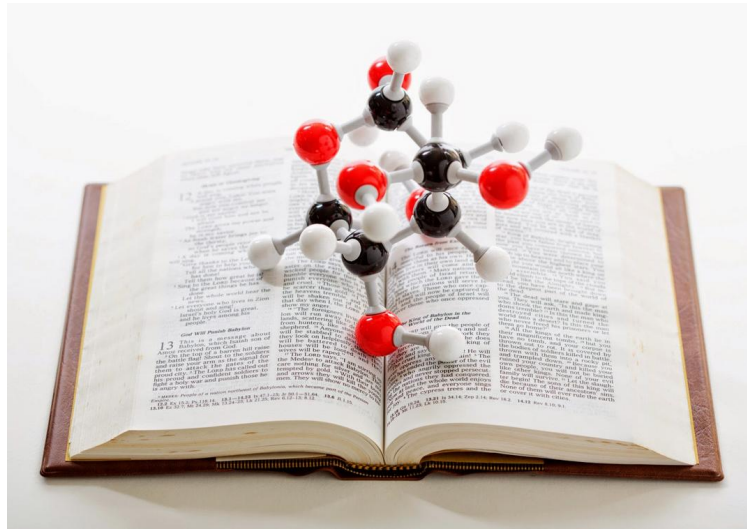


At Odds With Science

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I THINK A DIFFICULTY is not belief in God per se,¹ but belief in certain conceptions of God. Some conceptions are at odds with what scientific work reveals about reality. Christianity's fantastical content places it at odds.

Some Christians believe that life on Earth is only about 6000 years old. This is at odds because through science we know that life's lineage extends back at least 3.7 billion years.

Many Christians believe in the existence of Heaven—a “perfect” place where there will be no suffering nor disease. But in science we know that there is an obligate parasitism of the *Holospira* bacterium on the *Paramecium* protozoan, causing disease in the latter.² Reconciling this fact with Christian belief about Heaven demands either that Heaven's doors remain shut for unicellular protozoa and bacteria, or that the evolved survival strategies of the *Holospira* bacterium will be altered in Heaven so as not to inflict disease on the *Paramecium*.

Christians are usually required to believe in the Virgin Birth. That is, that Mary did not conceive by sexual intercourse, that a mammalian egg fertilisation did not happen, that Jesus' full genomic complement of 23 chromosome pairs was obtained “magically,” and that Mary may have had sexual relations with a divine entity. In science, we know that diploid organisms inherit one copy of each homologous chromosome from each parent. So as a normal diploid human, Jesus must have had a biological mother and a biological father, and that for each chromosomal pair, one chromosome must have come from his mother Mary and the other chromosome from his father. Furthermore, in science, parthenogenesis and asexual reproduction are known to occur variously within Earth's biomes, but never in humans.

There were no eye-witnesses to the essential supernatural phenomena in the Christian narrative. In particular, there were no eye-witnesses to Jesus' alleged divine conception, other than Mary herself, of course. Nor were there any eye-witnesses to Jesus' alleged Resurrection. Many Christians may be surprised to learn that, if read at face value, the Gospels explicitly report that there were no eye-witnesses to the Resurrection. Conversely, it is with the telescopes and microscopes of science that we may all be eye-witnesses!

Many Christians believe that Jesus performed the miracle of walking on the surface of the waters of the Sea of Galilee by the port of Bethsaida. In science we find this not to be possible. Furthermore, my investigations reveal a mundane explanation for the alleged miracle, namely, that Jesus walked from sand bank to sand bar

¹I declare this to be my own work, entirely. In particular, no AI was used in any research, analysis, synthesis, writing, nor typesetting of this work. In short, AI was not recruited at any time in this work. Errors and inaccuracies are therefore proudly my own.

²“Our Paramecia Are Infected,” Journey to the Microcosmos, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=foKz81E1CjM>

to sand bank, and so on, in an ancient estuary system located near Bethsaida as the Jordan River flows into the Sea. I am happy to argue this case.

Christians are usually required to believe that Jesus was at once fully corporeal, died by crucifixion, and yet became physically alive again after being dead for about three days. In science, we know about mammalian hibernation, and how microbial cysts can become reanimated under favourable ambient conditions. But neither of these is a subversion of the ostensibly irreversible process of cell death. Furthermore, a strong biblical case can be made that Jesus did not die on the Cross, but instead survived. There exist biblical clues for this.

Christians are usually required to believe that Jesus ate broiled fish, drank water and wine, and walked under the inviolable influence of Earth's gravitational field. Yet somehow he floated into the air during his Ascension on Mt Olivet. Up up and away he levitated, destined for Heaven. Through science we now know that Heaven cannot be located yonder above the clouds. For in science (physics), there is no "Up." And through science we know that people cannot levitate as if by magic. Furthermore, a plausible case can be made, supported by real data, that Jesus lived out his post-crucifixion life in Jerusalem and was buried in a family tomb on the outskirts of Jerusalem along with other family members. I am happy to provide sources to peer-reviewed work on this.

It seems clear to me that many of the fantastical elements of the Christian narrative are profoundly incompatible with the findings of science. This incompatibility caused me to suffer a cognitive dissonance for some time. In the end, I felt I had to confront this dissonance. I chose a scientific worldview, and am happy and grateful that I did.

In closing, I note that there are conceptions of god which are not hampered by such fantastical elements, and which are therefore not at odds with the findings of science. But conventional Christianity's conception of god is not one of them.