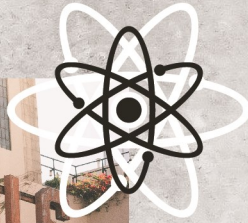


QUESTIONS

ANSWERING TOUGH QUESTIONS
ABOUT SCIENCE AND FAITH



INSIDE

HOW DID WE
GET HERE?...1

FACT OR
FICTION?...3

CAN/DID
MIRACLES
HAPPEN?...7

ISN'T SCIENCE
IN CONFLICT
WITH
CHRISTIANITY?
...11

THE MIRACLES
OF JESUS...13

KNOW WHY YOU BELIEVE
WHAT YOU BELIEVE

Each lesson has optional videos that you can watch on our Facebook page (facebook.com/shofarcreationscience). Find the playlist titled "Explore Booklet: QUESTIONS." Videos are numbered according to the lesson they are paired with. Videos are not required, but are additional ways for you to learn more about specific topics.

How Did We Get Here?



Both science and faith tell us the universe began at an exact moment in time. If you believe this to be correct, then something caused everything to begin and this powerful creative force must be beyond the universe itself.

Science helps us understand the “how” and “when.” Faith explores the “who” and “why.” Romans 1:20 says, “For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So, they have no excuse for not knowing God.” As far as we know, we are the only ones asking why we are here. Animals don’t ask why they exist! The chances of the universe supporting life are small, so either we exist by chance—or someone wanted us to exist!

Is our desire for meaning a clue to who we really are? Maybe love, joy, compassion, and imagination are just chemical reactions. Did our whole universe come from nothing, accidentally making the perfect conditions for life to exist? Or did someone specially design it?

- Consider the cause and effect of our existence—how life began and the possibility that someone started it all.
- Science and faith do not have to work against each other. Instead, we can begin to recognize how they complement each other.
- It is important to know why you believe what you believe!

Some scientists say that science and religion are two separate things. Francis Collins (pictured, left), the director of the National Human Genome Research Institute came to believe in God at the age of 27 while working on his medical degree. He was part of a team treating a woman dying of heart disease. “She was very clear about her faith and she looked me square in the eye and she said, ‘what do you believe?’” he recalled. He said he realized then that he had never considered the matter seriously—the way a scientist should. Until this conversation happened, he considered himself an agnostic atheist and didn’t examine the evidence of Christianity.

1. How do you think we got here? Why do you think that?

2. How much evidence would you need to believe that the world has a creator?

Fact or Fiction?



To believe something is true, we need to trust the source. For example, when it comes to the life of Jesus, we have the gospels—but how do we know they are trustworthy?

Historians look for a number of things when deciding if a piece of writing is reliable. Textual criticism examines the numbers of copies of early texts and looks at the time gap between the original document and the earliest copy of it. They ask questions like:

- “How soon was it written after the actual event?”
- “How many copies of the history do we have and are they accurate?”
- “Are there records from eyewitness testimonies?”

According to the historical criteria for accuracy, we have much more evidence of the life and deeds of Jesus than we do for Alexander the Great or Julius Caesar! There are only 20 copies of Julius Caesar’s life—spanning over 1,000 years. Historians have recovered more than 5,300 Greek manuscripts, 10,000 Latin translations, and 9,300 others of the New Testament—spanning 170 to 450 years. If you accept the accounts of Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar, can you accept the accounts of Jesus and how we got here in the Bible?

Another thing to consider is that the gospel accounts were told by eyewitnesses. If they were lying, they would have done a poor job of making themselves look good or the Messiah victorious! Would so many of the disciples have died to defend a story they knew to be a lie? Some believe the gospel writers exaggerated, but their accounts are very detailed.

Read these eyewitness accounts (emphasis added):

“Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?”

—MARK 4:38

“The others stayed with the boat and pulled the loaded net to the shore, for they were only about a hundred yards from shore. When they got there, they found breakfast waiting for them—fish cooking over a charcoal fire, and some bread. ‘Bring some of the fish you’ve just caught,’ Jesus said. So Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore. There were 153 large fish, yet the net hadn’t torn.”

—JOHN 21:8-11

...continued



Today, many people believe most of what they read online to be true. Is the information on websites like Google correct? What is the evidence that the videos on YouTube are true? How do you know? If you trust what Google, YouTube, or other sources say, why wouldn't you trust God's written word?

A search on Google to answer questions like "How old is the earth?" or "How did we get here?" gives a variety of results. Which one is right? How can you trust their answers?

Only the Bible gives the true and reliable account of the origin of all basic entities of life and the entire universe. Over and over again, the Bible's historical account has been confirmed by archaeology, biology, geology, and astronomy.

People question the accuracy of the gospels because unbelievable things happened. Interestingly, during Jesus' life, no one denied that he performed miracles. Even the religious leaders of Jesus' time saw Him perform miracles—and they wanted to kill Him for it!

1. Do you believe the Bible is true? Why or why not?

2. If you believe the accounts written in the Bible are true, then how do you think we got here?

3. Did the disciples make it all up, or are their accounts trustworthy?

4. Have you read the Bible or the gospels for yourself? Would you consider reading them?

Can/Did Miracles Happen?



What is science? It is a way to understand nature by developing explanations for the structures, processes and history of nature that can be tested by observations in laboratories or in the field. Sometimes such observations are direct—like measuring the chemical composition of a rock. Today, it is common to believe that there is a war going on between science and religion.

Many creationists' view of Genesis 1 makes any kind of evolutionary process impossible, while the philosophical naturalists like Charles Dawkins makes religious belief wrong. At the other end of the spectrum, there are those who believe faith is mainly a private, personal thing, and therefore does not speak to the empirical¹ realm at all. Many people claim that science and religion have nothing in common with each other.

Most scientists have turned to the Bible and said, “the biblical accounts can’t be reliable because they contain descriptions of miracles.” The idea behind this claim is “science has proven that there is no such thing as miracles.”

However, think about the fact that Christians are not the only people that believe in the miraculous. Believing in miracles is not out of the ordinary for many people who follow a certain faith. Those that follow the religions of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Daosim have varying levels of belief in the miraculous.

“If you have a hard time believing in the miraculous, you’re not alone.”

The miraculous is very important for Christian belief. Christians celebrate miracles including the birth of Jesus during Christmas, and the resurrection of Jesus from the dead during Easter, to name a few.

Perhaps those who *don’t* believe in miracles are actually the minority. There are some who outright reject the miraculous realm, and there are others that are searching for answers. If you have a hard time believing in the miraculous, you’re not alone.

¹ empirical—originating in or based on observation or experience; relying on experience or observation alone often without due regard for system and theory; capable of being verified or disproved by observation or experiment

...continued



Consider the evidence of the miraculous throughout the Bible:

OLD TESTAMENT

- The creation of the world in 6 days
- The global flood
- The parting of the Red Sea to deliver the nation of Israel out of Egypt
- The man named Jonah surviving in the belly of a great fish
- ...and many more

NEW TESTAMENT

- The conception of Jesus Christ in the Virgin Mary
- Jesus' miracles: healing of the sick, raising the dead, multiplying food, calming a raging sea, causing a fig tree to die
- Philip transported by the Holy Spirit to Azotus in Acts 8
- Peter raising Tabitha (Dorcas) to life in Acts 9
- ...and many more

The miraculous did not stop after Jesus' death and resurrection! In Matthew 28, we are told that the apostles met the risen Jesus on a mountainside in Galilee. Verse 17 says, "when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted." Some of Jesus' own disciples could not believe the miracle of the resurrection, even when they were looking straight at Him with their eyes and touching Him with their hands. If you have a hard time believing in the miraculous, you're not alone.

Some people may wonder if believing in miracles makes them look silly or foolish. Well, we know that God created everything out of nothing, so it wouldn't be an issue for Him to rearrange parts of His creation whenever he wants to. If you believe miracles cannot happen, then you must know beyond reasonable doubt that God doesn't exist. Do you have evidence to prove that?

1. Define the word miracle.

2. Do you believe miracles exist? Why or why not?

3. Have you experienced God do the miraculous? Write what you are comfortable sharing.

Isn't Science in Conflict with Christianity?



It is common to believe today that there is a war going on between science and religion. A medical student once said, “The Bible denies evolution, which most educated people accept. It bothers me terribly that so many Christians, because of their belief in the Bible, can take such an unscientific mindset.” His concern is quite understandable.

The relationship of science to the Bible relies on how we read the scientific record and how we interpret important Bible passages like Genesis 1. Those who accept the Bible’s authority agree that the primary goal of biblical interpretation is to discover the biblical author’s original meaning as he sought to be understood by his audience.

The Bible also says we are without excuse for not believing in a Creator God. The apostle Paul said in Romans 1:20, “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”

Earlier, we talked about how we got here and the authenticity of the Bible. Many people have simply looked at the data and decided evolution better fits the data. However, some of those very same people have said evolution is somehow not compatible with both the Bible and faith in God. Still, there are

some that say it all started with a bang. But where did this originate? How is it possible that a big bang out of nowhere could be the beginning of all things? Is that really easier to believe than the biblical account of creation?

1. Look back at Lesson One. At this point in our lessons, how do you believe we got here? Did your belief change since Lesson One?

2. Do you still need more evidence to believe someone specially created all of this? Why or why not?

3. Can faith and science work together? Why or why not?

The Miracles of Jesus



JESUS CALMED THE STORM MATTHEW 8:23-27

²³Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. ²⁴Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. ²⁵The disciples went and woke him, saying, “Lord, save us! We’re going to drown!” ²⁶He replied, “You of little faith, why are you so afraid?” Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. ²⁷The men were amazed and asked, “What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!”

JESUS CURED THE PARALYTIC MATTHEW 9:1-8

¹Jesus stepped into a boat, crossed over and came to his own town. ²Some men brought to him a paralyzed man, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the man, “Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven.” ³At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, “This fellow is blaspheming!” ⁴Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, “Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts? ⁵Which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? ⁶But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” So he said to the paralyzed man, “Get up, take your mat and go home.” ⁷Then the man got up and went home. ⁸When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such authority to man.

JESUS RAISED A DEAD GIRL AND HEALED A SICK WOMAN MATTHEW 9:18-26

¹⁸While he was saying this, a synagogue leader came and knelt before him and said, “My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on her, and she will live.” ¹⁹Jesus got up and went with him, and so did his

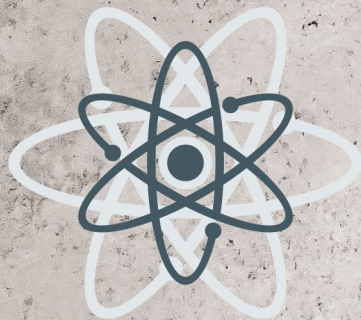
disciples. ²⁰ Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. ²¹ She said to herself, “If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed.” ²² Jesus turned and saw her. “Take heart, daughter,” he said, “your faith has healed you.” And the woman was healed at that moment. ²³ When Jesus entered the synagogue leader’s house and saw the noisy crowd and people playing pipes, ²⁴ he said, “Go away. The girl is not dead but asleep.” But they laughed at him. ²⁵ After the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took the girl by the hand, and she got up. ²⁶ News of this spread through all that region.

JESUS HEALED TWO BLIND MEN MATTHEW 9:27-31

²⁷ As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, “Have mercy on us, Son of David!” ²⁸ When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” “Yes, Lord,” they replied. ²⁹ Then he touched their eyes and said, “According to your faith let it be done to you”; ³⁰ and their sight was restored. Jesus warned them sternly, “See that no one knows about this.” ³¹ But they went out and spread the news about him all over that region.

JESUS FED 5,000 PEOPLE MATTHEW 14:13-21

¹³ When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. ¹⁵ As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.” ¹⁶ Jesus replied, “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.” ¹⁷ “We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered. ¹⁸ “Bring them here to me,” he said. ¹⁹ And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. ²⁰ They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ²¹ The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.



EXPLORING
CREATION
SCIENCE

FACEBOOK.COM/SHOFARCREATIONSCIENCE
SHOFARMISSIONS.COM/CREATIONSCIENCE