

## Does Science *Really* Undermine the Virgin Birth?

Why Science is the Arch-Enemy of Materialism; Not of Christianity

Absolutely not! Although certain leaders in my Christian denomination state that the miraculous conception of Jesus within Mary as narrated in Matthew 1 and Luke 1 conflicts with *scientific* knowledge,<sup>1</sup> their perceptions are grounded on an ignorance of the actual parameters<sup>2</sup> entailed in the pursuit of scientific facts. This mistake results in effectively vilifying science for being “anti-Christian.” To be sure, a significant number of *scientists* also<sup>3</sup> share the same negative prejudice as do certain theologians (though for different reasons) that *scientific* investigation conflicts with religious teaching of a kind that bases its dogma on revelation by a transcendent God (2 Timothy 3:16). Yet they too are categorically mistaken in that judgment. That party makes the invalid leap from rightly celebrating the mounting benefits from advances in technology that result from following the scientific method, to actually believing that physical particles constitute the *entirety* of existence! This intellectual error perverts an investigational *method* that is highly fruitful for exploring and harnessing the material world, by turning it instead into a dogmatic world-view (religion?) whose chief tenet is that physical matter constitutes the *whole* of reality. This shift in beliefs is so utterly absurd, it **fails to qualify as science** and for this reason is designated by the different term; “*scientism*.” Hence the title of my highly critical essay on this fallacious view, titled “*Scientism is NOT Science*.”<sup>4</sup> Plainly, it ISN’T science *per se*, but dogmatic *scientism*,<sup>5</sup> which cannot be reconciled with orthodox Christianity, and that for five reasons:

1. Science cannot pronounce judgment on the *possibility* of miracles for the simple reason that the domain of scientific investigation is limited entirely to the study of the *nature* of matter and the material causal events which occur between physical entities. Although science can evaluate *specific* effects that are alleged to be the result of the miracle under consideration in order to determine whether its details withstand scrutiny, it cannot dogmatically rule out miracles altogether. Since Christianity by contrast both encompasses the *intersection* between material and non-material (spiritual) reality, and embraces the latter, it is outside of the province of science to dismiss Christianity as mythical by means of its own “tools” and methods.
2. For this reason there are no *scientific* grounds for science to appeal to, on which to insist that causation be limited to solely *material* (non-agent<sup>6</sup>) processes. I make the case that limiting causal factors to material processes is utterly irrational in my essay, “The Case for the Soul.”<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lohar Schwabe has stated, “*Virgin birth is something any scientific approach to Scriptures must reject,*” and later, “*Admittedly it does not make any scientific sense that Jesus is the incarnate God who died for our sins and rose from the dead.*” (“Technology, Thinking, and Theology.” Jaynan Clark Eglund, President of the Word Alone Network, ed. *By What Authority?* (Hoffman House, 2008), pp. 190, 194). \*\* Matthew Harrison, President of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, has stated, “*Just as science will forever have a problem with Jesus being God and man, with His virgin birth, or with His resurrection...*” (“Concerning Six Day Creation.” *Lutheran Witness Magazine*. (January 3, 2018), p. 1, also <https://blogs.lcms.org/2018/64959/>, -- all boldface mine). Such terminology conveys the impression that at their very core science and Christianity are in conflict with each other with the consequence that Christianity cannot withstand the level of scrutiny that our culture expects truth claims to meet.

<sup>2</sup> Or “guidelines.”

<sup>3</sup> Richard Dawkins, *The Greatest Showman* (Free Press, 2009), writes that his book’s name was inspired by a t shirt he received which was printed, “*Evolution: the Greatest Show on Earth and the Only Game in Town,*” (p. XIV), and \*\* Stephen Hawking, *The Grand Design*. (Bantam, 2012), which states, “*This book is written in the concept of scientific determinism which implies...that there are no miracles or exceptions in the laws of nature*” (p. 34). Note that my employment of the suffix, *ists*, in *scientists* (my text), highlights the distinction between science as a method of investigation, and its practitioners who either may or may not heed its proper boundaries.

<sup>4</sup> As with every other essay of mine, this essay may be accessed at my website, [www.christianityontheoffense.com](http://www.christianityontheoffense.com)

<sup>5</sup> The suffix, “*ism,*” serves the purpose of transforming a *particular* action or thing into an all-encompassing social cause or philosophy.

<sup>6</sup> An agent is a personal being who, in this case, has the capacity to harness material causes for his/her purposes.

<sup>7</sup> Op.cit. (4).

3. It is commonly suggested that “Biblical Dogma” cannot rise to the stature of science in terms of pronouncing, as trustworthy, factual realities for the reason that its’ vehicle of communication is “merely” religious and not scientific discourse. Yet this objection is easily debunked by the multiplied clear examples from everyday life that truths are successfully delivered (conveyed) through a variety of means all the time. See my essay, “Defusing the Alleged Conflict Between Scientific Fact and the Text of Genesis 1 Without Compromising Either One.”<sup>8</sup>
4. Indeed, it is anti-scientific to presume at the outset that matter, and material causes must constitute all that exists. The scientific method instead requires giving prior attention to the details surrounding the phenomena that it wishes to investigate before it can even propose a valid working hypothesis. Such phenomena must include not only that data which is accessible to our senses or can be measured according to universal standards, but also to that data which we witness socially (by interpersonal communication and productions resulting from creative thinking) and intuitively within our own creative and thinking minds. The proposition of materialists that free-will is an illusion runs in complete contradiction to the latter criteria.
5. Furthermore, the presumption that matter is the only driving force behind simply every physical process runs into sheer contradiction with the brute empirical fact of cosmology that out of the Big Bang the entire cosmos came into existence from nothing physical whatsoever (Genesis 1:1).<sup>9</sup> What logically follows from this reality is that the realm of the spirit is not merely equal in stature to matter, but the *primary* reality out of which all physical things come (*came*—Gen. 1:1) into existence (John 1:1-3). Since all of physical existence came into being by the Creator who freely commanded it to be (Hebrews 11:3), the so-called “challenge” that skeptics pose against a virgin birth was surely no problem at all to God. In fact the intellectual burden they gleefully thrust onto Christians belongs instead on the shoulders of the materialists who strongly suggest to the contrary that their materialistic cosmos appeared from no cause (or creative agent) at all.

It is urgent that both sides of this matter of the relationship between biblical faith and scientific investigation take a careful reassessment of the proper parameters of the research program that we call science. It is here that we find a vital means by which we can understand the world by every means at hand, including both empirical discovery, and the renewal of our minds by the fresh study of Scripture.<sup>10</sup>

I am not seeking in this paper to substantiate the virgin birth (which I deem to be a fact) by means of supporting evidence. The nature of this miracle in particular is such that no evidence here is conceivably possible (pun intended). On the other hand, the case for Jesus’ life and death, and most especially His resurrection from the dead is highly verifiable. See my essay, “Hoax? Myth? Or Literally True? The Evidence for Jesus’ Historical Resurrection.”<sup>11</sup> Building as I do on that miracle, I deem the virgin birth (God’s means to become human) an easy miracle to accept on faith without direct evidence.

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<sup>8</sup> Op.cit. (4).

<sup>9</sup> Einstein’s General Theory of Relativity states that matter, energy, space, and time, came into existence out of nothing. Hugh Ross. The Creator and the Cosmos. (RTB, 2018). \*\* See also my essay, “Was the Big Bang the Big Beginning?” Op.cit. (4), p. 7.

<sup>10</sup> See my essays, “The Biblical Demand to Take Another Look,” and \*\* “The Bible Expressly Forbids Denigrating the Testimony,” under the file name, “Romans 1:18-20.” Op.cit. (4).

<sup>11</sup> Op.cit. (4). \*\* See also Lee Strobel’s book, The Case for Christ. (Zondervan, 2000).

