

Genesis and Science

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Introduction

Science and the Bible have often been perceived as antagonistic on many points than one. They are said to lock horns and therefore cannot fully meet at all points. For some minds, they are mutually exclusive. Whilst the Bible is said to be static and complete, Science is said to change with time as more facts and light comes to the fore about the nature of things in the physical world around us. The issue of origins has been a very hot point of conflict over the years with potent pundits on either side. Each side claims to offer a more realistic and reasonable argument as the case may be. What are we to make out of all this? Can Science and the Genesis account of creation ever be reconciled? This paper defines some important parameters before drawing a reasonable conclusion.

Science Defined

Science has a many definitions. One of them is the arrival at facts or truth using repeated experimentation. Science is premised on empirical evidence and thus fits very well with the modern idea of truth or false. For science to be true, it relies on specific traceable standard methodology used to investigate a phenomenon using a process whose result is replicably the same irrespective of who carries out the experiment. In short, it can be verified by independent investigators using the same procedure. If anything cannot be verified, then it remains a theory or model. Once a theory is proved through empirical evidence, then it becomes a law. Science means “knowledge” whose hypothesis is capable of being falsified. Effectively, Science investigates the physical world unveiling the “what” of this world. It attempts to explain what is happening. Karl Popper has done the Scientific community by defining what constitutes authentic Science. Thomas Kuhn has added his voice to the conversation when he states that Science or its methods are not static, changing as better theories or information comes to the core.

What Science is not

True science is premised on repeated experimentation before coming to a conclusion. In a post modern context absolutes, often normative in the modern context, are discarded in preference for a mixture of assumptions, faith and skewed interpretation of facts or reality. For instance, evolution remains a theory not conclusively proved by experimentation. At best, it is an alternative view to origins that rests on some assumptions that require reasonable evidence to prove true. That is working backwards to confirm a belief rather than investigation first leading to conclusions arising from the objective data collected. Some of what comes across as Science today, theoretical Science not with standing, is infact not, if we are to stick to the standard definition of authentic Science. Further more, the Bible is the word of God and therefore cannot be classified in the same category with Science. While Science demands objective empirical evidence to establish a fact, the Bible is the word of God which encases the meta-narrative from which all Science and world view is derived. In other words, Science merely amplifies God's creation which the Bible declares but makes no deliberate effort or intention to prove.

It may therefore be concluded that Science and the Bible are not the same nor do they contradict but complement each other.

Apparent Discrepancies or Disagreement between Science and the Genesis Account

Some people have argued that the Bible has some errors and therefore cannot be relied on. They often point to the Two Genesis accounts of creation alleging that they were written by different individuals rather than by Moses. They point to the JEDP sources asserting that the narratives are of different authors, probably compiled by Moses or some unknown individual. Others go further to state that the narratives are mere mythological stories generated by people from the ancient past. These people therefore dismiss the story of the fall in Genesis 3 thus rejecting original sin. The post modern scientist argues that the Bible cannot be true because the creation account cannot be proved and some what inconsistent with the evolution theory. Evolution demands millions of years to stand. It also starts from a Big Bang which triggered all things to what they are today and continue to mutate. Critically analyzed, evolution is not true Science because unlike Science, it is premised on the faith basis. It may further be stated that true Science never contradicts or antagonizes the Bible because one complements the other. One is of divine origin while the other investigates what the originator has already put in place by creation.

Reasons Why the Genesis Account is Disputed

As earlier alluded to, some dispute the Genesis account as being unreliable, mythological and not verifiable using standard Scientific means. Opponents of

the Bible insist that the Genesis accounts are mere stories rather than those that can be proved using evidence in nature, archaeological finds among many. The Christian would argue in a different direction but for now, individuals dispute the Genesis account as being true or reliable because they want to impose similar parameters of verification when in fact the Bible is in another class.

What Others Have Said About the Bible and Science

Some theologians have fallen for the trap of theistic or process evolution. They hold that God used time and processes to create the world over a long period of time, rather than the literal six day period mentioned in the Bible. This group (directly or indirectly) rejects the plain Genesis account of creation as being poetic, mythological or some such thought. In this school would fit Dr Hugh Ross, Dr Cochran and probably the late Dr Chalmers who held the gap theory in relation to Genesis 1:1-2. Others however such as Dr Whitcomb, Dr Henry Morris or Ken Ham. Whitcomb and Morris have written extensively about the literal nature of The Genesis account in their 1961 monumental work- *The Genesis Flood*. In it they assert that the Flood was global in nature affecting the whole world. Additionally, they assert that the earth is young rather than old as Ross and others claim. Though Dawkins may not be in the same category as the worthies mentioned above, he represents the atheistic evolutionist scientific community of our times. He too has written and lectured extensively on how that evolution is true. Thankfully, we have an increasing stream of Biblical theologians that hold to, establish and defend the Holy Scripture for what it is- inspired, authoritative, all comprehensive and sufficient for all matters. These hold strongly to the scriptural meta narrative grids as the basis from which we interpret the world. In this class we have names such as E.J.Young among others fit into this category.

Take Home Gems

1. God has mandated man to subdue nature.
2. Genesis is a true account despite the various theories including the **Jehovah Elohim Deuteronomy and Priestly (JEDP)** classifications or suggestion.
3. Some suggest that the Genesis account was not written by one person, Moses, but several authors which he probably compiled into one account. Others deny completely that Moses had any hand at all.
4. Some others claim that the Genesis narratives were Hebrew poetic stories (folklore) drawn from different sources and could not possibly have been true or taken place. By that token, they deny the narration of the Fall in the Garden or even original sin. Increasingly, many people are adopting this faulty

position in preference for the idea that man is intrinsically good, only the environment affects him.

5. The statements in Genesis are factual rather than imaginary or poetical. They must thus be accepted as literal as they come across.
6. Some claim/blame the Genesis 1 commission is responsible for the planet degradation that that we currently witness around the world. Francis Schaeffer wisely rebutted this claim in his writing.
7. On the contrary, God ensures that the Israelites' live in harmony with creation. Extremes are certainly to be avoided.
8. Some assert that Church (Bible) and Science are mutually exclusive. This is not entirely true.
9. Evolution depends on a long period of time to be authentic or feasible. Thus time is said to be the hero of the plot.
10. Time has certain qualities that include flow (sequential) and order.
11. The Trinity doctrine in the scriptures is derived rather than stated. Some verses such as I John 5:7,8 (KJV) seem to directly suggest the Trinity but the original may not have had that import. However, the Genesis 1 narration of "us" (Genesis 1:26ff) alludes to the Trinity as in God's majestic plural. Others state that the word translated 'God' in Genesis 1 is "Gods" for majestic plural. However, some scholars reject the Trinitarian imputation on Genesis 1. While not denying the truth of the Trinity, they advise people to look elsewhere in scripture.
12. Evolution, unlike creation teaches self creation.
13. Some theologians claim that creation is incomplete, ongoing because the divine one is still creating new things, so some Catholic theologians hold (i.e. Dr Robert Cochran).
14. Some argue that between Genesis 1:1 & 2, there is a gulf, destruction and recreation that took place. This should account for many things such as the loss of dinosaurs etc. This view has its own troubles. This is called the *gap theory* and some prominent well meaning theologians espouse this position. To achieve its objectives, the gap theory strongly suggests that the Genesis 1:2 passage should read something like "*and the earth became without form and void*" rather than "*the earth was without form and void*". This gives room to squeeze in evolution's much needed billions of years.

15. Some people reject the first chapters of Genesis altogether as not worth paying attention to. They find the literal six day creation as incredibly senseless. But *Elohim* has power to do all things.
16. The word “day” is used frequently in the Old Testament and in different senses. In Genesis however, the word ‘day’ may safely be attributed to the 24 hour literal day. This makes sense to the Christian that accepts all parts of scripture as inspired.
17. Some suggest that the word ‘day’ refers to a long period of time of creation.
18. There have been suggestions that the earth once had a canopy of water that encircled the earth. Young Earth creationists Morris and Whitcomb strongly suggest this proposition in their land mark book: *The Genesis Flood*.
19. The exact location of the Garden of Eden is not certain though some suggest that it was in the present day Iraq.
20. The Manuscripts in Genesis are said to have been edited, especially place (i.e. cities) names. Moses is believed to have led this editing, though no proof for this is forth coming, at least for now.
21. The rivers mentioned in Genesis have meanings: Gihon=bursting of deep flowing; Hiddekel=swift or daring; Euphrates=Sweet; Pison=full flowing etc.
22. When humans walked on the moon in July 1969, NASA had two objectives: Prove if life exists elsewhere in the universe and determine the age of the moon. Two sides of arguments have been advanced from the American public. Some argue that these are pointless expenditures which could be better utilised while others argue that this frontier exploration is essential.
23. The earth is said to be revolving around the Sun which itself is revolving around the stars in our galaxy.
24. When angels were exactly created, before or after earth creation? The question remains open. A further question is: when exactly did Lucifer rebel and plummet from Heaven to the Earth?
25. In Genesis, a story of the “giants” is found. What does the word ‘giant’ exactly mean? Some suggest that ‘giants’ may mean “violent”.
26. Creation took place in six literal days but preservation still continues till today.
27. Interestingly, classification of species is today based on evolution premise rather than the creation premise which was originally the standard in the past.

28. In the *tablet theory*, the question as to who exactly authored which part of the book of Genesis. Different aspects of the book are attributed to different individuals. Some argue that the first eleven chapters of Genesis are obsolete and not relevant to the complex times our lot is cast in.
29. Some argue that Moses basically compiled or probably wrote the last 14 chapters of Genesis.
30. The effects of Adam's sin in the Garden are far reaching even to the entire universe.
31. Did God 'clone' Eve from Adam? Some argue so.
32. Evolutionalists are racists? Some people claim so.
33. The root source of the world's races remains unresolved though some suggest that races have adapted hence the differences in the races. Others claim that the Genesis 9:25 story of Ham, Canaan and their brother, Shem, in relation to their father Noah's curse explain the sources of the races.
34. God has embedded all that is needed in the cell. That borders on venture, DNA discussion.

Conclusion

The Bible and true Science once objectively scanned have never been at variance or antagonistic. A few minor points may not be expressed in the same way but the overall picture is in sync or agreement. The Christian can therefore confidently believe and trust their Bible in the face of possible variations with post modern science. The difference lies in the interpretation of facts, and one's world view or bias.

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