

Faith and Science

Ron Peri

An official White House photo from February 26 captured the Vice-President and the Coronavirus Task Force opening their meeting with heads bowed in prayer. The photo was immediately ridiculed. One commentator said that Pence and his team were “wallowing in ignorant superstition and willful ignorance,” another commentator stated: “It’s not a joke when people... are trying to stop a virus with prayer. What else did anyone expect? Science? Reason? Something sensible?”

It is popular to think that science and faith are at opposite ends of the spectrum and mutually exclusive. But the Bible states that science should ultimately lead to faith:

Romans 1:20 – “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”

In other words, God’s existence – His power and His divine nature – should be obvious from studying His creation. Theologians refer to this as general revelation. God reveals himself through what He has made.

Some years back I visited Barcelona, Spain and toured the Picasso museum. Pablo Picasso’s genius was obvious in the incredible works of art that he had created. You can know much about the man through his artwork. Likewise, you can find out a great deal about God through his creation.

Theologians refer to the Bible as special revelation. God speaking through men in words that can be understood thereby giving far more detail about who he is and his relationship to his creation. If I were to read Picasso’s letters, I would know much more about him. I would know why he painted this picture or that picture and what he was depicting. The Bible is God’s letters to us. From creation, we can know that he is. From the bible, we can know who he is, what he is like, and what he expects of us.

Whenever anyone speaks about faith or about science, it is important to understand that person’s biases. People come to the Bible from multiple vantage points, either believing it is all true, partly true, or not true at all. While it is generally presumed that science conflicts with faith, I have found just the opposite. Science drew me to faith. I did not come to faith first and then seek to find proof for what I believed. Rather, I was a skeptic who came to faith based on what I discovered.

My first inkling that there was some great mind behind the universe was during my senior year in college. I was studying electrical engineering. In one of my courses, we were working with analog computers. With an analog computer you can model virtually anything. We therefore studied the various formulae that could be used to design electrical circuits in an analog computer. I was very surprised to discover that the formula for the shock absorber on your car is the same as for an inductor in an electronic circuit. In fact, the formula for fluids can be replicated in an electrical circuit. The opposite is true. So you can actually build fluidic computer that uses no electrical components. And it is not just between fluids and electronics, across all disciplines the formulae are all analogous. The thought crossed my mind. “this can’t be an accident. There must be a designer.” But then I dropped that line of thinking and went back to being a godless decent guy.

Since then, I have arrived at the conviction that the Bible is indeed true and accurate and does not conflict with science. I came to that conclusion after a lengthy and, I believe, thorough investigation. So

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let me share a bit of my background and the things that led up to that investigation and a few of the things I discovered.

I graduated as an electrical engineer and think like an engineer (I think my wife views being an engineer as a form of mental difficulty). Some people approach life with their emotions. An engineer takes a logical approach. Everything must add up.

After graduating, I went to work for IBM, selling their large mainframes. "large" is relative. An entire room of "large" mainframe equipment had less power than my Apple watch. Those were the days when 64k was delivered by truck. I met my wife-to-be while at IBM. I vacillated between being an atheist and an agnostic. An atheist is one who says there is no God. An agnostic says, I don't know.

My wife was an occasional churchgoer, then two years into our marriage she became a committed Christian. I found this very upsetting. Now I had a religious fanatic for a wife. This was not part of my life plan. I thought this would be a passing phase, like Tupperware parties. But after several months of watching her, I realized that she was not going to change. And I liked what she had become.

I wanted what she had, but not the way she had gotten it. As an engineer, I know that if you build a beautiful house on a bad foundation, the house will eventually collapse. And she was building this new life on the Bible, a book I believed was just a collection of fairy tales. So I had a logical problem and had to determine if the Bible was in fact a supernatural book, but how could I – a natural man - know that? So I set up some tests to determine if it contained any supernatural information. What could I consider supernatural information? Information that the writers could not have had thousands of years ago, but that we conclusively know to be true today. I concluded that that would be things such as scientific information that was unknown at that time and also historical information that had been prophesied and now come to pass. By this time, I had overheard enough to understand that there were claims of fulfilled prophecies in the Bible. I decided to focus on science as it was touched on in the Bible and also those prophecies related to the Jews and the Messiah.

Investigating Science in the Bible

Reading through Genesis, I found the creation account to be poetic rather than scientific. Further, I found that there was very little about science as I read through the Old Testament. I was, however, struck by the fact that there were no fanciful scientific absurdities as are found in other ancient literature. I was particularly surprised to find out that many major discoveries had been made based on the Bible. So much so, that in High Middle Ages, **Theology** was named queen of the sciences when schools divided classical liberal arts learning into grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy. Men went to the Bible to find out about nature.

Matthew Fontaine Maury, for example, discovered the currents in the North Atlantic as a direct result of reading scripture. There is a monument to him at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD with the caption: Pathfinder of the Seas. His inspiration, Holy Writ, Psalm 8: "Thou hast made highways in the sea for the fish". The situation – clipper ships plying their trade between England and the United States would find themselves becalmed. No wind and no current. Some crews perished. Merchants lost money. There was a need to see if there was a pathway from England that would avoid this dire result. Here is the account as written by his son Richard Maury in 1915:

At one time, when Commodore Maury was very sick, he asked one of his daughters to get the Bible and read to him. She chose Psalm 8, the eighth verse of which speaks of "whatsoever walketh through the

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paths of the sea," he repeated "the paths of the sea, the paths of the sea, if God says the paths of the sea, they are there, and if I ever get out of this bed I will find them."

He did indeed get well and began his deep sea soundings as soon as he was strong enough, and found that two ridges extended from the New York coast to England, so he made charts for ships to sail over one path to England and return over the other. Maury's charts are still in use today.

I also found little holy spirit footnotes. P.S. – Moses didn't write this. I did. Signed H.S. Take the number of stars in the universe. At the time the Bible was written, astronomers of that day could count approximately 3,000 stars with the naked eye. The most widely accepted star count was that of Anaximander, a Greek astronomer and mathematician from Miletus best known as Pythagoras teacher. In his work "About Nature", counted 3,253 stars. Hipparchus and Ptolemy, other ancients, counted less than 2,000 stars. Galileo, with his telescope, was able to increase that to over 30,000 stars. It is reasonable, therefore, that the Bible in mentioning the number of the stars would quote a figure in the thousands. It does not. Instead it repeats on multiple occasions (Genesis 22:17 for one) "the number of the stars is as the sands of the seas." Sir James Jeans, British astronomer, skeptic, wrote in in 1965 in his book that *The Stars in Their Courses*, "that there are probably something like as many stars in the universe as there are grains of sand on all the seashores of the world." An extremely large, uncountable, finite number.

The great scientist, Louis Pasteur, said "Science brings men nearer to God". He discovered that pathogens caused disease. He invented the first vaccine. He invented pasteurization. He studied science because he was trying to unlock God's secrets of design hidden in nature.

You see, Intelligent men do not immediately discount God.

Albert Einstein said, "I believe in a God who reveals himself in the harmony of all that exists...I am convinced that God does not play dice." The structure of the universe brought Albert Einstein to faith. In 1979 I attended a little church in Luling, Louisiana. IN a Sunday School group there I met a woman who had been Einstein's maid while he lived in Princeton, NJ. She shared several stories about Dr. Einstein's very real faith confirming that this incredible genius was not too smart to believe in God.

Prior to Einstein, Isaac Newton was the greatest analyst of the physical universe. He sought to find the basic laws of physics, He gave his reason when he said, "I search for laws, because I am convinced there is a lawgiver." Randomness and time do not produce laws. Only a master intelligence can produce such laws.

Nikola Tesla, thought by many to be the greatest inventor of all time, firmly believed that God had designed everything in the physical universe. He worked first for Thomas Edison, but then went off on his own. Edison would test and test myriads of different types of filaments to find one that worked well, and famously "Genius is 1% inspiration and 99% perspiration". Tesla on the other hand, claimed his discoveries were revelations from God and prayed for insights to be revealed to him. A man of great faith, he would wake up in the morning and sketch an invention he had dreamt about the night before. Most only know his name through the automobile that now carries it. He invented alternating current generators and motors and enabled the modern age. His greatest invention was the wireless transmission of electricity. He was assembling a wireless transmission tower in Wardenclyffe, New York. And successfully demonstrated lighting lightbulbs wirelessly, miles away.

The great mathematician, Blaise Pascale, wrote in his book *Pensées*: "What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now

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remains is the empty print and trace? This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him, seeking in things that are not there the help he cannot find in those that are, though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself.” There is a God shaped vacuum in every man.

- Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* VII(425)

But I was impressed at what the Bible doesn't say. Unlike other ancient texts, the Bible does not state that the earth is flat. Instead, it indicates that the roundness or sphere of the earth is hung upon nothing. The Hebrew word used is Cwoq, which is the word for ball. This can be seen in two places.

Isaiah 40:21-22

²¹ Do you not know?

Have you not heard?

Has it not been told you from the beginning?

Have you not understood since the earth was founded?

²² God sits enthroned above the circle of the earth (Hebrew word Cwoq which translates as circle or sphere or ball),

and its people are like grasshoppers.

Job 26:7 - He spreads out the northern skies over empty space; he suspends the earth over **nothing**. / **Not atlas or a turtle's back.**

The Chinese thought a dragon ate the moon every month. James 1:17 - Shifting shadows on the moon.

Since my initial study, I have spent a good deal of time fascinated by DNA and the human genome. We will look at this in more depth in a future message, but let me share a few items now. The structure of DNA is incredibly efficient. It is far and away the most efficient storage medium: A bioengineer and geneticist at Harvard's Wyss Institute have successfully stored 5.5 petabits of data — around 700 terabytes — in a single gram of DNA. Scientists have been [eyeing up DNA as a potential storage medium](#) for a long time, for three very good reasons: It's incredibly dense (you can store one bit per base, and a base is only a few atoms large); it's volumetric (beaker) rather than planar (hard disk); and it's incredibly stable — where other bleeding-edge storage mediums need to be kept in sub-zero vacuums, DNA can survive for hundreds of thousands of years in a box in your garage.

So think of this, some scientists who believe all was an accident, are reverse engineering DNA to figure out how to store data efficiently. A million times more densely than anything man has designed. DNA is not the result of an explosion in eons past. Explosions do not produce order.

In fact, DNA is also a programming language. With incredible amounts of information. Also incredibly efficient. It is the program for you. Every cell in your body contains the code. It is the largest program ever written. Print it out on 8.5 by 11 paper and it will be as tall as the Washington Monument.

So when I looked at the design, I had to conclude there was a designer. And when I tested the Bible, I found that it was incredibly accurate and contained information that was unknown 2 or 3,000 years ago.

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The scientific mind says, Seeing is believing. But there are many things that are invisible that are nonetheless real. In your pocket you have something that says loudly that you believe in the invisible. You have a cell phone. You take the invisible for granted. To say there is a God you cannot see is no more questionable than to say there are radio waves passing through this room that you cannot see. You believe in atoms and protons and neutrons and electrons because someone told you they exist. Yet they are invisible unless you have special equipment to detect them. You believe that the speed of light is the maximum velocity of anything, yet scientists in Princeton, NJ were able to point a laser through Cesium that exceeded the speed of light.

Most of what we believe, we take by faith. We have not used a “scientific” method to confirm them. When we look at the cosmos or peer through a microscope, it becomes obvious that there is someone who has set the rules and engineered our habitation – and us – so that we can live and thrive in this time and place. We need to recognize and declare his glory.

As the psalmist says:

Psalm 19:1-4 - **1** The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. **2** Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. **3** They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. **4** Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.