

# Does True Science Conflict with God's Word?

**Paul Brown**

Sometimes it seems as if we are in a battle with science. Here we are, the Christians, with our stubborn shield of faith, standing against the lions of science with their sharp teeth of facts.

But is that really the case? Our English word "science" comes from the Latin and simply means "knowledge." As such science is not the enemy of the Bible. And so it isn't the enemy of Christians. We aren't pitted against each other—Christians with faith against science with evidence.

No, true science and Christians are on the side of the one who has ALL the facts and who has ever seen the universe in its completeness. We can say with David, "Therefore I esteem all thy precepts (and all that You have said in Your Word) concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way." (Psalm 119:128) God is omniscient. He knows and has known all things all the time. He has never learned. People can only know in part. Though scientists give themselves to the pursuit of facts—to study systematically the natural order—they still know very little. But as they learn more and more, scientists invariably discover, though they may not admit it, that God's Word was right all along.

Yet, it is true that as we look around us it seems that everywhere we look and listen we find scientists and science textbooks that are in conflict with the Bible. That's because, though both believers and unbelievers have the same set of facts before them, we are looking at those facts through different sets of glasses. If you wear sunglasses, the world has a tinge to it according to the color of your lenses.

The unbeliever has a set of glasses that are colored with the idea that the earth is billions of years old. If everything started without God he has to allow eons of time to account for everything to come to be. He

looks at the evidence of the earth through those glasses. He sees layers of rock in the Grand Canyon and says, "This must have been formed by water slowly over billions of years."

He has a problem, though. As he discovers the wonders of nature, he sees it is far more complex than he dreamed. He has to keep adding billions of years to account for the complexity he sees.

Take cells, for example. We are composed of trillions of them, but until as late as the 1600s, they were unknown. No one had seen and identified them until Robert Hooke "discovered" them with the aid of an early microscope.

Then, with more high-powered microscopes, it was found that cells aren't the smallest structure. As you study the cell, you see they aren't a simple building block, but an incredibly complex mechanism with many parts, which can take in food, repair itself, copy itself, and communicate with other cells. Scientists had to figure in a few billion more years to allow for development of the wonders of this invisible (to us) part of us. We have trillions of cells, all going about their business, keeping us alive and functioning. Just the study of these is amazing and stuns us with the immensity of God's power. And yet this whole microscopic world was only seen in the past few hundred years.

What other invisible things are yet to be discovered?

The Christian looks through the corrective glasses of Scripture. We don't have to allow for billions of years, because we know God created everything complete and perfect. We know about the Fall and the Flood from the Bible. We see the same Grand Canyon, and say, "Must have been caused by lots of water in a short period of time, no doubt the flood God told us about in Scripture."

Same facts—but we are looking at it with different viewpoints.

From time to time the godless scientists proudly trot out what they perceive to be evidence that Scripture is wrong. Time and time again, we

see that the Bible, of course, was right all along. Over and over we see that, as learning increases, men see that the Bible is correct. Does true science conflict with the Bible? Absolutely not!

It's important to note, too, that there are obvious truths in the Bible that the human writers had no way of knowing. It took thousands of years for us to uncover the scientific reason behind the things God told us to do.

We can see how God, who knew all about microorganisms, protected His people from disease and illness long before scientific discoveries led to modern sanitation.

In the books of Leviticus and Numbers is a long list of things the Israelites were to do to be a clean people. For example, they were to avoid touching a dead body (Numbers 19:11). If they touched a dead body they were to wash themselves with water and be declared unclean until evening. They didn't know why they should do it. In those early years they had no knowledge of germs and contamination. They just did it because God told them to.

It wasn't until 1847, a very recent date, that Ignaz Semmelweis, an Austrian physician, discovered the cause for the high death rate of new mothers in his obstetrical clinic. It was due to Puerperal fever, what we know now as septicemia. Three times as many mothers died in the clinic staffed by doctors as did in the second clinic, run by midwives. That's because the doctors would come directly from doing an autopsy and examine the mother in labor. They knew nothing of germs, and so spread disease from the dead body to the living mother.

Semmelweis had the doctors wash their hands after doing autopsies and before checking the mothers. The rate of deaths dropped from 10-30% to below 1%. He didn't know why, but saw the evidence. He tried to publish his work and to encourage other obstetricians to do the hand washing, too.

The response by the scientists and the established medical com-

munity? He was fired from his position as head of the clinics, even though he had so drastically reduced the death rate. No other obstetricians would listen to him. No scientific journals would publish his articles. He was mocked as "the hand-washing doctor." In the end, he was committed to an insane asylum where he died two weeks later, ironically enough, of septicemia—probably from a severe beating from a guard. He was just 47 when he died.

That's the trouble with humans—especially those who decide to study the creation but deny the Creator. They tend to be know-it-alls and refuse to accept anything that differs from what they already know. They mock the truth until the truth can no longer be denied.

In about another 10 years, Louis Pasteur confirmed the germ theory and it is accepted today as a matter of course. But how would the Israelites know about it so many thousands of years previously? Why would the strict instruction about handling a dead body be in the Bible, unless the Creator, who already knew all about germs, put it in His instruction manual? He knew that people wouldn't understand for generations upon generations. They didn't have the background to begin to understand. To describe germs to ancient Israelites would be like trying to describe color to a blind man. So God just proclaimed it and said, "Do it."

By the way, there is a whole series of instructions for new mothers in the Bible that we now know make an excellent plan for a healthy mother and baby. By declaring a woman who had just given birth unclean, the law required people who touched her to—guess what—wash their hands. This especially applied to the midwives.

Also, since she was unclean she was excused from cooking and housework, from travel, and from any social obligations. She had time to rest and to care for her new baby. Since no one could come around her, she and the baby were protected from viruses and bacteria carried in by the guests. Again, medical science agrees with the Bible. It just took a few

thousand years for science to get there.

Whole books have been written about how scientific discoveries about diet, about sanitation, and about disease control are coming into line with the instructions written in the Bible. Could an ancient people possibly have known these things? Not unless an omniscient, loving God had told them.

Archeology is another science in which the Bible turns out to be correct, sometimes to the chagrin of the learned men who thought they knew it all. Take King Sargon for example.

In Isaiah 20:1 we read about Sargon. "In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod (when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him) and fought against Ashdod, and took it:"

An Obelisk stone was found in the 1800s, which listed, supposedly, all the names of the Assyrian kings. Professors of the University of Chicago called a press conference and announced that they had found a glaring error in the Bible. Sargon was not mentioned on the list. No mention of Sargon could be found anywhere in any of the artifacts they had uncovered. The Bible didn't fall in line with archeological discoveries, so the Bible must be wrong, we see.

However, when the royal palace of Sargon was found, God had the last laugh. They had to acknowledge that this majestic palace, complete with 40 ton statues dedicated to Sargon, was the palace of Sargon—his name was engraved on the walls. Not only that, details of the battle with Ashdod spoken about in Isaiah were also engraved on the walls.

Again, were science and archeology our enemies? No, God's Word was true all along. God wasn't worried. Eventually, He allowed the scientists to uncover a bit more of His truth. This bit of truth just happened to weigh a few tons—too big to ignore.

Other discoveries that corroborate the Bible accounts include the discovery of the Ebla archive in northern Syria in the 1970s. There they

found documents written some 800 years before Moses. The customs and place names that Moses wrote down were—surprise!---accurate. For that matter, archeologists had long said that Moses couldn't have written down the first five books of the law because writing wasn't developed yet. The Ebla tablets and the discovery of even earlier writing showed that not to be the case.

The Hittites were once thought to be imaginary people in a book of legends, until their capital and records were discovered at Bogazkoy, Turkey.

The wealth of Solomon was thought to be a highly exaggerated story. That is, until archeological discoveries showed that the wealth of the kingdoms of that area was concentrated around the king. Now the wealth of Solomon is acknowledged to be entirely feasible.

We could go on and on, discussing various people, places and kings which are recorded for us faithfully and accurately in the Bible. Do we need to worry when someone or some fact is called in question by non-believers? No, just wait. No doubt they will uncover the truth, eventually. Meanwhile, we can just believe and not worry about it.

We've seen how medical science and archeology are just becoming advanced enough to agree with the Bible. Let's take a look at other scientific facts that God wrote down long before scientists could possibly have learned about them.

Job, probably the oldest book of the Bible, is full of examples of scientific truths that people had no way of knowing in ancient times. God said to Job, "Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?" (Job 38:16)

Probably Job and the readers of Job for hundreds of years thought God was speaking poetically. The word "spring" is "Nebek" which means places where water bursts forth from the earth. So what was God talking about? How could water burst forth from beneath the ocean?

In 1977, oceanographers found out what God meant. As technology allowed men to explore the deep, sure enough, they found underwater geysers that spewed out boiling water and minerals. In November of 1979, the National Geographic ran an article titled, "Incredible World of the Deep-sea Rifts." It bears the caption, "Scientists explore rifts in the sea floor where hot springs spew minerals and startling life exists in a strange world without sun."

How could the writer of the ancient book of Job have known about the deep-sea springs? While we don't know for sure when the book of Job was written down, we do know for sure it was before 1977!

But was it a fluke, just a chance poetical allusion that happened to coincide with revealed scientific truth? No, because other Old Testament passages also refer to the springs of the sea. When God describes the causes of the great flood in Genesis 7:11, he says, "the fountains of the deep were broken up and the floodgates of heaven were opened." Fountains of the deep—another reference to geysers in the ocean which erupted at God's command and sent water over the whole earth.

Psalms 33:6-9 also describes the waters gathered together at creation. "By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host. He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap. He lays up the deeps in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord, let all the habitants of the world stand in awe of Him."

At creation, God stored water in "storehouses" miles deep within the ocean floor. No one could possibly know they were there—unless God told him. There is total darkness at that depth and the pressure is too great for a human to withstand, even with scuba gear. Yet those depths of darkness weren't hidden from God. He knew they were there because He made them. He had it recorded for us in the Bible. And now He has allowed men to, bit by bit, discover pieces of His hidden wonders. Why? Not to prove Himself true, because He is true already, but to give us glimpses of His glory and power.

What did other ancient peoples—those who didn't have the Bible—believe about the earth? The Hindus believed the earth was supported on the backs of four elephants which stood on the back of a big tortoise. The Altaic people of Northern Siberia thought three big fish supported the world, and the Tartars of Eurasia opted for a great bull.

Yet in Job 26:7, God said the earth was hung upon nothing. Photos from space don't show any giant elephants or birds or bulls. They show the earth floating in space—hung upon nothing. How could the writer of Job have just made that up? It would be too much to believe that at the same time, or even before, other people believed in giant animals holding up the world, one ancient people had it exactly right—unless they were told by One who knew. Again we see science falling in line with the truth.

Similarly, the Bible talks in Isaiah about the universe expanding. Isaiah 40:22 teaches that God stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them out like a tent. We see the picture of the universe spreading out, increasing in size. You can't tell that by looking. The sky tonight will look about as big to your naked eye as it looked last night.

Scientists used to believe that the universe was static. The idea that it was getting bigger was thought to be a ridiculous idea. Isaiah 40:22 was probably dismissed as just a figure of speech, or an example of the fallacy of Scripture.

But in the 1920s scientists found that the galaxies were moving away from each other. Just like the spots of a balloon get farther apart as the balloon is blown up and expanded, so the galaxies moving away from each other showed that the universe was expanding.

The Bible was right again! The idea of an expanding universe was recorded thousands of years before men had the technology and equipment to discover it to be so.

How many things are in the Bible that seem inexplicable to us today? Do you think that, in areas where science can't find a reason for



one of God's decrees, that it might be that science just isn't far enough along yet? The mocking shouldn't bother us. Certainly, we can't just accept that scientists today already know everything. There are whole worlds we don't have an inkling about. There are whole ranges of concepts that we don't have right. We don't have to depend on doubtful, emerging science. We don't have to fear it, because the more it advances, the more it will prove the truth of the Bible. It is God's Word. He, who knows it all, tells us in the book everything we need to know. Does true science conflict with the Bible? Again, Absolutely not!

When we come to the last book of the Bible, we find the saints in Heaven falling down before the Lord and saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou has created all things, and for they pleasure they are and were created." (Revelation 4:11)

"Lord," they cry, "You are worthy to receive the glory, for You have made it all."

True science, the searching out and discovery of God's wonders in the world He has made, should always lead to that sentiment. "This is so amazing.... God YOU are so amazing! 'To God be the glory great things He has done...."

Some of you do not know the Lord. God has displayed His glory in His creation that you might know where you came from, why you are here, and why He gave His Son to die on the cross of Calvary.

God has made you and all things (Genesis 1; Acts 17:25). He has made you to glorify Him and to enjoy Him forever (Matthew 22:36-40; 1 Corinthians 10:31). But you and all men have sinned (Romans 3:23). We have all in our sinfulness gone astray and turned away from our Creator (Isaiah 53:6). The just sentence upon our sins is death—eternal separation from our Holy Creator (Romans 6:23). But here is the wonder and good news, in the fullness of time He sent for His Son, Jesus Christ, born of a virgin and without sin. He, Who had no debt toward God, for He

was God, fulfilled all righteousness for sinners. He, the infinite Son of God, on the cross of Calvary died, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God (1 Peter 3:18). And this, in order that now you can be forgiven of all your sins.

2 Corinthians 5:20-21 says this, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

How is this mine? John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Come to God by faith, surrendering all, holding nothing before Him for your acceptance with Him but what Jesus Christ did for sinners on the cross.