



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."*

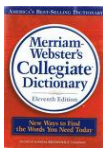


It is often assumed that faith and reason are enemies. It is often assumed that faith and science cannot get along. Based on these assumptions, the Bible seems to take on the role of a book that holds people back from the present century and makes them somewhat backwards in their thinking and irrelevant 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

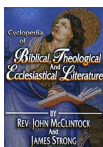
The words for "reason" in the Bible, especially in the New Testament, carry the thought of "dialogue," going back and forth without lecturing.

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

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 Cyclopaedia: 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: (NIV) *Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.*

Acts 17:31: (KJV) *Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*



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.



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

Matthew 8:23-27: (NASB) ²³When he got into the boat, His disciples followed him. ²⁴And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being covered with the waves; but Jesus Himself was asleep. ²⁵And they came to him and woke him, saying, "Save us, Lord; we are perishing!" ²⁶He said to them, "Why are you afraid, you men of little faith?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm. ²⁷The men were amazed, and said, "What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?"

Observing Jesus caused them to believe.

James 2:14-17: (NASB) ¹⁴What use is it, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but he has no works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? ¹⁷Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself.

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:

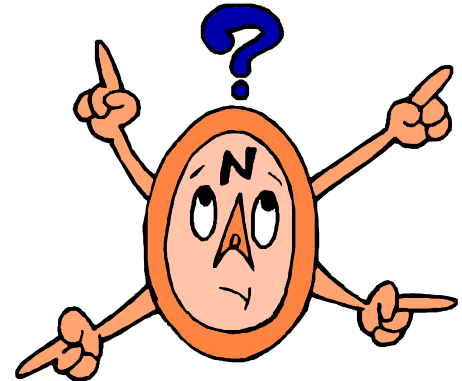
1 Thessalonians 5:12-22: (NASB) (selected verses) ¹²But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction...¹⁵See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people. ¹⁶Rejoice always; ¹⁷pray without ceasing; ¹⁸in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. ²¹But



examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil.

2 Timothy 2:14-15: (NASB) ¹⁴*Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers. ¹⁵Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.*

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.

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?**



2 Peter 1:16-21: (NASB) ¹⁶*For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to him by the Majestic Glory, "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased"—¹⁸and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹So we have the prophetic word made more sure (confirmed), to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. ²⁰But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, ²¹for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.*

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."

Does the Bible tell us that people of faith are supposed to know everything?

Matthew 24:32-36: (NASB) ³²*"Now learn the parable from the fig tree: when its branch has already become tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near; ³³So, you too, when you see all these things, recognize that he is near, right at the door. ³⁴"Truly I say to you, this generation will not pass away until all these things take place. ³⁵"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. ³⁶"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.*

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: (NASB) ⁶*So when they had come together, they were asking him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; ⁸but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."*

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: (NASB) ¹²*For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. ¹³But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

The Apostle Paul acknowledges that we can't see everything clearly now.

The account of Doubting Thomas:

John 20:26-29: (NASB) ²⁶*After eight days his disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be*



with you." ²⁷Then he said to Thomas, "Reach here with your finger, and see my hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing." ²⁸Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!" ²⁹Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed."

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: (NASB) ⁶Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷having been firmly rooted and now being built up in him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude. ⁸See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

People have personal agendas. The Apostle knew this would creep into Christianity.

2 Peter 2:1-3: (NASB) ¹But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. ²Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; ³and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

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: (NASB) ¹⁵Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? ¹⁷So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. ¹⁹"Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰So then, you will know them by their fruits.

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.



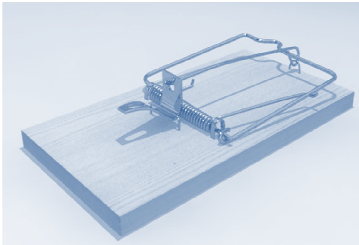
But are these incredible physical laws so precise by happenstance? Or were they designed by an Intelligent Creator?

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: (NASB) *Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.*



Philippians 3:17-19: (NASB) ¹⁷*Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. ¹⁸For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, ¹⁹whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.*

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: (NASB) ⁷*But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. ⁸More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, ⁹and may be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, ¹⁰that I may know him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being conformed to his death; ¹¹in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. ¹²Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. ¹³Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.*

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: (NASB) ¹⁶*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. ¹⁷For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous man shall live by faith." ¹⁸For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. ²⁰For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.*

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: (NRSV) ²⁷For he draws up the drops of water; he distills his mist in rain, ²⁸which the skies pour down and drop upon mortals abundantly. ²⁹Can anyone understand the spreading of the clouds, the thunderings of his pavilion?

Oceanography: The ocean currents.

Psalms 8:8: (NRSV) *the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.*

Astronomy: The sun moves around in an orbit.

Psalms 19:4-6: (NRSV) ⁴yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. *In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun,* ⁵*which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy, and like a strong man runs its course with joy.* ⁶*Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them; and nothing is hid from its heat.*

The Earth is round and it is surrounded by the atmosphere!

Isaiah 40:22: (NRSV) *It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to live in;*

The belt of Orion being loosed!

Job 38:31: (NKJV) *Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades, or loose the belt of Orion?*

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...!***



Hubble Telescope picture