

The Bible Knew First

(by Bob Pulliam)

We seem to know so much in this modern world of ours. And while ancient man had made some very keen observation, he just did not know some of the things we take for granted. But what if the Bible already made mention of these things before "modern science" discovered them?... Well, read on...

The Shape of the Earth...

The Earth is flat. That was the opinion of "science" before it's serious reconsideration by more modern men. In the days of Columbus, it was feared that one might sail right off the edge of the Earth if he went too far. We can laugh at such matters, but it was not until this period that the shape of the earth was beginning to challenge general science. But now let's go back further in time. Roughly 2,000 years before the time of Columbus we find a Hebrew Prophet named Isaiah writing the following:

"It is He who sits above the circle of the earth..." (Isa 40:22)

The word for "circle" in this text actually indicates an object with three dimensional character (a sphere, or ball). How did Isaiah know that the Earth was round? He hadn't seen any pictures of it. Perhaps he figured it out the same way Pythagoras did, who lived about the same time. But consider for a moment that the Jews were not scientists by any stretch of the imagination, and the Bible never meant for the dabbling of opinions. For Isaiah to put such an opinion in scripture, and jeopardize the integrity of the Bible would have been unthinkable. But here it is asserted as a simple matter of fact. Long before any other peoples took it up as a matter of fact.

What's Holding it Up?...

A vast majority of ancient man believed that the Earth had some means of support, and that all of the heavenly bodies moved above us. You'll often hear this referred to as the Ptolemaic System. What does the Bible say about the Earth's support?

"... He hangs the earth on nothing." (Job 26:7)

That the Earth is hung on nothing is denied by no one today. But the Bible knew it first.

Singing Stars...

We don't usually think of stars as singing, but it is fairly common knowledge that they do emit a noise which we pick up with radio-telescopes and study. Who would have thought that those silent dots in the sky actually made any noise? But the Lord said to Job:

"When the morning stars sang together..." (Job 38:7)

Now one might think that this is just a figure of speech, applying a human act of praise to a portion of creation. Such is not unheard of in scripture (e.g. Ps 19:2). But there is a peculiar aspect of this passage that should be considered. The word "sang" in this passage actually

refers to a shrill piercing noise, like that irritating noise of a rusty iron gate being closed. I don't like to be picky, but if I were going to choose a word to describe the singing of the stars in praise to God, I would have chosen something much prettier than that. I submit that Job would have also. But Job is not speaking in this passage. The creator is, and he actually knew the sound made by the singing stars.

Refraction of Light...

We realize light follows a path, and that there is a method by which that light is divided. We all know that a prism will bend light, separating the various colors into visible bands (creating a rainbow). Think about these two statements:

"What is the path in which light dwells? By what method is light divided ...?" (Job 38:19, 24)

Light in a path, and a method for dividing it. Today, an entire branch of science (spectroscopy) is based on this principle. The Lord said something about it to Job long before mankind discovered it.

Paths in the Sea...

One of the most famous instances of God's word teaching man about nature is in the story about Matthew Fontaine Maury. During an illness, Maury's son was reading to him from the Bible. As he read, he came to this passage:

"Whatever passeth through the paths of the sea." (Ps 8:8)

The passage arrested Maury's attention. He is said to have told his son, "It is enough, if the word of God says there are paths in the sea, they must be there, and I am going to find them." After a few years, Maury had charted many of the currents and sea lanes.

Maury is responsible for establishing Annapolis Academy, and a statue of him stands in Richland, Virginia. In one hand he is holding charts, and in the other.... You guessed it, ... A Bible.

Conclusion...

We might expect the Chinese to discover something early, the Egyptians something else, and the Greeks something as well. But the *Bible* spoke of these things before "scientific observation" discovered them. The Bible was not written by scientists. And the Bible does not dabble at trying to scoop the intellectual community of its day on some new way of thought. If the Bible was indulging in simply stating the ideas of its day, then we could expect it to be wrong in some matter taken for granted now. But the Bible is always right! How did men so long ago know so much about the mechanics of creation?... Perhaps the creator spoke to them, giving them firsthand knowledge... Hmmmmmm....