What kinds of answers can we expect from the Bible?
## Unit 8: Bible Interpretation and Science

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Unit Overview

Unit 8: Bible Interpretation and Science teaches students the principles and methods Christians use to understand and apply the meaning of Scripture, paying special attention to the Bible’s ancient context and the ways Christians harmonize the truth in the Bible with scientific knowledge.

This unit features:

• A video introduction to Old Testament scholar Tremper Longman III.
• A devotional Bible study on the virtue of unity.
• An explanation of the origin of the Bible and principles of Bible interpretation.
• An activity that shows how differences between our modern context and the ancient context of the Bible affect our understanding.
• A comparison of ways people harmonize modern science and the Bible.
• Examples of how people interpret Genesis 1 in light of ancient ideas about the cosmos and the literary structure of the text.
• A case study of different approaches to cosmology in the Bible.
• A chance to practice Christian unity with people who have a different interpretation of Genesis.
Learning Outcomes
What will students know or be able to do after this unit?

- Explain the importance of unity for the church.
- Describe how paying attention to the Bible’s original audience, purpose, literary forms, and cultural context helps a reader understand the Bible better.
- Analyze how differences in language, cultural concepts, experience, and background knowledge affect biblical interpretation.
- Compare and contrast concordist and divine accommodation expectations about how science and the Bible fit together.
- Identify elements of ancient Near East (ANE) cosmology that appear in the Genesis 1 creation account.
- Use a literary approach to analyze the Genesis 1 creation account in terms of realms and inhabitants.
- Evaluate the influence of concordist and divine accommodation approaches on the interpretation of young earth creationist, old earth creationist, and evolutionary creationist authors.

How to Use This Unit
Please see the User Introduction and Overview (biologos.link/user-intro) for important information and links, such as the difference between the five module types (Meet, Grow, Experience, Engage, and Integrate); our terms of use (how documents may be modified and distributed); and advice for communicating with parents or others in your community about potentially controversial topics.

This document contains lesson plans for the entire unit. Other files, such as student handouts, images for the Grow module, teacher instructions for specific activities, answer keys, and slide presentations, are accessible via links within this document.

Teacher’s Notes and sample answers are formatted with italics.

Scope and Sequence
This unit builds on Unit 2: Ways of Knowing. It assumes students are familiar with how scientific knowledge and theological knowledge are similar and different, and how each type of knowledge is acquired. It also assumes students know the difference between core doctrines and secondary beliefs. This unit relies on an approach to interpreting Scripture which values understanding the cultural context and hypothesizing about what the text would have meant to the original audience. You may want to point out to students that other hermeneutical lenses (e.g. theological or devotional) are also necessary; reading Scripture in a variety of ways can help us better understand what God wants to teach us in his word.
After completing **Unit 8: Bible Interpretation and Science**, you can continue with other units (biologos.link/units-list) that pair well with your science or Bible course (biologos.link/course-pairing). The modular design gives you flexibility to pick and choose the activities that best suit your goals, time constraints, and students’ interests.

To learn more about how Christians interpret Genesis and reconcile core Christian beliefs with evolution and an ancient earth, see **Unit 9: Evolution and God’s Creation, Unit 10: The Fossil Record and Faith, and Unit 11: Humans and the Rest of Creation**.

For an introduction to questions at the intersection of faith and science, see **Unit 1: Faith and Science Foundations**. To explore how science can be a way to serve God, see **Unit 3: Science as a Christian Vocation**. An emphasis on seeing truth about God in the natural world is found in **Unit 12: Seeing God in Creation**. Open questions and debated issues about how to best reconcile theological and scientific knowledge are explored in **Unit 4: Cells and Design, Unit 5: Genetic Diversity and Human Dignity, Unit 6: DNA Technologies and Ethics, Unit 7: Fearfully and Wonderfully Made, Unit 13: Caring for the People and the Planet, Unit 14: Climate Change and Our Commission, and Unit 15: Biodiversity and Conservation**.

**Pedagogy of Hospitality**

Integrate presumes acceptance of, or directly teaches, the scientific consensus on some matters of controversy within the Christian community: namely, modern cosmology, the age of the earth, evolution, and anthropogenic climate change. At the same time, we as authors recognize that in any community of Christians, there is likely a diversity of viewpoints. Our goal is education, not indoctrination. As such, we include opportunities to explore various Christian perspectives within the Integrate units. Reflection assignments and discussion questions are intentionally open-ended, without an expectation that students adopt any one “correct” perspective. We also believe practicing gracious dialogue is more important than winning an argument. For this reason the curriculum includes opportunities for respectful engagement with others who think differently. For tips on how to create a welcoming environment in your community, see biology professor Kerry Fulcher’s article **A Pedagogy of Hospitality** (biologos.link/hospitality).

**Corequisite Science**

While Integrate is flexible and may be used as a standalone resource for enrichment, it is designed to supplement, not replace, science instruction. Students will be prepared to engage with the material in this unit assuming concurrent or previous study of the nature of science.

**NGSS Alignment**

The **Next Generation Science Standards** (NGSS; biologos.link/ngss) are research-based, cutting-edge K-12 science standards. They set expectations for what students should know and be able to do. While not an NGSS curriculum, Integrate has many points of alignment with NGSS. If you refer to NGSS in your lesson planning, please see the **NGSS Alignment for Integrate** (biologos.link/ngss-alignment).
Vocabulary

The following terms and concepts are used in this unit or in the additional resources. Definitions and explanations are found in the Unit Glossary at the end of the unit. Many additional terms are included in the main Integrate Glossary (biologos.link/glossary).

accommodation
ancient Near East (ANE)
Answers in Genesis
appearance of age
biblical literalism
Big Bang
cognitive bias
cognitive environment
common descent
concordism
cosmic geography
cosmic temple model
cosmology
creationism
creation science
culture
day-age view
doctrine
eisegesis
 evolution
evolutionary creation (EC)
exegesis
firmament
framework view
functional origins
 gap theory
general revelation
genre
heliocentrism
heresy
hermeneutics
inspiration
Leviathan
material origins
miracle
 old earth creation (OEC)
orthodox
presuppositions
progressive creation
Reasons to Believe
special creation
 special revelation
theistic evolution (TE)
worldview
young earth creationism (YEC)
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