

Examination of 'the worldview of the Bible cannot be carried over to a scientific age'.

Introduction

We must all search for truth and there can be no room for compromise with lies and errors in important matters. To damage truth is to damage truth but also to damage people who want truth. It is not a victimless crime.

Errors and lies breed more errors and lies. Reason, the power to avoid contradicting ourselves, is the tool for guiding ourselves into truth. You invite hatred and suspicion towards yourself if you are not an energetic servant of truth. It will be hard at times but it will be harder if you do not contend earnestly and see it through.

The biggest challenge to the reasonableness of the Bible and its truth is the view that science and religion are incompatible and locked in conflict. It is my intention to test that perception by examining how the Bible responds to it.

People speak of scientific orthodoxy. This is incorrect. Scientists accuse renegade scientists who hawk bizarre theories of ignoring the evidence - that is not enforcing an orthodoxy but objecting to distortion or ignorance of the evidence. Science is about evidence not faith.

Modern people feel that the Bible was written by people who lived long before the discoveries of science and therefore espouses a primitive and superstitious worldview. A worldview is "a particular philosophy of life or conception of the world" [1]. An atheistic worldview may argue that we are here by chance and are not here for any purpose. A Christian one will argue that we are here to love and serve God forever and that he purposely made us.

Is the Bible really in conflict with science?

Christianity would need to be more than just tolerant of science. It would need to embrace and encourage and praise it with utmost sincerity. For some Buddhists, science is mysticism without the magical thinking (page 114, WHY I AM A BUDDHIST, No Nonsense Buddhism for Modern Living, Stephen T Asma, Watkins, London, 2011 - sadly maligned but wonderful book, a gem!).

The Christians feel that the scriptures are just as significant today in the "scientific age" for the scriptures and science together give us tremendous knowledge. Science alone admittedly is not enough. It leaves us with gaps. But it does not follow that the scriptures fill those gaps. And filling the gaps is one thing but filling them with the correct filler is another. The argument that faith and reason complement and fulfil one another is dishonest. If a faith fits the holes and could be reasonable that does not mean that it is actually reasonable. Also, faith claims that there are mysteries and that God is a mystery. Faith gives you paradoxes - where one doctrine of faith contradicts another. Faith says you have to hold both views and hope that one day you will find out how they can be reconciled. It calls its paradoxes mysteries. But that means you do not know if the faith is even non-contradictory. If it is then it is irrational. Instead of faith and reason complementing one another as equals clearly reason has to come first. Faith is terrible at dealing with the unknown where reason fails to take us.

Claims of the Bible

We are suspicious of miracles and revelation from God - seeing them as hangovers from a pre-scientific and superstitious age. No matter how many testimonies we might get that omens told the future accurately in the past we ignore them. We just presume superstition is nonsense by definition and testimony and evidence in its favour does not change that. Evidence that the sun is really a spaceship and not a sun at all is useless.

Anyway the Bible states that it is THE revelation from God and it endorses a worldview based on miracles including the power of God to change even the hardest of hearts. It claims to have been produced by the miracle of divine inspiration.

We take it for granted that cause and effect are universal in the universe. A miracle is like an event that ignores natural causes. It is an effect without any visible cause. So religion assumes that the cause is God. This alone is against science which says that some events do happen without causes and even God has no reason to be involved.

If the Bible does not claim to be the word of God, then there is no point in worrying that it might disagree with science. It's just another ancient work.

The Bible claims to be the word of God - and breathed out by God. 2 Timothy 3:16, All Scripture is God-breathed (All Scripture Quotations except where stated otherwise: New International Version, Study Version (Zondervan, 2011)).

It presupposes that God is all-powerful. Matthew 19:26, Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." Therefore God will not need to resort to lying. Numbers 23:19, God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?

To tell a lie is to try and assert control over something that may not be controllable. Deep down we do not want to believe in a God who is capable of being deceived or who can deceive. Such a God cannot be our rock and our fortress. Psalm 18:2, The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. If the Bible is God's word it cannot err and it claims to be revelation from God and therefore a miracle - result of direct supernatural divine activity.

Limits of Science

Science is restricted in what it can discover for us so it is said to be wrong to assume it necessarily rules out the biblical worldview. Even if the Bible is man-made it could still be right in some things.

Some say that logically working out that God exists is a job for philosophy not science. Science is said to depend on evidence and experiment and not on logic. This is not true. Experiments are based on reasoning - if x then y.

It is said that since God is not an object in the universe he cannot be discovered scientifically. But surely there would be indirect signs that he must exist? Science could verify those. And I thought Jesus as God incarnate is an object in the universe and out there somewhere?

It is not true that the God question is necessarily beyond the expertise of science. Yet it is true that science only deals with physical energies and entities. Vernon, M. The Big Questions, God, (Quercus, 2012), p. 29. Religion says that God is spirit and spirit is a mystery. Religion says it understands some things about spirit and how it works but just as it cannot understand the tiniest atom it cannot understand spirit wholly. Thus clearly though spirit may be non-physical that does not mean that it is necessarily beyond the scope of science. Maybe it can be detected by some machine that we have not invented yet. Spirit is usually understood as some kind of activity - it does something. So that aspect of it at least in principle should be discoverable by science.

In science, the problem is not that something is non-physical but that it is there that counts. Religion is really just trying to prevent science from finding out that it is nonsense.

Believers maintain that science can only deal with what came to be at the big bang. They say that it cannot show that God does not exist or does not exist for that is outside its scope. In reality they know science cannot prove or give evidence for God and are inventing an excuse for why that is not so. If there is no God then they need an excuse for still believing.

If the universe came from something at the big bang, where did the something come from? Christianity answers that it was made by God who is a non-physical entity - spirit: John 4:24 "God is spirit". And who did not make it from anything: "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear".

The notion that science only works on data from the big bang on sees creation as merely a past act. Creation in Christian theology is seen as continuous. It is like a woman baking bread. Unless she focuses a magic ray on it, it will revert to dough. She has to continuously act on it to keep it baked. Science will tell us the apple fell off the tree because of gravity. Christianity will simply have to say that God did it. Keeping the focus away from "before" the big bang does not help at all.

Religion likes to order scientists to believe that science cannot verify non-physical realities. Or that it cannot prove that we love God. There is said then to be no conflict between the core biblical theory that God made all things and what science has learned about the origins of all things. But if science cannot prove a conflict it is wrong to say that there is no conflict for YOU DO NOT KNOW!!! Yet the lie that being unable to prove a conflict means there is no conflict is fundamental to Christian belief!