



Science “So Called”

by John C. Whitcomb



“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge” (Proverbs 1:7). There’s one place we must start our quest for knowledge—God’s Word. Otherwise, we can easily be seduced by false ideas masquerading as truth.

The Apostle Paul had very high respect for his disciple Timothy and described him with affirming words to the church at Philippi.

Timothy, however, like all of us, was in constant danger of being drawn into, or at least deeply influenced by, some false ideas masquerading as truth. So Paul ended his first letter to Timothy with these words of warning: “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust [see 6:14], avoiding profane and vain babblings, and the oppositions of science falsely so called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith” (1 Timothy 6:20–21, KJV).

Now what did Paul mean by “sci-

ence”? The Greek word *gnosis* means “knowledge” in a general sense, not in the technical sense we use the word “science” today. Greek expert W. E. Vine explains that “science in the modern sense of the word, *viz*, the investigation, discovery and classification of secondary laws, is unknown in Scripture.”¹

But this verse’s application to historical sciences, such as the study of the origin of the universe (cosmogony) and the study of fossils (paleontology), is clear. Most contemporary scientists who discuss these foundational issues are immersed in “science [knowledge] falsely so called” because

they exclude divine revelation about Creation, the Curse, and the Flood. They extrapolate presently observed processes into the distant past.

Refusing to believe that the Bible helps explain the stars and fossils we see today, they hold to uniformitarianism (the belief that present slow processes are sufficient to explain what happened in the past). By rejecting the one-time, unique events of Creation and the Flood, “they are willingly ignorant” of how the universe, the earth, plants, animals, and people came into existence, and how this world has been judged by our holy Creator (see 2 Peter 3:1–7).

The ultimate question we must answer is the same one Pontius Pilate asked Jesus: “What is truth?” (John 18:38). In reality, Pilate was not at all interested in Christ’s claim or His definition of truth.

Pilate’s attitude toward the truth continues to prevail. Paul’s warning about “science” 2,000 years ago is just as true today as it was then, and it applies to *all* misuses of truth. The modern belief in evolution is just the most flagrant example of mankind’s willful suppression of the truth (Romans 1:18). It is illogical for an atheist to deny that God created the world. If everything came from nothing by a mysterious combination of time and chance, then where did thinking and information come from? How can we exchange ideas and expect others to understand us and take us seriously?

Yet Richard Dawkins, one of the most well-known advocates of evolution and an eminent scientist at Oxford University, pontificates that Bible believers are the ones who are ignorant of the truth: “It is absolutely safe to say that if you meet somebody who claims not to believe in evolution, that person is ignorant, stupid or insane (or wicked, but I’d rather not consider that).”²

The inherent contradictions in Dawkins’s claim were apparent to John C. Lennox, Professor of Mathematics at the University of Oxford. He responded to Dawkins’s argument, and his words are worth rereading: “I confess to finding it curious that those who claim that there is no such thing as truth expect me to believe that what they are saying is true! Perhaps I misunderstand them, but they seem to exempt themselves from their general rubric that there is no such thing as truth when they are either speaking to me or writing their books.

They turn out to believe in truth after all. In any case, scientists have a clear stake in truth. Why, otherwise, would they bother to do science?”³

Knowledge that is based on ultimate truth, then, can only be provided by God the Creator, who knows everything and is the source of truth. Christ, the God-Man, said, “I am . . . the truth” (John 14:6). Note that He not only speaks truth; He is the truth! Thus, any claim to knowledge that contradicts what Christ said and what God’s Word says is false. Each one of us must therefore strive to be “a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15, KJV).

Molecules-to-man evolution is “science [knowledge] falsely so called” because it contradicts biblical revelation about origins. As Romans 1:18–20 tells us: “The invisible things of [God] from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, . . . so that they are without excuse” (KJV).

The Apostle Paul offers some timeless advice to Christians living in a world saturated with false ideas that contradict the Bible: Let us be no longer “children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine [such as evolutionism], by the sleight of men,” but rededicate our hearts and minds to speak “the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:14–15, KJV). ■

NOTES

¹ *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, III, 326.

² “Put Your Money on Evolution,” *The New York Times Review of Books*, April 9, 1989, pp. 34–35. Quoted in John Lennox, *God’s Undertaker* (Oxford, England: Lion Hudson, 2007), p. 93.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.



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Study & Discussion Questions . . .

- 1 Does the Bible really talk about “science”?
- 2 Read 1 Timothy 6:20–21. Why did Paul have to warn Timothy about “science falsely so called”?
- 3 What is uniformitarianism?
- 4 How does God refute uniformitarianism?
- 5 How can anyone know what ultimate truth really is?
- 6 What does atheism do to the concept of truth?
- 7 How can we really know how the world began?
- 8 How do we connect the Lord Jesus with ultimate truth?
- 9 Read Romans 1:18–20. Why does God say that we are “without excuse” for denying creation?



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