

Pleasant Springs Church

12-Week Study · A Quantum Case For God

WEEK 1 OF 12

The Two Books

Why a Christian should care about modern physics

THE BIG IDEA

The medieval church spoke of *two books*: the book of nature and the book of scripture, both written by the same God. When the two seem to disagree, we have either misread the data or misread the text — the Author cannot contradict Himself. Modern physics is the most careful reading of the book of nature humans have ever done. Scripture says creation will testify (Rom 1:20). For twelve weeks we listen to what it testifies.

If you grew up in Sunday school you may have been told, quietly or loudly, that science and faith are enemies — that you must choose. This series rejects that premise. The author of Genesis is also the author of every photon, every quark, every vibrating string of energy at the bottom of physical reality. To love Him with all your mind (Matt 22:37) is to take both books with full seriousness.

Dennis Zetting's *A Quantum Case For God* — the book this twelve-week series engages — makes a modest and powerful claim. Not that science *proves* God, but that the discoveries of modern quantum and string physics have eroded every scientific basis on which one might confidently assert that a creator God *cannot* exist. And, in many specific cases, the physics reveals exactly the kind of reality scripture predicts.

This week sets the stage. We look at the doctrine of two books, the Pauline claim that creation is a legible witness, and the thread that will tie every following week together: **God speaks; reality answers.**

SCRIPTURE

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Romans 1:20 · Creation Is a Witness

Septuagint (LXX) / Greek New Testament

τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορᾶται, ἢ τε ἀίδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θειότης, εἰς τὸ εἶναι αὐτοῦς ἀναπολογήτους.

English Standard Version

For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

Psalms 18:2 LXX (= Ps 19:1) · The Heavens Narrate Glory

Septuagint (LXX) / Greek New Testament

οἱ οὐρανοὶ διηγοῦνται δόξαν Θεοῦ, ποίησιν δὲ χειρῶν αὐτοῦ ἀναγγέλλει τὸ στερέωμα·

English Standard Version

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

Psalms 32:6 LXX (= Ps 33:6) · The Word and the Worlds

Septuagint (LXX) / Greek New Testament

τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ Κυρίου οἱ οὐρανοὶ ἐστερεώθησαν, καὶ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ πᾶσα ἡ δύναμις αὐτῶν.

English Standard Version

By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host.

THE BIBLICAL CASE

The Doctrine of Two Books

Augustine of Hippo (354–430) wrote: «*It is the divine page that you must listen to; it is the book of the universe that you must observe.*» The metaphor traveled through Aquinas, Bonaventure, Galileo, Bacon, Kepler, Newton, and into the Reformation. Calvin called the world *theatrum gloriae Dei* — the theater of God’s glory. The instinct is the same in all of them: the same God authored both. Read either honestly and you arrive at the same Author.

The Thread That Ties Every Week

Genesis 1 records ten times that «*God said.*» Psalm 33 says the heavens were made by His *word* and framed by the *breath of His mouth*. Hebrews 11:3 says the worlds were framed by the *spoken word of God*. John 1 calls Christ Himself the *Logos* — the Word — through whom all things were made. Speech

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is vibration of air. Vibration of air is the macroscopic shadow of a vibrating string at the bottom of physical reality. The whole physical universe, on the modern account, is one continuous, sustained vibration. The whole physical universe, on the biblical account, is a sustained Word. The two books say the same thing.

THE CONVERGENCE

Scripture says creation witnesses. Modern physics is the most careful listening to that witness we have ever done. The series is not *science vs. faith*; it is two faithful readings of the same Author.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Where did you first learn that science and faith are opposed? Was it ever explicitly taught, or just absorbed?
2. Augustine, Aquinas, Newton, Faraday, Maxwell, Kelvin, and many of the founders of modern science were Christians. Why does our culture rarely tell that story?
3. Romans 1:20 says creation makes the invisible attributes of God *clearly perceived*. Where in your own life have you most clearly perceived God through nature?
4. If the two books cannot contradict, what would honest reading require of you when an apparent contradiction shows up?
5. Read Psalm 33:6 aloud. What does it mean to you that the universe began as a *spoken* thing?

CLOSING PRAYER

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Father, you are the Author of two books and the same God speaks through both. Forgive us when we have set them against each other, when we have read your scripture lazily or your creation lazily and blamed the disagreement on you. Open our minds to read both with care. Open our hearts to find you in both. Bring us through these twelve weeks more in love with you, more in love with your world, more able to give a reason for the hope that is in us. We ask it through Jesus Christ, the Logos in whom all things hold together.
Amen.

Week 1 of 12 — A Quantum Case For God, a Pleasant Springs Church discipleship series. The complete 12-week study, and every other lesson, is at ps-church.com/discipleship/quantum-case-for-god