

Science vs. Faith

Trust Issues



The following document is a rough copy of Pastor Drost's sermon notes
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We are in a series of messages called: **Trust Issues**

Is Christianity believable in today's modern and advanced world?

With all the archeological discoveries we have today, can we trust the Bible? Can we trust Christians?

What about organised religion? Are faith and science compatible?

We are reading this morning one of the oldest and most famous pieces of literature in the world. For the sake of time I am only reading the first eight verses and also the last verse (verse 31) in this chapter.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day. Then God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day." Genesis 1:1-8 (NKJV)

"Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day." Genesis 1:31 (NKJV)

This is God's Word



The BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) is the world's oldest national broadcasting organization and the largest broadcaster in the world by number of employees. Since the 1920s it has produced some of the most reliable world news and amazing documentaries like Planet Earth.

Nine years ago, the BBC did a poll that surveyed the 100 most prominent physicists. **James Clerk Maxwell** was voted the third greatest physicist of all time, behind only Newton and Einstein. Einstein described Maxwell's work as the "*most profound and the most fruitful that physics has experienced since the time of Newton*." Maxwell, in his famous equations, found a single description for electricity and magnetism, a remarkable feat. He also showed that his equations predicted waves that traveled at the speed of light, showing that visible light, radio waves, microwaves, and X-rays, were also all part of the same phenomenon. His theories on magnetism, optics and electricity completely transform the realm of scientific discovery.

In fact, you are able to see this image of a butterfly in colour thanks to **James Maxwell**.

Under the direction of James Maxwell, the Cavendish Laboratory was opened in 1874. Since its foundation, the Laboratory has completely changed our understanding of the physical world through its extraordinary history of discovery and innovation. Maxwell had carved in Latin the text from Psalm 111:2 on the great front oak doors: "*magna opera Domini exquisita in omnes voluntates eius*" which means in English: "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein."

Why am I saying all this?

My point is simply this: **James Maxwell** was not only a brilliant scientist, he was also a devout Christian, who wrote frequently about his faith.

So to the question, "**Are faith and science compatible?**" The answer is clearly **YES!**

Maxwell wrote the following in one of his letters:

"I think Christians whose minds are scientific are bound to study science that their view of the glory of God may be as extensive as their being is capable."

For Maxwell, the beauty of the natural world that he observed, and the fact that he could discover it, **filled him with wonder**, and it gave credence to the idea that there is a Creator who created an amazing organized universe and **created us** to inhabit it, to enjoy it and to explore it.

Well, what about the other two scientists that were elected first and second place in the BBC poll of the 100 most prominent physicists?

Isaac Newton Recognized as one of the most influential scientists of all time, he developed calculus and described universal gravitation, the three laws of motion, and developed colour theory. His contributions to science are incredible... a genius!

Yet, he wrote more on theology and religion than he did on science. **Here is what he said:**

"The most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being." (Isaac Newton - Principia Mathematica)

Albert Einstein

His amazing mind and his contribution to modern science are without question genius. His contributions, among many, are the theory of relativity, his mass–energy equivalence formula (which is considered "the world's most famous equation"), his discoveries on the thermal properties of light, statistical mechanics, quantum theory, and on and on it goes... **Here is what he said:**

"My religion consists of a humble admiration of the illimitable superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble minds. That deeply emotional conviction of the presence of a superior reasoning power, which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms my idea of God."

Francis Collins

He is one of the preeminent geneticists in the world. He helped complete ground-breaking research into human DNA as a leader of **the Human Genome Project**. He is who is currently the Director of the National Institutes of Health (USA). He is author of his bestselling 2006 book The Language of God (A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief) **Let me quote:**

"Will we turn our backs on science because it is perceived as a threat to God, abandoning all the promise of advancing our understanding of nature and applying that to the alleviation of suffering and the betterment of humankind? Alternatively, will we turn our backs on faith, concluding that science has rendered the spiritual life no longer necessary...?"

Both of these choices are profoundly dangerous. Both deny truth. Both will diminish the nobility of humankind. Both will be devastating to our future. And both are unnecessary. The God of the Bible is also the God of the genome. He can be worshipped in the cathedral or in the laboratory. His creation is majestic, awesome, intricate and beautiful - and it cannot be at war with itself. Only we imperfect humans can start such battles. And only we can end them."

- Some Christians think that there is this conspiracy, that scientists get up in the morning and try their best to prove there is no God. And so, some Christians circle the wagons and treat all science as

the enemy of their faith. If science says it, then it's an attack on Christianity, faith and even western civilization (as we know it). Some go as far as to think of science as linked to communism.

- And yes, there are Scientists like **Richard Dawkins** and **Sam Harris** who strongly oppose and even make fun of people of faith. Some even view religion as one of the top evils of our world.

And yes, if you decide to pursue a degree in many of our Universities across North America, there will be profs that will challenge your faith and even try to dismantle your belief in God and the Bible. But remember, **there are many amazing scientists out there, extremely intelligent minds, well respected professors**, in all the branches of science, **that firmly hold to a strong faith in God as Author and Creator of all things visible and invisible.**

- You don't have to turn your back on science in order to be a passionate follower of Jesus Christ!
- You do not have to check your brain at the door when you come to church (even though I have seen some Christians who do).
- You can believe in science and still believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that He died on the Cross for our sins and that He rose from the dead.
- You can believe in science and still believe that we are more than just physical entities without souls, that death is more than an **"off switch, Click! And you're gone!"**
- You can believe in science and also believe that the sensations of love and beauty and awe are more than just neurological-chemical events created in your brain.
- You can believe in science and still not believe that we humans are the product of nothing more than some random lucky amoeba that moved up the evolutionary chain by way of the strong eating the weak.

Let me give you just two reasons for believing in God:

(There are many more that could be presented, but for the sake of time we will quickly look at just two.)

1. The first reason is simply this: **The Universe Exists!**

Now science clearly agrees that the universe had a beginning.

Scientists call it the BIG BANG. Now before the 19th century the vast majority of scientists did not believe that the universe had a beginning, but now **the scientific evidence** points to a clear beginning. IT WAS NOT, AND THEN IT WAS. That brings us to this question: **Why is there something rather than nothing?**

For there to be something, rather than nothing, there has to be a beginning; and for there to be a beginning there has to be a cause to that beginning. That's called the **Principle of Causality.**

Something (the cause) causes something else (the effect) to happen.

Christians believe that the cause is found in verse one of the Bible:

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Genesis 1:1

Now for an atheist, this presents a problem. The existence of the Big Bang is an inconvenient truth, for in that case, the physical universe must have been produced by something not physical. The existence of the universe itself points to the existence of something beyond the universe, something that does not depend on anything else for its existence, something of immense power, something that has an ability to think and cause.

Now think about that. The alternative is that something can come from nothing. The idea of **nothing** is hard for us to think about. **Nothing would mean complete, blank emptiness.** Imagine... no space, no time, no matter, no energy, not even a void because a void implies boundaries. **NOTHING.** Then with no explanation, no cause, the universe (bang!) pops into being. That is not scientifically possible; you cannot get from nothing to something without the assistance of something or someone with the power and ability to cause it to happen.

That takes way more faith than believing in God as creator!

People make fun of Christians that believe God created the world in 6 literal days. Not all Christians interpret Genesis one that way, but some do. They are called Literalists. Often people pooh-poo those that do believe in a literal 6-day creation, but then they turn around and believe that the universe suddenly exploded into existence from nothing with no help from a (as Einstein put it) “superior reasoning power”!

To believe that God created the world takes faith.

Hebrews 11 teaches that clearly:

“By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.” Hebrews 11:3 (NIV)

But to believe that there is no God and that this whole amazing and complex universe came to being out of nothing also takes incredible faith, and arguably way more faith!

So, looking at our Universe and understanding the scientific principle of Causality is reason to believe in a Creator. That’s what the Apostle Paul was referring to 2000 years ago...

“For since the creation of the world, God’s invisible attributes—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made.” Romans 1:20

This bring me to my next reason for believing in God:

2. A Precision-Designed Universe that supports life.

The more scientists discover about our universe, the more they discover about the exactness of gravitational forces of planets, carefully balanced equations, constants, and properties of matter, that if they were altered in the slightest way, the result would be catastrophic; life as we know it would end.

- Example: The proportion of the mass of a neutron of hydrogen that's converted to energy during nuclear fusion is 0.007. If it were 0.006, the whole universe would be hydrogen, and there would be no life. If it were 0.008, there’d be no hydrogen and therefore no life. The proportions are exactly what is required to sustain life!
- A second example of design involves the basic forces of nature. **The law of universal gravitation.** All masses attract each other with a force that is directly proportional to the product of their masses and inversely proportional to the square of the distance between them. Gravity maintains the moon's orbit around the earth, the earth's orbit around the sun, and also the rotation of the entire Milky Way galaxy. A precision that makes a carefully crafted Swiss watch look like a toy. One small shift in the gravitational force and it would result in a huge massive crash of planets and of the entire universe. The gravity force clearly displays critical design.

The more science perfects the ability to examine our world, our universe, how matter is held together and how atomic particles vibrate hold together by these little tiny solar systems called atoms, how our brains work, the crystal structure of ice, how a seed works, how plant life and animal life depend on each other to exist, the balance between protons and electrons... the marvels of DNA, how a hummingbird can fly... the list goes on and on of the vast list of examples that clearly point to intelligent and intentional design which the Bible calls God.

“The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge.” Psalm 19:1–2 (NKJV)

The more science tells us about our universe, the more we can see the handiwork of God. We should never fear truth!

The voice of the Lord is speaking to us through His creation, He reveals Himself through the microscope and the telescope. He speaks to us through the flight of the butterfly, through the song of the sparrow. He talks to us as we explore the galaxy and take pictures of Jupiter. He reveals Himself through science, medicine and astronomy. We see His fingerprint in biology and chemistry. He loves us through a puppy’s eyes, laughs with us when we’re at the zoo & whispers to us as we marvel at nature’s wonders.

“The heavens declare the glory of God.” Psalm 19:1–2 (NKJV)

Next week we are going to look at Genesis...

- Genesis is the introduction to the theology of God.
- The **first three chapters** of Genesis and the **last three chapters** of Revelations are the **BOOKENDS** of God’s redemptive story for humanity.
- Many people (including many Christians) miss the central beauty of these amazing and very old pieces of Bible literature .
- It introduces us to the revelation of who God is, who the Word of God is and the work of the Holy Spirit.
- It is the beginning of the Christian Creed.

We believe in God, the Father, the Almighty, creator of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, God from God, Light from Light, through Him all things were made. For us and for our salvation.

- Genesis 1 says that God spoke things into existence.
- John 1 says that that Word was with God and was God. “All things were made through Him.”
John 1:3a It goes on to say that the Word was Jesus. That’s why the creed says **“through Him all things were made.”**

We believe in the Holy Spirit the giver of life.

- Genesis tells us that...

“God created humans in his own image, in the image of God He created them.” Genesis 1:27
“God breathed into us the breath of life.” Genesis 2:7

That gives you value! You are more than a blob of carbon, a random collection of molecules on an insignificant speck of dust called earth that is revolving around billions of stars and will soon burn itself out and end all known forms on life. But long before that happens, you will have died and rotted and your momentary existence will be eternally forgotten and without meaning or significance.

No, God says that you are more than that. That He loves you and you matter to Him, and He desires a relationship with you. Would you trust Him?