

Philosophical Considerations on Origins

Biblical Guidelines

1. The Christian faith is a reasonable, historical, and factual faith. Christians are called to believe the truth (that which corresponds to reality)(2 Tim 4:4; 2Pet 1:16). Faith in falsehoods is *deception* which is not of God (Jn 8:44; Titus 3:30).

2. Both the Bible and nature reveal truth (Psalm 19:1-4; Rom 1:20). All truth is God's truth. The Bible is data. Nature is data. Truth from both helps us understand the other and they will not contradict each other. Christians are to be truth seekers. We should not be afraid of, or deny, truth.

3. Man's *interpretation* of the Bible and nature is subject to error. Thus Christians should be very discerning regarding both theology (man's interpretation of the Bible data) and science (man's interpretation of nature's data).

4. The Bible warns Christians about oppositions of science falsely so called (1Tim 6:20) and philosophy contrary to Christ (Col 2:8). Rebellious man has a desire to exalt himself against the knowledge of God, suppress the truth of God, and be willingly ignorant of the truth of God (Rom 1:18-25; 1Cor 1:18-25; 2Cor 10:5; 2Pet 3:3-9). The effects of the fall should cause us to expect unsaved man to suppress the truth of science where it points to God.

5. Jesus had a high view of scripture and commanded his followers to do so as well (Mat 4:4-7; 5:17-18; 21:42; 19:4-5; 22:29; 26:54-56; Mark 12:10; 14:49; Luke 4:21; 24:25-27,32,45; John 5:39; 7:38; 13:18; 17:12, 17; 19:28). All scripture is given by inspiration of God (2Tim 3:16; 2Pet 1:16-21) and are the very words of God (2Tm 3:16-18; Matt 4:4; 1Cor 2:12-13; John 10:35; 1Thes 2:13; Rev 1:3; 22:18-19).

6. Scripture is given to believers to be understood (1John 5:13; Prov 4:4; 1Peter 2:2; 2Peter 3:18; 2Cor 2:7-16.) Therefore by the Holy Spirit's illumination, it is understandable. Though some scriptures are difficult to understand (2Pet 3:16), skill can be obtained in the word by continued study, humility, and obedience (2Tim 2:15; Hebrews 5:13-14; Jn 7:17). God reveals his truth to the lowly and hides truth from the proud (Prov 11:2; Matt 11:25; Mark 12:37; 1Cor 1:26-29).

7. Scripture should not be added to, taken away from, or corrupted to align with the uncertain theories of man (Rev 22:18-19; 2Cor 2:17; 2Pet 3:16). There is no scriptural justification for neglecting or misinterpreting the word of God—not to be accepted by men, not to gain credibility in the eyes of men, not to win men to Christ. The end does not justify the means. God never does wrong to save a soul. Nor should we.

8. Our scriptural interpretations should be reconsidered if they are at odds with irrefutable scientific truths. As it was discovered that the earth orbits the sun (heliocentric view) versus the sun orbiting the earth (geocentric view), 1Chron 16:30; Psalm 93:1; 104:5; 1Sam 2:8; Eccl 1:5 (which speak of the pillars of the earth and the earth not moving) were reinterpreted to

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harmonize with the heliocentric view, which did the text no harm. The Bible was not in error, only some people's interpretation.

Scientific Considerations

1. Science is a noble cause that has greatly benefited mankind. Some of the first and greatest scientists were Christians. The scientific method came out of protestant Europe.
2. The science of origins is more speculative by nature than other sciences since it deals with things which happened in the past that do not lend themselves to the scientific method of observation, repetition, and test. It is impossible to experimentally test and repeat the exact conditions of the past which are not known with certainty.
3. Scientific conclusions regarding origins are constantly debunked by later research. Scientists in this field work with incomplete data that is continually changing their understanding. Also, scientists are people like the rest of us who often have pride and biases that influence their interpretations of nature's data. Even blatant fraudulent claims have remained in textbooks years after their discovery.
4. Lack of scientific certainty is often overcompensated for by philosophical zeal which can cloud the scientific arguments. Naturalistic reductionism (nature is everything) and God-of-the-gaps (we do not know so God must have done it) are two extremes of bad science. Good science is diligent and honest. It does not settle for easy speculative answers or overstate the certainty of theories based on philosophical prejudice.
5. There is more to reality than the material world. Some immaterial things that cannot be grounded or explained by the reductionist view of naturalism are intentional states of consciousness, life meaning and purpose, free will, laws of logic, the existence and applicability of mathematics, music, love, beauty, humor, moral values, principles of justice, human dignity and worth, personal identity and responsibility. Science (the study of nature) could never by itself be sufficient for an intelligent understanding of all of reality. Empirical observations point to an immaterial reality that we should explore using the applicable tools of philosophy and theology.