

Lies My Sunday School Teacher Told Me

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[0 : 00] This is probably my first time I've given any kind of a talk on biblical things, other than eulogies several decades ago. So, I have a tough audience, right? You know, there's a lot of depth here.

But I'll do my best. In my regular occupation, I do international business, and something new that I'm doing is commercializing technology.

And, you know, I wonder if it's something that's late in the game that I'm getting into. And one of my colleagues said, no, Mel, not at all. Someone who commercializes technology, you have to be a very good generalist.

And you need some life experience. So, guys coming out of college and university can't do it.

You've got to know a lot, but not to an expert level, but about everything.

So, I don't know. I guess that's sort of confidence. It's a jack-of-all-trades. There is a future for some of us. So, this talk isn't entirely neutral.

[1 : 06] Well, actually, let me... So, that's the title. Because I wanted people to turn up. I didn't want it to be a snooze fest. So, but this is really what it's about.

Reconciling our Christian faith with scientific fact and growth. Maybe I should put a comma in there somewhere, so I'll get some English teachers talking to me laughter. But, you know, Christian faith, the Bible's been the same for a long time.

And a lot of books written about the Bible, but the Bible's the same. And like the song says, Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. But science keeps growing and growing and growing.

And it surprises us. I remember in the 80s, you know, starting out driving cars. And, you know, should we get a car with electric windows or not?

No, the more gadgets you have, the more things that can go wrong. But now that's just, you know, it's just almost compulsory.

[2 : 10] What's the word? Anyway. Essential. Essential. Parts of things. And things don't, some of the things that used to fall apart before, they keep running, you know. Science keeps, science keeps surprising us.

You know, but as believers, there's sometimes a conflict in our hearts and mind with our Christian faith and science. And, you know, we have the citadel of faith inside and outside we have the juggernaut of science coming at us.

So what do we do? Well, let's start with a prayer. Lord God, who has left us your holy word to be a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our steps, give unto us all your Holy Spirit that out of the same word we may learn what is your eternal will and frame our lives in all holy obedience to the same, to your glory and honor and the increase of our faith, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen. So there's some little subtopics through here. So we're going to move along pretty quickly, obviously, and try and have a conclusion.

The fourth is really the punchline. So if some of you want to leave, you could. And then hopefully we won't end. We'll end okay. So the first is, yeah, Christian faith versus science.

[3 : 45] You know, I give speeches all the time abroad, but it's things I know about manufacturing, so I don't do PowerPoints. But this has been a really good exercise, I tell you.

So the thing is, you know, the divide between faith and, or Christian faith and science, is it unabridgable? Particularly the two communities of, you know, faith versus science.

Are they in perpetual conflict? You know, there's a lot of political division in the world, which is just not going to get together. Do we have to choose sides? Or you don't have to choose sides whatsoever.

And I see, you know, four options. You might see more. Let me know. So, oh, I should just talk about this.

So the first choice is, you choose religion, you reject science technology. I mean, there's really a picture of equilibrium and harmony. These are people that are not looking to increase their portfolio by 10% next year.

[4 : 45] They're not going to push nature beyond what it can do. And I just have a lot of respect for those people. So that's one option.

The second is, reject God, embrace materialism and science. There's a quotation there you can look at.

Now, Dr. John Lennox was a renowned professor, scientist, and Christian apologist from Oxford. And actually, this is a quote within a quote.

So he's quoting Richard Leventon and a biologist from Harvard University, a geneticist, in this quote anyway. So I'll read a little bit of that.

So we take the side of science in spite of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, in spite of its failure to fulfill many of its extravagant promises of health and life, in spite of the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have a prior commitment, a commitment to materialism.

[5 : 56] So that's the priority materialism that you see. So a lot of scientists, not every, but, you know, their atheism comes first, and it's a driver behind their science.

Not to say that there isn't good science or bad science or good faith or bad faith, but some of these things you can say about the faith community as well. It's not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenon, phenomenal world.

But on the contrary, we are forced by our priority adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counterintuitive, no matter how mystifying to the initiated.

Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a divine foot in the door. Okay. Okay. So, that's that side.

That's the second. The third is becoming very popular. Be spiritual, mistrust science.

[7 : 11] These are people that have abandoned mainstream religion and denominations. They describe themselves as spiritual, but not belonging to the generally accepted fates of the world.

Now, this is from a very recent National Post article. You can see in the picture, as you can see in the picture, there's a new trend where women give birth at home instead of the hospital. There is no midwife or other health professional present.

The only assistance is from a partner or other family relations. They reject vaccines. We shockingly see the return of polio in developed countries.

So, there have been some deaths, obviously, and it's been quite widespread. Now, you say, you know, what kind of people are these? Well, they're younger than the average population and possess generally good education and higher incomes.

Now, choosing only their personal perceptions, feelings, and experience as a guide, well, you know the source. And you have no one to blame if you fail. But, more importantly, if you succeed, you got it.

[8 : 22] All right? So, you know, so Western-style Buddhists, New Age variants, and there's agnostics and atheists in the mix as well.

The third one is reconciling your Christian faith in science.

This is probably the loneliest of choices. There's not much companionship here. And in this position, you can be challenged and vulnerable to attack from all sides.

So, whether you're in the business world, working in the scientific community, sometimes you can never say something that's right. Performing Christian ministry or charity or any skilled or unskilled trait.

But there can be advantages. You can be associated and break bread with all kinds of people from very different backgrounds and opinions. You can hold your own in some debates. Some you can't.

[9 : 25] One of the wonderful features about this choice is that most things have not been reconciled. You know? So, you have a hunger to find out more from the world around you.

There's a freedom to say, I don't know. I never thought about that. What do you think? How do you arrive at that? Creation and time.

So, from biblical references, we know that time between Adam and the birth of Christ was roughly 4,000 years. From other historical records, we know that Christ was born roughly 2,000 years ago. Since Adam was created on the sixth day of the creation, we conclude that the earth and the entire universe and everything in it was created approximately 6,000 years ago. This is a common idea among evangelicals.

Then, 2 Peter weighs into this conversation. But do not forget this one thing, dear friends. With the Lord, a day is like 1,000 years.

[10:29] And 1,000 years are like a day. Well, if we apply this literally, then we get a bonus 6,000 years and we double it to 12,000. So, you see a couple of pictures of some very old things.

So, here in the White Mountains of California is a bristlecone pine called Methuselah. Methuselah. And it's over 4,848 years old.

And others in that forest are over 5,000. Now, this Charlie Brown Christmas tree over here in Sweden's Fulafalajet Mountain, that's a Norway spruce.

So, don't get a Norway spruce for Christmas, whatever you do. Now, it doesn't look like much, but this little tree is an estimated 9,550 years old.

Wow. Yeah. And how do they tell? They take a core sample and they count the rings, right? Yeah. It's science. It's quite empirical. You can't argue with that. So, if you look at a 6,000 year earth or universe, it's a little troubling, you know?

[11:42] And, yeah. But we have to reconcile it. So, okay. So, let's... This is one of my favorite sayings.

You know, it's probably been said by someone else before and there's no copyright on it. Entropy is inevitable. Now, the word entropy has two definitions, if you look it up.

There's kind of a general definition and a physics one, which is very involved. It's about thermodynamics and the degree of disorder and randomness and so on.

The general one that we can probably all relate to is gradual decline into disorder, a market where entropy reigns supreme, deterioration, degeneration, crumbling, decline, degrade...

Anyway, life is a struggle against entropy. So, what this means is everything the universe breaks down becomes more simple and tired. There's no everlasting life in the physical universe observed so far, or life out there for that matter.

[12:46] External forces can reverse entropy temporarily, but with time, entropy wins. Lazarus eventually died.

There are single-celled plants and animals that have lived for billions of years reproducing by division, but when our sun goes supernova, they'll go too. So, they'll confront entropy as well. Chemical elements such as carbon also break down in age. So, now we're going to talk about carbon dating a little bit, and I'll try and explain that.

Isotopes. So, isotopes are kind of like stages in human life. So, humans go from fetus, baby, infant, teenager, etc. So, in chemical elements, these are known as isotopes.

So, they can tell by what it is, how many of this kind of isotope or that kind of isotope, how old something is. So, that's how they measure age.

[13:47] Now, carbon-14 is a radioactive isotope of carbon with a half-life of 5,730 years old.

Eventually, it decays and becomes nitrogen, if you leave it long enough. The carbon-14 dating limit lies around 58,000 years, 62,000 years.

And there are many methods and variants of this, and it has become more and more accurate. And some of the tracks I've read, you know, back in the 70s would knock carbon dating, but it's become pretty good.

There's different variations, so they triangulate, just like you find someone emitting a radar, using a radio somewhere.

Okay. Now, there's other things. There's uranium-torium dating method. And it has this two compounds, uranium-234 to 230.

[15:06] It's a substance of the half-life of 80,000 years. You know. So, they can measure things within a few hundred thousand years. And then you've got rubidium strontium, and it's got a half-life of 50 billion years.

And, you know, give or take error of 30, 50 million years. So, and then there's all these.

And variations of this. So, you know, depending, I mean, scientific fact on age and stuff always changes.

But it does get, science just does get more accurate with time. It does tend to build. Now, if you're a Christian whose fate, fate and fate, pivoted on a 6,000-year-old universe, how do you handle this juggernaut?

You know, how do you do that? And along with that, how do you process the hostility towards Christians from those claiming scientific understanding?

[16:20] How do we deal if humans create simple synthetic life in the laboratory? This has already happened, and it's not big news. I think it's over six or seven years ago.

They took a very simple bacteria, hollowed it out. It had a very simple DNA. They created one from scratch, put it in, it fired up.

Okay? Recently, they did a whole virus from scratch. Like, from scratch. And it worked. And, again, it's not big news.

I'm surprised why. But, again, it's not really creating life. It's manipulating life. But it may happen one day. And you have to say, okay, how are you going to deal with that, right?

So, I'll just talk about life in the universe, what I think about that. This is life or intelligent life out there. I think science sometimes, or some scientists, or some people who think they understand science, get quite enraptured about the idea because the universe is so vast.

[17:32] And Carl Sagan and others, you've seen the numbers. You know, with so many, you know, millions and billions of galaxies somewhere, there's got to be, you know, one in, you know, 50 million, there's got to be, you know, there's got to be 50 million planets like ours, so one of them's got to have it.

So, there's 100% chance that there's life out there. But we see how difficult it is to create life in a controlled laboratory. Of course, it's life as we don't understand it and stuff, but I think the scientific answer is there's no proof that there's life out there.

But as Christians, we should also be prepared for the thing, or any person, there might be. But scientifically speaking, there really isn't. Water is not an organic compound.

You can mix water and minerals all you like. You don't get those complex things which follow, that make the foundation. Again, the spark of life, where does it come from?

Maybe it can happen out there. Maybe God's doing other work. We don't know. All right. Well, this is where I like to be.

[18:51] I guess men are from Mars, so, you know, the fourth orbit I choose. And so, it goes like this. What I believe, and I'm sorry to interject the word I, because this is a lot of, I'm sharing my own way, there's no conflict between the word of God and science.

Or you can state it as there will be, one day, no conflict between the word of God and science. Or, if God were saying, there shall be no conflict between the word of God and science.

We just don't know it yet. I can't prove anything, but that's my fate. Now, the supporting thing that I say is, well, either the biblical interpretation is misapplied or the science is premature.

So, if there isn't a sink between the two. Or you can even, if you want to be more edgy, you can say that the interpretation is wrong and the science is bad.

I mean, it's perfectly okay to say that. I mean, there's a lot more people that are much more qualified to speak on interpreting the Bible, to know when something is poetry, when something is history, when something is direct interpretation.

[20:11] And we should allow the time in our lives to figure it out or let it speak to us. So we know what it is.

So, that's really my punchline, as I was saying. Now, back to Sunday school teachers.

I don't know, did any of you see these jack-chick tracks? Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Okay. I mean... Can you read it to us?

Oh, sure. It says, And I will say to my soul, soul, thou hast much good laid up for many years. Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

Luke 12, 19. So, he had a number of tracks really encouraging people to come to faith and not live a life of riotous living and be proper and so on.

[21:12] And he passed away two years ago. I didn't even know that. Now, this was issued 2002. But, I mean, I saw this in the mid-70s.

So, he's been writing stuff. Yeah. So, and I think before he passed away, he's written tracks on Muslims and LGBT and lots of things. Catholics.

Yeah, Catholics as well. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So, I mean, I'll just give you a little taste of this. But, these were lying around in Sunday school. You know, they... I got them. There you go. Can you read them? Oh, sure.

It says, But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee. It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.

[22 : 09] I think he had once called the big spender and so on. And these were handed out in prisons in a lot of terrible places, which I think was very good. But, you know, as young boys, we'd get this one saying, you know, the big spender.

I'm going, wow, that looks kind of good with a pipe and a nice curvy car and all that. It was a little distracting, you know. And, um...

And, marvel not at this, for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the grave shall hear his voice. Um, and shall come forth...

Well, anyway, you can say, what's happening? It's all over, but... He wasn't expecting it. He was. I don't know. Your clean underwear won't help you.

So, so... Um... Shocking tracks. He, um... Oh. It's a new...

[23 : 09] Okay. He also tackles evolution. How many of you believe in evolution? We do, sir. Anyone disagree? Little voice in the back says, I do, sir.

And then comes the hostility. You can get out of my class, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Woo! So... I don't know. Um...

So... Yeah. Yeah. Fair enough. Well... I think, uh... Well, like...

Oh. Um... Yeah. Yeah. It's talking about... Um... Bob, are you telling me that dinosaurs and man were both created the same day?

That's what the... That's what God's word tells us. Man, that's too hard to swallow. Jason, there are photos of men's footprints walking next to dinosaur footprints. They were found in Glen Rose, Texas.

[24 : 09] God doesn't lie. So... Uh... I have to agree with Jack Chick that God doesn't lie. And, uh... One of my closest friends, I said...

You know... Uh... Because I was running into the carbon dating problem. And I was in that six-year thing. And... And carbon dating and all this other... Uh... Technology was beginning to age things. Um... Um... So he said to me, well... Well, maybe God just makes it look that way. And that... I remember telling him, no, God doesn't lie. Why would he create false things?

So... Um... Anyway, just to let you know, the more research and stuff found that it wasn't human. Right. Um... So... Um...

There's a video, like... It's an animated video. It's only three minutes long. And hopefully we'll get some sound out of it. Uh... Uh... In the beginning...

[25 : 07] Is he smoking? No, it's... It's... The firmament. The firmament of... The firmament of the darkness. But the breath of the creator... Fluttered against the face of the void, whispering...

Let there be light. And light was. And it was good. The first day. And then the formless light... Gain to take on substance.

It's like the big boom, isn't it? The second day. The big bang. And our world was born. A beautiful, fragile home. And a great, warm and light... No jealous days.

And a lesser light ruled the nights. And there was evening. Big morning. Another day. And the waters of the world gathered together.

And in their midst... Emerged dry land. Another day passed. And the ground put forth the growing things. A thick blanket of green stretching across all creation.

[26 : 11] And the waters too... Teemed with life. Great creatures of the teeth that are no more. Vast multitudes of fish. Some of which may still swim beneath these seas.

And soon... The sky was streaming with birds. And there was evening. And there was morning. A fifth day. Now the whole world...

Was full of living beings. Everything that creeps. Everything that crawls. And every beast that walks upon the ground. And it was good. It was all good. It was light. And air.

And water. And soil. All clean and unspoiled. The plants and fish. The fowl and beasts. Each after their own kind. All part of the greater whole. All in their place. When all was in balance.

Was paradise. The jewel of the creator's palm. And the creator made man. And by his side woman. Father and mother of us all.

[27 : 09] He gave them the choice. Follow the temptation of darkness. Or hold on. To the blessing of light.

That they ate from the forbidden fruit.

Their innocence. It's extinguished. So for the ten generations. Since Adam's sin. Has walked within us. Brother against brother.

Nation against nation. Man against creation. We murdered each other. We broke the wall.

We did this. Man did this. Everything that was beautiful. Everything that was good. We shattered.

[28 : 10] Evolution of hostility.

So. I've thought long and hard about. Why. Scientists. Atheistic scientists.

Or agnostic scientists. Have some hostility. Towards. Christianity. Because they get pretty riled up. When. You know. Go up a couple of octaves. When.

That comes. Into the conversation. And. Part of it is. A. I don't want to call it. PTSD. PTSD. But.

I think. A little boy growing up. Who. Loves science. Parents say. You need a good education.

Study hard at school. People. And.

[29 : 09] He begins to admire. Some of the scientists. And. He reads about them. They become his heroes. And then. And.

What happens to his heroes. You know. There are. And. Starting with. Philosophers. You know.

The precursor to. To scientists. Because everything starts. With an idea. The burning of libraries.

Being exiled. From church and community. If you didn't. Follow what the church. Want to do. Not just picking on the. Christian church. I'm sure. That in. All faiths.

Around the world. Hinduism. Islam. Any scientific mind. Wanted to. Step out.

Were. Often. Squashed. Or. You know. Tortured. Or. Terrible things. So. What happens. It's like. Reading about.

[30 : 08] Your. Ancestor. Being treated. That way. Because the hero. Kind of. Becomes part of his. Memory. Genetic memory.

In a way. Don't take me. Literally here. But. So. As they grow up. You know. They. They have this. Animosity. They.

And. I. I. I. I. I. I. I. I. I. I. I. I. and turned on the TV, and there was a Sadguru.

So he's one of these Hindu gurus, but he's kind of pop. You know, he's got the beard and everything. He's got some young people there. And he was taking a swipe at organized religion, but it was clearly Christianity.

And people take Christianity, simplify it to very crude elements, and then attack it.

[31 : 11] There's a lot more to the Christian faith. We know that. And just as there's a lot to science, which is study of God's creation.

But that's where that hostility comes from. Now, on the Christian community or Christian experience, tools kill. Cain killed Abel.

I don't think we know exactly how. He killed him. And his blood spilled on the ground, so he had some kind of device, some kind of technology, some kind of tool.

Industry creates idols. So as soon as humans, as we read in the Bible, develop metallurgy, they make idols to worship. Technology propagates sin.

So going into Greco-Roman times, people have free time. Technology allows people to have more leisure.

[32 : 13] There's also more sin and depravity. And medicine, an insult to God, I think some Christians feel that way.

And I'm talking more in a historical sort of context. So there is this back and forth between the two. And it's very, very, really difficult to reconcile between the two communities.

But I think where we can start is in our own heads. And part of this is understanding science and understanding our faith.

Okay. Okay. And I'm just moving along here. Okay. So this is my conclusion. So John 3.16, For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

So that's always my reset. When I'm pulled this way or that way, this way, this way or that way, I can always, it's kind of a cliché, but I can always come back to this.

[33 : 24] I don't want to point that this also points to other things. We're going to be, if we talk about synthetic human beings created in the future, aliens from other planets, who knows?

I think if they come from this universe, they're created in this universe, in whatever shape and form, if they understand sin, then Christ died for them. So that's the end.

Thank you. Thank you.