.

Official Statements from the Catholic Magisterium on the Inspiration and Inerrancy of Sacred Scripture

The Catholic Church, throughout her two-thousand year history, has been very clear and adamant in her teaching that Scripture contains no error when it speaks on theology, history, science, mathematics or

³⁷ Thomas Aquinas wrote: "The Earth stands in relation to the heaven as the center of a circle to its circumference. But as one center may have many circumferences, so, though there is but one Earth, there may be many heavens" (*Summa Theologica*, "Treatise on the Work of the Six Days," Question 68, Article 4). By "many heavens" Thomas is referring to the three ways in which Scripture uses the word "heaven," *e.g.*, the Earth's atmosphere; the starry cosmos; and the third heaven as God's domain above the firmament.

any other discipline or factual proposition. Scripture cannot err because God is its main author:

- **Pius IX**, condemned the following notion: “The prophecies and miracles set forth and recorded in the Sacred Scriptures are the fiction of poets, and the mysteries of the Christian faith the result of philosophical investigations. In the books of the Old and the New Testament there are contained mythical inventions...”³⁸
- **Pope Leo XIII**: “It is absolutely wrong and forbidden either to narrow inspiration to certain parts only of Sacred Scripture or to admit that the sacred writer has erred.”³⁹
- **Pope Pius X**, condemned the notion: “Divine inspiration does not extend to all of Sacred Scriptures so that it renders its parts, each and every one, free from every error.”⁴⁰
- **Pope Benedict XV**: “...the divine inspiration extends to all parts of Scripture without distinction, and that no error could occur in the inspired text.”⁴¹
- **Pope Pius XII**, repeats Leo XIII decree: “It is absolutely wrong and forbidden either to narrow inspiration to certain parts only of Sacred Scripture or to admit that the sacred writer has erred.”⁴²
- **Pope Pius XII**, condemns the notion: “...immunity from error extends only to those parts of the Bible that treat of God or of moral and religious matters.”⁴³
- **1964 Pontifical Biblical Commission**: “...that the Gospels were written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who preserved their authors from every error.”
- **1998 Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith**: “...the absence of error in the inspired sacred texts...”⁴⁴
- **Pope Leo XIII**: “For the sacred Scripture is not like other books. Dictated by the Holy Spirit, it contains things of the deepest importance, which, in many instances, are most difficult and obscure.”⁴⁵

³⁸ *Syllabus of Errors*

³⁹ *Providentissimus Deus*

⁴⁰ *Lamentabili Sani*

⁴¹ *Spiritus Paraclitus*

⁴² *Divino Afflante Spiritu*

⁴³ *Humani Generis*

⁴⁴ *Professio Fidei*

⁴⁵ *Providentissimus Deus*

- **Pope Leo XIII:** “For all the books in their entirety...with all their parts, have been written under the dictation of the Holy Spirit.”⁴⁶
- **Vatican Council 1:** “Further, this supernatural revelation...is contained in the written books...from the apostles themselves by the dictation of the Holy Spirit, and have been transmitted as it were from hand to hand.”
- **1994 Catechism of the Catholic Church:** “Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit.” “God inspired the human authors of the sacred books...it was as true authors that they con-signed to writing whatever he wanted written, and no more.”⁴⁷
- **Pope Leo XIII:** “It is futile to argue that the Holy Spirit took human beings as his instruments in writing, implying that some error could slip in For by his supernatural power he so stimulated and moved them to write, and so assisted them while they were writing, that they properly conceived in their mind, wished to write down faithfully, and expressed aptly with infallible truth all those things, and only those things, which He himself ordered; otherwise He could not Himself be the author of the whole of Sacred Scripture.”⁴⁸
- **Code of Canon Law (1983):** “Even after ordination to the priesthood, clerics are to pursue sacred studies and are to strive after that solid doctrine founded in sacred scripture, handed on by their predecessors, and commonly accepted by the Church, as set out especially in the documents of councils and of the Roman Pontiffs. They are to avoid profane novel-ties and pseudo-science.”⁴⁹

⁴⁶ *Providentissimus Deus*

⁴⁷ ¶¶ 81, 106.

⁴⁸ *Providentissimus Deus*

⁴⁹ Canon 279.1

THE BIBLICAL AND SCIENTIFIC DISHONESTY OF SOME CHRISTIAN TEXTBOOK PUBLISHERS

Ron Nelson¹

As a Christian school teacher, the matter of truly Biblical curriculum is of utmost concern. Looking back over my 33 years as a science teacher in a Christian school, I have discovered a shocking amount of Biblically-deficient material in the science textbooks produced by many of the mainline Christian textbook publishers. Because of these deficiencies, I have been forced to add a significant amount of Biblical material in order to bring these textbooks into alignment with a truly Biblical presentation of scientific information. It appears to me that many of these Christian textbook publishers have adopted a somewhat secular content in the scientific information and then sprinkled in a few Scriptures with a mention of God here and there and think that they have produced a Christian textbook.

It is my contention that a truly Christian science textbook must begin with the Bible and what it has to say about a given topic. Once the Bible has been thoroughly explored, then we can add what man's observations have contributed to our understanding of the foundational truth presented in the Bible. The Bible must be the foundation for any topic and then must be thoroughly integrated into the discussion of the topic. This I have endeavored to do over the years and have often been accused of teaching "too much Bible and not enough science." What some Christians fail to realize is that the Bible is *the* source of all true science (knowledge) and that there is no true science (knowledge) without the Bible.

Having said all this let me address a specific example of Biblical and scientific dishonesty displayed in one of the Christian textbooks. The case in point is in the matter of a geocentric universe. In the 1994 edition of *Matter and Motion in God's Universe* published by the A Beka book division of Pensacola Christian College, we find a discussion of "The Development of Modern Astronomy" on pages 33-38. On those pages we are informed that "Ptolemy's false geocentric idea" is

¹ Ron Nelson is the science teacher at Cleveland Baptist Church's high school. Ron's testimony appeared in the Summer 2008 *Biblical Astronomer*, 18:(125):65, under the title, "From Peaks of Siver to Streets of Gold."

“the pagan view” of the universe. We are then told that “Copernicus’ correct heliocentric idea” is “the Christian view.” Not one verse of Scripture is used to substantiate the “correct” and “false” allegations presented therein. Instead, they use the Protestant Reformation and its “Back to the Bible” emphasis as evidence for their allegations. Not one mention is made of the fact that many of the Protestant Reformers voiced their opposition to the Copernican system. No mention is made of Tycho Brahe, but Galileo and Kepler are presented as “saviors” of the “Christian” Copernican system. What Biblical and scientific dishonesty! When questioned about the biased presentation, the publisher’s response is that since the Copernican viewpoint is the most widely-held viewpoint, it is the view which will be presented in the text. Is this a Biblical approach in presenting scientific information?

In the interest of fairness and to give credit where credit is due, the textbook under critique does present a very sound Biblical defense of creationism versus Darwinism. They are to be commended for their fine coverage of the topic. However, even this segment of the book maintains its bias against Geocentricity in citing Job 38:12, 14² as biblical support for the alleged rotation of the earth on its axis. Somehow they overlooked the clearer teaching of passages such as Psalm 104:5,³ Job 26:7⁴ and others which speak in favor of Geocentricity. Any intelligent reader will quickly see that Psalm 104:5 and Job 26:7 support the idea of a stationary earth far better than Job 38:12, 14 supports the untenable idea of a moving earth.

In the face of these difficulties, we ask ourselves this question: What is the solution to the Christian textbook problem? The answer is surprisingly simple, begin with what the Bible says, and then carefully integrate the discoveries of science as they are interpreted and screened through the sieve of Scripture. This is the basic concept presented to us in Isaiah 8:20, “To the law and the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” The Bible must be our standard frame of reference and must be in a pre-eminent position in the evaluation and presentation of all scientific information.

² Job 38:12—Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the day-spring to know his place; ...¹⁴ It is turned as clay to the seal; and they stand as a garment.

³ Psalm 104:5—Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever.

⁴ Job 26:7—He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.

CREDO

The Biblical Astronomer was founded in 1971 as the Tychonian Society. It is based on the premise that the only absolutely trustworthy information about the origin and purpose of all that exists and happens is given by God, our Creator and Redeemer, in his infallible, preserved word, the Holy Bible commonly called the King James Bible. Any scientific endeavor which does not accept this revelation from on high without any reservations, literary, philosophical or whatever, we reject as already condemned in its unfounded first assumptions.

We believe that the creation was completed in six twenty-four hour days and that the world is not older than about six thousand years. We maintain that the Bible teaches us of an earth that neither rotates daily nor revolves yearly about the sun; that it is at rest with respect to the throne of him who called it into existence; and that hence it is absolutely at rest in the universe.

We affirm that no man is righteous and so all are in need of salvation, which is the free gift of God, given by the grace of God, and not to be obtained through any merit or works of our own. We affirm that salvation is available only through faith in the shed blood and finished work of our risen LORD and saviour, Jesus Christ.

Lastly, the reason why we deem a return to a geocentric astronomy a first apologetic necessity is that its rejection at the beginning of our Modern Age constitutes one very important, if not the most important, cause of the historical development of Bible criticism, now resulting in an increasingly anti-Christian world in which atheistic existentialism preaches a life that is really meaningless.

If you agree with the above, please consider becoming a member. Membership dues are \$30 per year. Members receive free shipping on all items offered for sale by the *Biblical Astronomer*.

To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

– Isaiah 8:20

TITLES AVAILABLE FROM THE A.B.A.

Orders can be honored only if accompanied by payment in United States currency either by cheque drawn on a U.S. bank or cash. All North American orders add 15% postage. Orders for books outside North America please add an additional \$11 for the first book and \$6 for each additional one; for other items add \$5 per item for postage.

BOOKS AND DVDs

The Bible and Geocentricity, by Prof. James N. Hanson. A collection of articles, most of which made up the “Bible and Geocentricity” column in the early 1990s. Prof. Hanson has added numerous illustrations. (145 pages, 5.5x8.5 format) \$10

The Book of Bible Problems by G. Bouw. The most difficult “contradictions” in the Bible are answered without compromise. “A classic,” writes Gail Riplinger. 266 pages, indexed. \$20

Geocentricity DVD. Martin Selbrede gives a first-rate presentation of geocentricity. \$18

Where in the Universe Are We? DVD by Philip Stott. We carried Stott’s videos until they were no longer produced. Recently they have been remastered for DVD. This DVD deals with geocentricity. \$25

Problems in Astronomy, DVD by Philip Stott. Remastered for DVD, this program is more creationist-oriented than dealing with the geocentric universe, although the topic is covered positively. \$25

Geocentricity, the Scriptural Cosmology, narrated by Dr. Bouw explains the seasons, retrograde motion and other phenomena using Pastor Norwalt’s Tyconic Orrery. Previously released as a VHS tape, it has been transferred to DVD from its original 8mm videotape \$18

The Fixed Idea of Astronomical Theory, August Tischner. Reprint of the 1883 first edition of the book that exerted by far the most influence on geocentrist writers in the first quarter of the 20th century, and is the source of anti-Copernican testimonies of 19th century scientist. \$10

Thou Shalt Keep Them, ed. by Kent Brandenburg. A collection of papers powerfully defending the KJV translations of challenged readings, such as Psalm 12:6,7. Includes papers by Dr. Strouse. \$20

Why Cumbereth it the Ground? Kenneth Brooks. Critically examines the origins and impact of American Christian Fundamentalism. \$17

(Product list continued on the inside front cover.)