

A month or so ago, I was asked to review Daniel Friedmann's "The Genesis One Code." A trip to the book's website followed by a brief look at the foreword...and I was sold...even though I was in the middle of Finals.

Foreword (brought to you by the official "The Genesis One Code" website):

Are you educated in the sciences and convinced that current scientific theories and data explain our origins? At the same time, do you have an awareness of the Bible and its seeming incompatibility with science?

Do you believe that God created the world and that all answers pertaining to our origins are clearly provided in the scriptures? At the same time, do you have a basic awareness of science and its seeming incompatibility with some of the teachings of your religion?

Are you familiar with the basics of both religion and science yet cannot reconcile the two as far as explaining our origins?

At the start of this journey I too was unsure whether or not the answers found in science books and religious scriptures could be reconciled. Now, having explored both in some depth, I can say that such reconciliation is not out of the question. This book attempts to demonstrate the reconciliation with respect to two major areas: the timing of the formation of the universe and the emergence and development of life on earth.

As previous posts suggest, one of the missions of this blog is to find some middle ground between theology and scientific thought. I want to bridge that gap between science and religion that seems to widen every time an author resorts to polemics when writing a book that seeks to explore the origin of the universe. Therefore, one of the first things that stood out to me when reading this book was Friedmann's ability to explore the origin of the universe without picking one side and continually refuting the other. Rather, he explores the history and thought of both sides in a balanced manner that is easy to follow. He also draws on information from both sides to create a time line for creation that is in agreement with scientific as well as biblical sources. The meat of the book centers on the two timelines presented by both sides of the creation-evolution debate. In the first timeline, the creation timeline, creation of the earth and universe take place in six days. In the other timeline, the big bang timeline, creation of the universe occurs 13.7 billion years ago. Talk about a major difference in time! Interestingly enough, however, Friedmann is able to piece a timeline together that matches up the major events found in both time lines. How does he do this? Well, I'm not going to spoil it for you. However, I will say that it involved some pretty interesting theories, aged manuscripts, biblical texts, and various other sources. All of the sources used are conveniently found at the end of each chapter...making it a little easier for the readers interested in doing some independent investigation.

Regardless of where you stand when it comes to the origin of the universe, The Genesis One Code is a worthwhile read. I could not put it down once I was finally able to start reading...and it certainly did provide me with some fresh insight as to how creation from a Catholic standpoint can be in agreement with creation from a scientific standpoint.

I may have a scientific background (current PhD student with a BS in biology and MS in molecular biology), but I feel that Friedmann presented genetics, evolution, and even the Big Bang theory in a manner that was succinct and easy to understand...regardless of the reader's

background. He also does the same for the religious portions of the book. Though I have studied other religions in the past, I have to admit that I was not familiar with some of the material referenced by Friedmann et al. You may have to read up on a few things after reading this book, regardless of how familiar you are with Judaism, Kabbalah, and a few of the authors cited. Also, though the timeline Friedmann derived from biblical and Kabbalistic texts and traditions was in accordance with the timeline suggested by current science, Friedmann's book still leaves quite a few open ended questions for the reader.

Speaking of questions, author Daniel Friedmann was kind enough to agree to an interview! (How awesome is that?!)

Welcome to the Catholic Science Geek blog Mr. Friedmann!

Alright, we already know you're a science geek because, according to your website, you have a master's degree in engineering physics. In an effort to break the ice and get this interview started, I'd going to ask you to share one geeky fact about yourself.

I read cosmology books for fun!

So, is there any moment in your life where everything kind of clicked in your mind or did you always feel that science and faith could complement each other?

About a year and a half ago while working on the research for the book and the conversion factor for times, everything clicked together. As I converted the times of more and more events and saw how well everything fit together, it was very exciting.

Deep inside, I've always thought that science and faith had to fit together. I must admit that as I studied more and more physics I reached the point where I thought physics explained everything pertaining to the universe. However, once I reached 4th year university I realized there were so many unanswered questions (which they don't tell you about in years 1 thru 3 of university) that we were a long way away from figuring things out. So I went back into religion for answers.

So, what made you finally decide to write this book?

Discussion with my nephews (14 to 20 years of age) where I realized they were asking the same questions I had asked at their age and not getting satisfactory answers. Furthermore, there were some prominent scientists trying to promote that they had the answers, and on top of that, that there is no need for God. The combination of all this made me re-double my efforts.

Concurrently I saw an approach to the problem developed 800 years ago, that looked like it had promise – which pointed me to the solution.

Your book seems, for the most part, to take a pretty balanced stance when it comes to addressing the origin of the universe. Why not just pick one side of the debate and leave it at that?

Almost everything I read picks a side and tries to attack the other side. But both sides are on the same side! God made the universe and science is a way to explore it and understand it. So there are no sides. Furthermore, I want the reader to make their own decision. The intent of the book is to show that there is agreement on what happened and when it happened and some disagreement on how it happened. After the readers have explored the agreement between science and Genesis they can proceed to explore their beliefs.

How have readers responded to The Genesis One Code? I'd imagine your inbox to be flooded with responses from people who either loved the book or hated it. Care to share some of the responses you've been getting (good or bad)?

I wish my inbox was flooded, since I really want this message to get out! I have received many responses and they are overwhelmingly positive. Some people that have, it seems, a hate for religion have sent negative comments, but it does not appear that they made an effort to actually read the book.

While I enjoyed reading this book, there were quite a few Rabbis and traditions in there that weren't so familiar to me. Are the works of these Rabbis accepted by all Jewish scholars, or just those that follow Kabbalah?

Almost all the sources used are mainstream accepted and as you noted they help guide us through Genesis - the book by enlarge relies on the Genesis text. The source (from Kabbalah) that motivated the conversion of timelines is not mainstream - although for many centuries its premise (cosmic sabbatical cycles) was accepted, but fell out of mainstream acceptance in the past 150 years.

Do you have any advice or suggested works for readers who end up enjoying The Genesis One Code?

Advice- please spread the word that science and religion are compatible especially to young adults who are been exposed to science, not as a field of study like I was, but increasingly as an alternative to religion.

By the way, all net proceeds are being donated to charity.

Suggested works- hopefully some of the references will motivate people to further study or find similar works in their religious teachings.

There is of course my next book which I hope to get out by the end of the year. The second book picks up where this one left off and tackles humans (from monkeys until today). It will be titled "Adam and the Homo sapiens".

Thank you very much for the interview as well as your time. I hope to see more of your work in the future.

Thank you for taking time to review the book and doing such a thorough job.

Disclaimer: I was given a copy of the book to review. I was not offered any form of compensation for reading the book or reviewing the book. The thought and opinions expressed herein are my own.