

Science and faith

Gary P. Baumler

My high school science teacher (an evolutionist) once told me I'd have my faith rocked at its very foundations in college because of my belief in creation. He was wrong, but I've had to sort out some things in the meantime. The question keeps coming back: "What does science have to do with faith?"

The easy answer is "Nothing." But explaining that answer is not nearly so easy.

A Religion News Service article I saved prompts these thoughts. For five years some Christians have been saying that the latest science supports the belief in a momentous flood in Noah's day. Yea, for good science!

Or not? The evidence had to do with geology and the fact that the once fresh-water Black Sea has become a salt-water sea. But now we learn that for thousands of years, apparently, salt water from the Sea of Marmara has been somehow seeping into the Black Sea. No flood necessary!

I'm not here to argue or even understand the scientific evidence in this case, but to discuss how Christians should take such news. For the Christians who were upset—some greatly agitated—by the new findings, it should be a lesson. Science cannot prove Bible history, especially miraculous events. It cannot disprove it either. It cannot go back; it can only theorize based on uncertain evidence. Good scientists constantly test and retest their own findings.

Although we welcome scientific evidence that supports the Bible, we are foolish to hang our faith-cap on it. Science finds new and varying evidence, changes theories, creates its own missing links, usually assumes no divine intervention, is never absolute. As one theologian said, science is "a fickle friend at best." That friendship is too rocky for something as precious as our faith.

Besides, think about it. If a fresh-water to salt-water Black Sea helps prove a universal flood, why wouldn't we have many more bodies of water like it? The primary "proof" of Scripture is not scientific. It is the Holy Spirit working through the Word to bring us to faith.

An even bigger issue surfaces here, however. Some Christians agree that science shouldn't affect faith because, they say, the accounts in Genesis are not historical. In fact, one theologian insists that if you believe that the first 10 chapters of Genesis are historical, "then you need corroboration from science."

"Need corroboration?" The sort of corroboration that the Black Sea offers? Corroboration that disallows God's hand at work, which doesn't take into account that God created the universe with the appearance of age? Corroboration that looks at bone fragments and comes up with a new level of man's evolution? Corroboration that

would have us believe that everything came from nothing and life emerged from non-life by its own power?

It is true, as another theologian contends, that “the Bible is not a book of archeology or science.” But that makes it no less true when it speaks of events that have shaped our earth and our lives. The alternative is plainly unacceptable. Our creation, our fall into sin, the promise of the Savior, the work of Christ for our salvation, and his resurrection from the dead all took place in history. They are archeologically and scientifically true. Make any part of it a myth, and all of it becomes suspect. Take out one piece, and the rest falls like a house of cards.

Our God and his Word are not so fragile. They will stand into eternity after this earth with its imperfect science has been destroyed.

Gary P. Baumler is editor of Forward in Christ magazine and WELS Director of Communications.

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