



The Big Story

Discussion Questions

We encourage your group to sit down to watch together [“The Big Story” with Extended Introduction](#) (the timestamps below refer to this video). Here are a few questions to guide your discussion

1. Science is often pitted against the Bible as a competing explanation. Pastor Len wove science and the Bible together into one grand story, showing how they can complement one another. Have you ever thought of science and the Bible in this way before?
2. Pastor Len traces the key events of the Bible into one narrative, calling it “the true story of the whole world.” Is this how you see the Bible, as one coherent story? If so, do you agree with how Pastor Len put “The Big Story” together, or would you emphasize different themes or events?
3. “The Big Story” video doesn’t get into the details of Genesis 1 and 2. Instead, Pastor Len is inspired by the beautiful language of those passages to retell the story in light of scientific discoveries about God’s creation. In the Extended Introduction, he discusses the work of biblical scholars who show that **“these chapters were not meant to give us a literal historical or scientific description of creation. They were meant as counter-stories to the creation stories of Ancient Near Eastern cultures.” [2:20]** Had you thought of the Genesis texts this way before? Could the texts still be true in a meaningful sense if they were not written as a blow-by-blow, scientific description of how God created?

Digging Deeper: The creation stories of Genesis were written in a very different cultural context than our own modern scientific times. Read [“Guided Tour: Ancient Cosmology and the Bible”](#) for links to several BioLogos articles on understanding the original context of Genesis.

4. “The Big Story” doesn’t get into the exact sequence of scientific details; instead it celebrates the broad sweep of natural history. Did you learn something new about the history of the universe and of life? Do you have new questions about the development of stars and/or species?
5. Did the story give you new insights into or questions about the character of God? The qualities of the Trinity? How God interacts with time, space, and the natural world?
6. Pastor Len says that prior to the dawn of humans, **“all these living things just existed, there was still no creature capable of knowing and loving the Creator.”** [9:33] Do you think other creatures can love God in some way? What hints or precursors to human consciousness do we see in animals? How is human consciousness and human love for God distinct from that of animals?

Digging Deeper: Some areas of science that Pastor Len mentioned are well understood and nearly universally accepted by scientists today (like the [great age of the universe](#) and the [shared biological ancestry of humans with other life forms](#)). Others are cutting-edge and still debated among scientists, such as the [origin of earth’s water](#) (recent research suggests that asteroids, not comets, are the source), and the [origin of the first living creatures](#) (an introduction here).

7. Pastor Len says: **“What a miracle of love and creativity! After a process of billions of years, from a pinpoint of possibility, from a sprinkling of stardust, conscious human beings stand on the earth.”** [10:56] Consider how leading astronomer and atheist Lawrence Krauss [writes](#) of the same event: **“You couldn’t be here if stars hadn’t exploded, because the elements - the carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, iron, all the things that matter for evolution - weren’t created at the beginning of time. They were created in the nuclear furnaces of stars, and the only way they could get into your body is if those stars were kind enough to explode. So, forget Jesus. The stars died so that you could be here today.”** These two people have radically different worldviews, yet both accept that we came from stardust. What can people with different worldviews agree on when it comes to the science of origins? What do they disagree about?

8. A key turn of the plot of the big story is the fall of humanity into sin as **“the poison of their rebellion spreads.”** [12:11]. Christian theology teaches that all people have sinned and no one is righteous. What are some ways for understanding how sin spread through the early humans? Did it spread genetically? Socially?

Digging Deeper: There are multiple theories about how exactly the doctrine of “original sin” can be understood in light of evolution. Here’s an article explaining some of these theories, and why it’s OK that there’s multiple perspectives on this question: [“Why the Church Needs Multiple Theories of Original Sin”](#) by Loren Haarsma.

9. Pastor Len says: ***“Salvation is not about leaving behind our broken humanity or the spoiled created order. Salvation is about becoming human, and as restored human beings into the image of God, bringing the created order to its full glory” [13:33]*** and ***“Jesus Christ is the true and human image of the invisible God.” [14:08]*** Do you think salvation is about becoming truly human or about becoming like Christ? Or both?

10. The conclusion of “The Big Story” is the ***“restored creation” in which “all things will be made new.” [14:47]***
Do you think the new creation will be a return to the Eden described in Genesis 2? Or will it be transformed into a something beyond Eden, like the city described in Isaiah 60 and Revelation 21-22? Does the evidence for biological evolution (involving suffering and death) impact our understanding of the Eden of Genesis or of the new creation?

Digging Deeper: If life has developed through a process of evolution, then death and decay have been around for as long as life itself. How do we understand this in light of the scriptural vision of a new creation without any death and suffering? This article addresses that difficult question: [“And God Saw That It Was Good”: Death and Pain in the Created Order, Part 1](#)” by Keith Miller. For more on how to understand the promise of “new creation” as part of the Big Story, read [“Easter for the Universe”](#) by Ted Davis and Ted Peters.