

Has science disproved God?

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Preacher: John French

[0:00] Good morning, everyone. Braving the cold. Do you ever pause and wonder, am I just some kind of random, giant, chaotic fluke in time and space?

Or is there order, meaning and purpose? If there is a God, surely we could find out, or at the very least, this God would communicate and reveal themselves to us.

Look around us. It's spectacular. For those of us that enjoy the great outdoors, walk the dog, budding astronomers, watching a sunrise or sunset, gets us thinking, wow, this is amazing.

There must be something more. Can we explain the beginning? The answer from science is no one knows. We haven't the faintest idea.

We weren't there when it happened. We can hypothesise and come up with some conclusions, but at the end of the day, we don't have a clue. We didn't observe it taking place.

[1:06] The Bible speaks of this. In Ecclesiastes, we read, God has made everything possible in its time. He has also set eternity in our hearts. But we cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

We can't fathom what God has done. But we do know God's word is powerful. When he spoke creation to an existence, let there be light. Everything is beautiful in its time.

We are in awe and wonder. And deep down, we all know there's something more. God has put a yearning on our hearts. He has set eternity in them.

Has science disproved God? If you think science has disproved God, you've been misled. If you think science has all the answers, or will have all the answers one day, you have blind faith.

If you think that science deals in facts, and trusting the Bible involves a blind leap of faith, you've been deceived. If you think you can't possibly be a scientist, and a believer in God, then you've been misinformed.

[2:13] And if you think that science and Christianity are not compatible, you've been tricked. Today we don't have time to go into depth on a lot of questions related to this topic, but I do want you to know that being a scientist, and believing in God, are completely complementary.

Science does not disprove God. I'm not a scientist, but I love science. It's fascinating. It can explain how things work. There are so many great things to find out and discover about our world, and the universe in which we live.

Science has brought so many medical breakthroughs. I was on a drip in 2010 that saved my life.

Thank you, science. It solves problems, makes innovations, technological advancements.

But sadly, science has also led to chemical warfare, nuclear warfare, and just better ways of destroying each other. So it's not all good. Science is defined as the methodical study of the natural world and its processes.

Science tries to find answers to questions based on conclusions you obtain from observations, and it's especially beneficial to repeatedly make these observations. Like the sun rising this morning and setting this evening.

[3:33] I'm pretty sure it's going to rise tomorrow morning and set the following evening because we've observed it. If it doesn't take place, then panic. If you don't observe it or you can't and you have untestable assumptions, then it actually requires a faith step.

And a quick reminder that faith is placing our confidence and trust in someone or something. If it is untested, if it is not observable, it requires faith.

Science seeks to eliminate what is false, suggesting possible truths, and the objective is then to find the most accurate answer that seems to answer the question most suitably. This then leads to more questions, followed by attempts to find more accurate answers.

There's a lot of hypothesising and attempts to replicate, observe, then again theorise. There is faith in the unseen. It does try to find the most true answer to questions being posed, but it's not necessarily trying to seek the truth.

Now, while I think science is fascinating and you may as well, we must remember science generally seeks to answer the how question rather than the why, which is why science cannot disprove God because it actually isn't asking the God question in the first place.

[4:55] Telescope, microscope, can we see God through a telescope or observe God under a microscope? Can we collect samples of God and put them in a test tube?

Or can we put God in a petri dish? It's absurd. Science is not seeking to do this. Science won't answer the God question because none of these fields are even asking the God question.

None of them. So debate rages then over how much influence Christianity had on the rise of modern science. We're used to hearing science and the Bible mentioned in the same sentence as evolution or the origin of the universe.

But there's a whole range of scientific principles associated with order, rational inquiry, interpretation of data and the sustaining of life which can be traced back to the influence of the Bible upon modern science as founders.

As we look at the rise of science in the 16th and 17th century, Alfred North Whitehead and many others have commented something like this. Men became scientific because they expected law in nature and they expected law in nature because they believed in a law giver.

[6:11] Professor Peter Harrison, an academic at Oxford, explains how science rose in the 17th century because of a new seriousness among Christians to read the Bible carefully, not merely as spiritual allegory or devotional material, but as information about the real world of history and nature because God is creator, his creation is orderly.

So scientific method, discovery by empirical reasoning, is unquestionably a byproduct of Christianity as it arose due to the efforts of Christian scientists like Francis Bacon who recognised that humanity is flawed, limited and prone to error.

So to know and understand the truth of God's creation is not just enough to rely on human logic. It's also necessary to observe closely what God has created with a degree of humility, recognising the limits of human knowledge.

So observe, test, repeatedly observe, test again. We can only know so much through science, but we can know the God who knows everything and completes the knowledge.

We're reminded in Deuteronomy 29, the secret things belong to the Lord our God, so we're not going to know everything, ever. But the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.

[7:37] We know that many of the major figures in the history of science were believers in God and the Bible. There's so many, but I'm going to actually rattle off some names that you might be familiar with. Galileo, Kepler, Copernicus, Boyle, Mendel, Bacon, Newton, Descartes, Pascal, Faraday, Pasteur, Rutherford, Marconi, Fleming, Poynting, Kelvin, Collins, Lennox, and the list goes on.

Scientists and believers. The fact that these scientists had a biblical view of the universe is significant. Here's some quotes. Kepler described his work as thinking God's thoughts after him, that the universe was an expression of God.

Isaac Newton, don't doubt the creator because it is inconceivable that accidents alone could be the controller of this universe. Pasteur believed science brings men nearer to God.

Even Einstein, although he was not a Christian, as far as I'm aware, said, the more I study science, the more I believe in God. If you go to the Cavendish Science Laboratory in Cambridge University, which was established in 1874, engraved over the double doors are the words in Latin, but this is the English, great are the works of the Lord studied by all who delight in them.

That's over the science lab in Cambridge. Francis Bacon famously asserted that God spoke through two books, the Bible and the Book of Nature.

[9:09] By studying scripture, Bacon claimed we can know God's character and purposes. By studying the natural world, we see that character and purpose in action. Scientists, past and present, observe God's handiwork, even if not all of them acknowledge this today, as Psalm 19 makes clear.

The heavens declare the glory of God. The skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day, they pour forth speech. Night after night, they display knowledge.

I think I've just lost power. No? You can hear me? Okay, good. They have no speech, they use no words, no sound is heard from them, yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

In other words, what we see is God's giant thumbprint, as we observe nature, as if God was to say, hey, look at what I've made.

I've fine-tuned it. I am the creator. And let's see how fine-tuned that is with this clip. From galaxies and stars, down to atoms and subatomic particles, the very structure of our universe is determined by these numbers.

[10 : 38] These are the fundamental constants and quantities of the universe. Scientists have come to the shocking realization that each of these numbers has been carefully dialed to an astonishingly precise value, a value that falls within an exceedingly narrow, life-permitting range.

If any one of these numbers were altered by even a hair's breadth, no physical, interactive life of any kind could exist anywhere. There'd be no stars, no life, no planets, no chemistry.

Consider gravity, for example. The force of gravity is determined by the gravitational constant. If this constant varied by just 1 in 10 to the 60th parts, none of us would exist.

To understand how exceedingly narrow this life-permitting range is, imagine a dial divided into 10 to the 60th increments. To get a handle on how many tiny points on the dial this is, compare it to the number of cells in your body, or the number of seconds that have ticked by since time began.

If the gravitational constant had been out of tune by just one of these infinitesimally small increments, the universe would either have expanded and thinned out so rapidly that no stars could form and life couldn't exist.

[11 : 59] Or it would have collapsed back on itself with the same result. No stars, no planets, and no life. Or consider the expansion rate of the universe.

This is driven by the cosmological constant. A change in its value by a mere 1 part in 10 to the 120th parts would cause the universe to expand too rapidly or too slowly.

In either case, the universe would again be life prohibiting. Or another example of fine-tuning. If the mass and energy of the early universe were not evenly distributed to an incomprehensible precision of 1 part in 10 to the 10 to the 123rd, the universe would be hostile to life of any kind.

The fact is, our universe permits physical, interactive life only because these and many other numbers have been independently and exquisitely balanced on a razor's edge.

Wherever physicists look, they see examples of fine-tuning. The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life.

[13 : 12] If anyone claims not to be surprised by the special features that the universe has, he's hiding his head in the sand. These special features are surprising and unlikely. William Paley was an 18th century philosopher who saw the intricacies of a watch and thought to himself, I've never met the watchmaker, but I know there's a person who's made this watch and clearly there's a creator behind this.

He looked at the world around him and said, there must be a designer, God. The 1100s, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Anselm, argued the first cause. God must be timeless, spaceless, immaterial, uncaused, powerful and personal.

One of the big debates then for scientists is Genesis 1 and 2. Is it Hebrew poetry or is it narrative? Christians can't even agree. Is it six literal 24-hour days?

Or does each day represent an epoch or period of time? Because Psalm 90 verse 4 says a thousand years in your sight, God, are like a day gone by. No one was there.

It wasn't observed. We don't know. And we can easily get bogged down in this, but there are some interesting findings in science. In 1859, on the origins of species, Charles Darwin said this, If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not have possibly formed by numerous successive slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down.

[14 : 47] Well, such an organ, as Darwin describes here, would be known as an irreducibly complex system. This is a single system of several interacting parts that all contribute to the basic function of the system, and if you remove any one of these parts, the system would effectively cease to function.

So thankfully, science has made some advances since the 1800s and so we've uncovered a few things since then like biomolecular machines. Inside large organisms are a series of organs that form specific functions.

These complex systems require every component to be in place simultaneously in order for it to function. There is no room for gradual changes. They had to be there all at once.

To illustrate this, I'm going to use the world's tallest animal, the giraffe, five and a half metres tall. So in order to get blood up that neck, they have a heart that weighs 12 kilograms and it's 75 centimetres wide.

It's a huge heart and it's a massive, powerful pump. So I want you to imagine now that the giraffe needs something to drink and so it goes to waterhole and it bends down to drink and what happens at that point is blood just rushes straight down its neck and as it goes down with gravity going at the same time, it should shoot into its brain and it should hemorrhage it out and it should drop dead straight away.

[16:16] But it doesn't. There are little spigots in the arteries that go up the neck like little valves. So as its neck goes down, these close off and lock off the blood flow but there's still enough blood pumping through at the last bit to actually explode their brain out.

But what actually happens with that last bit of blood, it actually goes to a sponge that's at the back of the brain that absorbs that last bit of blood and stops it from hemorrhaging.

So it doesn't die. But then it sees a lion coming and thinks, oh, I better get running now. So it jumps up and has anyone ever got up really quickly and had a bit of a little faint moment because you got up too quick?

Well, can you imagine being a giraffe and you've got bloods right down here and bloods up there. Why doesn't it pass out and faint? Because all those spigots then open up and blood starts flowing but it's still not enough for it to not pass out.

But there's still blood in that sponge. So it bursts, puts that blood into its brain and it doesn't pass out and then everything's opened up and it functions and it runs off happily. An irreducibly complex system.

[17:24] All of these parts, all there, all at once, all at the same time. There could be no gradually changing over time. Imagine it lying there thinking, oh, I've got to do something about this blood issue.

Maybe I should evolve somehow. Too late. I'm dead. Evolved things don't, dead things don't evolve. The giraffe needs a designer and it's just the kind of evidence Darwin would have to acknowledge would break down his theory.

Sounds miraculous. So what about miracles? Hasn't science proven that miracles don't happen? Science can't disprove miracles.

Science deals exclusively with natural phenomena, physical matter and material processes. But a miracle, by definition, is a violation of the laws of nature. And so by definition, it's not a natural phenomenon.

It's supernatural. So supernatural events lie outside the boundaries of science. It's logically impossible for science to throw out any hypothesis that lies outside its boundaries.

[18:28] Yet science actually has to acknowledge miracles. You see, the law of nature is biogenesis. We only get life from life. And yet we've got life from no life.

That's called abiogenesis. That's a miracle. Abiogenesis has never been observed or replicated. You know Dr Frankenstein's monster, let there be life.

We can't do it. We can't get life from no life. I haven't got time to go into the fossil evidence of the Cambridge explosion that all the animals are there all at once. Again though, I want to say we can't fathom the beginning.

We just can't. And we can't fathom how spectacular the new creation will be in the end. In the meantime, we have an ache and a yearning that there is something more and God's put that on our hearts.

So it does come down to belief and there is a psychology of belief. We can ask, can I believe it when I want to believe something but must I believe it when we don't want to believe?

[19:29] If our belief is there is no God or science disproves God, then we'll only ever look out for this. Our eyes will be closed to any other possibilities. David Nagel asks us to consider what we believe through three tests, the coherent test, the pragmatic test and the reality test.

The coherent test. Do our propositions agree or contradict? Do your systems of belief fit together in a consistent manner? For example, if we're in a closed world where there's nothing supernatural, why do we stand at a grave of a friend and say, oh, they're watching over me now?

A pragmatic test. Does your belief work? Can it be applied to human experience? And does it have something to say about key concerns and issues of life? For example, if we're a result of natural selection, why do we care about the poor?

Because it's survival of the fittest. Why do we care about who's going to be in government in America soon? Because it's all natural selection. Survival of the fittest. Reality test.

Does what you believe fit with reality and is it capable of giving satisfactory explanations for the totality of things? If we're just machines, how can we explain feeling love, anger at injustice, heartbreak or suffering loss?

[20 : 52] Science has almost become a religion for some people. Have you heard of scientism? It's an exaggerated view that science and scientific method are the best and only way to render truth about the world and reality.

Some scientists like the late Christopher Hitchens, Richard Dawkins, Lawrence Krauss or Neil deGrasse Tyson try to tell you at best there's probably no God.

But if the scientist who believes there is no God is correct, this is what it looks like. Our origin, we are a mutated fluke of evolution. Our destiny, we will eventually rot and become food for worms.

Our life, we're a collection of minerals and chemicals which actually only have a street value of about \$5. If the scientist who believes there is no God is correct, our past has no purpose, our future contains no hope and our present possesses nothing of meaning or value.

Science doesn't give us meaning, or purpose or answer the why. These are the questions the Bible addresses and answers. I start asking by do you ever stop to wonder and think what it's all about?

[22 : 02] If there's a God, surely God would show up. Jesus does just that. This is not science, this is history. Cemented in history, he displays his power of nature over creation itself because he is the creator with us.

One of my favourite stories is when Jesus and his disciples are in a boat and there's a furious squall and Jesus is asleep and they come to him and they wake him up, they're terrified, we're going to drown.

Jesus gets up and looks at the storm and says, quiet, be still. Now I've surfed in stormy weather and if suddenly the clouds parted and the sun came out and the wind just went dead still and the waves died down and it went dead flat, I'd be terrified.

And that's how they respond. They cower in the back of the boat and they say, who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him. Science can't prove or disprove this event or the identity and nature of Jesus.

These are historical events. The Bible reveals we were made for relationships with God and with each other and relationships that are to be marked by love. Jesus the creator steps into creation and shows his the creator, calming storms, raising the dead.

[23 : 24] But creation has been undone by sin. As a result, we are broken image bearers of God. Jesus' death on the cross in our place restores life, gives meaning and purpose and then he was observed repeatedly by over 500 people over 40 days.

And as a result, our origin, we're created for relationships. Our destiny, through Jesus, we look forward to an eternal glory. Our life, treasure Jesus together for God's glory and the joy of all people.

Our past has purpose our present, it possesses extreme significance, meaning and value and our future contains real hope. Science has done amazing things.

We've even discovered the cell adhesive molecule laminin which holds our whole bodies together. That looks like a cross by the way. We've discovered that all donkeys have a marking on their backs.

Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem. That marking on their back is a cross. We've discovered that anti-venom for a snake bite is mixed with lamb's blood to bring life.

[24 : 40] Are all these coincidences? By all means, enjoy the good things science has to offer. Don't hide behind science as some excuse to not believe in God. Science doesn't disprove God.

Science helps point us to God's masterful handiwork. Life on earth was no accident. We're meant to be here. In Revelation 4.11 we read, You are worthy our Lord and God to receive glory and honour

and power for you created all things and by your will they were created and have their being.
Amen.