

## Outline

## **Deep Impact: Galileo & the Bible**

**January 14, 2006**

*The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy, and like a strong man runs its course with joy. Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them; and nothing is hid from its heat. Psalm 19:1-6*

Introduction: The Deep Impact of Galileo and the Church and their collision over where science and religion meet.

- *“To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord)...” 1 Corinthians 7:12*

### I. Sources of Tension Between Science and Religion

#### A. The Galileo Incident (1600s): Church denounced Galileo for heresy,

- The church made a critical mistake when it began making scientific claims, because science is not the church’s domain.

#### B. Richard Dawkins (late 1900s) – zoologist, ethologist; “The big lie is that God or some omnipotent creator made and oversees the world.”

- Science made a critical mistake when it began making religious claims because religion is not science’s domain.

### II. The Role of Science and Religion

#### A. The aim of science: Understanding the “how” of the creation

- Science deals with the mechanics of the creation

#### B. The aim of religion: Understanding the “why” of the creation

- Religion deals with the purpose of the creation

#### C. An analogy from music and sound:

### III. Where Do Science and Religion Meet?

#### A. 3 Possibilities:

#### B. Christian Theology’s Two Books: Psalm 19:1-6 and Psalm 119:105

##### 1. The natural world, (God’s handiwork)

- *Since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made... Romans 1:19,20*

##### 2. God’s direct revealing of himself to us. (Bible, Jesus, experiences, etc.)

Conclusion: Does it have to be a collision course...or can we find where Science & Religion Meet ?

**Monday, January 15** – My thanks to Adam Hamilton for the study guides for this series. This week we'll study scriptures related to the different ways we come to know or see God. Among the ways human beings are meant to "see" and know God is by studying the creation. Read Romans 1:18-23 where Paul makes the case that all human beings are held accountable for at least some knowledge of God since, as Paul claims, certain things about God, including his very existence, should be obvious by studying creation. Read Psalm 19:1-6. What do you perceive about the character of God when you look at the beauty of creation?

**Tuesday, January 16** – Today we'll look at another of what are called the "hymns of creation" – Psalms which offer praise to God by examining God's works in creation. You can imagine these Psalms having been written after the Psalmist took a walk through the woods, or while sitting outside looking up at the stars. Read Psalm 104. What is the tone of this Psalm? What does the Psalmist conclude about God by looking at the creation? Look over your notes on the conclusion of last weekend's sermon – related to tsunamis, science and religion. How does science help us understand terrible tragedies like this? What role does religion play in such events?

**Wednesday, January 17** – In Sunday's sermon we spoke of the "two books" by which Christians believe they come to know ultimate truth – the first book is the natural world, which is God's handiwork, and the second are God's direct or special ways of revealing himself to us. Among these are our personal experiences of God – moments when God's Spirit touches our hearts, when we receive insights from God, or when God acts in our lives in providential ways. Can you think of any times when you either felt God's presence, perceived that you saw God working in your life, or felt God speaking to you? What was this like? Read Psalm 23. How did David experience God in his life? What did his experience lead him to believe about God as expressed in this Psalm? Remember that our subjective experiences of God must always be understood in the light of the scriptures – at times our experiences can be misunderstood or even misleading, as when some have believed God was telling them to do terrible things in his name. Nevertheless, our personal experience is one way God reveals himself to us.

**Thursday, January 18** – Picking up on yesterday's theme, let's continue to consider the "second book" by which God reveals himself – his direct or special revelation to us. In addition to God's direct work in our lives which we perceive through personal experience, God has given us the gift of scripture. Read Psalm 119:105 and II Timothy 3:14-16. What do these two passages say about the Bible? Read I Peter 1:20-21. What does this teach us about prophetic words in the Bible? Finally, read Hebrews 4:12-13. What does this teach us about God's word? Christians thus believe that God can be known in some ways through nature, and through our personal experience of God, but more directly, and more perfectly, through the inspired writings we call the Bible. These provide a more objective basis for our knowledge of God against which we measure our more subjective experiences of God.

**Friday, January 19** – We've been studying the "two books" by which truth and ultimate reality are made known – the first "book" is creation itself. But that is only one form of knowledge about ultimate reality. God has taken the initiative to reveal more to us – because God longs to be made known to us, and longs for us to know his will. This leads to the second "book" – God's special acts of revelation in which God more directly makes himself known. We've learned that these include our personal experience of God, and the Bible. But even these are subject to misinterpretation. God's supreme act of revealing himself and his will was by becoming one of us in Jesus Christ. Jesus – both his words and his actions, is the Word of God by which we measure and interpret all other words and experiences of God. Read John 1:1-18. What does this teach you about Jesus? How does this passage relate to you personally?