

## The God questions (and science)

It sometimes feels that science (or naturalism) is the “prevailing god” in our day and age and so requires special attention.

The interesting thing is that this “conflict” between Christianity and science wasn’t always so.

It was only at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (1800s) that secular thinkers began to teach naturalism (denial of God) and separate Christianity’s role in the scientific community.

Until then, many primary developers of key scientific disciplines were God fearing scientists. For example:<sup>i</sup>

- Galileo Galilei (1564 – 1642) – Astronomy, mathematics and physics
- Isaac Newton (1642-1727) – dynamics
- Blaise Pascal (1623 – 62) – mathematics, physics and theology
- Robert Boyle (1627- 91)- chemistry
- Michael Faraday (1791-1867) – electromagnetics
- Gregor Mendel (1822-84) - genetics

And the early effect of Christianity on our modern society is not limited to scientists. Many of today’s world famous leading universities have their origins in Christianity.

*Harvard* was named after a Christian minister. *Yale* was started by clergymen, and *Princeton’s* first year of class was taught by Reverend Jonathan Dickinson. Princeton’s crest still says “*Dei sub numine viget,*” which is Latin for “Under God she flourishes.”

*Oxford University* was established by various religious orders. Likewise, *Cambridge University* was established in 1209 by Christian leaders. *Saint Andrews*, Scotland’s oldest university, was founded principally for the teaching and study of theology.<sup>ii</sup>

As you can see, science and religion have not always been in conflict in fact it has been argued that what scientists are proud of, the “scientific method” is a byproduct of Christianity.

“The scientific method – discovery by empirical reasoning – is, unquestionably a byproduct of Christianity. To know the truth of God’s creation, it’s not enough to rely on human logic. It’s also necessary to observe closely what God has created.”<sup>iii</sup>

So, what does God have to do with science?

To understand this question, I will use an example<sup>iv</sup>:

“*Why is the water boiling in the tea kettle?*”

The scientific answer might be:

“*The water is boiling because at this temperature it undergoes a phase transition from liquid to vapour.*”

Another acceptable, though non-scientific, answer is:

*“The water is boiling because I put the kettle on the stove.”*

A third answer might be:

*“The water is boiling because my prayer partner is coming over for tea.”*

None of the answers is wrong; rather, each gives a different perspective to the question. The scientific answer does not tell the whole story.

One of the reasons why science has been successful, where others have failed is the “scientific method” I have mentioned earlier. What is the scientific method?

The scientific method begins with an inside, working outside view, starting with very simple questions if you like. For example:

*Why does an apple fall?*

*Why does a sinking stone also displace water?*

It then goes on to investigate such a simple question logically until the *theory of gravity* or *Archimedes’ principle* is born.

Science when it started in “ignoring” the big questions, which other areas like the philosophies like to tackle (such as “what happens in death”) has therefore been able to make leaps and bounds, where others have failed, hence – the success of science.

Science is therefore tremendously successful in understanding the physical world, but we should not let that tempt us to think it can be used to understand everything in life.

THE ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS YOU WILL EVER FACE IN YOUR LIFE ARE THEREFORE ALL ABOUT MAKING THE CORRECT ASSUMPTIONS (something I learnt during my science classes) – and asking the right questions (something the science teachers sometimes beat into our young brains).

Science does not prove the bible is wrong. They are simply different questions (mostly) to address different matters (mostly).

There is a common saying in English:

*“You cannot compare oranges and apples”*

The two are not entirely comparable.

Science at its core tries to study the physical world and natural world through observation and experiment. As you see, science can therefore not fully explain God and his ways (though God uses science and nature to reveal himself to us) because the bible says:

*God is Spirit<sup>v</sup> (and so is not physical or natural – you cannot see or touch him).*

*God is not in the “natural world” - as his Home is in heaven<sup>vi</sup>, a place we cannot reach in the physical world.*

The God questions can therefore only be answered by taking a journey of FAITH and reading the bible – but in so doing, this also provides many answers to science questions.

## Bible answers to many common questions (including science questions)

### How was the universe created?

*“In the beginning, God created the heavens (meaning the universe) and the earth.” Gen 1:1.*

### How did man (and woman) come about?

*“Then God said, let us make man in our image, according to our likeness. Gen 1: 26”*

### How should we take care of the Environment?

We should take care of it because it does not belong to us. God says:

*“...the land is mine and you are but aliens and my tenants...”<sup>vii</sup>*

### If God is good, why is there war and suffering?

Everything has a purpose and the bible says, there is a time for everything. It says:

*There is a time for everything,  
A time to be born and a time to die,  
A time for war and a time for peace<sup>viii</sup>*

What this verse means is that sometimes some things are necessary in order for other things to happen.

As an example, for you to be born, a mother has to go through so much pain.

If you saw her in pain while giving birth, you would be very upset –and perhaps think God is bad or the doctors who keep her in pain are but - but then a good thing comes out of the pain, you are born.

In the same way, sometimes war, suffering, sickness comes on the earth for various reasons – punishment, a lesson/teaching, so that a new thing can come and so on and so forth.

What is most important is to remember that at the end of it all, God himself says:

*Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb [Jesus] <sup>down</sup> the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.*

*No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.<sup>ix</sup>*

### **How do you treat other people?**

Everyone must be treated with respect and should be loved. In fact the bible makes it clear that you cannot claim to love God if you hate others. This is what it says:

*Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.<sup>x</sup>*

### **Should you do the right thing when the government asks you to (such as paying taxes)?**

In the bible some men came to Jesus. They wanted to trap him/trick him so they could report him to the Roman soldiers. They asked him a question:

*Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not?"*

*But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? Show me the coin used for paying the tax." They brought him a denarius and he asked them, "Whose image is this? And whose inscription?"*

*"Caesar's," they replied. Then he said to them, "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."<sup>xi</sup>*

### **And faithfulness in a relationship or in a marriage?**

Being faithful means being loyal to someone and not being mad to that person or lying to that person, with another person.

The bible teaches that marriage is a gift from God and it also teaches that we should be faithful to others. It says:

*Never let loyalty and kindness leave you! Tie them around your neck as a reminder. Write them deep within your heart.<sup>xii</sup>*

### **Should I work hard to have a lot of money?**

Yes, working hard is good and having money is good – but money should not become your master, or you will hate God. In fact the bible says in Matthew 6: 24:

*No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.*

### **How about having fun as a Christian?**

Fun is good and there are many stories of people having fun in the bible. Jesus' first recorded miracle was to turn water into wine, at a wedding.

Just like there is a time of war and a time of peace, the bible says this about fun in the book of Ecclesiastes 3: 4:

*[For everything there is a season...]*

*A time to weep, and a time to laugh;*

*A time to mourn, and a time to dance;*

### **What if my friends laugh at me for being a Christian or try to get me to do something bad?**

The bible teaches you how to handle “peer pressure”.

It says in John 8: 33 that *“You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free”*.

What this means is that if you know the truth (that Jesus is Lord and in control of your life), then you will not be afraid of what your friends say – and will always do the right thing, hence becoming free (from their pressure or from being a slave to bad things - sin).

The bible further encourages you to build your life on Jesus (the rock) so that when tough times come (like peer pressure or being encouraged to do bad things), you will stay strong. He uses a parable (story) to explain (from Matthew 7: 24 - 27):

*“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.*

*But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”*

If you are ever in doubt about something, read your bible and analyse it, think of it, pray about it.

Try to think about what could be a lie - don't believe everything you hear, you need to test it. Test the words people tell you. Test what you hear so that you know for yourself if it's true. <sup>xiii</sup>

### **When someone dies.**

When humans were created, God said this about the creation:

*“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” ([Genesis 2:7, KJV](#))*

When someone dies, they are buried (and people cry), but as human beings have a body and a spirit. The Spirit belongs to God. The body returns to the Ground.

The bible says:

*“The dust returns to the ground it came from, and the spirit returns to God who gave it” ([Ecclesiastes 12:7, NIV](#))*

The soul of the believer (someone who believes in Jesus) goes to be with God. The soul of the unbeliever goes to torment or “hades”. A place of suffering.

If you believe in Jesus, there is no need to fear for at the end of it all, this is what the bible says:

*“There shall be no more death” ([Revelation 21:4](#)).*

### Are there aliens?

The Bible does not explicitly confirm or deny the existence of intelligent life from other planets – and many bible parts when read together seem to point to the fact that the universe was created for us here on earth. It is worth noting that over the years scientists have searched for alien life and found none (they will add ...YET).

BUT even if they did, according to the bible it would seem they will not be “superior to man”.

[Psalm 8:5](#) says that man was made a little lower than the angels and crowned with glory and honour.

This means that in the ranking order of all created things God made, there are the angels, then man.

This should make you realize again and again that God has created us special – a MASTERPIECE and so it means your life, should be lived – for his highest glory (your utmost for his highest).

### How do I deal with being worried about the future?

The bible says, you should not worry about the future

*“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?”<sup>xiv</sup>*

In another place it says,  
Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said,

“Never will I leave you;

never will I forsake you.”<sup>[a]</sup>

And finally, when Jesus was leaving the earth, he told his disciples about the Holy Spirit who he would send to help them and to reveal to them things. The bible says this in John 16:13:

*However when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak from Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will show you things to come.*

So you see, you don't need to worry about the future when you put your trust in Jesus and ask him for the Holy Spirit.

## Notes

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- <sup>i</sup> The bible's answers to 100 of Life's biggest lessons, Norman L. Geisler & Jason Jimenez, Baker Books, 2015.
- <sup>ii</sup> <https://answersingenesis.org/christianity/harvard-yale-princeton-oxford-once-christian/>
- <sup>iii</sup> <http://www.smh.com.au/business/the-economy/economy-rests-on-christian-foundations-20160324-gnq5io.html>
- <sup>iv</sup> <http://biologos.org/common-questions/christianity-and-science/science-and-religion>
- <sup>v</sup> John 4: 24
- <sup>vi</sup> <http://biblehub.com/isaiah/66-1.htm>
- <sup>vii</sup> Leviticus 25: 23 - 24
- <sup>viii</sup> Ecclesiastes 3: 8
- <sup>ix</sup> Revelations 22: 22
- <sup>x</sup> [http://biblehub.com/1\\_john/4-20.htm](http://biblehub.com/1_john/4-20.htm)
- <sup>xi</sup> <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22:15-22>
- <sup>xii</sup> <http://biblehub.com/proverbs/3-3.htm>
- <sup>xiii</sup> Reference from 1 John 4:4
- <sup>xiv</sup> Matthew 6: 25 – 26