**BIBLE TALK Radio Broadcast**

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**Is Faith Valid in a Scientific World?**

There are those who believe that faith and science are incompatible. Their view is that faith is a blind leap into the dark -- that it is belief without evidence – and that science, on the other hand is coming to conclusions based on observation, that is conclusions based on evidence, and that there is no room for faith in science. Are faith and science opposed to one another? Is faith valid in a scientific world? These are the questions we want to consider on our program today?

We are glad that you are with us.

Is faith valid in a scientific world? Some people think that faith is opposed to science? Their concept is that science is a study concerned with observation and the accumulation of facts, while faith is believing something without any evidence whatsoever. Well, their definition of science is correct, but their definition of faith is not correct. Believing that is based on a mere whim, without any evidence is what is called “blind faith,” and that is not the faith of Christians. Biblical faith is built upon evidence. Yes, faith is a conviction of things not seen (Heb. 11:1), but that does not mean that this conviction is without evidence. We are going to talk about that later in the program, but first let us talk about science.

What is science? Natural science is defined as "systematized knowledge derived from observation, study, and experimentation carried on in order to determine the nature or principles of what is being studied." The key components of science are testing and observation. If something cannot be tested, observed, and tested again, then it cannot be proved by the typical scientific method. Science is not a bad thing. Science involves the finding of facts through observation and experimentation. Facts are a good thing. People of faith are not opposed to facts. We are opposed to those, in the name of science, who try to push a false theory on us and call it fact. But we are not opposed to science and its pursuit of facts.

And also Science has contributed immensely to the wellbeing of mankind. Its discoveries and inventions have bettered our lives in many ways. Just think of the medical advancements that have improved our health and cured our diseases. No Christian can be anti-scientific, because science has been a means God has employed to bring blessings to us.

But we need to understand that science is limited. First of all science cannot test all that falls within the realm of what is true; it is not the final determiner of truth. For example, unique, historical events are outside the realm of natural science because those events cannot be tested or observed, but they are true nonetheless. The life of Abraham Lincoln cannot be observed by science, but all would believe to be true that he was President of the United States during the Civil War. Science can only test and observe evidence that exists in the present. Secondly, science is not able to make value judgments. The results of scientific study might have an effect on how people make value judgments, but ultimately it is the people, not the methods, that argue values and morals. Morality neither starts nor ends with science.

Now this is not stated to be critical of true science. God is the One who made science. God created the natural world and upholds it; it is because of the dependability of nature that God set in order that one can study science. For example, gravity is something we can always count on to work. It is dependable. God made it that way. This is what makes the study of science possible. But the point we are making, science is not the final standard of all that is true and morally right. It is too limited for that.

But also we need to understand that science is based on faith. Many people think that religion is based on faith, and science is just based on observation. But the fact is that science is not only based on observation, but is also based on faith. Without faith scientists could not do their work. Let me read what John W. Klotz, PHD said about science and faith. He said, “We must recognize that all science is based on a great deal of faith—faith in the correctness of basic scientific assumptions, faith in the integrity of other scientists, faith in the accuracy of their observations. It is not true that the Christian walks by faith and the scientist by sight. It is very obvious that also the scientist walks much of the way by faith.” Notice he mentions faith in the integrity of the other scientists. Scientists are not experts in every field of study and therefore must rely upon the studies and conclusions of other scientists. To do that, they must have faith in the integrity of other scientists.

Dr. Klotz also mentions that science is based on faith in certain assumptions. One of the assumptions that scientists accept by faith that Klotz mentions is the assumption of uniformity. He said that the scientist “assumes that the natural laws and principles which he discovers in his laboratories hold throughout time and space.” He says, “Actually it is only by making this assumption that the scientist is able to work at all.” (*The philosophy of Science in Relation to Concepts of Creation vs, the Evolution Theory,* Why Not Creation?, edited by Walter E. Jammerts, pages 8-9) In other words, the scientist does his work by faith.

It should also be observed that the scientific method, as we know it today, began in the sixteenth century among people who were believers in God, monotheists. The Greek polytheists of the past were competent scientists, but they failed to employ what is known as the experimental method. You see, they viewed the universe as capricious and irregular, and therefore not capable of systematic study. But the monotheists, those who believed in the one true God reasoned that the universe must be orderly and worthy of investigation because it was the work of an intelligent Creator. Paul Little wrote concerning these scientists in his book, Know Why You Believe, “in pursuing scientific research, they were convinced they were thinking God’s thoughts after him.”

The point is, scientists who use the experimental method in their research are doing their work by faith, faith in the assumptions that the universe is orderly, that it operates according to a pattern, and that therefore, one can predict its behavior. Therefore, faith and science are not incompatible. They are not opposed to one another.

Now, what about the Christian’s faith? Critics charge that the Christian’s faith is a “blind leap into the dark.” By this they mean that even though there is no evidence for what Christians believe, they believe it anyway. Their charge is false. As we have already mentioned Biblical faith is built upon evidence. Yes, faith is a conviction of things not seen (Heb. 11:1), but it is not without evidence. It is a mistaken concept to think that all faith is devoid of evidence. Faith does not require one to be an eyewitness of everything believed, but it should rest upon proper evidence. For example, I have faith that my mother really is my physical mother. I do not have scientific proof of this, but the evidence is such that it would be unreasonable for me to think otherwise. There are eyewitnesses and documents as evidence. Now I believe it to be true, even though I was not an eyewitness. But it is not blind faith.

When it comes to faith in God as Creator, we believe that the evidence is such that it warrants the response of faith, even though one cannot scientifically prove everything about God. Psalm 19:1 says, “*The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork*.” Rom 1:20 reads, “*For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the*

*things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse*,” These passages are saying that the natural world around us provides evidence for God. By looking at, and observing the world around us (by means of the scientific method) we learn that 1) nothing comes from nothing, in other words every effect must have an adequate cause, and we learn that 2) the design characteristic of our world demands an Intelligent Designer. And so we believe in a God who created, even though we did not see Him do it. It is not a blind faith, but faith based on evidence. Again, faith and science are not incompatible.

We also see that the Christian’s faith is built upon evidence by looking at the account in John 20:24-31. After Jesus was raised from the dead He appeared to His disciples, but one of them, Thomas was not present. The other disciples who had seen Jesus said to Thomas, “We have seen the Lord.” Thomas said to them, “*Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe*.” His attitude is like many today, I’m not going to believe unless I see. After eight days Jesus appears to His disciples again, and Thomas is with them. “*Then He said to Thomas, ‘Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.’ And Thomas answered and said to Him, ‘My Lord and my God!*’” Thomas believed because he saw Jesus. But notice what Jesus then said to Thomas, “*Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed*.” Jesus indicates that one can believe without seeing. But how can one believe without seeing? Look in the very next two verses, verses 30-31, John records “*And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name*.” John says that he had recorded some of the signs that Jesus had done for the purpose of producing faith in those who have not seen. The miracles that Jesus did were signs testifying of who Jesus was and is. Nicodemus said that no one could do these signs that Jesus did unless God was with Him (John 3:2) God provided these miracles as evidence of the deity of Jesus, not only for those who saw them, but also for those who did not seen them. Jesus expects those who did not see them to believe on the testimony of those who did see. This is the reason John, an eyewitness, recorded the signs that Jesus did. Even though we have not seen these signs first hand, they were done in the presence of eyewitnesses so that we might believe.

But someone may object and say, “Since we did not see them first hand, how can it be proven that Jesus did them?” They are as much proven as any event recorded in history. We did not see George Washington, but we believe that he was the first president of the United States. Why? Because of the historical documents that we have concerning his life. How do we know that Christopher Columbus sailed to this Continent? It is accepted as a proven fact of history because of the historical documents. In the same way, the life and deeds of Jesus Christ are recorded in reliable historical documents. It is a fact of recorded history.

And so our faith in God and in Christ Jesus is based upon evidence.

And so is faith valid in a scientific world? Yes, indeed. Faith is a part of life. One cannot live life without faith. And faith and science are not opposed to one another as science itself requires a degree of faith. Faith and science are compatible. We should avoid viewing these as opposites, and start seeing how they can work together. One does not disprove the other; instead, they can enhance and help each other.

Our time is gone for today. We thank you for listening.

If you have a question for our program, send it in. There are three ways you may send us your question.

You may email it in: Our email address is sjchurch@sjchurchofchrist.com.

You may call it in: Our phone number is 573-265-8628. If no one is there to answer, just leave you question on the answering machine.

Or you may mail it in through the U.S. Postal Service: The address is Bible Talk, PO Box 308, St. James, MO 65559