

# Reading the Bible with Wisdom

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## Introduction

This article is a follow-up for article #126, **God does not lie - versus - Science does not lie**. [Nr126Lies2.pdf \(csun.edu\)](#) and it is written because four Christians wrote comments in disagreement with what is said in it. It is also written after I read three books in which the human condition is described, and these books are: **Science and Faith – A New Introduction** by John F. Haught, **The Biology of Belief – Unleashing the Power of Consciousness, Matter & Miracles** by Bruce H. Lipton, and **Awe – The New Science of Everyday Wonder and How it Can Transform Your Life** by Dacher Keltner. I can recommend all three of these books.

In 1600, about 400 years ago the Catholic pope had Giordano Bruno burned at the stake for heresy because Bruno supported the view of Copernicus that the Earth was not the center of the universe and that it was the sun that physically orbited the Earth and not the Earth orbiting the sun. This opinion by the pope was based on the following two scriptures.

*Like a bridegroom emerging from his chamber, like a champion rejoicing to run his course, the sun rises at one end of the heavens and runs its circuit to the other; nothing is deprived of its warmth. (Psalm 13:5-6)*

*The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises. (Ecclesiastes 1:5)*

The pope was certain that the Bible was the **Word of God** and anyone who opposed the **Word of God** deserved death. In today's world, some Christians would not recommend someone being burned to death at a stake for making such a science statement, but they would say: (a) that Bruno, if he were alive today, had Satan directing his life and that making such a science claim was evil and came from mankind and not from God and (b) if Bruno had the Holy Spirit and was a born-again Christian, he would have known that it was an evil idea and that it came from humans and not from God.

Bruno was an irritating person and likely said other things against what the pope in the Catholic church believed that caused him to be burned at the stake, but Galileo also expressed this opposition to how the sun moved, and the pope confined him to his house for being in opposition to the Bible.

The fact that the Earth orbits the sun and not that the sun physically orbiting the Earth is not a lie but is the truth, and such truth does not make God a liar. What is written in the Bible is simply reporting the nature of God's natural laws that are dependable, which makes them laws. What is revealed is that when the verses in Psalm 13:5-6 and Ecclesiastes 1:5 were

written, the authors of these verses did not know the science that we know today because there were no microscopes or telescopes in biblical times nor scientists to explain what is observed in these instruments in science words that would not have any meaning to the people living at that time. That is, we need to read the Bible with wisdom and recognize that times and cultures are different.

## **Another science truth**

Likewise, when Moses wrote in the Bible:

*<sup>13</sup> I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. <sup>14</sup> Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, <sup>15</sup> I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. <sup>16</sup> Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.”* (Genesis 9:13-16) --- these scripture verses seem to say that God created a rainbow just at this time at the end of Noah’s flood. But scientifically, that is not true on the basis that God’s natural laws concerning the optical behavior of sunlight moving through the droplets of water (rain or mist) would have produced many rainbows long before Noah’s flood and not just for the first time at the end of Noah’s flood. In other words, Moses was giving a theological message and not a science lesson.

Such a theological message also applies to his description of Noah's flood. Moses took two ancient pagan epics (Gilgamesh and Atrahasis) and converted what is written in these epics into a theological message in which the water in Noah's flood is said to cover the highest mountains in the whole global world. Modern science studies show that such is not true, but Moses would not have known that in writing his theology. Modern science shows that a large storm existed in biblical times that created a major flood, but the water in this flood was local and covered the highest "land" (Hebrew word "eretz") in southeastern Mesopotamia which would have been the whole world that Noah would have seen from the ark. See the following articles.

**Yes, Noah's Flood May Have Happened, But Not Over the Whole Earth** [Flood 2 \(csun.edu\)](#)

**Fountains of the Great Deep and Noah's Flood**  
[Nr64Fountains.pdf \(csun.edu\)](#)

## **Still another science truth**

In the Bible there are 823 scriptural verses that says that all knowledge, emotions (love and hate), and thinking reside in the heart. From science we know that the heart consists of muscle tissues that have no neurological network of cells that record all knowledge, produce both love and hate emotions, and enable thinking. That is, what is said in the Bible is excellent theology but "*bad science*." Readers of the Bible can then use "wisdom" in viewing these scriptural verses and consider what is said in them as having "symbolic meaning" that is not written to be a

scientific interpretation. The lack of a modern scientific interpretation of the function of the heart in the Bible occurs because in the time of Jesus, the early biblical people considered the heart as the center of the body. All arteries led from the heart. It pulsed with life. The brain was thought to be some kind of organ that filtered the blood, but, otherwise, it was relatively unimportant.

The custom of offering blood and sacrifices to gods was common in many ancient cultures and supports the contention that ancient cultures considered the heart to be more important than the brain. The Israelites also continued this custom when they offered blood from animals that were sacrificed to Jahweh in the Temple in Jerusalem. In none of these ancient cultures was the brain sacrificed.

This misunderstanding of the importance of the brain is also illustrated by the Egyptian culture. When their temple priests mummified their pharaohs, they carefully cut out the heart and saved it for the preserved body, but they scraped the brains out of the skull through the nostrils and threw away the scrapings.

On the basis of the above analyses, if the Bible were an accurate guide today to medical science, then, emotional feelings, knowledge, and wisdom should be considered to reside in the heart and not in the brain. Therefore, in our medical institutions, if young-Earth creationists are correct about the scientific inerrancy of the Bible, (a) a mentally disturbed person should be sent to a cardiologist, (b) professors at medical

schools should be teaching today's psychiatrists and medical doctors to treat the heart with drugs for mental diseases, (c) to operate on the heart for mental problems, and (d) to ignore the brain in these dealings with mental health problems.

## **God Created Humans in His Own Image**

In Genesis 1:27 the scripture reads:

*God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.*

This scripture is not only good theology, but it is also good science. Commonly in our patriarchal society, humans give God a “male” image and say “in His own image.” But the Hebrew words are “in *Our* own image” in a plural sense and not as a “male” God. The “good science” is that God gave humans a very large brain in which a neurological network of cells occur that allow all knowledge, emotions (love and hate), and thinking to occur as described above. Using that network in our brains (minds), humans can look at an index finger on a hand and tell it to move and, seemingly instantly, a pulse of electric energy is sent from the brain through an arm, through the hand, and then to a muscle in the finger that causes it to move.

Likewise, the optic nerve cones in the back of our eyes have a neurological network of cells that convert incoming energy in electromagnetic waves into electric pulses that go to the back of our brains and tell us that humans have seen; i.e., green light. The cells in these optic cones recognize the green color on the basis of the wave length of the light, and then the

brain also recognize how intense (brightness) of the green is on the basis of the amplitude of the waves. The greater the amplitude --- the more intense the green is. And, other cells in optic cones recognize other colors, like red or blue. Thus, humans are made in the image of God in that humans can see, think to cause a muscle to move, store knowledge that humans moved a muscle at a given time, and have an emotion of gladness that we could move that muscle.

None of the above information is described in the Bible because it is written to describe good theology and not to give a science lesson. Moreover, when humans look at fingers in a hand, humans think that they are seeing masses of cells consisting of proteins in muscle and skin and of kerogen in the fingernails. That observance is on a macro-scale, but on a subatomic scale, the fingers have no mass but are mostly empty space. Einstein gave us the equation  $E = mc^2$  (energy equals mass times the speed of light squared). That is a tiny amount of mass of hydrogen atoms can be converted into an enormous amount of energy --- hence, the hydrogen bomb. But the equation can be reversed in God's universe so that a large amount of energy can be converted into an enormous amount of mass to the Nth degree that became galaxies, stars, and eventually into carbon, hydrogen, oxygen, and nitrogen atoms in our fingers. These different elements are "star dust" that resulted from a supernova explosion, and our sun is a second-generation star and not a first-generation star as Genesis 1 implies in its first four days when it is written to give good theology and not as a science lesson. See the following article.

## **Grand Apologetics – Errors in Science and Christian Guidance** [Nr93Grand.pdf \(csun.edu\)](#)

Furthermore, if humans could see inside atoms at the really tiny subatomic scale, no mass would be seen at all. Instead, different kinds of invisible spheres of spinning energy of leptons, quarks, and other such creations would be there. This science quantum information is also not described in the Bible because it was not written to be a science textbook.

Nevertheless, this quantum science information reveals how awesome that God is as a Creator. Furthermore, God has made the universe with 6 very precise quantum numbers that if they were a very tiny bit larger or smaller, the universe that is observed by humans through telescopes would not exist nor would humans exist. (See book “**Just Six Numbers**” by Martin Rees.)

## **Where God Lives**

The early Hebrews thought that God lived in heaven on a throne in a three-tier universe. See: **Understanding Inerrancy in the Bible and Science Not in the Bible** [Nr95Inerrancy.pdf \(csun.edu\)](#) for an image of this universe. Then, the Bible gives us a progressive accurate history of biblical Hebrew people and reports how this view in early times changed such that the Hebrews moved God from a throne in heaven into a box (an ark with specific dimensions) that could be put in a tent to be worshipped there, and then the Hebrews carried God in this ark as they moved around from place to place. Eventually, this ark was put in a stone temple in Jerusalem, and then, finally, Jesus appeared and taught that God could move, not only into our bodies (brains, mind, in the head, but also into cells in stomachs



and intestines that enable digestion of food or into the muscles in a heart that enable our bodies to function). That is, humans are created in God's intelligent image.

## **Age of the Universe and Earth**

This accurate human history recorded in the Bible has been used by modern humans to say that the universe and Earth are 6,000 years old by two methods. One method uses the long ages of patriarchs and subsequent tribes to the present time to total 6,000 years. The other method uses the scripture that God says that "a day can be thousand years."

*"But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day" (2 Peter; 3:8)*

Because there are 6 days in the Genesis Week of the Bible, the universe and Earth can be said to be 6,000 years old. But if the Bible is written to give good theology and not written to be a science textbook, what is said in the Bible can be interpreted a different way. That is, saying that "a day is like a thousand years" has a theological meaning in that the author of 2 Peter could have said "a day is like a million years" or "a day is like a billion years," but, of course, early biblical people could not have imagined such great lengths of time. In any case, saying that a "day is like a thousand years" is a Hebrew way for saying "for a very long time." This realization of time-length also applies to where Moses says in Genesis 1 that during Noah's flood, it "rained for 40 days and 40 nights" and then realize that such words do not necessarily mean precisely the numerical

numbers of 40 but that it is a Hebrew way of saying that it rained “for a very long time.”

On that basis, the Bible is written with good theology, but not as a science textbook. Modern science knowledge gives us ample evidence that the universe is as much as ~13.8 billion years old and the Earth is ~about 4.6 billion years old. Christians need to quit teaching that the cosmological processes in the universe and the geologic processes on Earth can be squeezed into a 6,000-year time frame when there is ample evidence that such is not true. See the following articles that provide this science evidence.

**Position Statement: Science, Bible, Noah’s Flood, and Evolution** [Nr102Position.pdf \(csun.edu\)](#)

**Understanding Inerrancy in the Bible and Science Not in the Bible** [Nr95Inerrancy.pdf \(csun.edu\)](#)

**Further Consequences of the Big Hurricanes Theory** [Nr121Further6.pdf \(csun.edu\)](#)

## **The Power of Prayer and Medicine**

Lastly, humans need to look, not only at the good theology in the Bible, but also at the science that a God/Creator uses. One of the wonders is the power of the mind that God has given humans in using emotions, particularly love. That is, in the medical fields, the pharmaceutical companies manufacture drugs to treat different kinds of sicknesses, and these companies have salespeople going around to visit doctors to convince them that a

particular pill that these companies make and sell is the best to treat a given sickness. But there are always side effects that result when a drug in a pill is introduced into a human body because that drug may also affect biological processes in other cells and functions of the body. Such is often ignored and may cause more lethal effects than the pill was supposed to treat. Instead, a doctor needs to look at the whole life style of a human patient and find out what other possibilities led to a sickness, such as an improper diet, lack of exercise, the endurance of stress, the missing of sleep time, or whatever, and then the doctor may recommend to a patient other things to do rather than taking a pill or pills.

In many cases, if a doctor gives a patient a placebo (a sugar pill) and assures the patient that it will resolve his/her health problem, commonly the health problem, because of the positive thinking that the mind has over body functions, is resolved and the patient is healed. Also, people with cancer, who have advanced stages of large tumors, when (a) are told that people are praying for them to be healed and (b) are convinced that God will answer their prayers, they become healed, and the doctors can find no trace of the tumor and are amazed. That is, positive thinking that also comes from God occurs in the brain because humans are created in the image of God, and this positive thinking coming also from God does the healing.

To further illustrate the power of positive thinking of the mind over body functions, it has been demonstrated that if a person is hypnotized and (a) touched by a cold iron nail on the skin of an arm and (b) is told that the iron nail is burning hot, the

person's mind causes blisters to form on the skin at the point of touching as if it were touched by a burning hot nail. That is, this blistering clearly shows that humans are made in the image of God to have this miraculous ability. See the book by Bruce Lipton.

The above discussion is not meant to suggest that all prayer is going to result in a healing of sickness or lack of death. If death occurs or sickness continues, people who have prayed can have guilt feelings and blame themselves for not praying hard enough. Or the person who is still sick can think that he or she did not believe hard enough for healing, but that need not be true because God may have other plans for humans who are dealing with health problems. Furthermore, death is one of the necessities of life. People who have near-death experiences and come back to life testify that the mind goes beyond the body into a wonderful existence of love and peace. At any rate, it is certainly not wise for anyone to use negative thoughts about a health problem because the mind will interpret such negative feelings to mean that there is no hope at all, and really bad effects can happen.

## **Conclusion**

On the basis of what is said above, the Bible needs to be read with wisdom and as a book of good theology. The reader should follow the interpretation of Conrad Hyers, a Presbyterian minister. In regards to Genesis 1, he says that the issue being faced by the early Hebrews was not how the universe, earth, and life were created but by the beliefs of their neighbor tribes who thought that the gods that they worshiped were bad and were out

to get them. These gods included night, water, sun, moon, stars, plants, and animal gods, and these Hebrews had to make daily sacrifices to idols of these gods if they wanted to survive. The author of Genesis 1 said: “These are not gods. There is only one God and He made all of these objects and they are all GOOD.” I agree with pastor Hyers. At any rate, Genesis 1 provides wonderful theology, and that is something I can believe.

If the Bible is read with wisdom, then it can be understood that it answers the questions of who God is and why God exists and that science, not in the Bible, answers the questions of when, where, and how God created, and both are true and not in conflict. The Bible can also tell us that this God promotes love in God’s kingdom and that love can have powerful effects on a human’s body and mind. On that basis, the person who believes in science can realize that he or she is not controlled by Satan, but he or she is using the mind that God gave this person in God’s image to recognize the truth of science that God also provides.