

Palisades Community Bible Church

Online Sunday School

Do You Believe In Science?

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By definition, “Believing in” something means you have trust in something. There is no true belief if there is no trust. If you sit in a chair, get on a plane, or undergo surgery, you put your trust in something. You “believe in it.” If you don’t trust in something, you don’t believe in it.

From the time we were little tykes, we’ve been conditioned to believe, accept and trust in, science. From first grade on, we have studied science..... HOLD ON! Let’s stop there:

Not many of us have actually STUDIED science. We were taught “about” science. We were taught “about” what science has discovered. We memorized famous scientists and their discoveries. We were introduced to physical sciences and biology. We were lectured, we read, we did research on...the achievements of science, but we DID NOT “study science,” at least not in our first 12 years of school. Science was not what we studied; its history and its achievements were what we studied. If we went on to college, in a non-scientific pursuit, we may not have gotten any more on science than some compulsory classes in our undergrad years.

The primary lesson one comes away with on the topic of science is that science is how complex things are discovered, explained and PROVEN.

I’m not criticizing science, or scientists, but rather, pointing out that we have been conditioned to believe in it, almost unquestioningly. There has been a tremendous body of scientific discoveries and advancements that have benefitted mankind, and that body grows exponentially every year. That, alone, is enough to convince most folks that science is worthy of our trust. Indeed, billions of lives have been improved because of science. It is a process that leads to trustworthy outcomes.... we have many reasons to trust in science.

Can Science Be Misused?

Can science lead us down a bad road? Is it infallible, or can science can cause us to draw wrong conclusions? Can science become a replacement for God? Can science explain God away?

If you are wondering about such questions as the true age of the earth, the existence of heaven, whether the universe was created by God, whether life was created as we see it, or if

it evolved from lower forms into higher forms....you are probably unsure about whether to put your trust in science or the Bible.

Many people who call themselves Christians, or 'religious', or by one of many faith denominations, put their trust in parts of God's word. There are other parts that they simply cannot believe (trust). In short, there are many who consider themselves to be in the camp of God, who cannot follow this passage:

Psalms 118:8 "It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man."

If you've studied academia over the past several hundred years, you know that science in academia has been purposely positioned in our educational systems to push God out of our thinking. It actually started with the earliest studies of atheism farther back than the periods of "Classical Antiquity" of Roman and Greek academia starting around the 8th century BC. This form of "higher thinking" has driven most academic minds ever since. In its simplest form, it is atheism: the belief that "there is no God, and there is no evidence of a God's existence." In other words, the atheist puts his trust in the conclusion that there is no God. By contrast, the "agnostic" simply does not know whether God exists – the atheist is convinced.

This trust in 'no god' forms the atheist's world view, meaning that everything s/he does is through the lens of that assumption.

Throughout the centuries, advances in educational systems have increasingly incorporated atheism as fundamental to all areas of study...even science. I don't need to spend a lot of time on the captains of the academic atheism efforts, especially during the past century, but suffice it to say; if you've been watching our society de-volve, you know it is our educational systems and what comes through electronic media that have most impacted Americans' world views. Their purpose has been to convince emerging generations that they can only trust (believe in) a secular, atheist world view. Our most recent U.S. census reported that America is now a post-Christian nation; less than half of us believe in a God.

(Just a note; behavioral science has proven that the single most important influence on one's world view is the influence of their parents. Schools and media are secondary to that. Why have American parents failed so miserably??)

So, what does this have to do with science? We'll get to that right after I share just how it is that astrologists determine the distance stars are from the earth. Why did I look this up? Why does this even matter to a Bible study? Stay with me and I'll show you.....

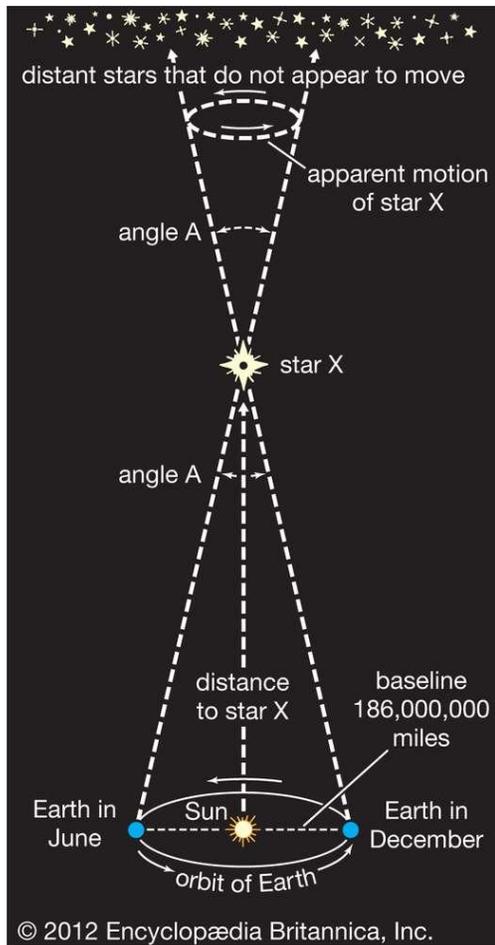
From the Encyclopedia Britannica

The closest star, Proxima Centauri, is 4.24 light-years away. A light-year is 9.44 trillion km, or 5.88 trillion miles. That is an incredibly large distance. Walking to Proxima Centauri would take

215 million years. If you turned it up and went as fast as Apollo 11 went to the Moon, it would still take 43,000 years. So how can we measure such a distance?

The answer is just plain old geometry. Hold out your hand at arm's length. Close one eye. Now open that eye and close the other. Your hand will seem to move against the background. Your two eyes and your hand form a long triangle. If you know the distance between your eyes and the angle by which your hand moved against the background, you can calculate the length of your arm. The angle by which your hand moves is called the parallax.

Of course, you wouldn't measure your arm this way. But now make the triangle much bigger.



Instead of your two eyes as the base of the triangle, have those two points be Earth on opposite sides of the Sun. If you then take pictures of a star, if the star is close enough, it will move relative to background stars just like your hand moved relative to your surroundings. Knowing the parallax angle the star moved and the size of Earth's orbit, you can calculate the distance to the star.

Measuring this distance is no small feat. The parallax angle by which even the closest stars shift is very small. For Proxima Centauri, it's 0.77 arc second. An arc second is 1/3,600 of a degree. If you hold one of your hairs about 10 meters (or 33 feet) away, the hair covers an angle of 1 arc second. It wasn't until 1838 that astronomers were able to measure such small angles. In that year, Friedrich Bessel measured the parallax of 61 Cygni as 0.314 arc second, or 11.4 light-years.

Fun fact: A star with a parallax of 1 arc second would be 3.26 light-years away. This distance became known as the "parallactic second," or parsec for short.

Some Relevance, Please?

OK, interesting, but what does that have to do with a Bible study? One of the ways secular, atheist, science convinces learners that there is no God is by demonstrating what appears to be contradictions in God's Word...the Bible. In the very first book of the Bible, we see God's account of creation, in this passage; up until the stars are created:

Genesis 1: 1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

3 And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. 4 God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light “day,” and the darkness he called “night.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

6 And God said, “Let there be a vault (an arched, or dome shaped, overhead structure – “firmament”) between the waters to separate water from water.” 7 So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. 8 God called the vault “sky.” And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

9 And God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear.” And it was so. 10 God called the dry ground “land,” and the gathered waters he called “seas.” And God saw that it was good.

11 Then God said, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds.” And it was so. 12 The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. 13 And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

14 And God said, “Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, 15 and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. 16 God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. 17 God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, 18 to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19 And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

So, according to God, He made the earth in a very short period of time. He put the sun and the moon in the “vault” of the sky on the fourth day of creation. However, atheist science claims that these “stars” are so far from the earth that it would be impossible for their light to reach the earth to be seen by humans if the earth is only so many thousand years old. In other words, science says that a star we can observe, and calculate to be millions of light years away, would not be visible to us unless this star had been created millions of years earlier than the Biblical account.

In short, to the secular scientist, the Biblical time frame of creation is but a tick of the clock compared to **their** calculation of the age of the universe. It is impossible for the earth to be as young as God reports it to be. Since secular science makes this conclusion, the Biblical account of creation is incorrect. Therefore, it is incorrect to believe in an intelligent designer and

supernatural creator. Therefore, there MUST be some other explanation for the origin of the earth than the Biblical account. This brings into question all the rest of the Bible, as well, with the obvious answer; “No God.”

What’s Atheism About?

Perhaps you’re now scratching your own head. You may not have heard this part of the atheist’s logic path for concluding that there is no God. Let’s examine what shapes the thinking when one has an Atheist world view. Their primary beliefs:

Supreme being: A God or gods do not exist.

Reality: Only the physical world exists. The physical world consists of time, space and matter. Neither the spiritual world nor spiritual beings exist.

Nature of man: Man is at the top of the evolutionary scale. Man is in control of his own destiny, outside of cataclysmic events.

Man’s primary problem: Man’s problems are primarily rooted in the lack of education and lack of resources.

Solution to man’s primary problem: Science, technology and human ingenuity will solve man’s problems.

Afterlife: Annihilation (oblivion). Following death there is no afterlife, consciousness or recollection of existence.

Understanding what drives the mentality, the intellect and the motivations of an atheist, how can we expect that an atheist scientist might utilize a purely logical process and arrive at a conclusion that contradicts his/her world view? That’s somewhat of a trick question. If an atheist scientist was to OBJECTIVELY (without preconceived bias or prejudice for the outcome) analyze the veracity of the Bible’s claims in Genesis, that scientist would have to be willing to arrive at the conclusion that an intelligent being created the universe! They’d have to put their faith in the scientific process and NOT in their own world view. If that process were to lead the objective atheist scientist to a conclusion that agreed with the Biblical account, s/he would no longer be atheist. (read this paragraph again)

The Scientific Process

The key to this process is OBJECTIVITY. One must approach the scientific process, which we all learned about in school, WITHOUT A CONTAMINATING BIAS:

1. Ask a question
2. Conduct research
3. Form a hypothesis
4. Test the hypothesis
5. Repeat until a reliable, consistent outcome is achieved

Any and all scientists that taint their research findings with personal beliefs violate the scientific process and produce faulty conclusions. Any and all academics, political leaders, jurists, etc. who use, teach and promote such conclusions because they comport with their personal world view prove themselves NOT to be educators or leaders, but propagandists!

I've had many conversations with atheists and agnostics and they tell me they trust science. Interestingly, none has been willing to look at the findings of scientists who started out atheist – convinced there is no God – only to have their findings demonstrate that the earth was, indeed, created by an intelligent designer.

Each and every one of these atheists, who place their trust in science, has been unwilling to research the topic themselves. They give ME the homework of proving it to THEM. In other words, they don't even trust science as they claim! If they did, they would use science to prove, or disprove God's existence instead of following the religion of atheism.

But, why would they go to the effort? They see no purpose, since they fully believe that there is no God, anyway.

Their lives are guided by their own opinions which are driven by their world view. They don't care to know any different. As Christians, we know the eternal consequences of such a world view and we want to help them understand the Gospel. Please realize, they often DO understand the Gospel as a philosophy or belief system, but it is only within the context of the atheist world view; an opiate for the ignorant and/or suffering. Their world view cannot accept the first sentence in the Bible; "In the beginning, God...." Like a bicycle without a chain, you can spin one sprocket all you want, but it won't turn the other sprocket. "No God" is their shield from any knowledge of the rest of the Bible.

Is The Atheist Hopelessly Lost?

Only ONE THING might open the atheist to God; **prayer**. In the same way that the holy spirit works in the life of a Christian, prayer invokes spiritual influence toward the object for whom the Christian prays.

2 Corinthians 10:4 "We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. 5 We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God."

Matthew 28: 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

So, What's The Answer?

So that I don't leave you hanging, let's address the logical possibilities for scientifically explaining how it is that a star's light can be visible from millions of light years away....to an earth that is only thousands of years old. First, we can never know, conclusively, apart from God telling us. And, He has chosen not to. So, we must take the account of creation as faithfully as we take the balance of the scriptures; as God breathed and true. Here are some possible explanations:

- The scientific model for determining the speed of light may be flawed. If the theory of relativity is true, then can light travelling 'millions of light years' bend time and actually accelerate?
- The scientific model for determining the distance a star is from the earth might be flawed. There is absolutely NO possibility of verifying that the parallax model produces accurate results. The model, itself, demonstrates that the increments of measurement are incredibly tiny and the slightest error can lead to massively incorrect assumptions. It's only theory, and it takes faith to believe it. Look back at the illustration; notice the words "appear" and "apparent" in the model. It's just a theory.
- Since God created the stars in an instant, he also could have created their photons, already traveling from each star to the earth (actually they spread in all directions) at the same instant. This would be logical since they would then appear immediately in the sky as seen from the earth.
- Science has concluded that the universe is expanding, as if it had a central origin, and the stars and planets are moving farther apart. God could have created the stars close to the earth, then hurled them outward.
- God could have sped up the time, or the speed of light, during creation in order that the stars' light might reach earth on the fourth day.

I've never heard, nor seen, a secular scientific approach to reconciling this kind of study to conclude anything other than "no god." Have you? Again, trick question. If a secular approach discovers the Living God, it instantly ceases to be secular!

Such findings would also fail to prove worthy in an education system and public media that are prejudiced and biased toward; "NO GOD."

Proverbs 3:5 "Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight."