

The End of Science, the Beginning of Faith

By Pastor James Keen

Man was created to worship God. If he doesn't worship the true God, he will find something else to worship. In ancient times, man worshipped some wooden, stone, or metal idol of his creation... the work of his hands. Because the idol was a replacement for the Holy God, men looked to his idol to do those things that he should trust God to do: like securing his prosperity, health, and control of those events otherwise beyond the reach of his hand.

From a spiritual perspective, an idol is anything that unseats God from the throne of our heart. The idols men worship are not innately evil, but are exalted to an evil extreme by the lusts of our heart. Like the piece of wood spoken of in Isaiah 44:9-20, it had a useful purpose until it was crafted into an idol. As an idol, its purpose was abused and man's heart was lured away from God. It wasn't the wood, but the heart of man that was evil.

Fast forwarding to today, we live in a country where the use of wooden, stone, or metallic idols is uncommon. However, our culture has not escaped the yoke of idolatry. Of the many forms of idols worshipped today, one of the preeminent idols is the god of science. Like ancient idolatry, science is the work of man's hand, our attempt to understand and control those things otherwise beyond our reach. In its proper context, science is a wonderful tool and a gift from God, much like the piece of wood spoken of in Isaiah 44. However when abused, science becomes an idol by unseating God from His place in our heart.

We see the effects of this idolatry in the news constantly. The battle between evolution and creation, the controversy over stem cell research, the plastic surgery craze, and human cloning are recognizable fronts in this war. Men use science to control that which is beyond his control, attempting to alter God's creation, trample His Word, and rid a generation of their faith in God. Aren't these the objectives of Satan? Did not Israel fall for this time after time as they were lured away to idolatry?

Understanding Science

The word, "science" is derived from the Latin, *scientia*, which means, "knowledge". Scientific knowledge is acquired through the use of the scientific method. "The scientific method refers to a body of techniques for investigating phenomena and acquiring new knowledge of the natural world, as well as the correction and integration of previous knowledge, based on observable, empirical, measurable evidence, and subject to laws of reasoning. All this evidence is collectively called scientific evidence."¹

In short, scientific knowledge is the acquisition of data through the observation of experiments or phenomena. The data is then subjected to human reason to develop a theory that will correlate the information in a rational manner. For example, a man can observe atmospheric conditions for a span of time and begin to predict the weather based upon repetitions in the observed pattern. Jesus recognized this ability in Matthew 16:2-3 when He said, "...When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?"

Jesus did not condemn their use of science, but wanted them to also apply their hearts and minds to the Word of God. Again, science is not evil, but a tool that allows us to better understand the creation of God and to fulfill His command to subdue the earth. (Genesis 1:28) Science affords us many conveniences and resources that allow us to work more efficiently, giving us more time to devote to prayer, study, and ministry. We may choose to waste that time, but it isn't the fault of science. Science properly applied also gives us greater insight into the work of God, showing us the many facets of His wisdom and glory.

The End of Science

¹ "Scientific method." *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. 22 Jul 2006, 04:55 UTC. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 23 Jul 2006 <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Scientific_method&oldid=65160300>.

The End of Science, the Beginning of Faith

By Pastor James Keen

By “the end of science” I am speaking of the limitations of science. Despite what we are told by secular scientists and the media, science can only take us so far in understanding the world around us because of its inherent limitations. As we have defined science and the scientific method above, there are three apparent weaknesses:

1.) **Man’s ability to perceive data is limited to his senses**

The ability of science to understand the universe is limited by man’s ability to analyze only those things detectable to his senses. In Hebrews 11:3, we read, “Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”

This passage places an understanding of creation outside the reach of science. We can only analyze the data we can perceive. God tells us that the universe was not created from anything that man can observe or measure. Therefore, science will never be able to give us a complete understanding of the creation of the world because it has no perceivable data to work with. This applies to all aspects of spiritual life. Science will never be able to create a pill that will solve your spiritual problems, rid your soul of sin, heal your marriage, or raise your children. These all have spiritual aspects and are beyond the realm of science.

2.) **We do not have all available data**

Proverbs 18:13 warns us to avoid casting a judgment until we have all the facts. Good science is based on a complete set of data. When it comes to creation, we just don’t have all the facts. Not only is some of the data outside the realm of human observation, there are also many things that we just don’t know.

Remember when the Lord appeared to Job in the whirlwind? (Job 38-42) Job had rebelled in his heart against the purposes of the Lord in allowing calamity to fall upon Him. The Lord provides Job several examples of how little Job actually knew. Without all of the facts, how could Job begin to judge God? Job repented of his foolishness in dust in ashes. Oh that the Lord would grant this repentance to scientists who rage against the existence of God based on their incomplete data and faulty theories. Let God be true and every man a liar! (Romans 3:4) Despite man’s technological advances, the internet, and super computers, our knowledge and comprehension still falls far short of the knowledge of God. The Word of God remains true, “because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” (1 Corinthians 1:25)

3.) **Our reason is flawed as a result of the fall of man**

One of the pillars of modern science is man’s ability to reason, correlating different facts in such a manner as to arrive at a logical conclusion. The Scriptures, however, teach us that man’s mind is blinded by sin. (2 Corinthians 4:4) After the fall, man stopped thinking clearly without the aid of the Word and the Spirit of God to lift the cloud of sin. We experience this confusion every time we fail to obey God, having “reasoned” sin will be of greater benefit to us than righteousness. Like Paul said, “What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.” (Romans 6:21) We can all look back in shame at our faulty reasoning. We have all experienced the “death” of sin.

Scientists, despite claiming to be unbiased, are subject to the same sinful nature which besets us all. When faced with an incomplete set of data that can be interpreted in two different ways, will they advocate an interpretation that will condemn their sin and subject them to a Holy God or one that will condone sin and free them from any consequences of wrongdoing? To sinful man, there is a temptation to choose the interpretation that undermines faith. To a man guided by the Word and Spirit, there would be a different inclination. The facts do not contradict God’s Word. Man’s interpretation of those facts, however, is where the problem lies.

The End of Science, the Beginning of Faith

By Pastor James Keen

The Beginning of Faith

The limitation of science is the beginning of faith. As we are taught in Hebrews, faith is the evidence of things unseen and therefore not subject to scientific evaluation. Faith begins where scientific explanations end!

Allow me to go one step further and state that science can only be properly understood in the context of faith. In John 13:16, Jesus says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him." As we read earlier, those things that appear and can be studied by science were created by those things which do not appear (God and the spiritual realm) and are not subject to scientific examination. Which is greater, the Creator or the creation? Science cannot be used to make claims about an unseen realm which it cannot analyze. That is not the proper use of science. Only faith in God and His Word gives us access to those things unseen. Because the realm of science sprung from the realm of faith, science is not greater than faith, but is subject to faith. By faith, I am referring to a belief in the truths taught in the Word of God.

The Proper Place of Science

The god of false science is no different than any other false god served by man. It appeals to man's desire to control the uncontrollable, giving man a false hope in something that cannot save. It tries unsuccessfully to deal with the problem of sin, and it provides a message that undermines the truth. I do not advocate ignorance of science, but denounce the false claims of science born out of the wickedness of man's heart.

This idol was anticipated by the Lord. In 1 Timothy 6:20-21, Paul warns, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith..." Paul was warning Timothy about faulty "scientific" arguments, which might appeal to man's distorted reason but were not true and would only lead to error.

Since Paul's day, the faulty arguments have multiplied and can seem overwhelming when we subject ourselves to the limitations of human reason. I do not pretend to be able to answer all the arguments of the skeptics. Yet, we are not at a disadvantage; we have faith in a real God and Savior who is just as powerful today as ever! The way to handle the skeptics is to heed the advice given to Timothy by Paul. Keep your faith in "the faith" committed to our trust in the Word of God! Keep your faith in the power of the Spirit of God to pierce the hardest of hearts and lead men to truth. Even if one mastered all of the arguments of science and was able to silence the critics, faith would still be necessary. Remember, without faith it is impossible to please God. (Hebrews 11:6)

Don't be afraid of science. Understand its rightful place and use the good science to accomplish God's will. Yet, do not be lured into an idolatry that neglects faith in our loving God and exalts man's reason. True believers have always faced a mountain of critics with lots of deceptively appealing reasons to reject the truth. Their arguments have come and gone but the truth of God has never changed. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen." (1 John 5:21)