

Are science and Christianity enemies or friends?

Okay, let me draw you back together for a few moments. I said that every week we would pick a popular big question of our generation and try and use what we've discovered from John's Gospel to answer it. Well, tonight's big question is this one: Are science and Christianity enemies or friends?

Now, I don't know what you think about that question, but I think at the popular level they are often presented as enemies. Would you say that that's fair? I think that's fair. I think often they are presented as enemies, often we are forced to choose between one or the other, someone will say, 'Are you a person of faith or are you a person of science? Have you picked Christianity, or...? How can you be a scientist and how can you be a Christian?' And often they are played against each other at the popular level and are certainly not the best of friends, hand in hand walking down the street. They are presented often as enemies.

Now, I don't believe that, and there are many, many Christians who do not believe that either, in fact the majority of Christians would not see a conflict between science and Christianity. So I thought for a few minutes I'll try and persuade you of why I don't think they should be enemies – in fact, why I think they should be best of friends. And to do that, just think back with me about what we discovered tonight from John chapter 1. What we discovered and what we were not told: those are two key things.

Now think about what we were told. We discovered that we have been created. We have been designed. There was a plan and there was a purpose. Now that is not at all in conflict with science, is it? To be told that there is a Creator or Designer. In fact, many scientists will say to us that there are many hallmarks of a Designer in the universe all around us, that if you look you will see that this world, this universe that we inhabit doesn't seem to be randomly put together but bears the hallmarks of a Designer. There are many scientists that would say that. So inherently there is no contradiction between creation, a Creator, a Designer and science.

But think about what we were not told in John chapter 1. What were we not told? We were not told how the eternal Word created everything. We were told that he did do that, but we were not told anything about the mechanics, the 'how' question. And if you look all the way through the Bible, the same story is told again and again. The Bible, you see, is interested in different questions. It's interested in the 'who' question and the 'why' question, and not so much the 'how' question. In fact, the Bible is so interested in telling us who the designer is and why you and me are here, and how you and me can live and prepare for the future. But it doesn't set out to be a scientific textbook. And if the Bible is treated as a scientific textbook, we're going to get all sorts of answers that the Bible doesn't want to give us. Because it answers different questions: the 'who' and the 'why'.

Now, to try and help you understand this, you'll see on this table a beautiful cake. Now, some people have asked, 'Is it real?' It is. It is real. Now, there's lots of things that you could try and work out, if you wanted to, about this beautiful cake. But just suppose we wanted to go into detail about this cake, well, what could I do? Well, I could take this cake to our local secondary school, and I could take it through all the different departments. So I could, for example, take it to the chemistry department and ask the chemists to have a look at the cake and tell me all of what is there. And they could tell me interesting things I'm sure, about electrons and protons and neutrons – all sorts of constitutions of the cake. It'd be very exciting, and they could tell me what constitutes the cake.

I could pick up the cake and take it next to the physics department. And the physics department may say, 'Ah, well, they only told you about the big stuff. Let's go even smaller. Let's talk about quarks and all things like that.' 'Very exciting. Thanks very much,' we would say, 'You've told us a lot about this cake.' We could take it to the mathematics department, and what would they tell us? Well, they could get all sorts of measuring things out, they could look at the circles, and they could write equations up on the board to tell us how quickly things collided... It'd be great, wouldn't it? We could pick up the cake again and we could take it to the kitchen, and we could ask the chef,

and the chef might be able to tell us how all the different ingredients were put together and how long it was baked for in the oven. Now, we could have learned lots about this cake by doing that, and each department would've spoken about the cake in the language that it uses. They would be different things, they would not be contradictory things, they would be concurrent truth, just in the language that they were using. But if we wanted to know about the person who baked the cake and why the cake was made, then none of those people could tell us anything about it. How would we discover more about the person who made the cake and why it was made? Well, that person would have to tell us. So let's just see, is there anyone in the room tonight who was responsible for baking this cake? No, I know it's not you. I know it's not you. Is there anyone else who was responsible for baking this cake? Yes, the person next to you. Now, can I ask you why – and this is my wife – why have you baked this cake?

VICKY: Because you told me to.

LEE: Because I told you to. Right. So not because you loved me or anything like that, no? Because I – it is actually right – I told her to. Now, if you wanted to find out more about the baker of the cake and why she made it, well, we would have to hear her speak.

It's the same with our universe. It's the same with the creation. If we want to discover how things were made, how things work, then the scientists will tell us all sorts of different answers to that question. But if we want to know who made it and why we are here, then we've got to listen to the God who created everything. And that's why the words of Jesus are so good. Think about what we've learned tonight, that Jesus is claiming to be fully and utterly divine. He is claiming to be our creator, who has come into the world, and therefore as we listen to him we can find out much more about who God is and why we are here.

And yet, here's the great thing as well. As you go and listen and discover more about the God who made us, the God we discover is a God of order and a God of purpose. And so, rather than Christianity and science being deadly enemies, they're actually the best of friends. Because the God you meet in the Bible is so orderly and purposeful that we should expect science to give us good results. It is not actually an enemy of science: rightly understood, the Bible gives a foundation for science and encourages us to go and do science. It encourages us to come to Jesus to find out the answers, but then to go and look at the world if we want to understand how the world works.

So are science and Christianity enemies or friends? Well, rightly understood, science and Christianity are the best of friends. Well, we're going to go back into our tables for a few minutes. It'd be great if you just want to chat about some of that stuff, and then I'll let you know when we get to half past nine.

Identity – Who is God? Who are we?

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