



TIME OF GRACE®

Skeptical Faith: God Loves Science?

Study Notes

Summary

The dichotomy of science/reason/logic/proof and faith/religion/belief/God is too much for many to overcome. How can people of faith share the Word with those who oppose faith altogether? The apostle Paul gives us two compelling answers in Romans chapters 1 and 2.

5 Things to Know About God and Science

1. God _____ science.
 - **Romans 1:19,20:** ¹⁹ What may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 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 people are without excuse.
2. Everyone has _____.
 - **Hebrews 11:3:** By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.
3. Only God explains _____.
 - **Romans 2:14,15:** ¹⁴ (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. ¹⁵ They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.)
4. Only God explains _____.
 - **Ecclesiastes 3:11:** He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.
5. Jesus loved _____.

Points to Ponder

1. Read Psalm 19. How does the author remind us of the powerful purpose of the universe that science loves to study?
2. If you don't/didn't believe in a God who created us, what is/would be your best explanation of the existence of objective evil (i.e., stuff that is always and absolutely wrong)? Upon reflecting upon your answer, is it reasonable?
3. Study Romans 1:18-25. What is the ironic part about people who deny that God made them? (Hint: They don't stop worshiping!)

Homework for Next Week

Read Luke 16:19-31.

Time of Grace Ministry
Skeptical Faith: God Loves Science?
Romans 1:19,20; Hebrews 11:3; Romans 2:14,15; Ecclesiastes 3:11
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Pastor Mike Novotny

About six months ago I got an email from a Christian who is studying to be a chemist, and she described to me how she felt stuck. Stuck between the truth that she had grown up with in her church and the theories that she was now learning in a classroom. In her email she wrote to me, "Pastor Mike, how can I continue to believe in a God of creation, when I am now learning this flood of evidence that proves the theory of evolution?" And she did not know what to do. Even worse was the fact that she did not know with whom she could talk. In the classroom she admitted that many people had no room for God. They did not want to talk even at all about supernatural causes or possibilities. Science was science, it explained everything, end of discussion.

But when she went home, she faced many Christians who were just the same. They did not understand the scientific theories. They did not want to know about them, and they tried to shut down that conversation before it even started out of fear of where it might go. And so, she reached out to me and asked that honest question, if she had to choose between her head and her heart, could you still be deeply spiritual and at the same time passionately scientific?

I wonder as I look out at all of you today if some of you have felt caught in that same tension? Because you do not have to be a chemist to feel it. Maybe just a kid or a parent who is on that field trip at the local museum. And every description for every exhibit describes a universe that has no place, and more importantly no need for a higher power. Maybe you are talking with some of your friends or your own kids that you have raised in the church. And now they say they do not want to come to worship, and they do not want to read the Bible because they believe in facts. They believe in data. They believe in science. Maybe you are sitting down with your boyfriend in college watching a Netflix special about our planet that we call Earth. And there are pretty compelling explanations for how this all came into existence and none of them involve Jesus. In so many different ways we can feel stuck. Do we have to be a person who chooses data and evidence? Who engages the mind, the intellect in our heads? Or do we have to go with faith, with trust, with church, with Jesus to engage our hearts?

Many people today would tell you that you have to choose between those two options. Are you going to be a person of faith, or are you going to choose to be a person of facts? Are you going to just say, "Because the Bible tells me so," and ignore as much data as possible to stay in your nice little Christian bubble or can you engage in physics, in astronomy, in chemistry and medicine? What does a person who loves Jesus but also loves science supposed to do?

You know I was blessed to sit down with that young chemist in the making and have a conversation. And I had to admit to her that I really lack her expertise, as my study has been in theology and not in chemistry. So, I would have to defer her now to Pastor Michael or to the PHDs who love Jesus and hold on to their sciences. But at the same time, we had a really good conversation and that conversation allowed us to dive deep into this tension and this topic. And at the end of the conversation, she felt so much better, that the tension seemed to lessen just a little bit.

And that is why today I want to share with you a little bit of what I shared with her. I am not going to answer every question you have today about creation and evolution. About the Big Bang or the age of the earth, about human origins or DNA ancestry. What I am going to do is put five ideas in the back of your mind that I want you to think about when you feel like you have to walk away from Jesus for the sake of hard evidence. When you feel like your grip is loosening on the Scripture, on the church, and on your Savior himself. I want these five things to pop into the back of your mind, to remind you that according to the Bible itself you do not have to choose between head and heart. You can be a person who embraces both.

So, grab a pen because here is the first of the five things I want to tell you. I want you to know first of all, that God likes science. If God the Father had a minivan, and the minivan had a bumper sticker, that bumper sticker might say, "I heart science." And if Jesus had posters in his Nazareth bedroom, one of them might have been the periodic table, because God likes science. Do you know what the word science actually means? It comes from the Latin word scientia or scantia which means knowledge. And since God likes knowledge, God happens to like science. And here is why, look at this passage from the book of Romans. The apostle Paul said, "What may be known about God is plain to them," to people, "because God has made it plain to them. 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 people are without excuse."

And that is why God loves it when we study science. When you go into nursing, you start to grasp not that people just exist. But how a sperm and an egg become a peanut and then a grapefruit and then a watermelon, and then a little kid Uncle Joe puts in a cute little onesie. Like, God loves that. When you grasp just the sheer impossibility of that happening, but it does. Because God's brain is impossible to grasp, he likes it. When you go into to mathematics or engineering, or accounting, and you know how numbers work and you see the wisdom behind it. God likes that. When you figure out how buildings stand, how gravity works and structure and pressure. And you learn what makes the greatest cathedrals on planet earth stand where people gather to worship the exalted God. God likes it. So, when you are filled with scientia, then you are filled with knowledge. God likes it. He likes science because he likes to be known.

And I think that is why over the centuries, and even in recent times, some of these scientists have liked God right back. A few years ago, an author named Baruch Shalev, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in the twentieth century, did a study of people. And he found out that 73% of chemistry winners, 65% of physics winners and 62% of medicine winners of the Nobel Prize were... Christians. Proving that you do not have to be a junk scientist or a person who dismisses God to be at the highest intellectual level of your field. It was a great reminder that they had

studied the universe that God created. They had come to know him in a personal way, not apart from the data, but because of it. So, the first thing I want you to remember as you feel that tension is to know that you do not have to run away from science, from knowledge. You do not have to close the textbooks. You can study our universe with open eyes, open ears, and an open mind. Because God likes to be known. So, that is the first thing.

Grab your pen. Here is the second thing, number two, I want you to know that everyone has faith. You know, it is so easy in the college dorm room to get sucked into that argument that there are people who have faith, and then there are people who rely on facts. There are people who are kind of subjective, "I feel, I really believe that God is with me." And there are people who bring it into the laboratory and require evidence before they put their trust and faith and reliance on something. And I want to tell you today that that is simply not true. Everyone on the entire spectrum, from the militant atheist who is pushing evolution, to the most fundamental Bible thumping evangelical, everyone has faith. Everyone trusts in things that they cannot yet see. Everyone has theories that they believe the facts support, and gaps in those theories that they just trust one day will be filled in to prove what they always believed. I know it is true for me as a Christian. As I look at the modern theories and the scientific data there is some stuff that makes sense to me as a person who believes in God. And there is some stuff that I do not get just yet. And the Bible admits that in the book of Hebrews. Look at this passage. It says, "By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made of what was visible." How do we understand? How do Christians know that God spoke? He commanded, and the universe came into existence.

Well, the answer is... faith. I was not there. I have not seen the YouTube evidence. I believe that God the Father is the maker of heaven and earth, but I did not see God the Father who made heaven and earth. I have faith, but I also have evidence. Have you ever heard of the fine-tuning argument before? It is this idea that our universe and especially our planet is like this giant sound board. And things are so finely tuned, like the constants and forces of the universe are so finely tuned that it is nearly impossible that we would just happen to exist on earth. Like, the fact that planet earth is so far from the sun. You know we are not too close that we burn up and melt, and we are not so far away that we freeze. It is tuned just right. The gravitational force is just right. It is strong enough that it pulls oxygen down to the earth's atmosphere. But it is not so strong that toxic gases are pulled down to the surface of the earth where you would suffocate, and choke, and die. No, all these forces are finely tuned. And if you just believe it was enough time and enough chance. And hey, here we are as walking talking human beings the odds are pretty much against that. And so, the scientist who says there is no God has to have an insane amount of faith. The last time I consulted statisticians to figure out what are the odds that this would just happen? They say that all those things being tuned just as they are so that life could exist on earth are like you winning the Powerball lottery not once, and not twice in row but 342 million times in a row.

Come on, would you bet your bank account on those odds? But some people bet their soul. "Ah," but the scientist says, "Pastor you are forgetting about the multi-verse theory." Have you heard of it? It is one of the best arguments that atheists have for the existence of life on earth. It -- no it may, no okay -- the odds of us existing as human beings on a planet are crazy. If this is the only universe. But what if there are multiple universes, millions of universes? And we just happen to

be in the one where life could exist, where all the things are finely tuned just right. That would be logical, wouldn't it? Let me steal an analogy I have heard a couple of other pastors use. Let us imagine we are in an old west saloon, and a bunch of salty looking cowboys are playing poker for some good money at this table. And they hear the spurs and the double doors come swinging open and a new cowboy sits down. He buys all these chips. He puts in a big bet, and when people call his bluff, what does he lay down onto the table? A royal flush. The odds of getting a royal flush one in 649,470. And the other cowboys start to reach for their guns. And they deal a second hand. Money goes to the center of the table. The new cowboy pushes in all of his chips and what does he lay down on the table for a second time? A royal flush, and hammers get pulled back on the revolvers. The third time the cards go around and what does the new cowboy lay down for three straight hands? Another royal flush. And now they pull out the guns and they are point it right at this guy's forehead. And what does he say? "Guys, I know the odds are impossible but what if we just happen to be in the one universe, out of multiple universes, where a guy just happens to get three royal flushes the first time he walks into the bar? What do the cowboys do? Boom!

Now, come on, we do not stake life and death, eternity and our very soul on odds like that. And that little analogy goes to prove that it is not just the Christian with his Bible, it is the atheist with his data. Everyone has faith. Everyone trusts that there are just some things that they cannot yet see that the evidence will eventually prove. So, this is not a choice between head and heart. These are two groups of people with both heads and hearts that are debating the best possible explanation. So, that is thing number two to remember.

Now let us jump to number three, it is a little more philosophical. I would propose to you that only God explains evil, if you want to believe in moral right and wrong. That some things should be done, and other things should not. That all the time things like abuse or assault or genocide are evil, you need a universe with a God who made it. Did any of you catch that case on Court TV about the cat who killed the mouse? You know, poor little mouse from that family of thirteen. The cat just snuck up on it, pounced, even toyed with it and murdered it. It turns out that the cat's people have been murdering the mouse's people for generations upon generations. You hear about that case? No, you did not. Why not? Because they are animals. Like, that is just how the jungle works right? Survival of the fittest, the advance of the species.

So, now let me tell you this, if we are just animals why don't we feel the same way? If one race is strong enough to conquer and oppress and enslave another race. Why isn't that okay? If one country has the intelligence and the military power to eliminate another smaller country, why isn't that just the advancement of stronger genes? Here is a great passage to prove that in Romans 2. Paul said, "When Gentiles who do not have the law do by nature things required by the law... They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness." People feel right and wrong, they sense good and bad. In our conversations with our children, with our politicians, and with each other we use that word that requires the existence of God... should. You should not do that. "Says who? You? What if I think I should?" No, the very word itself appeals to a higher authority. Who says, "That some things are always good, and some things are always bad." No matter the culture. No matter the personal preference. The existence of absolute good and absolute evil proves that something that science simply cannot. It proves to a spiritual realm. It proves God.

On that same line of rational is number four. Only God can explain the deep need for human meaning. You ever hear about that Hollywood pet that was on anti-depressants because it felt like it was not making a difference in the world? No, you did not. Why not? I mean if dogs can have sex, supper, and a safe place to sleep, they are pretty happy. Why isn't the same thing true with human beings? Why can you be rich, like American rich? Why can your neighborhood be safe, like small town safe? And people still feel empty inside? I mean cats do not cry out, "What does it all mean?" And mosquitos do not switch college majors. Puppies do not read 'The Purpose Driven Life.' Why not? Because they are animals and you are not. You did not just evolve out of the goo and through the zoo and become you. No, you are a person that God himself created. I love how King Solomon, the wisest man on planet earth said it. In Ecclesiastes 3, he said, "God has made everything beautiful in its time and he has also set eternity in the human heart." God himself put an eternal longing in your hearts so that you would never be satisfied until you found it. And you could have all the safety, all the supper, and all the sex you want, but there would still be something in your heart that is longing for more. God created this God shaped hole within you, and unlike the animals, until you can find him you will be restless, searching for something more.

You know who proves that? Ellen and Tom Brady and Jim Carey, the Foo Fighters and so many other celebrities. 2,000 years ago, the Roman poet Horace said, "Why is it that no one lives satisfied with their condition?" And 2,000 years later our Hollywood celebrities prove that he was on to something. And think of all the advancement in the 2,000 years. Think of the kind of luxury that Ellen and Jim Carey and the Foo Fighters get to enjoy. But do you know what they say in their songs, in their speeches, in their social media posts? That they are not satisfied. They are still searching for something. And you could have the social media impact of Ellen. You could have the sports career of Tom Brady. You could travel the world and see tens of thousands of people screaming your name like the Foo Fighters. But until you see God face-to-face, something will be missing. Which means friends you do not have to be rich, and you do not have to be famous. You do not have to be skinnier. You do not have to get a promotion. Right now, you can find the thing that celebrities are aching to reach... God. He has said, "...eternity in the human heart." And when you come face-to-face with eternal God, you can find it.

Which brings us to point number five. As we fill in this blank, I want to admit to you that this is the least logical part of today's message. It is totally Bible biased and I want to tell you up front that I am only saying it because I am a Christian. But I still want you to know it. I want you to know this number five, that Jesus loved Genesis. For a lot of people that struggle with science comes right on the first pages of the Bible. "Wait, God created everything -- he spoke and in six days, poof, everything really? Adam and Eve like two human -- You believe that was an actual story, with an actual tree and an actual? Wait, Noah -- you think a guy got on a boat and the animals marched two by two and rains actually flooded the -- you believe that?" And my answer is yes. I actually do because Jesus did. Because Jesus talked about Adam and Eve in the beginning, and marriage in Genesis 2 and Noah in Genesis 6. Like, they were not fairy tales once upon a time but is actual historical events that actually happened.

Which brings up the question, why would you trust Jesus? Why would you view Genesis in the same way that Jesus did? And I suppose I could get very scientific with you. I could tell you

about all the evidence that points to a living Jesus, all the incredible, logical proof that says that Jesus actually did rise from the dead. But instead of going the logical route, let me turn it to a more emotional one. I think you should trust Jesus because he knows you and yet he still loves you. Jesus knows the whole story, but he still likes you. That Jesus knows all the stuff that is messed up and maybe not just messed up but evil, the crooked thoughts that come into our hearts, and yet he still loves us. Jesus heard every time we have said we are sorry for the exact same thing and even though it is been 100, 1,000, 100,000 times he still loves us. Jesus' love is totally illogical, and I still cannot figure out why he would do it. If he knows the whole story, if he knows things about me that you do not know about me, that I do not even remember about me and yet he still loves me, why would I not trust him? The accountant in my heart does not get why Jesus would not count my sins. But he does not. The God who knows everything, who put every star in the sky and knows every name. He has decided to not remember your sins anymore. I do not get why he does, but he does.

The illogical love of God did not stop him from calling sinners like us cleansed, pure and holy saints. And if you are not a Christian this might not make sense. But when we Christians look at the cross of Jesus, when we see the God who entered the universe he created to save the people who had rebelled against him, when we find out the fact that God is faithful, and he likes us, and we can approach his throne boldly because of what Jesus did, we trust him. Even if all the data does not back it up just yet we trust him. And if Jesus believes it, we believe it too. So, if you are struggling with faith and science, if you feel torn between the head and heart, the best Christian thing that I can encourage you to do is take some time at the cross of Jesus. Think about the things that science cannot prove, that you are saved by his blood. And trust in the God who loved you so much he came out of heaven into this earth. Know that you can put your faith in him, and you will never, ever be disappointed. Put those five things together and you have a great weapon against doubt, despair and unbelief. You have great things to remember that you are not a fool. You are not ignorant and you are not dumb for holding the book, the Bible in your hands and following Jesus.

And if you do that you can be just like Buzz. Back in 1969 Buzz Aldrin and a team of astronauts blasted a 103,000-pound rocket carrying 5.6 million pounds of propellants and they shot off \$25,000 miles an hour into space. It was one of America's and science's crowning achievements, that a man was about to walk on the moon. But before Buzz Aldrin stepped out of the spacecraft unto the surface of the moon, do you know what he did? He got out bread and wine and he worshipped. He read the words of his Savior, "I am the vine and you are the branches, and if a person remains in my love, they will bear much fruit." Like the astronauts from Apollo eight before him who read Genesis 1 when they first saw the earth from the moon's perspective. These men realized that you do not have to choose between head and heart. Between being saved by Jesus and being a follower of science. They prove that it is not an either-or equation. And that with Jesus that tension does not need to exist. You can know the scientific world and know the God who made it. Let us pray.

Dear Jesus, thank you for things that science simply cannot prove. We could have studied the stars and the trees and this universe for 1,000 lifetimes but none of them could assure us that you love us personally. So, thank you for the scriptures. Thank you for breaking in and speaking audibly that people could hear and then record the very words and heart of God.

Heavenly Father, I know the enemy wants to use science against Christianity. There is the belief that the only things that are true and real are those that can be tested and proven. But that is not true, that is an assumption, and it is faith in something that people do not have to believe. So, give us eyes to see and ears to hear and a heart that trusts that there are many things that we can learn from the universe. And there are some things that we can only learn from you, and from what you have revealed in your word.

Keep us strong in our faith. Keep us humble as we listen and give us trust that Jesus was not wrong, that the Savior who died on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins will never deceive us or lead us astray and we can follow him in full faith.

We pray this all, Jesus, in your beautiful name, amen.