

Myths About The Bible and Science

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YPM

Myth 1: Science is at war with Christianity and science is winning

- Argument: Religion was invented to explain natural phenomena. Science can now explain nearly everything, so God is crowded into a smaller and smaller corner
- Counter:
 - The Bible does *not* give pseudo-scientific explanations, unlike most similar documents.
 - Some essential questions cannot be explained by science, like the origin of the universe or aging and death.

Myth 2: The Bible discourages scientific inquiry

- The second task given by God to Adam was scientific in essence (Gen 2:19)
- Solomon's wisdom included botany and biology (1 Kings 4:33)
- The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, but not the end of wisdom.

Myth 3: Science is based entirely on reason and logic

- Learn to distinguish science from philosophy.
- Science based on experiment and observation
 - Tries to eliminate individual bias
 - Tends to become more exact in knowledge over time
- Philosophy based on speculation and logical inference
 - Places man's intellect at the center
 - Diverges into various schools of thought without arriving at truth (Corinthians)
- Greeks mistakenly combined science and philosophy
 - Ex: Theory of the humors (sanguine, phlegmatic, biliary, melancholy) was logical and consistent but completely *unscientific* because *untested*.

Myth 4: A scientific theory that is logical, consistent, and comprehensive is almost certainly correct.

- Be aware that many scientific statements rest on a foundation of philosophy
 - Ex: The natural processes we now observe have always occurred in the same way, at the same rate (2 Peter 3:4-5)
- Materialism is philosophy holding that nothing exists but matter.
 - This is not scientific because it can't be tested or proven.
 - It is this *philosophy*, not science, that the Bible opposes (Col 2:8)
 - Christianity is not just another competing philosophy. We follow a Person, not a philosophy.
- The Biblical approach to knowledge
 - For matters beyond scientific discovery, we have revelation
 - God as creator is fundamental (Rev 4:11)

Myth 5: The writers of the Bible were only human and made many scientific errors

- Does the earth move or does the sun?
 - See 1 Chron 16:30, Psalm 104:5. Possible explanations:
 - Written from the human vantage point
 - Earth refers to dry land, vs the ocean

Myth 6: The church has persecuted scientists who contradicted the Bible

- The trial of Galileo: The Bible was interpreted to agree with Ptolemy, a Greek-Egyptian philosopher, and Galileo challenged this erroneous idea.
- The eternal Word should not be interpreted in light of changeable scientific theories
- Why didn't God say that the earth orbits the sun?
 - For centuries, scholars would scoff because the Bible contradicted scientific authority. Unlearned people would scoff because of the evidence of their eyes. The gospel would suffer as it became secondary to scientific arguments.

Myth 7: Belief in the Bible requires belief in certain scientific theories.

- Other “bloopers”
 - The square earth (Isaiah 11:12, Rev. 7:1)
 - Compare Isaiah 40:22
 - The value of 3 for pi (1 Kings 7:23-26)
 - Bats listed with birds (Lev 11:13-19)

Myth 8: The Bible contains no support for the scientific approach

- Points of agreement
 - There is truth that is independent of our thoughts and perceptions
 - The universe has order
 - The universe is understandable
 - Testing is a way to arrive at knowledge (1 Thes 5:21, Psa 34:8).
 - Gideon as example of scientific method (Judges 6:36-40).
 - Humility is essential in the pursuit of truth.

Myth 9: The “new physics” of Einstein and quantum theory push God even farther into the background

- Tantalizing hints of modern physics in Scripture
 - The universe had a beginning (big bang theory)
 - Light (electromagnetic radiation) is the fundamental cornerstone of the universe. In commonly held scientific theory, it was the first thing that existed and its speed is the only thing that is constant (Gen 1:3)
 - Time is not eternal, but was created along with the material universe (Gen. 1:14)
 - The universe is expanding outward (Psa 104:2)

- Someday the universe will curl around and collapse in on itself (Rev 6:4, Isaiah 34:4, Psa 102:25-27)
- Three-dimensional space will end along with the material universe (Rev 20:11)
- Science has not explained what holds matter together (Col 1:17)
 - v = “vacuum expectation value of the Higgs field” = 1. If it were any other value, matter would fall apart, but the known forces on it would cause wild swings in the value
- The universe is stranger than we think
 - Curved space
 - Electrons in two places at the same time
 - Schroedinger’s cat, Heisenberg uncertainty principle
 - Effects of speed on time

Myth 10: The human mind is no more than a complicated machine

- In theory, there is mathematical evidence that something above the level of a machine is required in human thought (Lucas/Penrose/Gödel)
- In practice, artificial intelligence has tried and failed for 50 years to approximate human intelligence. The only chess programs that can beat human master players are those programmed with proven human strategies.

Myth 11: Belief in God hampers the work of a scientist

- Example: Mistaken idea that skepticism about evolution is harmful to medicine and other practical disciplines.
- Example of Leonhard Euler
 - One of the greatest mathematicians of all time (e , the base of natural logs, stands for Euler)
 - Was a consistent Christian and defended the inspiration of Scripture against the attacks of enlightenment philosophers

Science, properly understood, only reveals the wonders of God’s creation. “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.” (Psa 19:1-4)