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## Can Faith and Reason Work Together?

**Isaiah 1:18: (NKJV)** *"Come now, and let us reason together," says the Lord, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool."*

It is often assumed that faith and reason are enemies. It is often assumed that faith and science cannot get along. Based on these assumptions, the Bible seems to take on the role of a book that holds people back from the present century and makes them somewhat backwards in their thinking and irrelevant in their contributions...but is this really the case? Are faith and reason incompatible - unable to co-exist and contribute to someone's life? Stay with us as we look into the relationship between faith, reason, science and the Bible.

### Our only question:

### Can faith and reason work together?

First of all, we need to have some working definitions:

#### **Merriam Webster Online Dictionary: Reason**

- 1: the power of comprehending, inferring, or thinking especially in orderly rational ways:
- 2: proper exercise of the mind
- 3: sanity

The words for "reason" in the Bible, especially in the New Testament, carry the thought of "dialogue," going back and forth without lecturing.

#### **Merriam Webster Online Dictionary: Faith**

1. confidence or trust in a person or thing: faith in another's ability.
2. belief that is not based on proof

**Strong's: Faith:** 1. An objective body of truth: 2. A rule of thought, 3. A personal quality, act, or habit of the individual man;

**McClintock and Strong's Cyclopedia:** According to the Greek language, psychologically, "faith is the faculty of grasping evidence, with a propensity to admit it when duly presented to the mind."

**A Key Point: Faith according to the Bible is NOT credulity! Credulity:** readiness or willingness to believe especially on slight or uncertain evidence (gullibility)

#### **A Biblical definition of Faith:** Hebrews 11:1 Acts 17:31:

Again, here is an example of the all important difference between faith as taught in the Bible and credulity or gullibility. Biblical faith has a surety and conviction behind it that is based on evidence. For example, in this Acts scripture, there was physical proof that Jesus was resurrected. Credulity has only a willingness and desire to believe without any real basis needed.

*Reason is the glue  
that holds  
faith together.*

**Faith, according to the Biblical definition, develops through observation and application:**

**Matthew 8:23-27:** Observing Jesus caused them to believe.

**James 2:14-17:** Proclaiming without doing what you say isn't any good. Faith is first developed through observation - the gathering of evidence. Then it has to be applied to make it work.

In summary, faith is not gullibility but is built upon evidence.

Many people see our faith approach as credulity. Let's listen to a few clips:

🔊 **Bill Maher - Future does not belong to Religion, Scarborough Country 2007**

- People who do not believe in science and rationality

🔊 **Qualia Soup - Bible can only produce faith, YouTube**

- Christian faith has "superior" status;
- "There is nothing commendable in believing without evidence;"
- Guinness Book of World Records example: If they did not verify records, their credibility would plummet.

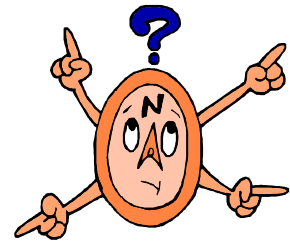


Let's see if the things in the following verses fit the "observations" above: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22 (selected verses) 2 Timothy 2:14-15: Your faith requires work to make sure you are getting it right. That's a big difference from being gullible.



Driving directions:

Take exit 37 and stay to the left.  
At the next light, turn right and it's the first driveway on the left.



Are these good or bad directions? That depends on what direction you are coming from, what road you are coming from, etc. If you already know where you are beginning, they are good directions.

2 Peter 1:16-21: It is important to have the eyewitness account, but the Apostle Peter said it was more important that those accounts were confirming prophecies given thousands of years earlier. This is faith based on evidence.

🔊 Bill Maher- Doubt, humor and I don't know, *CBS Interview* 9/29/08

- People are used to religion, that's why they don't laugh at it being silly.
- I preach the Gospel of "I don't know."

🔊 Qualia Soup - Science doesn't need faith, *The Faith Cake, YouTube*

- Science observes what happens then looks at that via support, non-support or contradiction through further experimentation.
- In the absence of valid reliable evidence, the default position is "we don't yet know."

The Bible has to be understood in context...

- ...When are the words spoken/written?
- ...To whom are they spoken/written?
- ...What are the circumstances of the words needing to be spoken/written?
- ...Why are the words being spoken/written?
- ...When, in what age, do the words apply?
- ...Are the words symbolic, literal or prophetic?
- ...Are they admonitions, parables, or a record of events?

**Does the Bible tell us that people of faith are supposed to know everything?** Matthew 24:32-36: There are certain things that we don't know, but we are told where to look so we know where we are in the stream of time. There is a process of searching and finding evidence.

Acts 1:6-8: After Jesus is resurrected, they are asking if it is yet time. Jesus tells them that they need to only be faithful to what they already know based on what they have already seen - because of the evidence.

1 Corinthians 13:12-13: The Apostle Paul acknowledges that we can't see everything clearly now.

**The account of Doubting Thomas:** John 20:26-29: Jesus praises faith without sight, but this is used as an argument *against* faith. However, collectively there was evidence, eyewitnesses and prophetic accounts - enough to believe upon. For Thomas, the other ten apostles were already eyewitnesses to the resurrected Jesus.

Doubt is a natural part of life and means we need to search further.

**Observations about faith:**

- Faith is NOT science - though the principles of searching and testing are present;
- Faith is NOT credulity or gullibility;
- Faith is acquired by listening and considering;
- Faith is maintained by study, proving and experience;
- Faith is spread by repeating the above two bullet items.





🔊 Bill Maher - Religion is arbitrary, *Scarborough Country* 2007

- Religion is a bureaucracy between man and God.
- If you were born in Pakistan, you would have a different belief. Religion is therefore completely and terribly arbitrary.

🔊 Qualia Soup - Science not sacred and unquestionable, *YouTube*

- Science is refined when discrepancies occur.
- Science not about dogmatically defending personal theories and the status quo.
- Science examines and challenges concepts rather than regarding them as sacred and unquestionable.

Global Warming: Recently a number of the "facts" of Global Warming have not only come under fire, but have had to be revised. Essentially we were told some things were "pure science" when they were in fact altered science. Does this mean that *all* Global Warming research and data is bogus? Of course not! So if the raw data is not in question, where did the breakdown occur? Was it the interpretation, was it carelessness, was it a separate agenda or was it the delivery to the masses?

Whatever the case, we know two things:

1. We know that revisiting the raw data is appropriate and necessary;
2. We know that what the masses have been led to believe has now had a serious shadow cast over it, due to what is now a perceived lack of credibility.

Faith regarding science comes in believing the conclusion based on interpretation of the "empirical evidence." The pure science was perhaps tampered with, but who would know that? Therefore, if you want to remove faith out of the scientific world and still have science relevant to the human world, then all human individuals must become expert scientists to be able to review and test the raw data of pure science so their beliefs can be based solely on the science and not on the bias of one or a group of individuals.

Following this reasoning, and knowing the impossibility of all people becoming experts in all of these areas of science, should we label those who study science and discovery as mere cultists, whose conclusions have a better than average chance of being correct, but must always be taken with a grain of salt until further personal verification can be established?

No, of course not! We should rather be on our guard to be sure that the conclusions are consistent with pure science only and not built on agendas, fabrications or opinions.

**The same latitude should be given to faith.** Just because we can see examples of true faith being hijacked for personal gain or power, does not mean that all faith is to be rejected! Rather, we should be on our guard to be sure that our conclusions are consistent with **pure faith only** and not built on agendas, fabrications or opinions.

Colossians 2:6-8: People have personal agendas. The Apostle knew this would creep into Christianity. 2 Peter 2:1-3: Beware, because it is our personal responsibility to follow through. The scientific method is not the end of all truth, but it is a way of confirming the things that faith tells us is there. Matthew 7:15-20: Faith is not the same as science, but that does not mean it isn't valid. The scientific method is not the end all for truth.

🔊 Qualia Soup - No faith-based assumptions - *The Faith Cake, YouTube*

- The consistency of physical laws that science uses eliminates assumptions.

But are these incredible physical laws so precise by happenstance? Or were they designed by an Intelligent Creator?

Darwinian Evolution assumes there is natural selection acting on random variation. Natural selection is defined as the outcome in the competition for life that permits a life form to leave more offspring than a competitor.

Source: Charles Darwin, Chapter 6, *Origin of the Species*: "To suppose that the eye, with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting the focus to different distances, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correction of spherical and chromatic aberration, could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest possible degree."

The Principle of IRREDUCIBLE COMPLEXITY: Any machine cannot function without a minimum assembly of components; in other words, certain things have to have all of their elements at their most basic level in order to function.



Let's assume a mousetrap as an example. The function of a mousetrap is to trap a mouse. A basic mousetrap consists of a base, a spring, a hammer, a holding bar and a catch. You can certainly make a more sophisticated trap with more parts and components. But you need a minimum of these parts in order for the mousetrap to function properly. This arrangement we designate as **IRREDUCIBLY COMPLEX**. You cannot make this machine any simpler without impacting its function. Take away any component and it no longer works!

However, you can't develop a mousetrap over time, because evolution says that each change has to benefit the whole. But if you are adding a spring when there is no lever, there is no benefit. This principle is a dramatic challenge to evolution.

If there are laws of the Universe, we believe they did not come about by chance. We discover what is already in place, we do not invent them. There are myriads of irreducibly complex "machines" within cells!

On another note - what about woodpeckers? The tongue of a woodpecker wraps around the back of its brain and comes out of its mouth. The tongue acts as a shock absorber to keep it from getting brain damage as it bangs its head against a tree. How does that evolve? That's not a natural selection that is beneficial until it is fully in place. What about bees and flowers needing one another? How does that dependence evolve without intelligence behind it? How is that randomly accomplished?

Source: Charles Darwin, Chapter 6, *Origin of the Species*: "If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed, which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down."

**What are the "faith-based assumptions" that faith asks of us?** 1 Corinthians 11:1 Philippians 3:17-19: Compare the way we follow through on our Christian faith because we can get off the path. Our example is that of Jesus. Philippians 3:7-14: Paul no longer followed his worldly ambitions. These are faith-based assumptions. The message is: don't change it to fit you or alter it, instead go back to the original path of Jesus.

🔊 Bill Maher - The Bible and Fairy Tales, *Scarborough Country* 8/22/07

- If Bible stories and fairy tales were switched, would it matter?
- You believe what you were told because adults told you it was true.

🔊 Qualia Soup - Bible cannot prove God Exists, *YouTube*

- There is nothing that can be regarded as evidence for the existence of gods.
- The Bible cannot be regarded as evidence because none of its claims can be proven through scientific investigation.

**So, what does the Bible prove?** Romans 1:16-20: The Bible continually points to nature and nature's laws as proof of a grand intelligence that God tells us is Him! The Bible appeals to **REASON** as a basis for belief!

Here are a few examples of scientific facts the Bible taught us before man could verify what is now common knowledge:

**Meteorology:** Water is recycled in the earth's water cycle. Job 36:27-29

**Oceanography:** The ocean currents. Psalms 8:8

**Astronomy:** The sun moves around in an orbit. Psalms 19:4-6/The Earth is round and it is surrounded by the atmosphere! Isaiah 40:22/The belt of Orion being loosed! Job 38:31

Not only does the Bible appeal to reason by way of nature, but also by way of history, both past and future. The Bible is full of prophecies, some of which have come to pass, some of which are presently coming to pass and some of which are future. We will only consider one of these - one which is in the process of being fulfilled as we speak - Israel coming back to their land.

Please refer to Ezekiel 37:1-6 and Ezekiel 37:11-14 for further study.

Isaiah 1:18: (NKJV) "Come now, and let us reason together," says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Proper faith is built upon reason and the incredible proofs given to us in the Scriptures.

*So can faith and reason work together?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions,  
Think about it...!*