

## The Myth of the Age

Written by Dr. John E. Russell Sr - Last Updated Tuesday, 06 March 2018 23:22

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The Greeks explained the world with stories that we now collectively call Greek mythology. The word "mythology" comes from a compound Greek word, *mythos*, "story" and *logos*, "word, study of, doctrine, discussion, or account" of anything. Mythology is the

. . .study of the traditional tales of any people or of mankind in general. . . .

. . .the oldest myths seem to have been the creation of some of the best minds among early peoples. These minds, untrained in reasoning and with very little factual knowledge to guide them, had a certain creative power, comparable to that of a poet or other artist. . . . By virtue of this they shaped a kind of vision, crude indeed, and often absurd or even revolting, of the reality which they dimly guessed to lie behind the bewildering phenomena surrounding them. This vision was as yet far from being scientific or philosophical thought, but it was in some sense the forerunner of both. Because these minds had as yet no approach to a scientific or philosophical vocabulary, it necessarily expressed itself in a kind of imagery which may perhaps justifiably be called symbolic. [*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1963 ed., S.v. "Mythology," by Herbert Jennings Rose. Mr. Rose was Professor of Greek, University of St. Andrews, Scotland 1927-53.]

Not only did the Greeks fabricate myths, but other nations did also. Some national myths resemble myths of other nations. As we examine the past stories to explain the world, they contain many ideas so far fetched that the word "myth" seems to fit the stories well.

Myths are generally divided into two categories: (1) creation myths and (2) explanatory myths. [*The World Book Encyclopedia*, 1987 ed., S.v. "Mythology," by C. Scott Littleton.]

From our twentieth century perspective and scientific knowledge, we can readily distinguish the fantasy from the fiction. However, if we had lived in past cultures, we probably would have believed the prevailing myths of the time! This complex of many commonly-accepted myths, taken together, we will call the "Myth of the Age."

The roots of science (Latin, *scientia*, "knowledge") reach back in ancient history. The Egyptians understood astronomy well enough to know when to predict annual Nile flooding and when to forecast the seasons about 3000 B.C. The ancient Babylonians developed a system of counting in units of 60, and understood fractions, squares and square roots. They were able to predict eclipses. Then later, by 1300 B.C., the Chinese had mapped the major stars. Ancient India

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developed surgical techniques and preventative medicine. India also invented the Hindu-Arabic numerals still in use today. The ancient Greeks produced more unrefined scientific knowledge than any other ancient people. [

*The World Book*

*Encyclopedia*

, 1987 ed., S.v.

"Science," by Joseph W. Dauben.]

Some highlights in the history of science are:

400 BC—Hippocrates taught that diseases have natural causes.

300 BC—Euclid organized geometry as a single system of mathematics.

200 BC—Archimedes discovered the laws of the lever and the pulley.

AD 150—Ptolemy proposed [wrongly] that the earth is the center of the universe. Galen developed the first medical theories based on experiments.

1500—Leonardo da Vinci studied anatomy, astronomy, botany and geology.

1543—Nicolaus Copernicus introduced the theory that the planets revolved around the sun (the sun-centered theory).

1609—Johannes Kepler established astronomy as a precise science. Galileo Galilei made the first telescope to view the heavens, and confirmed the sun-centered theory.

1628—William Harvey published his theory of how the blood circulates.

1650—Robert Hooke used the microscope to uncover the world of cells. Robert Boyle helped establish the experimental method in chemistry.

1710—Carl Scheele and Joseph Priestley independently discovered oxygen.

1776—Adam Smith published the first complete work on classical economics.

1777—Antoine Lavoisier discovered the nature of combustion.

1830—Charles Lyell showed that the earth has changed slowly during the ages.

1850—Louis Pasteur discovered that certain kinds of microscopic cells cause disease.

1860—James Clerk Maxwell developed his electromagnetic theory.

1869—Dmitri Mendeleev published his periodic table of the elements.

1879—Wilhelm Wundt founded one of the first psychology laboratories.

1898—Marie and Pierre Curie isolated the element radium.

1900—Sigmund Freud established the field of psychoanalysis. Paul Ehrlich originated the treatment of diseases with chemicals.

1905—Albert Einstein published his special theory of relativity.

1911—Ernest Rutherford put forth his theory of atomic structure.

1928—Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin, the first antibiotic.

1942—Enrico Fermi and co-workers achieved the first controlled nuclear chain reaction.

1953—Jonas Salk produced the first effective polio vaccine.

1957—The Soviet Union launched the first artificial satellite.

1969—Astronauts of the US Apollo 11 mission were the first humans to walk on the moon.

1974—Researchers developed the first successful recombinant DNA procedure.

1981—The United States launched the Columbia, the first reusable manned spacecraft. [*The World Book Encyclopedia*

, 1987 ed., s.v. "Science," by Joseph W. Dauben]. [Thomas H. Greer,

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*A Brief History of Western Man*

(New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1977), p. 353].

Late Twentieth Century—The discovery of better ways of looking into cells, irreducible parts of cells that could not have evolved destroyed Darwin's Theory of Evolution, in my opinion.

Microbiologist Michael Behe explains the arguments. See

Behe, Michael

J. *Darwin's*

*Black Box*

New York: Free

Press Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1996, 2006.

In the history of science, it is evident that yesterday's myth is being purged of some error and improved. We have learned not to bleed patients, to wash our hands before surgery, that the earth is not flat, etc.

Today's myth will probably be purged by further scientific discoveries in the future and replaced with another "myth of the age" that corresponds more with reality.

If the LORD allows the earth to stand a thousand years from now,

*People may look back on our "scientific" knowledge as simply myths!*

Essay 51, from my eBook, *Essays Exposing the Myths of Political Correctness*.

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In Essentials: Unity; In non-essentials: Liberty; In all things: Charity—Peter Meiderlin 1626.

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