



Part 1: Belief in God in a Scientific Age? Genesis 1:1

Even in our scientific age, faith in the God of the Bible is reasonable.

I. The Great Question of Our Age

Is faith in the God of the Bible reasonable in our scientific age?

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

“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. . . By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command. . .” Hebrews 11:1, 3

“I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.” – Apostles’ Creed

“There is so much more to atheism than its knockdown arguments that there is no God. There is the whole rest of the worldview that comes along with atheism. It’s a demanding, rigorous, breathtaking grip on reality, one that has been vindicated beyond reasonable doubt. It’s called science.”
– Alex Rosenberg, *The Atheist’s Guide to Reality*

The scientific worldview is the dominant filter of our secular age through which we evaluate what is and is not possible. Reality is limited to the physical universe. Life is reduced to what we can sense and measure scientifically.

“I have long felt that there was a general impression in the non-scientific world, that the scientific world believes science has discovered ways of explaining all the facts of nature without adopting any definite belief in a creator. I have never doubted that that impression was utterly groundless.”

– Lord Kelvin (1824-1907)

II. God's Two Books

"God has, in fact, written two books, not just one. Of course, we are all familiar with the first book he wrote, namely Scripture. But he has written a second book called creation."

– Sir Francis Bacon, referring to Augustine's idea

"The God who gave us the ability to study the world scientifically is also the God who guides us with the Holy Spirit as we seek to understand his written revelation. We cannot separate our study of God's Word from our study of God's world because both come from and point toward the same God."

– Deborah and Loren Haarsma, *Origins: A Reformed Look at Creation, Design and Evolution*, 17.

III. Christians and the Birth of Science

Many people today might not know that the modern science movement was first developed by Christians: Roger Bacon (1214-1294), William Ockham (1285-1350), Francis Bacon (1521-1626), Robert Boyle (1627-1691). Other Christian scientists of note include Descarte, Newton, Kepler, Galileo, Locke, Copernicus, Faraday, Kelvin, and Pasteur.

Albert Einstein kept pictures of three Christian scientists on the wall of his study: Isaac Newton (1642-1727), Michael Faraday (1791-1867), and James Clerk Maxwell (1831-1879). For these men, science and faith went hand-in-hand, and studying God's creation was an act of worship.

IV. Modern Christian Scientists

"I start by saying that there is a God who created the universe, and he is not an impersonal God."

– Daniel Hastings, Professor of Aeronautics and Astronautics, MIT (See "Exploring True Life," The Veritas Forum video, June 28, 2011, youtube.com/watch).

"[My] research is only a platform for me to do God's work. His creation, the way he made this world, is very interesting. It's amazing, really."

– Jing Kong, Professor of Electrical Engineering, MIT

"Understanding more of science doesn't make God smaller. It allows us to see His creative activity in more detail."

– Russel Cowburn, Professor of Experimental Physics, University of Cambridge (See "Nanotechnology, Creation and God," TED talk video, August 27, 2015, youtube.com).

See Commission on Creation by the American Scientific Affiliation (network.asa3.org). Here the ASA offers a general statement on creation:

1. God is the creator of all things.
2. God is as active in "natural" events as in "miraculous" ones.

3. God actively cares for His creation.
4. All creation is the object of God's redemptive plan.
5. We humans are given stewardship responsibility of creation.
6. We have a responsibility toward one another.
7. Scientific description and divine action need not be in conflict.

The ASA members hold a common belief on who created the universe, but different views on how God created the universe. There are various specific statements on views of creation that represent the diversity of views in the ASA including the following:

1. Young-Earth Creation (YEC) View
2. Old-Earth (Progressive) Creation View
3. Theistic Evolution (Continuous, Evolutionary Creation) View
4. Intelligent Design View

"I see an orderly, beautiful universe in which nearly all physical phenomena can be understood from a few simple mathematical equations. I see a universe that, had it been constructed slightly differently, would never have given birth to stars and planets, let alone bacteria and people. And there is no good scientific reason for why the universe should not have been different. Many good scientists have concluded from these observations that an intelligent God must have chosen to create the universe with such beautiful, simple, and life-giving properties. Many other equally good scientists are nevertheless atheists. Both conclusions are positions of faith."

– William G Phillips, "Does Science Make Belief in God Obsolete?," *fairobserver.com*, November 10, 2013.

V. Jesus Christ: Our Ultimate Lens

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

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men." John 1:1-4

We are left with many mysteries and questions about God's process of creation. The fact upon which we take our stand as Christians is the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

"Our life is not our own property but a possession of God. And it is in this divine ownership makes life a sacred thing."

– Abraham Heschel

Recommended Resources:

1. *Origins: A Reformed Look at Creation, Design and Evolution* by Deborah and Loren Haarsma (Faith Alive2007).
2. American Scientific Affiliation (network.asa3.org).
3. *The Reason for God*, Tim Keller (Dutton, 2008).

Discussion Questions:

1. What has been your understanding of the relationship between science and Christianity? Have you heard the claim that “science has proven Christianity false or irrelevant”? How do you see this belief manifested in our culture?
2. Are you encouraged to know there are many Christian scientists? How does this encourage you? What questions does it raise for you? Had you heard of the American Scientific Affiliation (network.asa3.org)?
3. Consider Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1-4. What claims are made of Jesus Christ? Doug said that the ultimate fact upon which we take our stand as Christians is the resurrection of Jesus Christ rather than the exact manner of how God created the universe. Does this help?