

MidWeek - Problems with Christianity

Week 6 - The Problem of Science

Intro Matters

- What is the Problem of Science?
 - Assumption: Science proves Christianity is **impossible**.
 - Why?
 - Science deals with **facts** and Christianity deals with **feelings**.
 - What are some foundational Christian truths that science would deem impossible?

Why Science Doesn't Prove Christianity is Impossible

- "Science does not compete with God as an explanation. Science gives a different kind of explanation."¹ *John Lennox, Oxford Mathematics Professor*
 - To believe that science is the only truth is the error of **scientism**.
 - Meaning: Science can tell us **some** things, but not **everything**.
 - **WHY** is there something rather than nothing?
 - We are **meaning**-seekers, not **fact-finders**.²
- 'No claims are true unless they can be proven scientifically' - cannot be proven scientifically!

Worldview Answers to the Problem of Science:

- Atheism - Science proves that God is **unnecessary** and therefore **cannot** exist.
 - Fails - Illogical.

¹ John Lennox, *Can Science Explain Everything?* Good Book Company, 2019, 7.

² Rebecca McLaughlin, *Confronting Christianity*, Crossway Books, 2019, 120

- “The same dozen tones are materially sufficient to account for Beethoven’s Moonlight Sonata and the notes the cat makes by walking on the keys. But the cat’s performance neither proves nor disproves the existence of Beethoven.”³
- Fails - Bias against Christianity
 - “The world needs to wake up from the long nightmare of religion. Anything we scientists can do to weaken the hold of religion should be done, and may in fact be our greatest contribution to civilization.” Steven Weinberg, Physics Nobel Prize Winner
 - “We have a prior commitment to materialism..it is absolute...for we cannot allow a Divine foot in the door.” Richard Lewontin, Harvard Geneticist
- Selfism - I **determine** what is true or false, based on “evidence.”
 - Fails - **Understanding** doesn’t determine truth.
 - Science is based on **objective** and **external** truth.
- Theism - Science is the study of what **God** has **created**.
 - Truth - Science needs the **biblical** worldview.
 - Uniformity of nature
 - Validity of our own reasoning

What is our defense?

- Christianity is not **blind faith**.
 - Luke 1:1-4
 - John 20:30-31
 - Luke 10:25-28
 - 1 Corinthians 14:15
- The Bible is **reliable**.
 - Manuscript evidence, textual criticism, “mistakes” (see Week 3)
 - The Bible is actually one cohesive story

³ Lennox, 28

- Genre differences - some things are literal, some are not
- Scientific **evidence** for Christianity
 - “A major survey in the American Journal of Public Health reports that religious involvement correlates strongly with wellbeing, happiness, life satisfaction, hope and optimism, purpose and meaning in life, higher self-esteem, help in grief, greater social support, less loneliness, lower rates of depression...just to mention a few.”⁴
- **Define** terms: What “**god**” are we talking about here?
 - God is not descended from the heavens and the earth like other “gods” - our God CREATED the heavens and the earth - therefore he is God of ALL
 - He is not “God of the gaps” (Genesis 1:1)
 - “Who created God?” Just demonstrates a lack of understanding of the nature of the biblical God
 - **Miracles** are not a problem for this God
 - “The laws of nature predict what is bound to happen if God does not intervene. It is no act of theft, of course, if the Creator intervenes in his own creation.”⁵
 - Science is out of its lane here
 - Natural causes are the only kind of causes that science CAN address, but this cannot mean that there are NO SUPERNATURAL causes!
 - Plantinga puts it this way “It’s like the drunk who insisted on looking for his lost car keys only under the streetlight on the grounds that the light was better there, or...even better, that since the keys would be hard to find in the dark...they MUST be in under the light!”⁶
- **Worldview** borrowing:
 - Ex. Problem of Evil and Suffering
 - Removing God from the equation doesn’t solve the problem, it makes it worse.
 - By what standard do you call anything evil?
 - Ex. Validity of our own thoughts
 - If everything is random and meaningless so are scientific theories
 - Meaning making is not the realm of science

⁴ Cited in Lennox, 21

⁵ Lennox, 62

⁶ Quoted in Tim Keller “Reason for God,” 89

- Remind them of the true **goal** of science
 - Science is reasonable theories on how things work in the natural world - it doesn't tell us WHY or WHAT
 - Science cannot be the ONLY rational explanation of something observed (Scientism)
 - Why is the water boiling?
- Science and Christianity used to play very well **together**.
 - Between 1901 and 2000 over 60% of Nobel laureates were Christians
 - Some of the founders of science were Christians - Galileo, Bacon, Ockham, Kepler, Boyle, Pascale, Newton, Faraday...etc.
 - Even today there are several Christians at MIT today
 - "Far from hindering the rise of modern science, faith in God was one of the motors that drove it. I, therefore, regard it as a privilege and an honor, not an embarrassment to be both a scientist and a Christian." Oxford Professor John Lennox

Big Idea: "Science does not compete with God as an explanation. Science gives a different kind of explanation."⁷

Schedule:

Week 1 6/29/22: Introduction – What is a Worldview

Week 2 7/6/22: Problem of Truth

Week 3: 7/13/22: Problem of Scripture

Week 4: 7/20/22: Problem of Jesus

Week 5: 7/27/22: Problem of Evil

Week 6: 8/3/22: Problem of Science

Week 7: 8/10/22: Problem of Christians

Week 8: 8/17/22: Problem of Exclusivity

8/24/22: VACATION WEEK - NO MIDWEEK

Week 9: 8/31/22: Problem of Sexuality

Week 10: 9/7/22: Summary

⁷ I can't do any better than John Lennox on this...