

Biblical View of Science

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Date: 04 September 2022

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[0 : 00] Amen. Biblical worldview of science. Over the past couple of years, we've moved through the COVID pandemic.

And we heard the instructions or the directives to follow the science. And this phrase was used strongly at times to get people to trust in and follow the directives that were given based on what science was saying.

And the phrase was presented with great conviction, indicating that really science speaks with authority and reliability so that we could trust what science was saying.

Well, the problem that developed was that there were conflicting conclusions and proclamations as to what science was saying.

And so as a result, for some, science lost its credibility, its trustworthiness. Well, the worldview question we consider this morning is, how should we view science?

[1 : 16] And, of course, we look at this topic through the lens of Scripture. It's Scripture, God's Word, that gives us His perspective.

We're talking about worldviews. It gives us God's view that we need in order to view science with truly the mind of God. And when we put our faith and trust in Jesus Christ, we indeed become followers of Jesus Christ.

Not just that, but even described in a richer and fuller way, we become children of God. Even going beyond that, we become united to Jesus Christ.

We are in union with Jesus Christ. Well, with such an honored and privileged position, being united to Jesus Christ, now we can view life and approach life, move through our lives in a very different way than what we did prior to our conversion, when we weren't united to Christ.

Romans 14, 7 through 8. For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord.

[2 : 33] So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. I mean, that's a great reassurance, a great truth that we need to understand and realize.

Another verse, a couple of verses that relate to this ownership principle that most of us know by memory as well. 1 Corinthians 6, 19 and 20.

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you are bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

So understanding this new reality about ourselves, we don't approach, really, the various aspects of our lives the same way we did prior to our conversion.

This union with Jesus Christ calls for a total reorientation of how we approach life. Whether it's the activities we do with our bodies, our members of our bodies, our voice, or even our minds.

[3 : 39] A new and total reorientation. And a large part of that reorientation has to do with how we think. And so even in the scriptures, we see this theme over and over again.

Romans 12, 2. Don't be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind. There's that. We've been hearing all about pivoting.

We're not going to be conformed to the world. We're going to be transformed. And part of that transformation is through the renewal of our mind. Philippians 2, 5.

Paul writing to the believers there in Philippi. Have this mind among yourselves. There was a change that needed to take place within their thinking, in their specific orientation of life that they were moving through.

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus. Colossians 3, 2 is another one. Set your minds on things above, not on things on the earth.

[4 : 43] They were being challenged with, in regard in particular, with how they should view Jesus Christ. And Paul is encouraging them, no, no, don't go back there.

That's what you came out of. Instead, turn this direction and have your mind set on things above, not on things on the earth. So when it comes to our topic of science, we want to be sure that our thinking, our perspective, is influenced by the word of God.

So let's start, first of all, with the definition of science. Now, as you go through your Bible, you're not going to come across the word science. But as we look at these definitions, these definitions will direct us directly to the word of God.

So let me give you a couple from Webster's Dictionary. Science is knowledge, or a system of knowledge covering general truths, or the operation of general laws, especially as obtained and tested through scientific method.

Cambridge Dictionary goes a little bit further. Knowledge from the careful study of the structure and behavior of the physical world, especially by watching, measuring, doing experiments, and the development of theories to describe the results of these activities.

[6 : 08] So even some of these definitions might transport you back to some of your high school science classes, or if you took some of these classes in college, some of these, this definition will take you back to some of those things that you experienced back then, the scientific method.

But both definitions put an emphasis on knowledge and the pursuit of knowledge in the physical world in which we live.

So that, of course, takes us to the source of knowledge. Now we can go to the scriptures and get a firm foundation on which to build our biblical worldview.

Because knowledge does have a starting point. Proverbs 1.7, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. Proverbs 2.6, for the Lord gives wisdom.

From His mouth come knowledge and understanding. Colossians 2.3 referring to Christ that says, In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

[7 : 13] So that's just not spiritual issues or moral issues. In Christ Jesus are hidden all the treasures of all wisdom and all knowledge.

So if a person wants to obtain knowledge, his pursuit will be greatly enhanced if he begins with a proper fear or reverence for God. And this reverence for God manifested by faith in Jesus Christ really puts the person in a right relationship with God who is the source of all knowledge.

In Genesis 1.1, In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. So in the beginning of the universe, God was already there existing from all eternity past.

He possessed all knowledge. There wasn't anything to know that he did not know. Any knowledge that came into the universe in which we would live, the universe that he created, came from God.

Knowledge doesn't come from nothing. Knowledge comes from God. And you'll see what I'm referring to as we develop the lesson. Colossians 1.15-16.

[8 : 32] Speaking of Jesus, he is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible.

The things that we see in our creation that are interacting with each other. The invisible things that we do not see, that many scientists seek to study, came through him.

Whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things were created through him and for him. So the knowledge of the world that really the process of science has uncovered and really still endeavors to uncover exists from God.

It was God's plan that people could be recipients of a portion of his knowledge. I mean, that begins to impress me and I trust you as well.

That God, who knows all things, is going to privilege us as his creatures with some of that knowledge. And in his design, he chose to reveal and communicate his knowledge in two different ways.

[9 : 56] We usually refer to these as special revelation and general revelation. Special revelation is what God reveals to us from supernatural means.

In ages past, prior to his word being completed. We can see in the scriptures it was communicated through dreams and visions. And then eventually, most importantly, through God himself.

God incarnate the person of Jesus Christ. And then, thankfully, we have God's written, revealed word preserved for us that we might know specifics of God and the world in which we live and ourselves and the way of salvation.

The way of coming into relationship with God. Special revelation. But then there's general revelation. It's what God reveals about himself to us through creation. It's referred to as general revelation because it communicates general content about God and is revealed to a general audience.

All people. This message is out there for everybody to see and to understand. And through general revelation, God communicates information still even about himself.

[11 : 11] His existence. His great power. His divine nature. His glory. To all people so that we know from reading Romans 1 that all people are without excuse.

There's that testimony. That witness. Bearing witness that God is there. And what are people going to do with it? So, it's there.

God has communicated this knowledge to people who could understand, who could receive it and benefit from it. People could understand and receive it because they were made in the image of God.

A quote from Vern Poitras' book, Redeeming Science, A God-Centered Approach. Very good. Interesting book to read. Because man is made in the image of God, God's rationality is at least in part accessible to us and intelligible by us.

Hence, there is hope for scientific discovery and progress. Now, there's more to this quote, but I've only included part of it, and it'll be available on the screen.

[12 : 28] Meaning, God is rational and upholds the universe in a logical, orderly fashion, which we call the laws of nature. And since God made our minds to be able to function in this universe, and since we're made in God's image, it stands to reason that our minds would have the ability to discover truths about the universe.

Wow, how exciting is that? Even when we weren't interested in science in high school or whatever. In fact, I was asking the grandkids at lunch when I was preparing this lesson, and I just said, what comes to mind if I was to say science?

And of course, they were thinking, oh, he's looking for some theological definition. And I said, no, I'm just looking for your initial reaction, and I don't like science, and it's not my favorite subject. Well, that could be true of many of us, but hopefully as we understand and develop this biblical worldview of science, it will open up a brand new or an expanded understanding of the greatness of God that we interact with every day.

And we can enter into times of worship and praise to God in some of these ways. It's an act of God's goodness and kindness toward us that he's done this.

[13 : 51] It's good that he made us in the image of God as rational beings. We can receive this revelation from God to contemplate it and to know it. Special revelation, we can come to know God in a unique way, in a relational way, and be united to Jesus Christ.

But then it also, it enables us to function as his creatures in the world that he created, to accomplish his purposes as to why we're here, and to pursue the worship of God, to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever, even in this pursuit of science as we see the workings of God, to truly enjoy him in a richer and fuller way.

And then also to act as his managers over his creation and subdue and have dominion over the earth. And so that brings us really to the purpose of science, this pursuit of knowledge of God working in and through his creation.

Remember that one of those definitions, knowledge that we get from the careful study of the structure and behavior of the physical world, especially by watching, measuring, doing experiments, and the development of theories to describe the results of these activities that we've undertaken, all of this observing, watching, measuring, and testing.

So this careful study of the structure and behavior of the physical world should lead us to a great worship, praise, and glorifying God, for that's the purpose of creation.

[15 : 33] We know this from Psalm 19, 1 through 6. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.

So creation is crying out to us the wonder, the glory, that which is magnificent of God, as God through it reveals, communicates the knowledge of himself.

Well, as a person carefully studies the structure and the activities that are taking place in the world, by watching, measuring, doing experiments, and as they uncover a wonder of God in creation, well,

it's meant to lead that individual to praise God, who established and upholds that wonder. We're familiar with that kind of activity. When people do wonderful things, maybe a painting or a sculpture or a composition of music, we're amazed by the people that can do that. Man, who painted that? Or who sculpted that? Or what a composer to write a piece of music like that. We're amazed, certainly at what we see and what we hear, but even more so of the individual who brought it into existence.

[17 : 01] And so it is with creation. God put it there that we might be in wonder of him. The wonder that the individual has uncovered is revelation, communication from God through general revelation.

God is speaking through his general revelation something magnificent about himself. Hebrews 1.3, speaking of Jesus, he's the radiance of the glory of God, the exact imprint of his nature. And he upholds the universe by the word of his power. That's the phrase I want us to really latch on to in these next few minutes.

He upholds the universe by the word of his power. Let me develop it a little bit more through just some thoughts and quotes. After a scientist has done the observing, measuring, and experimenting over and over, the results show a consistency.

And as they show this consistency, the scientist establishes a theory, or quite possibly, and has been done, eventually a law.

[18 : 17] He might call it Newton's law of gravitation, of universal gravitation, or Einstein's general theory of relativity. Both deal with gravity, which we're all familiar with.

The names of these laws are given by people to classify this force that pulls down upon us. And these names, they are helpful as we classify the various forces in the world in which we live and have to operate every day.

We need these terms, these classifications. But if we just stop in wonder and amazement at the force, we might conclude that it is an impersonal force that keeps us and other items in proper place to function.

We miss the greater message that's being communicated here. We're held in place by the word of God's power.

The names of specific laws, as Poitras says in his book, they are man's current best description approximating the word of God that governs the world.

[19 : 31] When scientists seek to discover scientific laws, they're actually looking for the word of God that governs the processes they are studying. It's not how they would describe what they're going through, but in reality, that's what they are doing.

In fact, they depend on the reliability of God as manifested through creation, even to conduct their observations, their experiments, their tests, over and over and over again.

If they think they understand a specific regularity, they may call it a law. Newton's laws of motions, Newton's law of gravitation, Kirchhoff's laws for electric circuits.

These laws are human summaries of the actual law, namely God's word, his speech, which governs motion and gravity and electric circuits and everything else.

Colossians 1.17, and he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is presently involved in creation.

[20 : 40] He didn't bring it into existence and then stand back and let's see what develops here that might be helpful and useful for these creatures that I've put in the world.

Psalms 147.15-18, he sends out his command to the earth. His word runs swiftly. He gives snow like wool. He scatters frost like ashes.

He hurls down the crystals of ice like crumbs. Who can stand before his cold? He sends out his word and melts them. He makes his wind blow and the waters flow.

True operational laws of the universe point to God. Everything that happens to us every day, it was sprinkling as it came to church, right?

Oh, it just happened through this law. Sorry. No, thankfully, all by the word of God. The law reflects something which is true of God, certainly.

[21 : 36] But in God, it exists in a much higher degree. Like we, as people, individuals made in the image of God, I reflect something that is true of my maker, God.

Far, far inferior to the reality of what you see in me as one made in the image of God, to God in whom it would exist in infinite form.

And so we see that manifested in the world. As we experience the law of gravity, we know that it has power greater than what I can resist on my own.

So it speaks of the power of God as this world is held together by the word of his power. So next time you drop your pencil, do people use pencils anymore?

Or your phone or whatever. You drop that and it goes down to the ground. Praise God. Thank you, God, that you hold all things together by the word of your power.

[22 : 37] Because if you didn't, I'd be trying to jump up, getting in that, trying to scoop it out of the air. No, we can turn something like that into an exercise of praise and worship to God because this force that he has in place by the word of his power has made it possible for me to live and operate more efficiently in the world that he created.

Let me see. Another quote. If it really is the law and is correctly formulated and qualified, it holds for all times and in all places. The classic terms are omnipresence, all places, and eternity, all times.

Law has these two attributes that are classically attributed to God. Creation is declaring that is wonderful and magnificent about God in a much smaller way, but still, its voice is going out.

If a law holds for all time, we presuppose that it's the same law through all time. If the law does not change with time, it is immutable.

The very concept of scientific law presupposes immutability. Again, the creation is declaring that which is even beyond an infinite degree in the God who created and set all things in place.

[24 : 06] So as we see creation glorify God, we aren't ascribing divinity to the forces themselves, the laws of nature, mother nature, you know, that's the wrong way to go.

Remember the biblical perspective. Those forces designated by men as laws, and then pick up a quote here, are in fact the word of God. Specifying how the world of creatures is to function,

so-called law is simply God speaking, God acting, God manifesting himself in time and space.

The real mistake here is not a matter of divinizing nature, but of refusing to recognize that the law is the law of God. Nothing less than God speaking.

We're confronting God. That's magnificent when you think of it. We can put it another way. The Bible distinguishes God from causes within the world.

The causes within the world include things like the growth of grass due to sunlight, water, air, minerals in the soil, and a multitude of chemical interaction. God is the, and I would add, primary personal cause active in all events.

[25 : 20] The sunlight and photosynthesis are secondary causes. The secondary causes are causes linking one event to another within the world. A person does not demonstrate the nonexistence of the primary personal cause, God, by examining more minutely some of the secondary causes.

It's an elementary philosophical mistake. It confuses one kind of cause for the other. So when we come in contact with these laws as they operate in our world, as I said, as we drop our cell phone, you're confronting God through the secondary law, this law of gravity.

When you turn the light switch on, you're confronting God and these laws of electrical circuitry that I would be, it would be a very short road that we would travel if I had to explain these laws to you.

But creation, every day, is declaring the glory of God, that which is magnificent about God. And indeed, there were scientists, and still are today, who recognize this truth.

Johannes Kepler found that the planets traveled approximately in ellipses, ovals, not circles, around the sun. Kepler was the first in the whole history of the world to see this marvel.

[26 : 46] Here's his reaction. It now remains that at last, with my eyes and hands removed from the tablet of demonstrations and lifted up towards the heavens, I should pray, devout and supplicating to the Father of lights, O thou who dost by the light of nature promote in us the desire for the light of grace, that by its means thou mayest transport us into the light of glory.

I give thanks to thee, O Lord, Creator, who hast delighted me with the makings, with thy makings, and in the works of thy hands have I exalted. And then another individual, the French physicist, physicist, Andre Marie Ampere, he laid the foundations for electrodynamics, the unit of electrical current.

We're familiar with amps. The Ampere was named after him, and he wrote the following poem.

Happy the one who in his learned watches contemplating the marvels of this vast universe, before so much beauty, before so much grandeur, bows the knee and acknowledges the divine creator.

I do not share the foolish incoherence of the scientist who would contest the existence of God, who would close his ears to what the heavens declare and refuse to see what shines before his eyes, to know God, to love him, to render to him a pure homage.

That is true knowledge and the study of the wise. The heavens declare the glory of God. God revealing truth about himself that brings to our inner being a rejoicing, a satisfaction in him and what he has done.

[28 : 42] Science can glorify God. Another purpose of science is that it enables us as God's managers of what he has created to more effectively subdue and have dominion over the earth.

We are familiar with these verses in Genesis 1, 26 and 28. It will not take time to read them. You understand where we are called to rule and subdue, to fill the earth.

And in prior to those verses, we read in that chapter how God's record of creation of the heavens and the earth and all that's contained in them.

In verses 26 and through 28, we see that God made Adam and Eve in his image and with that privileged and unique capacity, they were given stewardship responsibilities over his creation. They and those that would come after them, here we are today. Those that are filling the earth were given authority to reign over and care for God's creation.

[29 : 52] We learned some of that last week from Jeremy in his study. And so to do so really effectively, we needed to have an ever-expanding knowledge of the earth and its creatures.

So by being made in the image of God, God gave people those capabilities that they needed to once again observe his creation, to explore it, to think about what they observed, to study it, to study it carefully and deeply, to experiment with it and eventually uncover forces that God set in place, his word in the universe.

With such discoveries, people could develop methods of subduing and having dominion over the earth that really would enhance life in the world in which we live.

And that's what's happened over the years. As scientists gave themselves up to proper exercise of science, the pursuit of the knowledge of God is revealed in his creation. Let me give just one example that we could relate to.

Blaise Pascal lived in the 1600s. He was a brilliant philosopher, mathematician, and scientist. And he spent an enormous amount of time studying the air and liquids.

[31 : 18] He demonstrated that the air we breathe exerts pressure on everything, an effect we call atmospheric pressure today. In his studies of fluids, he demonstrated a law we now call Pascal's Law.

The science behind that law allowed us to develop hydraulic lifts, like a lift the mechanic uses to raise a car so he can get underneath it. Dominion.

Have dominion through the proper exercise of exploring the creation in which God has designed, understanding its laws and how it works.

We're able to effectively subdue. I'm glad my mechanic can have a lift. Sometimes wish I had one in my barn so that I could lift things and not have to try and squeeze underneath so that I could more effectively have dominion over whatever I need to work on.

We're thankful that others can do that. And so many, many, many other ways in which the study, the exercise of science has enabled us to carry out our purpose in subduing the world and creation in which we live.

[32 : 33] Well, those of us who are believers in the one true God, we can be in awe of God who is such a creator and holds his creation together by the word of his power.

And because he's enabled, really, so many to uncover his forces and develop machines, technologies, sometimes that we get flustered with, but still, very glad we have that phone that we can carry around as I'm traveling now and whatever else that God has made possible, that those being made in his image can explore so that we can manage and oversee his creation more effectively and wisely.

Well, while we enjoy much of what has been uncovered, really, through scientific research, there are challenges to achieving these purposes of science that God has laid down in his word.

And one is, certainly, that creation is under a curse. We've learned about that from our study in Romans 8 as well. because of Adam's original sin, creation was subjected to futility and bondage to corruption and is now groaning and eagerly waiting for the day of deliverance, that day being the final day of deliverance or redemption of those who are God's children.

And this passage and its personification of creation shows us that creation is under a curse that prevents it, really, from accomplishing the full intended purpose to glorify God.

[34 : 15] I mean, I'm already impressed with what I see in creation and what I experience daily. And that's from a creation that is in bondage and under that curse.

Scientists are studying a creation that is somewhat broken and not fully displaying what's magnificent about its creator. So there's a hindrance there, but there's another hindrance in the scientists themselves.

We're limited too. They're finite. Saved or not, they're finite beings. Being made in the image of God doesn't mean we have all knowledge.

Scientists interpret what they observe and study and test. Even wrongly at times, they come to conclusions that are not accurate. So study goes on.

They're somewhat frustrated at times at their lack of knowledge and understanding. And that does limit what we can know and understand. But thankfully, as time goes on and people continue to study, further things are uncovered and we can make progress.

[35 : 29] But also, they're affected by sin. Romans 1.21 For although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened.

So while a non-Christian by God's common grace, he can still do research and understand some of the workings of God's creation. His or her denial of God and His special revelation in the Bible leads to wrong conclusions.

And we're confronted with that on a regular basis as well, in particular with the beginnings of creation and how things continue on day by day.

They're left with an impersonal view of the universe ruled by an ultimate, powerful force that's out there that operate without really any ultimate purpose.

purpose. Can you understand why people become disenchanting? Many.

[36 : 41] You remove the ultimate person and the purpose. People are not made to live and operate on a daily basis, so the believer has a great advantage in understanding purpose and having the joy in life, even in the midst of difficulties.

We turn the switch on and there we go again confronted with the reality of our Maker and God and His wisdom. Something that we can rejoice in and have purpose in.

Certainly, those individuals apart from Christ are left coming up short of the glory of God as they suppress the truth. but there is a way out of this futile way of life.

More specifically, God has provided the way for an individual to do science research that results in the glory of God. And first, we talk about Christ redeeming science, not necessarily science itself, but those who operate within the realm of science.

and in the present, yeah, that way is found through faith in Jesus Christ, the creator and sustainer of creation, who also is the redeemer of those who repent and call upon Him, who is the only one who can rescue them out of their bondage to sin and out of this futile way of life and darkened understanding because of the hardness of their hearts.

[38 : 13] He is the one who has all knowledge. He is the one. Jesus Christ, even now, who has dominion and all authority, seated at the right hand of the throne of God. All that we were to do, Christ has accomplished.

He has all authority and dominion. And there will come that time when that which is in part will be in completion.

But we can also become new creations in Christ. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. So that is truly what we can experience in the present, but there is also a future aspect of this whole matter of scientific research that gives us hope in this whole matter in this field of science.

Even more in the future when Christ returns and a new heaven and earth are put in place, no more curse upon the earth. It's free to put on full display the glory of its maker God.

Not only will there be a new heaven and new earth, but God's redeemed people will be dwelling there free from any effects of sin. Science in the new world becomes an unhindered process of knowing Christ face to face and discovering the riches of his glory in a new heaven and new earth.

[39 : 37] Boy, wouldn't you like to be a scientist in those situations and conditions? Unhindered yourself by the effects of sin, studying a world in which is now set free from the bondage of sin.

You think, are we going to be doing science? Well, yeah, we're not going to be God. We're not going to know everything. We can explore unhindered and praise God in new riches and fullness of who we are in Christ.

Until then, we pursue Christ and the knowledge of God and his word and creation that we might praise and worship him and exercise dominion and obedience to him and love for him and for the welfare of others.

Dig out those science books that you've left behind and have a new perspective of God and his workings in the world today. Let's pray.

Father, this morning, only by your grace and mercy could we gather together here this morning and interact with this information, your truth, and have our hearts in agreement with it.

[40 : 59] and a fuller, richer scale and degree enjoy the world in which you have made.

So we praise you for what you've done in the world in which we see that we're learning more and more about and thank you and worship you and praise you for opening our hearts to the greater knowledge of yourself by faith in Jesus Christ.

In his name we pray. Amen.