

## Psalm 111

“Great are the works of the Lord”  
**Science and Faith**

*The research scientist's psalm*

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b  
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d  
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## Psalm 111

Why?

Praise the Lord!

**I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart,**  
 in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

Great are the works of the Lord,  
 studied by all who delight in them.

### God's works

- in creation
- In redemption
- A word of warning

## Psalm 111

(A Psalm for scientists)

Praise the Lord!

### God's handiwork

**Great are the works of the Lord,**  
**studied by all who delight in them.**

delight

Full of splendour and majesty is his work,  
 and his righteousness endures forever.

He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered;  
 the Lord is gracious and merciful.

He provides food for those who fear him;  
 he remembers his covenant forever.

Great are the works of the LORD; they are pondered  
 by all who delight in them.

*NIV, NEB*

**Great are the works of the LORD; they are  
 studied by all who delight in them.**

*ESV*

The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all  
 then that have pleasure therein.

*KJV, RV*

**How wonderful are the things the Lord does! All who  
 are delighted with them want to understand them.**

*GNB*

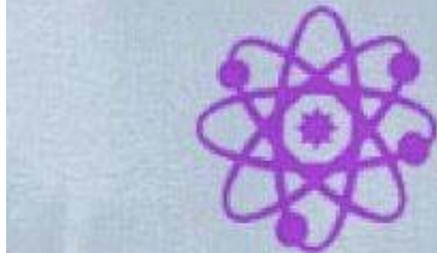
**God's works are so great, worth a lifetime of  
 study – endless enjoyment!**

*The Message*



The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein

*Magna opera Domini: exquisita in omnes voluntates eius.*



Science is God's way  
of telling you he  
doesn't exist.

### All truth is God's truth

For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. *Romans 1:20*

“Let no man think or maintain that a man can search too far, or be too well studied in the book of God's word, or the book of God's works...”

*Francis Bacon*



Devoted “to the glory of God the Creator, and the advantage of the human race”.

“I can’t imagine that science, which allows us to peer dimly into God’s creation, would in some way threaten God. Here is an opportunity to understand God better and increase our awe for what God has created”

**Francis Collins**

## “God of the Gaps”

God does not just plug the gaps which science is unable to fill.



*C. A. Coulson*

“When we come to the scientifically unknown, our correct policy is not to rejoice because we have found God; it is to become better scientists”

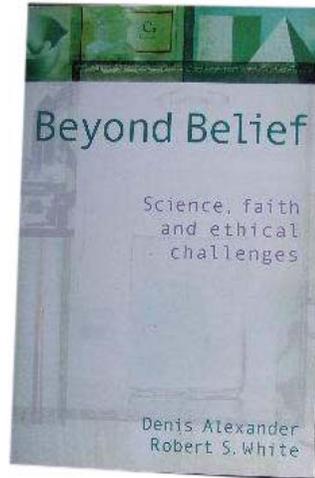
*Prof Charles Coulson, Professor of Theoretical Chemistry, University of Oxford*

“Thinking God’s thoughts after him”  
*Kepler*



“If there is an Almighty, maybe scientists are just gradually uncovering His method”  
*Sir David Attenborough*

*We are immensely grateful for the sheer fun of being able to study a created world that reflects God's plans and actions ... the unexpected joy of suddenly understanding some small corner of God's world better is hard to beat .. in his goodness, God allows us to participate in His creation.*



'I think scientist-believers are the most fortunate. We have the opportunity to explore the natural world at a time in history where mysteries are being revealed almost on a daily basis. We have the opportunity to perceive the unravelling of those mysteries in a special perspective that is an uncovering of God's grandeur. This is a particularly wonderful form of worship.'

Dr Francis Collins, former Director of Human Genome Research project, now director of NIH.

For a long time I wanted to become a theologian... now however I behold how through my efforts God is being celebrated in astronomy

Kepler



**Great are the works of the LORD; studied by all who delight in them.**

'Many are ignorant of what their creator has done, and hence they are foolish of heart and silent as to the praises of God; this evil can only be removed by a remembrance of God's works and a diligent study of them.'

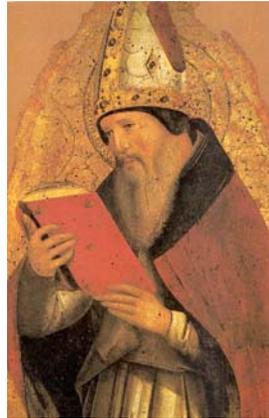
*Spurgeon*



Nature is what God  
does

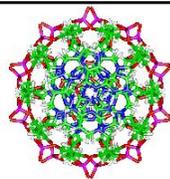
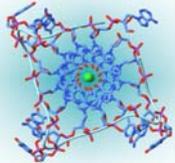
*Augustine*

**The facts of nature  
are the acts of God**



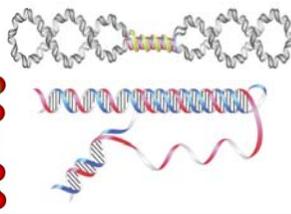
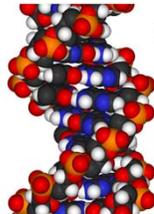
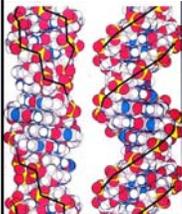
How is it that hardly any major religion has looked at science and concluded, "This is better than we thought! The Universe is much bigger than our prophets said, much grander, more subtle, more elegant?" Instead they say "No. My god is a little god, and I want him to stay that way" A religion that stressed the magnificence of the universe, as revealed by modern science might be able to draw forth reserves of reverence, awe and wonder..."

*Carl Sagan*



When I consider your  
heavens, the work of your  
fingers, the moon and the  
stars, which you have set in  
place... *Psalm 8:3,4*

The heavens declare the  
glory of God, the skies  
proclaim the work of His  
hands. *Psalm 19*



### Psalm 111

Praise the Lord!

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart,  
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

Great are the works of the  
studied by all who delight

awe

Full of splendour and majesty is his work,  
and his righteousness endures forever.

He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered;  
the Lord is gracious and merciful.

He provides food for those who fear him;  
he remembers his covenant forever.

## AWE



## Psalm 111

Praise the Lord!

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart,  
in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

Great are the works of the Lord,  
studied by all who delight in them.

Full of splendour and majesty is his name,  
and his righteousness endures forever.

He has caused his works to be remembered;  
the Lord is gracious and merciful.

He provides food for those who fear him;  
he remembers his covenant forever.

remembered

practical

reliable

The works of his hands are faithful and just;  
all his precepts are trustworthy;  
they are established forever and ever,  
to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.  
He sent redemption to his people;  
he has commanded his covenant forever.  
Holy and awesome is his name!  
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;  
all those who practice it have a good  
understanding.  
His praise endures forever!

## Science and Theology



Michael Faraday



Johannes Kepler



Robert Boyle



James Clerk Maxwell

- 7 The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy.
- 8 They are established for ever and ever, enacted in faithfulness and uprightness.

## Why is science possible?

“Belief in God renders the intelligibility of the universe itself intelligible. It says that the world is shot through with signs of mind precisely because the Mind of its Creator lies behind its wonderful order.” *John Polkinghorne*



“The most incomprehensible thing about the world is that it is comprehensible”. *Einstein*

## The importance of the material world

Christianity is unique amongst the world's major religions in the stress it places on the importance of the material world.

God himself pronounced that his creation was very good and was pleasing to him (Gen. 1:31). In the Incarnation, 'the Word became flesh and dwelt among us' (John 1:14).

A deep respect for matter is embedded in Christianity.

The works of his hands are faithful and just;  
all his precepts are trustworthy;  
they are established forever and ever  
to be performed with faithfulness **covenant** ss.  
He sent redemption to his people,  
he has commanded his covenant **Beware!!**  
Holy and awesome is his name.  
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;  
all those who practice it have a good  
understanding.  
His praise endures forever!

## Limits of Science

That there is indeed a limit upon science is made very likely by the existence of questions that science cannot answer and that no advance of science would empower it to answer...

*Sir Peter Medawar, The Limits of Science, (1987)*

Science cannot answer the questions that philosophers, or children ask; Why are we here, what is the point of being alive? ...

*Steve Jones*



## Limits of Science

Science can answer all life's questions  
– except the really interesting ones!

it cannot explain love, or joy, or peace, or  
patience, or kindness, or goodness, or faith.

*Gal. 5:22,23.*

## The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (v.10)

To him belongs eternal praise.

“If I have been enticed into brashness by  
the wonderful beauty of thy works, or if I  
have loved my own glory among men,  
while advancing in work destined for thy  
glory, gently and mercifully pardon me:  
and finally, deign graciously to cause that  
these demonstrations may lead to thy  
glory and to the salvation of souls, and  
nowhere be an obstacle to that. *Amen.*”



Johannes Kepler