

“Wise answers to challenging questions. Hugely helpful!”

BEAR GRYLLS

GOD'S BOOK

AN

HONEST LOOK

at the Bible's



TOUGHEST TOPICS

ANDREW OLLERTON

Praise for *God's Book*

“Rather than dodging the difficult issues, Andrew welcomes them—and then helps the reader work them through. With wisdom, clarity and pastoral sensitivity, *God's Book* invites us to engage the Bible on its own terms, not ours.”

ANDY BANNISTER, author and director of Solas

“Andrew Ollerton has provided an essential and highly accessible guide to the key concerns and objections many modern readers may have when reading the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Not only does Andrew provide context for confusing Scriptures and help to make sense of difficult passages, he also shows how the entire story of Scripture can speak to every generation anew, including our own. It is an excellent read—a book I would recommend to anyone wanting to make sense of Scripture.”

JUSTIN BRIERLEY, podcaster and author of *The Surprising Rebirth of Belief in God*

“With clarity and heart, Andrew helps us see how the ancient words of Scripture still speak today. He doesn't just unpack facts—he points to Jesus who is still good news for the real stuff of life. This book is honest, insightful and full of hope that we can love God's Book—and trust it—more than we ever thought possible.”

RACHEL GARDNER, director of partnerships at Youthscape

“Andrew's intellect, research and level of insight and understanding is in full force here! Personally, I find it hugely helpful when someone so cleverly gently walks a dullard like me through some of the most challenging questions and somehow leads me to such wise answers.”

BEAR GRYLLES, adventurer and TV presenter

“Here is something special: a guided tour of the Bible for those who doubt it from cover to cover. Taking contemporary questions seriously, Andrew Ollerton steers clear of simplistic apologetics. He appreciates the way today’s skepticism is many-sided—tensions between science and faith, objections to the Bible’s treatment of slavery and women, doubts about its historical claims, and uncertainty about its teaching on sex. Ollerton doesn’t settle for merely defending Scripture on these and other fronts. He uncovers a forgotten wisdom running through the whole narrative and shows, with clarity and generosity, how the Bible still speaks compellingly to every dimension of life.”

JOHN DICKSON, PhD, author and historian, host of *Undeceptions*, Jean Kvamme Distinguished Professor at Wheaton College, Illinois

“Andrew Ollerton is a theologian who guides us through the teachings of the Bible with a deft touch. This is a great resource for anyone struggling with difficult questions about the Bible.”

NICKY GUMBEL, pioneer of the Alpha course

“In *God’s Book*, Andrew Ollerton examines some of the toughest questions that arise when we read the Bible, encouraging us to think them through rather than avoid or ignore them. . . . In reading this book, you will be encouraged to discover good reasons for trusting the Bible for yourself. You may not agree with everything you read, but I recommend engaging with *God’s Book* and considering the Bible afresh.”

AMY ORR-EWING, author and theologian

“Whether you’re new to the Bible or have studied it for years—there’s something in here for everyone. Saints, skeptics and seekers will all benefit from this superb guide through some of the Bible’s more challenging terrain.”

MICHAEL OTS, evangelist and director of Feuer

“The Bible is so immense and so influential it has shaped even our critiques of the Bible. Andrew Ollerton does an excellent job of exploring the immensity as well as facing the critiques head-on. This is a wonderful guide to the modern world’s founding document.”

GLEN SCRIVENER, author and CEO of Speak Life

“Written in a simple but scholarly fashion, this book will help anyone who is grappling with difficult questions about the Bible. Andrew Ollerton has done a great job in giving a sense of the overarching story of Scripture as well as tackling some of its most challenging themes.”

DR. DAVE SMITH, senior pastor at KingsGate Community Church, Peterborough

“This book would be an ideal companion for anyone wanting to read the Bible for themselves, as well as leaders and preachers who want to better explain the faith to others and answer their questions in a winsome and compelling way.”

JOHN STEVENS, national director of Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC)

“Andrew Ollerton has a gift for tackling complex issues and combining them with real-life stories and analogies that make the Bible *click*. . . . Don’t read this book alone. Grab a friend, your youth group or your family, and use it as a starting point for the conversations we *need* to be having. It’s a book for now—and for what’s next.”

DR. CHLOE SWART, national director of Alpha UK

“The Bible has shaped our assumptions and our culture more than we think. Yet when you actually read the Bible, it throws up all kinds of problems and questions for modern readers. Andrew Ollerton faces these questions head-on in this honest and readable book which helps place the Bible in its historical context and highlights its wisdom for living well today.”

BISHOP GRAHAM TOMLIN, author and theologian

“With engaging storytelling, practical wisdom, scholarly insight and a delightful sense of humour, Andrew Ollerton takes his readers on an accessible and lively exploration of seven profound questions at the heart of human experience. This is a timely and precious book for anyone curious to discover a life deeply infused with meaning by the greatest story ever told, addressing head-on the Bible’s toughest topics with honesty, warmth and clarity.”

DR. CHRISTOPHER WATKIN, philosopher and author of *Biblical Critical Theory*

“Tackling contemporary concerns, Andrew is able to tease out why some of us become perplexed by what we are reading. In an engaging and accessible way, Andrew encourages us to think again about the context and genre of the Bible. This helps us to receive what we are reading in a different way. Andrew’s book will help you enjoy the whole Bible through a clearer lens.”

DAVID WELLS, Catholic theologian and author

“Andrew Ollerton has a real knack for making complex ideas accessible and simple. In *God’s Book*, he puts this skill to use in producing an eminently readable introduction to some of the most controversial passages in the Bible. The approach is open, conversational and non-dogmatic, though Ollerton expertly guides the reader not only to look more closely and carefully at particular topics, but all the while to see them as part of the wider whole of the biblical story.”

PROFESSOR PAUL S. WILLIAMS, chief executive, Bible Society

“This book will inspire and equip you for the kinds of conversations that matter in everyday life and work. . . . Rather than calling us to defend Scripture, Andrew invites us to let it speak for itself. By exploring the historical and cultural contexts in which these passages were written,

he helps us see that many of the texts we struggle with are not awkward passages to be avoided, but life-giving words that tell a better story about who God is and what it means to be human.”

PAUL WOOLLEY, CEO at the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity

“Andrew has written a truly remarkable book for our time. With wit and wisdom, brilliant scholarship and thorough research, Andrew gives excellent and accessible answers to some of today’s most challenging questions about the Bible and the Christian faith. I’m so thankful for the time and effort he put into this book, and am confident that for many it will be an effective tool in validating the truths of the Bible.”

BRIAN BRODERSEN, pastor emeritus of Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa and president of Calvary Global Network

“The Bible is not just a book of tough questions but the story of the God who brings hope into everyday life. In *God’s Book*, Andrew Ollerton bridges the gap between Scripture’s ancient story and today’s culture with honesty, humor, and pastoral care. I’m grateful for this resource—it makes the Bible accessible, engaging, and deeply relevant for neighbors, friends, and church members alike.”

DANIEL ROLFE, senior pastor of Mountain Springs Church, Colorado Springs, CO

“*God’s Book* is very needed in this season when so many people have seemingly unanswerable concerns about the Bible. I love the way that it is laid out around seven of the deepest questions thinking people have. I see this timely resource as equally valuable for genuine seekers and for thoughtful followers of Jesus looking to gain confidence as well as fluency so they can help others grow.”

KEVIN PALAU, CEO of Palau

“This book would be an ideal companion for anyone wanting to make sense of the Bible, especially the tricky parts. Andrew has a gift for tackling complex issues in an accessible and relevant way, combining in-depth teaching with real-life stories and analogies. A clear, honest and insightful study through the Bible. I highly recommend it for curious seekers and committed Christians.”

CHRIS ORDWAY, Global Leadership Network

“*God’s Book* is fresh, honest and engaging. It raises historical and ethical questions often asked of Scripture, and answers them sensibly and respectfully. While simple, the book is not simplistic; it’s accessible but not shallow, comprehensive but not complex. An inquiring mind will find satisfaction, new Christians will find encouragement, and the mature will find stimulation. Andrew Ollerton has given us one of the best recent introductions to the Bible.”

CHARLES PRICE, author and former pastor of The Peoples Church, Toronto

“Andrew Ollerton’s publication *God’s Book* is a true gift. With unwavering devotion to Scripture, a keen understanding of the current cultural context, and a warm, conversational style, Andrew tackles some of the most challenging issues of our day in a way that speaks beautifully to the curious and the confused, as well as to the dedicated Christ follower.”

BISHOP KEITH COWART, Free Methodist Church, USA

God's Book



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ask. seek. find.

GOD'S BOOK

— AN —
HONEST LOOK
at the Bible's



TOUGHEST
TOPICS

ANDREW OLLERTON

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God's Book: An Honest Look at the Bible's 7 Toughest Topics

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Prologue

One day, our eldest son came running in from the garden and announced: “I just saved Toby’s life!” Charlotte and I were initially grateful to our brave boy. But then his younger brother came in, soaking wet and furious: “Joel just pushed me in the pond!” We stared at our sons, trying to make sense of their contradictory claims. Finally, the penny dropped. As a fan of *Blue Peter*, a popular British TV programme, Joel was on a quest to collect all its “badges.” But the coveted gold badge still eluded him. This special prize was only awarded to young people who bravely intervened to save someone’s life. And so it made sense. With an ulterior motive, Joel crept up behind his brother, shoved him in the pond, half dragged him out and then ran inside to claim his reward!

This amusing incident highlights the importance of understanding texts within their context. When events become isolated from their original setting, motives and actions can easily be misconstrued. The topics covered in this book have been subject to a bewildering array of claims and counterclaims. Skeptics decry the Bible as primitive and morally dubious, while believers respond with various rebuttals. How can we even begin to discover

the truth? Well, perhaps we need to revisit the original context in which these issues arose. That's the purpose of this book. It addresses seven challenging topics by understanding them within the overarching plotline of the Bible.¹

Don't think for a minute that this is merely an academic exercise. These are not abstract philosophical ideas, but gritty issues etched into the biographies of real people. Making sense of these topics will help resolve contemporary dilemmas too.

- When we understand the creation stories in their ancient context, we won't be bullied into making a false choice between *either* science *or* the Bible.
- When we appreciate that the conquest of Canaan was a unique moment in Israel's history, it reveals why these stories do not justify violence or hatred today.
- When we understand the male sex culture in ancient Rome, the teachings of the Apostle Paul appear less outdated and more like an original #MeToo movement.

We should bear in mind that while the Bible was written *for us*, it wasn't written *to us*.² We're tuning in to texts that originated a great distance from our immediate context. We must travel back through centuries of cultural change to really make sense of the laws, stories and letters in the Bible. If you isolate a few verses from their original setting, God's book can easily be made to sound offensive, outdated or contradictory. However, as my family's pond drama shows, when we appreciate the backstory, it reveals a quite different perspective. Of course, no one can claim to be an expert on all seven topics, least of all me. Instead, this book is pitched at an introductory level. It provides an accessible and

thought-provoking chapter on each subject—subjects that most scholars write whole books about.

The Bible Is Trending

We were driving down the road in our rather old, dilapidated car when our daughter pointed to a passing vehicle: “Dad, can we get one of those instead?” It made me smile because the car in question was a Skoda. When I was Lucy’s age, we used to tell jokes about them: *What do you call a Skoda with two exhaust pipes? A wheelbarrow. How do you double the price of a Skoda? Put fuel in the tank.* Within a generation, an object of derision has become highly desirable. Skoda has turned its image around.

The Bible’s reputational status seems to be on the rise in our cultural moment too. As Western civilisation faces a meaning crisis, some influential voices are returning to the Bible as a valuable source of wisdom. British historian Tom Holland has highlighted the role of the Judeo-Christian Scriptures in forming values we now take for granted, including human rights, compassion for the vulnerable and consent in relationships. Ironically, when skeptics attack the Old Testament for its legalism or brutality, they are judging it by standards the Bible itself has established. The Canadian psychologist Jordan Peterson has also drawn a large following by unpacking Scripture as a source of meaning in the face of suffering and malevolence. In addition, the Bible features prominently with a host of other influencers: social activists like Ayaan Hirsi Ali, musicians like Nick Cave, podcasters like Joe Rogan and explorers like Bear Grylls.

Older generations may still have an aversion to the Bible, but among younger people, there’s a new curiosity. Perhaps that’s why

you are reading this book? You want to make sense of the Bible for yourself. I hope so. There's no better way to spend your time. However, I should warn you that God's book has some tough ideas and rough edges. Stray beyond familiar verses, and you will encounter perplexing passages that throw you off balance. It took me a while to realise this. Having grown up in a Christian home, I took the Bible on trust from an early age. However, in my late teenage years a conversation with a skeptic disrupted my simple faith. He claimed that the Bible was full of contradictions. I decided to read the whole thing to find out for myself. What I actually discovered was incredible harmony, given the timescales involved and the range of authors who compiled the sixty-six books that make up the Bible.³

However, what troubled me more were passages that involved brutality, outbursts of anger and terrifying warnings of judgment. Sunday School lessons had not prepared me for this. Now, I felt conflicted. On the one hand, I wanted the Bible to be the "Word of God." On the other hand, I didn't like some parts of it. I have since grown to appreciate that our reasons for trusting the Bible run deeper than whether we like it or find it convenient. How will we ever discover the truth if God is not allowed to communicate anything that makes us feel uncomfortable? Surely, the Bible's special status and value depends on it conveying truths from beyond ourselves, which cannot be easily accommodated. In an age of culture wars, echo chambers and fake news, the Bible offers solid ground and a firm place to stand.

After years of further wrestling, reading and questioning, including a PhD in theology, I'm writing this book to share what I wish I'd known in my late teens and twenties. The Bible is simultaneously a life-giving source of truth and a complex narrative with

some controversial passages. When skeptics dismiss it out of hand, I wonder: “Have you actually read it?” The Bible has stood the test of time and transformed civilisations for a reason. But when believers glibly state that the Bible is the Word of God, I also wonder: “Have *you* actually read it?” Tough topics in the Bible cannot be resolved by simplistic answers or dogmatic assertions. Even after we’ve wrestled hard and drawn on the best insights available, we’ll still be left with mysteries. But that’s where faith comes in. Can we learn to trust God with things beyond our finite understanding? No matter how knowledgeable we become, there is no escaping this.

How to Get the Most from This Book

Our primary focus in these chapters will not be on how the Bible was formed or whether the manuscripts are reliable. Instead, our focus will be on tough topics that surface *within* the story of the Bible.⁴ I’ve deliberately chosen subjects which our modern culture finds most problematic. Someone in medieval China or Victorian Britain may have shrugged their shoulders at things we consider “tough” but would stumble over other teachings we applaud. These seven topics are unashamedly for our cultural moment.

The book closely follows the big plotline of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. En route, we’ll grapple with laws about women and slavery, brutal warfare in Canaan, traumatic suffering in Babylon, impossible miracles by Jesus, teachings about sex that rocked the Roman Empire, and visions of heaven and hell that are literally out of this world. Maybe one or two of these topics are particularly concerning you right now? If so, dip into the relevant chapters and scratch the immediate itch. But then go back to the start, because this book will be most impactful if you follow the

chronological order. It brings the added benefit of learning how the whole Bible forms one coherent story that centres on Jesus. Here's how our seven topics hang together:



At a glance, each topic may seem rather daunting. So I've divided the seven parts into shorter chapters, which you can read in ten-minute bursts. For those who want to dig deeper, there's also a "side-note" section within each part that tackles a related issue, as well as more information in endnotes. Each chapter concludes with a suggested Bible passage to *read* and a question to *reflect* on. These exercises will help to consolidate your thinking. And why not invite friends to read along with you and discuss each topic together? On my website, you will find small group videos and discussion guides for each of the seven topics (andrewollerton.com).

Today, I'm father to three teenagers—the Skoda girl and the pond boys! I enjoy the challenge of keeping up with their questions and pushbacks about the Bible. They ask things I've never thought about and face challenges I never anticipated. This includes issues around identity, sexuality, global responsibility, ecological fears and new spiritualities. So I've finished each part with a letter to one of them, based on actual conversations we've had. It's an honest moment that distills all the thinking and touches down in the real world. If you are a parent, pastor or youth leader, these letters provide a conversation starter to help you discuss tricky topics *together*.

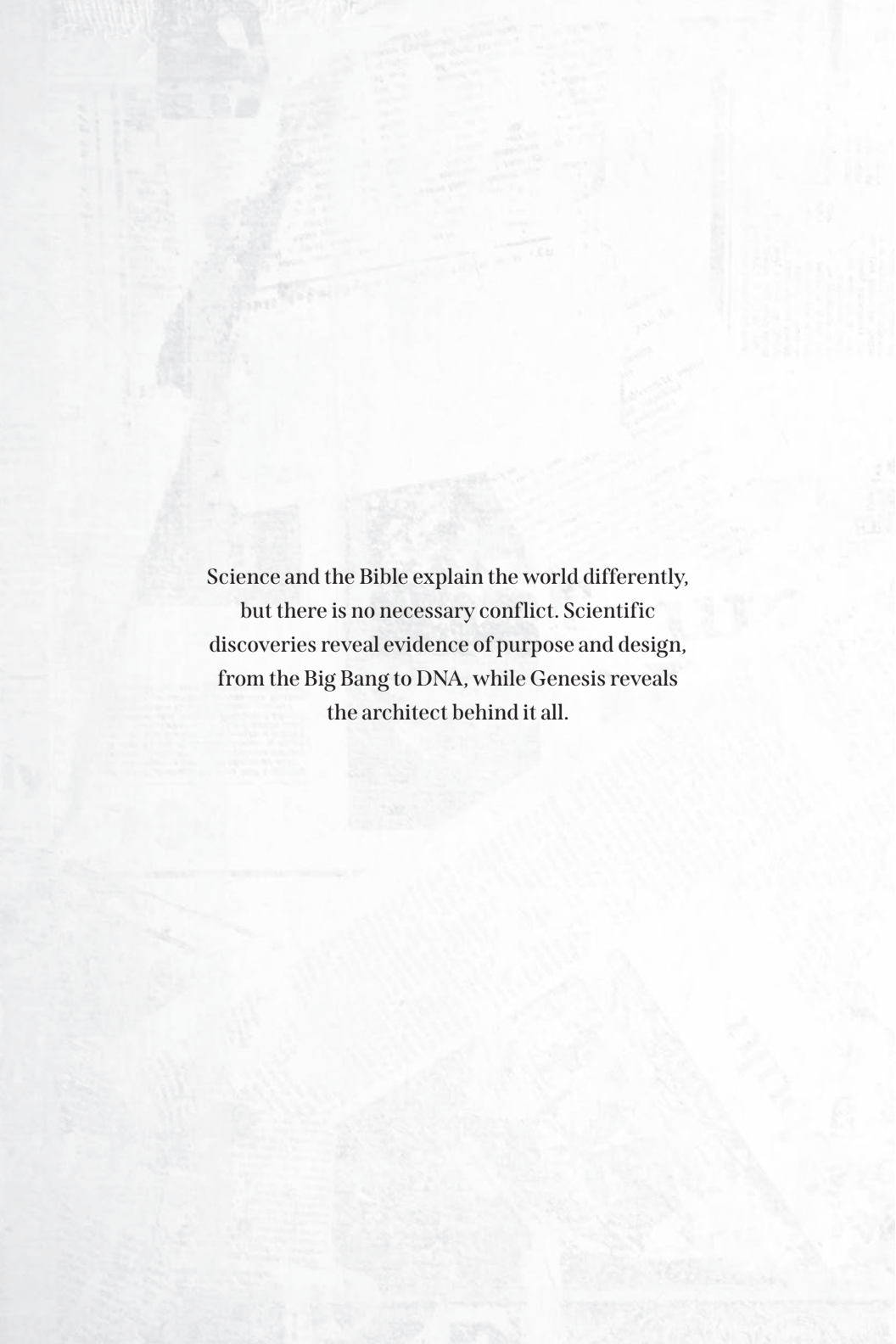
At times, the impression has been given that there are some things we shouldn't question. Just believe the Bible and do what it says. So we suppress honest doubts and hide disappointment or confusion. However, intellectual challenges and life's hardships are unavoidable, and these can trigger a full-blown crisis of faith. How can we develop a more robust confidence that grows stronger under pressure? I believe we need to lift the lid on the Bible so that tough topics can be explored and discussed in safe spaces. You may be a spiritual seeker who is new to the Bible or a believer who's already given it some thought. You may be a younger person at the start of your journey, or someone who's been round the block more times than I have. Whatever your background, we all need permission to grapple with tough topics raised by the bestselling book of all time.

PART 1

CREATION

Can we take Genesis seriously in a scientific age?





Science and the Bible explain the world differently,
but there is no necessary conflict. Scientific
discoveries reveal evidence of purpose and design,
from the Big Bang to DNA, while Genesis reveals
the architect behind it all.

Introducing the God-or-Science Dilemma

A few years ago, I visited an impressive historic property called Woolsthorpe Manor. In the seventeenth century it was home to a young and inquisitive genius who investigated the implications of an apple falling from a tree. At his family home in Lincolnshire, Sir Isaac Newton also experimented with refracted light and tried to fathom the laws of motion that govern the universe—all before the age of twenty-four. Now, I'm not a historic manor house type, but this proved to be a memorable visit. In the science centre, I paused to listen to a curator who was using a glass prism to show how rainbows form when light refracts through raindrops.

While in mid-flow, two young women, also not historic manor house types, interrupted him: “But I thought God created rainbows?”

I wish you could have seen the look on the curator's face. Surprise quickly turned to disdain: “That's what people used to believe, before science disproved God.”

Now I couldn't resist joining in: “But didn't Isaac Newton believe God established the laws of nature that cause rainbows to form?”

Before the annoyed curator had a chance to reply, one of the women said to the other: “You don't know nothing about God. You threw a rock through a church window!”

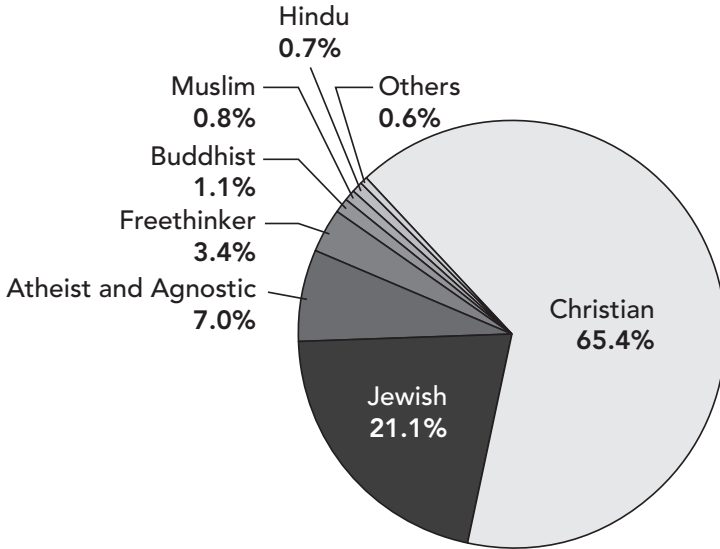
That revelation silenced all of us. Light refraction no longer seemed important. Instead, I wandered off to have my photo taken next to the famous apple tree where Newton hit on gravity.

That conversation about rainbows captures the dilemma at the heart of this chapter: does the explanatory power of science make belief in God less plausible? In particular, can we still take the creation stories in Genesis seriously? The curator articulated a popular belief that the Bible and science are opposed to each other, so you must choose between them. The secular narrative goes something like this: *In the past, natural phenomena were attributed to “God” because we didn’t know any better. But now, we understand why seasons change, diseases spread, tides rise and rainbows form. We no longer need “God” or the Bible to make sense of the world. Thanks to science, we’ve grown up and moved on.*

I wonder if you’ve heard similar ideas expressed on social media or in conversation with friends. Perhaps you’ve tried reading Genesis and wondered whether stories about Adam and Eve or Noah’s ark are for children. We can’t take them seriously as adults, can we? Whether you’re a science guru or someone who panics when you see a periodic table, these questions are important. If we want to progress beyond the first few pages of the Bible, we need to wrestle with the creation stories. They form an essential backdrop to everything that follows. So don’t opt out of the debate. Instead, let me show you why science and the Bible enjoy a more harmonious relationship than the curator suggested. To achieve this, we need to understand Genesis on its own terms. And that doesn’t require equations or Bunsen burners. After all, Genesis was written to make sense to ordinary people, standing on planet earth, without a microscope or telescope in hand, but wondering where everything came from and what it all means. If that’s you, then we’re good to go.

The Relationship Between Science and Faith

The idea that religion and science are in a permanent state of conflict is fake news. Recent studies have shown that the percentage of professional scientists in America who profess belief in God is around 50 per cent, and more than 60 per cent of recent Nobel Prize winners (laureates) identified as Christians. Science has not squeezed out belief in God. Instead, there is an impressive list of groundbreaking scientists, men and women, past and present, who share a strong faith. For example, the founder of modern genetics was a Christian priest, Rev. Gregor Mendel (1822–1884), and the head of the Human Genome Project that first sequenced DNA coding in the entire human body was a Christian called Francis Collins.

RELIGION OF NOBEL LAUREATES IN SCIENCE FROM 1901 TO 2000¹

Far from science undermining faith, many brilliant minds have discovered the opposite. The more physics, chemistry and biology reveal the intricate conditions that allowed the universe to form and complex life to develop, the more they detect a mystery at the heart of reality, an inexplicable sense of design, direction and purpose. From the farthest star to the smallest cell, science is revealing new wonders that demand a fuller explanation.

The Bible itself begins with an awe-inspiring account of the origins of everything. Genesis purports to reveal not only the beginning of the space–time universe but also what it means to be human and the meaning of life itself. However, Christians disagree sharply on how to interpret Genesis. Some have tried to *accommodate* the findings of science; others have *resisted* anything but a literal interpretation of the six days of creation. Truth be told, we

can't all be right, but we do need to stay humble and open to each other. Our understanding of the Bible is partial and incomplete.

Nevertheless, a more basic conviction can unite us: In the end there will be a perfect correspondence between the *world* God created (nature) and the *words* that God inspired (Scripture). On this basis, no Christian has anything to fear from accurate science and no scientist has anything to fear from the true meaning of Scripture. Our understanding of both nature and Scripture may be faulty, but these two sources ultimately complement each other because they share the same author.

Science can purify religion from error and
superstition; religion can purify science from idolatry
and false absolutes. Each can draw the other into
a wider world in which both can flourish.

POPE JOHN PAUL II²

Science can reveal things about the natural world that help to expose faulty interpretations of the Bible. For example, in the seventeenth century, Galileo famously challenged the prevailing view that the sun revolved around the earth. His new theory sparked a controversy with the Catholic Church that culminated in the trial of Galileo (1633). However, historians have recently shown that the debate was more about personality and politics than the Bible.³ Galileo's new theory primarily opposed the ideas of the Greek philosopher Aristotle (384–322 BC). His theory that the earth was the fixed centre of the universe remained dominant until the seventeenth century. But Galileo helped to disentangle science from this ancient error and so enabled a better interpretation of Scripture. Poetic verses referring to the earth standing on “pillars”

(Psalm 75:3) and being “firm and secure” (Psalm 93:1) were now seen for what they were—metaphors capturing the stability of our world under God’s providential care.⁴ The brilliant chemist and devout Christian, Robert Boyle (1627–1691), therefore argued that science helps us understand the “written” book of *Scripture* by revealing more of the “created book” of *nature*.⁵

Equally, the Bible provides a fuller explanation of reality than science ever can. You cannot measure love by its height or beauty by its weight. And yet these immaterial values are more real than the objective world that we can see and touch. The tools of science only assess a limited slice of reality. Think back to the rainbow conversation. Understanding light refraction isn’t the whole story. The reason we get our phones out when we see a rainbow is because of something beyond the laws of physics, don’t you think?

Have you ever wondered why there is order and beauty in nature at all? The material world seems to come with natural laws and mathematical logic already baked in. Without this, our universe would be random chaos and science experiments would be impossible. Where did this mysterious sense of order and purpose come from? As C. S. Lewis noted, the presence of *laws* in nature suggests there must be a *lawgiver*.⁶ And this lawgiver has arranged things so that light refraction results in elegant colour explosions. Don’t you think that demands an explanation? Along with Sir Isaac Newton, I believe rainbows are both *natural phenomena* which science can investigate and *majestic signposts* that point to a benevolent creator. As a poem in the Bible puts it:

The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

PSALM 19:1

I love exploring the great outdoors because I feel more in touch with God in wild places. Recently, I had the opportunity to climb Mount Olympus in Greece. I stayed overnight at a high-altitude hostel and set off while it was still dark the next morning. I arrived at the summit ridge just as the sun was rising over the Aegean Sea. All alone, I cried out in wonder and spontaneously sang an old hymn: “How Great Thou Art!” My tuneless voice somehow felt in tune with the chorus of nature. Perhaps you’ve had similar experiences?

When you stop and think about it, things we take for granted are nothing short of miraculous. The fact that there is *something* rather than *nothing*, *order* instead of *chaos*, *conscious persons* not just *inanimate matter*. The more science expands our understanding of how the world works, the more it requires a fuller explanation. In his book, *Return of the God Hypothesis*, Stephen Meyer shows that within the scientific community itself there is increased openness to evidence of design, purpose and transcendence within the natural world.⁷ So, instead of feeling threatened, we can adopt a positive stance. Good science and the truth of Scripture work in harmony to provide the most satisfying explanation of life on planet earth.⁸

That said, our task from here is not primarily to examine scientific discoveries. Others have attempted this, and I will draw on their work. But I am no scientist. Instead, our task will be to understand Genesis on its own terms. To achieve this, we will first need to consider what kind of literature we’re dealing with, including the ancient context. Then we will consider how stories of creation in the Bible relate to modern science, before wrapping up with some tips on how to interpret Genesis today.



READ

Psalm 19:1-14



REFLECT

What metaphors does this psalm use to celebrate the wonder of nature (verses 1-6) and the words of God (verses 7-14)? How would you respond to the claim that science and faith are in conflict with each other?