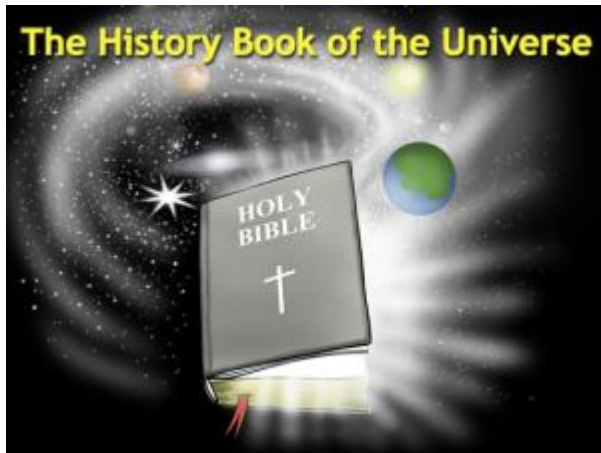


What Can the Bible Teach Us About Science?



This is a re-post from

<https://biblescienceforum.com/2023/07/24/what-can-the-bible-teach-us-about-science/>, an article by my good friend, [Dr. John Gideon Hartnett](#). I suggested this topic for him to write if he has the time and a desire to do so, and he obliged me. □

The Bible is not a science text. It is a history book; it tells us HIS STORY OF THE UNIVERSE. So what can it teach us about science?

There are two forms of science:

1. **Operational science** which employs the scientific method and relies on repeatable experimentation and observations.
2. **Historical/forensic science** which deals with past events and thus cannot involve repeatable experimentation and observation.

See [Operational and historical science: What are they?](#)

The Bible reports *historical events*, especially in the books that are written as narrative history. Genesis for example. But it also gives evidence of scientific discoveries. The claim of a scientific fact may need interpretation. Some have claimed the biblical text explains some scientific fact, but when I have examined those claims, I agree with some but disagree with others. See [Scientific Evidences in the Bible](#). In that list I would argue that there is good evidence for the claimed scientific discoveries.

But can we be certain? No, we can't. The Scriptures require interpretation and though I personally support most of those listed on that page I would not be dogmatic. They are subject to our interpretation.

The same goes for any historical event described in the Bible. We have no time machine, we never will have, and hence we cannot go back into the past to observe some past event and hence confirm by direct observation what

happened. This is the limitation of *historical or forensics science*. It is a weak form of science.

All experimentation is done in the present. No experiment can be done on the past. We need an eye witness to know the certainty of any event.

In the practice of modern *operational science* we propose an hypothesis and then test the hypothesis by repeatable experiments. We interact with the subject under investigation and measure the response. If the response agrees with what our model predicted, we keep that model, then propose new experiments and continue in that fashion.

There is never any proof, only disproof. The technique employed in *operational science* is to try to disprove the original hypothesis. The longer the hypothesis survives this process the more it moves up the line from hypothesis to theory and eventually to law.

The laws of nature/physics are those which have survived and are found to be robust, and have never failed with any predicted outcome, within the domain of their operation. The domain of operation needs to be defined because all theories are only approximations to the fundamental nature of the creation. We only ever approach, but never obtain, the perfect understanding of the laws of nature, which only the Creator has.

Quite clearly [cosmology is not science](#), in the sense of operational, repeatable science. [Nor is astrophysics operational science](#). You cannot interact with astrophysical objects and certainly not galaxies, clusters or the universe as a whole. You cannot do repeatable experiments on the universe. You can only observe which test predictions of models. For this reason the standard LCDM cosmology [should have been rejected a long time ago](#).

We can also propose hypotheses and models in historical science and we can test those models based on observations. We cannot prove anything but we can disprove the hypotheses or models.

The headline question is, What can the Bible tell us about science? When properly understood (based on the original manuscripts) the Bible is a collection of eye witness records of past events (history) and knowledge from the Creator. Since our Lord is the Creator of the universe and all that is in it, He alone has all knowledge. Therefore it follows that the Bible, His written word, can reveal to us knowledge of the creation when properly understood. Humans are not omniscient and have imperfect knowledge but Jesus said He would send the Holy Spirit to lead us into all truth (John 14:26, 16:13).

Humans with that help from God, the Holy Spirit, can correctly interpret the scriptures, and use scripture to interpret scripture. However flawed thinking can and will produce flawed interpretations. For example, saying that God used the big bang to create the universe over 13.8 billion years, like Williams Lane Craig claims, is flawed thinking. Instead of reading the Genesis account as the Hebrew grammar intended, all compromise positions are inserted to force the interpretation of the scriptures to align with man's

flawed theories due to the bias or worldview of the interpreter.

Everyone has a worldview and we all tend to interpret what we observe based on that worldview. So the correct starting point needs to be that the straightforward account in Genesis is the true history of the universe (6 x 24 hours days about 6 thousand years ago). Without this starting axiom what follows will be flawed. But as I said this is historical science and is not subject to any measurements in the present. For example, radiometric dating of meteorite samples can never establish [the age of the solar system](#). There are several unprovable assumptions that must be made to apply any radiometric dating method.

One final point. Though the Bible is not a scientific text and was never intended to be one, when it does describe some scientific fact, or historical event, it is correct.

There are some scriptures that might be construed as describing a stationary planet, and some have used these to argue that true ontology of the universe is that the earth does not move and it at the absolute centre with all the stars and galaxies moving around the planet.

While we can easily, or not so easily, change our frame of reference with application of the correct physical description, we can view the earth either at the centre of the universe or as it moving in space, spinning and revolving around the sun etc. Either description is valid as long as we use the correct mathematics for the chosen frame of reference.

But we cannot say the Earth is [absolutely geocentric in the universe](#). The scriptures do not insist on that. This is currently a bone of contention among some, yet it is [a debate that was settled a long while ago](#). The simplest explanation usually simplifies the mathematical description which gives us the better understanding of the physical dynamics.

In summary, I believe the correct way forward is to take the presuppositional approach, that the scriptures describe the truth, but be open to seek the correct understanding through study and the Holy Spirit. Where any interpretation departs from the straightforward understanding of the texts within the original context it must be wrong. The teaching of science is not the intent of the Author of the Bible but it always teaches truth even though limited in detail. Yet through faithful men of God, like Sir Isaac Newton, James Clerk Maxwell and Michael Faraday, God has revealed to us a better understanding of the created laws of nature. We approach that understanding through a series of steps. Yet anywhere man's theories or models disagree with scripture the models are wrong. For example, look [here](#). Nowhere do the scriptures teach a Flat Earth. Babylonian, Hebrew and Sumarian mythology may have but not the Bible.