

In The Beginning

All Truth Begins Here



The Bible & Science

INTRODUCTION: As we move into this second section of our study of Genesis 1-3 we will be considering the question of science and the Bible. The Bible was written in a context of space, time, and history yet it speaks to us of unseen and eternal realities. God has chosen to reveal Himself through a series of writings that comment on creation, calamities, the rise and fall of empires, war and peace, and the adventures of a chosen people through whom all the world has been blessed. How can we believe what human authors have written about the unseen spiritual realities if they cannot be trusted to report accurately what they had seen and perhaps personally experienced? And, if God could not prevent them from introducing myth and imagination into the account of creation and other matters beyond their observation, how could He prevent them from misunderstanding and introducing error into the message of redemption and eternal life? If we are not able to trust the Bible in all matters, where does that leave us with respect to the way of salvation? It leaves us on our own to figure out how to satisfy God, and we had better get it right, because if there is a heaven and a hell and a judgment and we get it wrong there is a hefty eternal price to pay. We cannot say, *You can believe whatever you think is true for you and just have faith and you will be just fine.* Because if the God of the Bible exists and what He says is true, the consequences of the error are disastrous and damning.

Secondly, as we approach this subject we must also ask the question, "For whom is this discussion intended; who benefits from it?" The Scripture says that the unbelieving mind and heart is blind and that the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit because they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor 2:14). Therefore, a rational defense of the Bible will not benefit the unbelieving heart and mind; we will never argue anyone into the Kingdom of God. So, if unbelievers cannot benefit and believers are already believers, what is the point? The enemy of our souls attacks our faith at many levels to introduce doubt. *Has God really said ...?* is not a question he asked only once, but every believer is attacked on this level routinely. God has given us His eternal truth in a context of space, time, and history for the very purpose that we maybe assured that the unseen truths are valid because they are grounded in facts that may be examined and verified. We start with believing faith and then we are given evidence of His truthfulness at every turn. It is glorifying to God and edifying to His people to prove His trustworthiness in every realm. We live in a time when the veracity of the Bible is being challenged in every area of life: moral principles, psychological problems, the cause of criminal behavior, the entire account of creation and the existence of the universe, social issues and the family, freedom of the will vs behavioral determinism with attendant responsibility for behavior, even the existence of God, eternal life, and a judgment. Our faith needs to be fortified with verifiable truth confirmed by the internal witness and affirmation of the Holy Spirit in order for us to stay the course of unswerving faithfulness to our God.

I. The Truth About The Bible & Science

- A. The Bible is not a textbook of science, nor did God give it to us with the goal of enlightening our minds about the material universe.
- B. The Bible is, however, rooted in a context of space, time, and history and if the eternal realities about which it speaks are to be credible then its context of things visible and temporal must be accurate (John 3:12).
- C. We should not expect the Bible to be a definitive reference for matters that relate to science, chemistry, math, physics, etc., but we should expect that whenever the Bible touches upon these realms, that what it says is accurate and authoritative (obvious figures of speech notwithstanding).
- D. We should recognize that truth is all there is to find and that all truth comes from the God Who cannot lie. Therefore, we should not be afraid to study the Bible or to investigate the physical universe—there is no conflict between the Bible and the truth about the physical universe, nor are there any contradictions between God and principles of math and physics rightly understood. (Proverbs 25:2)
- E. We must exercise great caution in making definitive statements about what the Bible says or means when it references matters of science and creation:
 1. Our exegesis must be very precise and accurate
 2. We must not say any more or any less than what the Bible actually affirms or leave out verses that do not fit the prevailing theories
 3. We must guard against interpretations of convenience simply because they are more acceptable in the present context (i.e.: the "gap theory" of Genesis 1:2)

Continued on next page...>

II. All Theories of Origins are Based On Faith—None are “Scientific”

- A. The scientific method in its most basic and essential form requires observation, recording, and repeatability. It cannot be applied to anything which cannot be observed, recorded under observation (ideally in a tightly controlled environment with a limitation of variables), and repeated by peers in the same field of investigation. Obviously it is impossible to observe and record the origin of the universe, the earth, or the appearance of life on this planet.
- B. All “scientific” efforts at retrospective investigation and analysis of origin of the universe and the appearance of life are based upon certain *a priori* assumptions which are themselves not verifiable or open to investigation. Chief among these assumptions is uniformitarianism (the present is the key to the past).
- C. If uniformitarianism is taken off the table as a foundational premise then all bets are off and no one, however well educated or intelligent, can say anything scientifically authoritative about what did or did not or might or might not have happened in the past. This is exactly the presumptive issue that Peter addresses: *“For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.” For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. 2 Peter 3:4-6*
- D. Whether one believes the Biblical account of creation, or evolutionary uniformitarianism, or any other account of the origin of the universe, their belief is based upon faith in a system which cannot be known or proved by rational effort. Despite the application of sound logical proof, however careful that deductive process might be, if the foundational premise is wrong then all the conclusions, however logically valid, fall like a house of cards in the wind; and the foundational premises cannot be known, they can only be presumed.

III. The Pursuit of Science Pleases God and Brings Glory to Him—It is a Worthy Investment of Our Time

- A. In the purest sense the pursuit of science is the pursuit of truth, or at least a part of the truth: that part we can see, explore, measure, and validate by experimentation. All truth is God’s truth and it is pleasing to Him when we care enough about what He has made to search it out, and in doing so to search out His glory. Pr25:2
- B. Just as at the end of every contemplation of a theological truth, one ultimately comes face-to-face with the glory of the transcendent God, so at the end of every scientific query one comes to a new level of being astounded by the glory, wisdom, and majesty of the Creator. Even in a fallen world that has been marred by the effects of sin, the glory of God is clearly evident. (Psalm 19:1 and following)
- C. The scientific method is, however, a tool for only one area of the exploration of truth: the material universe accessible to observation. It cannot answer questions of historical truth, for that investigation a different kind of validation is required, nor can it answer spiritual and moral questions that transcend matter. Scientific truth is not the only truth there is, nor is it adequate to explain our universe or our lives.

Questions for Thought & Discussion

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. | 1. Why is it not possible to “argue” someone into the Kingdom of God? In what way can we effectively use evidence and science to affirm the truth of Scripture to someone who is seeking to know Christ? |
| Psalm 14:1 The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.” | 2. If Scripture is open to human reasoning and private interpretation (2 Peter 1:20) as to what is or is not true, where are we with respect to the way of salvation and eternal life? |
| Psalm 19:1-2 The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge. | 3. Explain why scientific truth accounts for only a small portion of all truth. What are some of the ways other forms of truth can be known? |
| Proverbs 25:2 It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings is to search out a matter. | 4. Is laboratory experimentation and the investigation of nature a form of worship? In what way? What attitude of the heart must one have for this to be an act of worship? |
| | 5. Is doing science and wanting to be a scientist a Godly desire? Why or why not? |
| | 6. Do you experience the glory of God and have a sense of worship as you explore the natural world around you? Do you “take time to smell the roses?” |