

## Science and Faith at the Crossroads of Creation: Before We Begin

One of the places where science and faith are thought to be in conflict is in their respective accounts of creation. Christians have fallen into 4 camps on this issue: young earth creationism, old earth creationism, intelligent design, and theistic evolution. (And a 5th: "I don't know and could care less!")

Preliminary perspective: what holds us together is the shared treasure we have in Jesus, not our particular views about how science and faith fit together.

So why bother tackling this touchy subject? The love of Jesus for those informed by the story of science.

THIS IS IMPORTANT: I hope when we're finished with this series, you won't feel the slightest obligation to agree with my particular leanings on how science and faith intersect. I do hope you'll love Jesus more, have a deeper appreciation for his book, and a wider love for the world he loves. So that together, we'll be more useful to Jesus in his passionate pursuit of the world his father made and is making still.

### **Clearing Out Some Background Noise: The Cultural Conflict Between Conservative & Liberal**

Those who lean conservative tend toward higher suspicion of science (e.g., climate change and evolution); those who lean liberal are more accepting of science. Before we can have a truly loving conversation about science and faith, we have to understand that these tribal loyalties (conservative-liberal) are superceded by our loyalty to Jesus. A matter of the heart, more than social-political perspectives.

"Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Mt. 10:37) Our loyalty to him supercedes every other loyalty, including holy ones.

Our human tendency to form loyalties (family, church, nation, political party, ways of looking at the world, etc.)

Jesus transcended the party loyalties of his time.

St. Paul chastised the Corinthians for giving party loyalty too great a place.  
1 Cor. 1:11-12

Not likely anyone in Corinth would've said, "I'm for Paul, not Jesus." Paul was discerning something in the spiritual climate.

"Now the works of the flesh are plain....strife, jealousy, anger, selfishness, dissension, party spirit...I warn you, as I warned you before that those who do such thing shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5: 19-21)

If Jesus felt the need to speak so strongly to our deepest held and most holy loyalties--wouldn't he speak to the loyalties we call "conservative" and "liberal"?

The lessons of history: the dominant churches of 50 years ago (mainline Protestant) leaned left. Today, the dominant churches (evangelical) lean right.

A wise prayer in the light of scripture and history: "My deepest loyalty, Sir, is to you, and to you alone. If that offends the liberal agenda, so be it. If it offends the conservative agenda, so be it. And if these agendas are distorting in any way my grasp of your agenda, help me Lord."

How might one discern the party spirit in one's own sweet soul?

1. The party spirit makes it difficult for us to see how "the other side" might be closer to the heart of God on a particular issue.
2. The party spirit produces little or no sense of "internal dissonance" with our chosen tribe.
3. The party spirit thrives on contempt. Contempt has always been the guardian of the party line. But Jesus came down hard on contempt: Mt. 5: 21-22

The question of "who God is for": To say God is for us means his fierce and gentle and merciful and unrelenting love is for us. It doesn't mean he's "on our side" over and against, "their side"

Conclusion: A Bedtime Story with Joshua and the Night Visitor

