



Session II

# What Are the Essential Biblical Principles?



*How does the Christian in science think about God's involvement with his or her science?*

Is there a separating line between the natural and supernatural for a biblical Christian? The interesting thing is that biblically there is no such thing as “nature,” which could then have something above it or outside it. There is only creation, which God has brought into being and sustains. Perhaps in the idiom of today the question could be: “Is the cosmos self-sufficient?” or “Is the cosmos explainable totally in terms of matter, energy, in time and space?” Or to quote that great “philosopher” Carl Sagan: “Is the universe all there is or ever was or ever will be?” We believers ask, “Does God interact with matter and energy, in time and space?” Or put differently, “How does the Christian in science think about God’s involvement with his or her science? Does God only intervene to fix what ‘nature’ cannot do, that is, to do miracles?”

Let’s look at some of the evidence from God’s own revelation. In Genesis 8:22 (NIV), Noah is building an altar to the Lord in thanksgiving for his deliverance from the

flood. The Lord responds to this offering, while acknowledging “every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood,” meaning the sinfulness of human kind. God goes on to give this promise.

*As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.*

Then in Jeremiah 10:12–13 (NIV), God tells Jeremiah to tell the people:

*But God made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding. When he thunders, the waters in the heavens roar; he makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth. He sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses.*

These two passages together tell us that not only does God know that the earth will continue in predictable patterned behavior but that God causes that predictable patterned behavior. He is the one who continuously brings about the actions of matter and energy in time and space.

In Jeremiah 31:35–36 (NIV), God identifies himself thusly:

*This is what the Lord says, he who appoints the sun to shine by day, who decrees the moon and stars to shine by night, who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar—the Lord Almighty is his name: Only if these decrees vanish from my sight,” declares the Lord, will the descendants of Israel ever cease to be a nation before me.*

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Terry Morrison was born in Pittsburgh in 1936 to a recent immigrant from Northern Ireland and his young wife, a descendent from the Mayflower folk. Terry’s educational degrees include a B.S. from the University of Pittsburgh, a M.S. from the University of Illinois and Ph.D. in Chemistry from Syracuse University. Terry taught Inorganic Chemistry at Virginia Commonwealth University and was a Chemistry Professor at Butler University. In 1974, he joined the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship staff and directed staff work in the Middle Atlantic and Great Lakes Region and later served as an international director connecting InterVarsity USA with student work around the world. Currently, Terry is a director of the Faculty Ministry program of InterVarsity and is a board member of the Au Sable Institute of Environmental Studies. His is also big fan of British mysteries written between the wars (1920–1950).

The Lord indicates—by the present tense character of the verbs—that he is the actor behind matter and energy behavior in time and space. He calls the patterned behavior “decrees.” He has said that the creation is to exhibit a certain behavior and that it will continue that behavior until he indicates a change.

Going now to the New Testament, in Colossians 1:16, 17 (NIV), we are told that the Lord Jesus, the “Son,” is the “first born over all creation.”

*For by him [Jesus] all things were created: things in heaven, on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.” He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

Similarly, in the letter to the Hebrews (NIV) in the first chapter, verses 1–3 says:

*In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.*

These two passages indicate that the Lord Jesus is the Creator, Sustainer of the universe. It is his word and character that keep creation in being. We could say that the “laws of science” simply describe the decisions and actions of our Lord. He is the “glue” that holds it all together. So the biblical perception is that God, for and by his Son, creates and sustains in being, i.e., gives character and behavior patterns to everything that exists—matter, energy, time, and space. He is the Lord of science.

How, then, do we as Christians in science think and act as we do science or applied science? To say it another way, how should our faith *function* in our work? I believe it functions by our always being aware that our Lord is present in us and in the work we do. He delights in the character and behavior of matter, energy, time, and space. And the Lord delights in us as we study science. Our work is part of our worship of the God we serve who is Creator and Sustainer. We can work “doxologically.” All of it can



View of University of St. Mary's of the Lake, Mundelein, IL, the site of this conference.

be praise. We can react to what we observe in science as wisdom did in those days of creation. Proverbs 8:30b–31 (NIV) says:

*I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence, rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind.*

Thus there is no separation between our church-spiritual life and our university-professional life. All of it can be lived in joyful worship, humble, obedient service and complete faith. As we offer our work to the Lord in worship, he is delighted with us.

