

## SCIENCE - IT IS NOT ITS ROLE TO INTERPRET THE BIBLE!

Christians argue that all truth comes from God. They add that the Bible is the truth and thus we are to learn from the Bible and learn from science. They mean it is up to them to make science and the Bible fit. They cannot ask science to interpret the Bible. Science cannot take the Bible seriously in the first place or treat it the same as a discovery made by science.

### *Christian Teaching on the Bible and Science*

Science at least by implication is said to be in accord with the biblical worldview that sees good and evil in opposition. But science actually ignores good and evil. If unbelief in God is evil, science will back that unbelief up if it is scientifically justified.

Another alleged match between science and religion is how science is based on testimony and faith. Scientists have to trust human testimony that their machines work. Scientists learn from the work done by other scientists. The world trusts the testimony of science that discoveries have been made. The Bible purports to be the divine testimony about what God has done and how he has acted in history.

If science is faith it is faith in human self-empowerment and trustworthiness. If science is faith, that does not mean that religious faith necessarily becomes legitimate as well. It does not mean that scientific faith and religious faith can agree. Or that they really agree if they seem to. Religious faith could be mindless mysticism as Ayn Rand put it. Scientific faith would not be mystical or supernatural in any sense. Yet some attempt to paint science and what they call Scientism (the belief that the only truth that matters is what science has verified) as religious faith!

The author of the Genesis creation story, lived in a time when the supernatural was thought be directly at work when lightning flashed or when anything even slightly strange happened. It is impossible to believe that he would have went to huge effort to write the story if it were not literal. The story looks silly to us but it would not have looked silly to his generation. It was not a very effective way to get a non-literal message across in a literal and simplistic age. The traditional Christians and Jews are right to take Genesis as requiring a literal interpretation.

It has been noticed that the author of Genesis is trying to answer and supplant pagan myth. He subtly answers its content. He is not creating a new myth but opposing myth therefore his account is intended literally.

Scientific testimony and bible testimony cannot be equal. You simply cannot test the Bible the same way as science is tested. Science by definition is always checking out its discoveries and trying to prove them wrong. The Bible orders you believe in its statements with a resolve never to let anything change your mind.

Christianity says the question of the relationship between Christianity and science matters greatly because the consequences are grave. Should we turn against Christianity to embrace a scientific age, we may lose our eternal salvation, our sense of a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, our moral code and our Christian culture.

If Jesus is the truth, and unbiased science is the truth, then both come from the God of truth. Truth cannot contradict truth. If Jesus was just as prone to error as anybody else, or if it cannot be proved that Jesus spoke only the truth, then science comes first. If it contradicts Jesus then drop Jesus.

Christianity with all its sects inventing new doctrines and new divisions does not take science seriously. At least science gives you the tools to check things yourself.

People think that the Bible urges people not to change their views while science is continually revising and updating. It was the norm for Jesus to answer a question with a question. It is said that this shows he encouraged people to think coherently and therefore scientifically where it was possible. He is claimed to have given us the Holy Spirit to teach us all truth and it is said that cannot happen unless we are willing to open our minds. John 14:26 "Holy Spirit ... will teach you all things". But Jesus only answered a question with a question in some matters. The core doctrines he taught were so absurd that he could not use that teaching technique. And as for the Spirit opening our minds he meant that we are to imagine the Spirit is doing the thinking for us and putting his thoughts in our mind.

Jesus only permitted questioning within certain religious parameters. He even went as far as to accuse those who thought the Holy Spirit was doing fake casting out of demons of an unpardonable sin so that he could scare others off examining his religious affairs too closely.

If Jesus claims to be the truth, the problem is the evidence. It is controversial and contradictory and confusing and insufficient!

The Bible forbids deceit even for a greater good. Rom 3:7,8 Someone might argue, "If my falsehood enhances God's truthfulness and so increases his glory, why am I still condemned as a sinner?" Why not say—as some slanderously claim that we say—"Let us do evil that good may result"? Their condemnation is just! and Proverbs 29: 27 The righteous detest the dishonest; the wicked detest the upright.

John 14:6, Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Jesus said he was the way and the truth. He purportedly wanted to save us through the word of God from the tyranny of opinion which can only lead to us being swept by every wind of doctrine. Ephesians 4:14, Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. If so then this accords with science's cardinal doctrine that claims and opinions must have suitable support from evidence. If Jesus is the truth, and unbiased science is the truth, then both come from the God of truth. Truth cannot contradict truth.

Jesus may have given us dogma. But the point is not that dogma and rules about what we are allowed to believe and not to believe save us from chaos. The point is, is the dogma and the rules about it justified? You can't set up rules about what to believe just for its own sake.

The Church says the scientist who obeys God's command to love our neighbour as ourselves will want to know scientific truth and share it with others. Unless it is shared with other scientists, there will be no growth in scientific knowledge. But we must also praise the scientist who does not love his neighbour but who loves propagating scientific knowledge.

The Bible is said to spell out the ethical principles that science depends upon. The scientist merely needs to see that the principles are correct - the scientist does not need to recognise the Bible as the word of God for that to happen.

### *Science and Bible Interpretation*

Most believers today suggest the following approach to the Genesis creation story: "Take the core assertion that, somehow or other, God created the world, the events of the six-day narration being regarded as a form of poetry" Stannard, R. Science & Belief, The Big Issues (Lion, 2012) p. 54.

There are some interpretations of the Bible that are worse in the conflict with modern science than others. Many people today think that to be a Bible-believer you have to accept Archbishop Ussher's dating of creation at 4004 BC. It is important to point out that this was based on assumptions he made about the Bible genealogies rather than Bible teaching "it is precarious in the highest degree to draw chronological inferences from genealogical tables". That comes from Warfield, B B, On the Antiquity and the Unity of the Human Race (The Princeton Theological Review, 1911), p. 3

Some Christians say that if we try to water down scripture for the sake of what we perceive to be scientific knowledge, then we are guilty of wresting the word of God. They ask if we really want to take sinful and often deceitful man as the authority of the truth and not God? Their attitude shows a bias against human beings and scientists in particular.

The Book of Genesis speaks of six days of creation in Genesis 1. God made all things in six steps. Adam was made from the dust of the ground and a rib was taken from him and built up into his wife Eve. Genesis 2:21,22, So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. How can these details be reconciled with modern science which says creation was a process that took billions of years and that the order given in the Bible is wrong?

It is dishonest to reason that scripture is nonsense if you check it out against modern science and to postulate that it cannot be meant literally. That is reading today's scientific claims back into the scriptures which were produced in a pre-scientific age.

### *Adam and Eve and Evolutionary Theory*

Many Christians do not take Genesis seriously when it says God made man from dust and woman from the rib of man. Yet the apostle says God made man from woman and woman from man. 1 Corinthians 11:8 For man did not come from woman, but woman from man.

Are those Christians influenced by the bias against miracles that exists in science? Yes - assuming that it is a bias and not mere rational unbelief - because nobody denies that there is a lot we don't know.

Is there a conflict between the Bible teaching and the doctrine of evolution that random chance is behind the existence of all things?

Christians say that science is unable to examine the whole evolution process so its largely assuming that the system produced us. They say it has some pieces of the puzzle and has faith that evolution is the explanation for human existence. The Christian endeavours to see there is a puzzle and claims that the miraculous may have been at work rather than simply random forces.

But if the evidence for random evolution is sufficient the Christians are unwilling to settle for it. They introduce speculation and magic to water it down.

The claims of science and the claims of the Bible may seem impossible to reconcile. But Christians say there is no need to go that far - "We could simply say that we do not understand how the problems are to be solved and put our trust in God who may give us the answer. A good wife trusts her husband even though he seems to be doing terrible things. She waits for understanding. The Bible commands similar faith. We read in Genesis 22 how God asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac to him to test his obedience. God revealed his approval for Abraham's obedience despite the fact that Abraham would have thought God was contradicting his promise to make Isaac the father of a great nation."

This is a cop-out. They would not tolerate somebody saying the Islam and Christianity are identical religions but we do not know how! And God is brought in to pressure people to agree with them. They want to make people fear letting God down. They want to instil a bias.

*The Bible fits True Science!!!*

The Bible is not a scientific textbook, but it touches on matters that are relevant to science. It teaches some science. Examples follow.

The ancients would have seen a shadow on the moon making them think the earth was round. Isaiah supposedly talked about the circle of the earth. But the text does not actually say the earth is round but could be referring you how you seem to be standing in the middle of a circle when you are up on a high point.

JP Holding writes, "A ... desperate appeal is that a related modern Hebrew word does mean a "ball"; however, this proves little if anything, for modern usage has very little bearing on usage more than two thousand years earlier. Modern languages evolve constantly, and one would first have to prove that the modern word evolved with the ancient understanding in mind. Note as well that since it is related, not the same word, this is as much as admitting that duwr itself does not mean (simply or exclusively) "sphere", for otherwise, there would have been no need to "evolve" a modern word! What it boils down to is that while a sphere is a duwr, it is not the only thing that is a duwr, so it would not be sufficient for the absurd precise demands of modern Skeptics, who would simply assume that the text is saying that the earth is in the shape of a circle, as in Is. 29:3. All that said, it is not even clear that chuwg refers exclusively to the shape we call a circle. The word indicates boundaries being set, but nothing contextually demands a perfect circular shape. In Job 22:14, it refers to a "circuit" or route walked by God, and there's no particular reason why this should or should not be a circle. Altogether, the word is used only 3 times in the OT, and not once does the context clearly demand a shape of any particular regularity; and a root word in Job 26:10 describes the encompassment of "waters", and without further description. There's no basis for connecting the word to a modern "compass", and although LXX translators may have chosen the word for a simple circle, it is irrelevant that they did so, since their choice was governed by their own cosmological views. We may add the "earth" in Is. 40:22 is 'erets (more on this below). Isaiah's reference, per above, should be understood to refer to the oikoumene, or the shoreline of the day, not the "whole" earth." See Holding's The Contextual Encyclopedia of Biblical Inerrancy Volume 3.

Job cries that the earth hangs upon nothing. Christians say that it is saying that the earth floats in space. Job was right. That somebody had that view in a time when people believed all sorts of nonsense about the earth and what supported it is truly remarkable. God wrote this book and God got it right! Job however only meant that when you look at the sky you don't see any ropes that the earth must be hanging from! And Job being right would not imply that God revealed it to him. The Book of Job is claimed to have been inspired by God but it does not claim to be reporting God's actual speech or it does not claim that Job was inspired.

Another try. The Bible asserts that God made man from dust. And science shows us that the ground and the body all share the same elements. That assumes that God didn't take a little dust to turn magically into a man. Instead he got the ingredients and measured them out and made a man from them like it was a workshop. Dust magically turning into a man does not imply that the soil was used as an ingredient. Gold turned into a prince would not mean that the man has to contain only the element of gold.

The Bible supposedly has a scientific view of pain. God abhors human suffering and Jesus said that God regards even the

death of a sparrow as important. It reports that God became man to suffer with us and to establish a means by which suffering would be ultimately overcome. If scientists hate suffering and evil, they will be very careful not to do harm or to deceive.

Contrast that with Christian versions of science which argue that God lovingly set up the evolution system and its cruelty is not that bad for animals do not suffer much. It would be dangerous to assume that harming anything is fine as long as it is not fully aware that it is being injured. It would refute morality.

To those thoughts we say that scientists should hate evil out of empathy and not because of belief in God. And the Christian evolutionists praising their god for making animals suffer to benefit us is hideous. Atheists do not need to find ways to condone the evil of evolution for there is no God to get off the hook.

If the Bible is man-made and you declare it the truth that is anti-scientific. If you bring in science you are going to end up cherry-picking whatever fits the Bible. The end result is a pile of half-truths and truths disguised as science.

## NOTES

Stannard, R. Science & Belief, The Big Issues (Lion, 2012) or Warfield, B B, On the Antiquity and the Unity of the Human Race (The Princeton Theological Review, 1911) is worth a read.

2 Peter 3:16 warns about distorting the scriptures - that means that fancy far-fetched interpretations say of Genesis to make the accounts fit our modern evolutionary beliefs are out. They are imposing their ideas on the Bible and calling them the Bible.

Genesis 2:21,22, So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Why the detail if this is metaphor? And if there is a God there is no reason why he can't do this!

The verse "Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man" is clearly counter and contradictory to the core evolutionary idea that men and women evolved together. The verse says man existed alone before woman.

The New Testament says it means what it says:

1 Corinthians 11:8 For man did not come from woman, but woman from man.