



The Boundaries of Science and the Supernatural Question

Introduction

Science has given humanity extraordinary tools for understanding the natural world. Through **observation**, **experimentation**, and **theory**, it has explained countless phenomena once considered mysteries. Yet despite these triumphs, science has boundaries. It cannot address ultimate questions of meaning, morality, or destiny. Nor can it fully explain the origin of the universe, life, or consciousness.

The debate over these boundaries raises the **supernatural** question: can science point beyond nature to God? Some argue science must remain silent, confined to material causes. Others recognize that evidence, such as fine-tuning, DNA, and consciousness, suggests a reality beyond matter. Scripture speaks directly to these limits: “The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us” (Deuteronomy 29:29). This article explores where science stops, and how the **evidence** points beyond to the supernatural.

The Domain of Science

Science is a powerful method of inquiry. It excels at:

- Explaining **mechanisms**: how gravity shapes planets, or how DNA codes proteins.
- Making **predictions**: eclipses, chemical reactions, or disease spread.
- Developing **technology**: medicine, space exploration, and communication.

Scripture encourages studying creation: “The works of the LORD are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein” (Psalm 111:2). Science is part of humanity’s stewardship over creation (Genesis 1:28).

The Limits of Science

Despite its strengths, science cannot address every question. It is limited by its method—restricted to observable, repeatable, natural processes.

Science cannot explain:

- **The origin of existence**: Why is there something rather than nothing?



- **The foundation of laws:** Why do laws of nature exist, and why are they orderly?
- **Meaning and morality:** Why do humans seek purpose, and how do we know right from wrong?

Paul warns against overconfidence: “The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God” (1 Corinthians 3:19). Science alone cannot provide ultimate wisdom.

The Naturalistic Boundary

Many scientists adopt **methodological naturalism**—the assumption that only natural explanations are allowed. This is practical for lab work, but becomes problematic when turned into **philosophical naturalism**—the belief that nature is all that exists.

This **worldview** denies the supernatural not because of evidence, but by definition. Yet Scripture testifies: “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Psalm 14:1). Denying the supernatural closes the mind to reality.

The Supernatural Question

The supernatural question asks: Does evidence in nature point beyond itself? For example:

- The **origin of the universe** suggests a cause beyond time and space.
- The **design of DNA** suggests intelligence.
- The **fine-tuning of constants** suggests purpose.
- The **existence of consciousness** suggests a mind beyond matter.

Each line of evidence stretches science to its boundaries, hinting at the supernatural.

The Origin of the Universe

Science affirms the universe had a beginning. The Big Bang points to the origin of time, space, and matter. But science cannot explain what caused the beginning.

Genesis provides the answer: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). A cause outside nature—eternal and powerful—must have initiated it.

The Origin of Life



Science has not explained how nonliving chemicals became the first cell. All known life depends on DNA's coded information, but no natural mechanism generates code from chaos.

Job asked: "Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart?" (Job 38:36). Life's information testifies to God's wisdom.

The Origin of Consciousness

Materialism claims the brain produces the mind. But subjective experience, rational thought, and free will resist reduction to matter.

Scripture affirms humans are more than physical: "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7). Consciousness reflects the soul, given by God.

Morality and Meaning

Science describes what *is* but cannot dictate what *ought* to be. Morality is not a law of physics. Yet humans universally recognize right and wrong.

Paul wrote: "Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness" (Romans 2:15). Conscience points beyond biology to God's moral law.

Mystery and Humility

Both science and faith acknowledge mystery. Paul observed: "For now we see through a glass, darkly" (1 Corinthians 13:12). Science admits uncertainty in quantum mechanics, cosmology, and consciousness. Faith recognizes God's thoughts are higher than ours (Isaiah 55:9).

Mystery is not failure but a call to humility and worship.

Science and Faith in Harmony

When rightly understood, science and faith complement each other:

- Science reveals **how** creation works.
- Scripture reveals **why** creation exists.



As Augustine observed, God gave us “two books”—nature and Scripture. The heavens reveal His glory (Psalm 19:1), while His Word reveals His will.

The Dangers of Overreach

Two extremes distort truth:

- **Scientism:** the belief that science explains everything. This reduces humans to machines and denies God.
- **Misapplied fundamentalism:** forcing Scripture into scientific categories it was not meant to address, leading to unnecessary conflict.

The biblical path is balanced—affirming both God’s Word and God’s world.

Christ as the Key

Ultimately, the boundary between science and the supernatural points to Christ. “By him were all things created... and by him all things consist” (Colossians 1:16-17). He is both Creator and Sustainer. Science reveals His handiwork; Scripture reveals His person.

Conclusion

Science is powerful but limited. It explains mechanisms but not meaning, processes but not purpose. Evidence at the boundaries of science—the origins of the universe, life, and consciousness—points beyond nature to the supernatural. Scripture identifies the Designer as the God of creation, revealed in Jesus Christ. Recognizing science’s limits guards against arrogance and opens hearts to worship the One who transcends creation.