

6. The Bible and Science

Biblical material: Gen. 1:1; 2:1, 2; 7:11-24; Deut. 4:32; Ps. 100:3; 139:14; Isa. 42:5; 45:18; Jer. 33:22; John 1:1-3; Heb. 1:2.

Quotes

- The Bible, and it alone, with nothing added to it nor taken away from it by man, is the sole and sufficient guide for each individual, at all times and in all circumstances. *Michael Faraday*, one of the greatest physicists of all time.
- The nearer I approach to the end of my pilgrimage, the clearer is the evidence of the divine origin of the Bible, the grandeur and sublimity of God's remedy for fallen man are more appreciated, and the future is illumined with hope and joy. *Samuel F.B. Morse*, inventor of the telegraph.
- In regard to the origin of life and science it all positively affirms a creative power at work. *Lord Kelvin, William Thompson*, who established concept of thermodynamics and the scale of absolute temperatures.

Questions

Is the Bible “scientific”? How do we resolve the tension between such different world-views? How do different ideas of origins affect us? Is the alternative to “science” to think illogically or irrationally? Is the Bible contradictory to proven scientific concepts, and if so what might this mean? How do we present the Bible to those of this scientific age?

Discussion/Comment

“Science is built up with facts, as a house is with stones. But a collection of facts is no more a science than a heap of stones is a house.” Jules Henri Poincaré.

As we understand more and more about the universe in which we exist the argument for a Creator becomes ever more compelling. Take, for example, what has come to be called the “Anthropic Principle.” This principle proposes that the universe—the physical place in which we live—has characteristics that appear to indicate that it was deliberately designed for life and our existence. In fact, there are so many specific factors that need to be “just so” that it is now ridiculous to believe that our universe is a random occurrence. The number of “accidents” that would need to occur to form a life-friendly universe is just so immense that no reasonable person could believe this was the process. Even those scientists who want to deny a Creator God cannot deny the impossibility of random formation of our universe by accidental processes. The possibility is just too remote. The physical constants of the universe have to be exactly as they are, or the universe would not have formed, or would have been a place where life could not exist: “The laws of science, as we know them at present, contain many fundamental numbers, like the size of the electric charge of the electron and the ratio of the masses of the proton and the electron.... The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life.... One can take this either as evidence of a divine purpose in Creation and the choice of the laws of science or as support for the strong anthropic principle.” Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time*.

The extremely precise and critical properties that are needed for the universe to even form in the first place also point to very careful design and purpose. Writing about the supposed big bang, Hawking also explains that if the expansion velocity had been very slightly larger, then

the universe would have expanded too rapidly and no galaxies would have formed. Very slightly slower and the universe would have collapsed back upon itself. Hawking estimates that even a decrease of one part in a *trillion* would have resulted in the universe's re-collapse long ago, while a similar increase would have prevented galaxies forming.

One part in a trillion. Very small odds. Then add in some other aspects that if they occurred randomly would be extremely improbable. If the proton-neutron mass difference is not exactly as it is, then there would only be protons or neutrons. There would be no chemistry at all—and no life! If the nuclear weak force (one of the forces that holds matter together) had been very slightly weaker then all the hydrogen in the universe would now be helium. Not great for life either! If the nuclear strong force had been 2 percent greater, then protons (at the center of atoms) could not have formed. If the same force had been 5 percent less, no stars.

There's much, much more, involving the gravitational constant, the quantum of angular momentum, electromagnetic coupling, fine structure constants, and the ^8Be , ^{12}C , and ^{16}O nuclear energy levels—too much to go into here. But the point is made—the universe is fine-tuned to such an amazing extent that created design is the only reasonable conclusion. To have the right conditions for the universe to even exist, let alone for life, our universe must be balanced on the equivalent of a cosmic knife edge.

Even atheist astronomer Fred Hoyle admits that the way the elements carbon and hydrogen (on which our bodies are based) are required to be made suggests that the process has been deliberately “fixed” that way, and as a result: “A commonsense interpretation of the facts suggests that a superintellect has monkeyed with physics, as well as chemistry and biology, and that there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature.”

The conclusion of Stephen Hawking, when looking at the way the universe is thought to have started, is that “It would be very difficult to explain why the Universe should have begun in just this way, except as the act of a God who intended to create beings like us.” A stunning admission that it is indeed scientific to accept the theory of a Creator God!

Text comments

Gen. 1:1; 2:1, 2; 7:11-24. Creation and the Flood—how do such accounts play in the scientific world? An ongoing dialogue...

Deut. 4:32. Creation affirmed—but how does this demonstrate the evidence?

Ps. 100:3; 139:14. God made us—how does such a belief affect our self-perception?

Isa. 42:5; 45:18. Jer. 33:22. God's work of making the heavens. How does this relate to $e=mc^2$? And how does this relate to science, which does not operate in terms of affirmations?

John 1:1-3. The Creator-Word expressed in sublime language—but does not give us physical or chemical mechanisms. Like Milton we want to think God's thoughts after him...

Heb. 1:2. Jesus is the one “through whom” the universe was made. What does this mean?

Ellen White Comments

I have been warned that henceforth we shall have a constant contest. Science, so-called, and religion will be placed in opposition to each other, because finite men do not comprehend the power and greatness of God. {Ev 593}

Too often the minds of students are occupied with men's theories and speculations, falsely called science and philosophy. They need to be brought into close contact with nature. Let them learn that creation and Christianity have one God. Let them be taught to see the harmony of the natural with the spiritual. {COL 25}

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