

The Parable of the Candle

by Garth Wiebe

<https://www.answersingenesis.org/docs/1247.asp>

Chris and Lucy entered a building looking for Manuel. In a room they found a note and a lighted candle. Chris looked at the note and read it aloud:

‘Hi! It’s 2:30, and I’m leaving to run some errands. I’ll be back in a couple of hours. BTW, the electricity is out, so I lit a candle for you. — Manuel.’

Then Lucy said, ‘I know how we can find out how long it’s been since he left! Look, the candle has been burning since he lit it and has a significant amount of wax that’s melted and dripped down. If we figure out what the rate is which the wax is melting and measure the amount of wax that has thus far dripped, we can work backwards to find out how long it has been since he left.’

Chris said, ‘Why waste your time? The note says he left at 2:30.’ Lucy said, ‘Don’t believe everything you read.’ Chris replied, ‘Look, I’ve known Manuel for a long time, and this is his handwriting. Don’t be ridiculous.’

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Lucy replied, ‘Ah yes, but what does he mean by “2:30”? A note like that is subject to interpretation. Suppose he was talking about another time zone or something.’ And so a short philosophical argument ensued about the note. However, Lucy prevailed and insisted on performing the measurement and calculations.

A few minutes later, Lucy announced: ‘Well, I’ve got bad news for us. Based on the amount of wax that has melted and the rate at which the wax is melting, I can confidently tell you that it has been at least one whole day since this guy left. He was probably talking about 2:30 yesterday. And since he said that he’d be back “in a couple of hours”, we can assume that something happened to him and he’s not coming back at all. So much for your “note”.’

Just then, Manuel walked in. Lucy said, ‘Are you this guy “Manuel”? What took you so long?’ Manuel replied, ‘What are you talking about? I left you guys a note saying I’d be back in a couple of hours. It hasn’t even been that long.’ Lucy said, ‘Never mind the note. I measured the amount of wax that has dripped off your candle, and the rate which the wax was melting. I know you’ve been gone since yesterday.’

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Manuel replied, 'First of all, that candle isn't burning anywhere near as brightly as when I first lit it. Second of all, I didn't light a new candle, but a used one. And thirdly, I used another candle to light this candle and in the process the wax from that candle spilled all over this one.'

Lucy said, 'So you set up that candle to deceive us, to make it look like you left the room over a day ago, when in fact it's been less than a couple of hours.'

Manuel replied, 'Look, I left you a note telling you when I left. I never intended for you to conduct some silly experiment measuring wax dripping off of a candle to figure out when I left. I put the candle there so you guys would have some light.'

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Application:

Geographic: Fossils Yield 10-Million-Year-Old Bone Marrow -- A First

<http://www.answersingenesis.org/docs2006/0729ntn.asp>

In June of 2005, scientists announced they had found preserved red blood cells from a Tyrannosaurus Rex leg bone. (<http://www.foxnews.com/story/2006/07/26/bone-marrow-found-intact-in-ancient-fossils/>)

Findings like this one illustrate the rigidity of the millions-of-years paradigm. Just as in the case of the soft dinosaur tissue discovered awhile back, scientists admit being shocked that tissues—in this case, bone marrow of fossilized frogs and salamanders—could last so long. “It pushes back the boundary for how far [soft tissue] fossilization can go,” according to the study leader.

Of course, there’s no real evidence that soft tissue can last that long; it’s certainly not something scientists have demonstrated in a laboratory! One can only swallow the idea that the tissues are millions of years old if one unyieldingly presupposes that fossils take millions of years to develop and, therefore, that these fossilized animals lived millions of years ago.

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To draw on The Parable of the Candle a bit (go ahead; read it—I'll wait), let's say Lucy proceeds to determine that the candle has been burning for at least a whole day. Then, on the table next to the candle, she discovers a bowl full of cold ice cream. Yet she unquestioningly believes, based on her estimate of how long the candle's been burning, that no one has been in the room in the past day. So instead of allowing the bowl of ice cream to overturn her notion that no one's been in the room (and realizing that someone has been there rather recently!), she instead remarks to Chris, "Well, this just shows you that ice cream can take an awfully long time to melt!" Even if she doesn't accept Manuel's note that says he's only been gone since 2:30, the bowl of ice cream shows that someone had to have been in the room recently with the bowl of ice cream, otherwise it would have melted.