

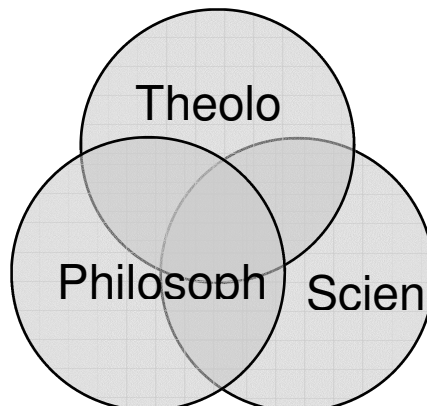
Hasn't Science Disproved God?

By Joshua Stateham

We live in an age and society of logical and rational thought. Due in part to our classical Greek and Roman influences, Western nations have become mesmerized with the power and answers found in science. It is a study that permeates virtually every aspect of our society to the point that the scientific method is practically inseparable from our Western psyche. This has been both a major reason for our nation's success and one of our greatest pitfalls. The god-like status that science has achieved in the Western world has caused some very disturbing side effects.

While we celebrate our Greco-Roman heritage in science and logic, our society has practically ignored the two other schools of study that made the classical period so classical- philosophy and theology. It is these three studies that pursue each aspect of man's curiosity of the universe around him and seek answers to his questions. Not one of these studies is all encompassing; each has its limits to what questions it can ultimately answer, but these three schools of thought all seek one thing - truth. Think of a question, any question. That question, whether profound or mundane, will fall under the discipline of one of these studies. What is crucial is to be able to identify which study is going to produce an answer to that question. Want to know how many licks it takes to get to the center of a lollipop? Look to science to provide you an answer. Want to know which is more real- the lollipop or the pleasure you get from licking it? Look to philosophy to provide you an answer. Want to know if it's your conscience or a higher power that you feel convicting you for polishing off that fifth lollipop? Look to theology to give you answers.

Of course truth is what we're after, not the vehicle that gets us there, but truth must embody all three of these studies, for truth is all encompassing. There is no question which has no answer, only questions which we have no *knowledge* of answers. To solidify this abstract idea a bit, I've provided a Venn diagram which we will discuss briefly.



Each of these studies are distinctly separate studies, yet there are areas of overlap representing answers to questions that may be offered, in part, by two or more of these disciplines. The real intricate and complex area of this concept is the center of the diagram where the three overlap. This is the womb of ideologies, a place that can either be the end result of a lifetime of study or the genesis of a lifelong dogmatic belief. Now there is so much we could discuss here, but let's not get too distracted from the topic at hand, which is of course the age-old science vs. religion debate ... Right?

Actually there is no such thing. Science has never been in a fight to the death with religion. As shown in the diagram, science and theology can provide both mutually inclusive and mutually exclusive *answers*, but science cannot disprove, overthrow or absorb *any* of the other disciplines, including theology. The studies themselves are neutral, benign and indifferent to the other studies because they are simply categories of query. *Each* has an enormous, if not equal influence on one's ideology, though there will be an entry point *to* that ideology through either one of these disciplines or simply from a preconceived ideology. This is where bias usually takes hold.

Let me explain this abstract concept in more concrete examples. Let's ask a question that has plagued man since the beginning of time – "is there a god?" We must look to theology for an answer and that answer is either yes or no, there is no other option. Granted, a Buddhist ideology might suggest that we are all gods, or potential gods, however in doing so it asserts that there is no higher power or authority than man, so for all intended purposes there is no god. That argument aside, let us look at other ideologies. Christianity most certainly answers "yes" to the question as do a number of other religions, faiths and world views. But there are other theistic views that state there is no god, namely Atheism. Wait, did I just call Atheism a theology? Yes I did, and yes it is. It is an answer to a theological question and therefore is a theological stance. But the real question is what about science, what does it have to say about the matter?

If science is the study of the natural universe, than by its very nature it is indifferent to the question of god and unable to answer that query. It cannot provide definitive answers to theological or to philosophical questions. This is where evolutionary Atheists or even Christian creationists might get a little ruffled. This is due again to the fact that we as a society are so biased toward science that we forget that it is a very limited field of study. What's worse is that scientific evidence is open to human interpretation. No one was around to see the creation of the universe; therefore no one can say with certainty when or how it happened. Man is left with scientific theories and speculations at best. But even with the best scientific theories, science is no closer to proving or disproving the existence of god than theology is to proving or disproving the existence of black holes. We have been fooling ourselves thinking that science

can offer theological answers when of course it can't. Creation vs. evolution has mischaracterized science as attacking theology, when in fact it is simply theism vs. naturalism. In other words, did god create the universe or did it simply just happen? But even if we could scientifically prove that naturalism is in fact the correct answer to our origins question, it would not prove that god doesn't exist, only that he either had nothing to do with our creation or he sparked the big bang and then left nature to take its course.

But it is highly unlikely that science will even ever be able to draw that conclusion due to human interpretation of evidence. Plato said, "Science is nothing but perception." A person's ideology will bias the observer and skew the "scientific" results. This brings us to our final point: Once formed, ideologies are extremely difficult to break or reform. Once a person forms an ideology, he or she begins to reinforce it. The ideology itself acts as a lens in which all the disciplines are filtered through. An Atheist will look to science to prove his ideology just as a theist will and *both* will discover convincing evidence to support their case. Strong science will produce weak ideology and strong ideology will produce weak science.

So if ideologies are so powerful over the mind, how should we approach forming one? With caution and great care, always aware of our susceptibility and always being open to the fact that there is a good chance the ideology we currently hold could be 100% incorrect. If we can keep an open mind rather than be so dogmatic about our beliefs, we will be much more able to find truth, because to find truth we must ask questions and seek unbiased answers. Unfortunately we live in an age and society which has decided that some questions are archaic and unworthy of being asked. Asking a philosophical question will raise eyebrows and asking theological questions will produce chuckles while no one would be able to actually answer the question intelligently. We have forgotten that there are no stupid questions or worse, we have assumed answers to these questions and no longer entertain them, instead regurgitating dogmatic or textbook answers without thought or regard. We no longer teach people to think, only to learn. We no longer teach students to ask questions, only to repeat answers. But there are so many questions that beg to be asked of this incredibly complex universe. *Do you have the courage to ask them?*

"Well I am certainly wiser than this man. It is only too likely that neither of us has any knowledge to boast of; but he thinks that he knows something which he does not know, whereas I am quite conscious of my ignorance. At any rate it seems that I am wiser than he is to this small extent, that I do not think that I know what I do not know." – Socrates