Creation scientists insist that the Bible is infallible and that it must be interpreted literally in regards to application in science. For example, Whitcomb (1973, p. 95) says:

"For a Christian, the written Word of God, correctly interpreted, must be the starting point for arriving at valid conclusions in every significant realm of meaning. If the God-honored and time-honored method of grammatical-historical ('normal') interpretation of the Bible is valid, the Biblical statements of history and doctrine cannot be twisted at the whim of the interpreter."

But a literal interpretation of the Bible in the realm of science is based on the assumption that the writers of the scriptures wrote precisely like "Greeks," when in fact much of the Bible was written by Hebrews, who wrote poetically. The point of this article is that when scriptures are taken literally and they produce nonsense, then science should be given preference. Examples of biblical quotes to demonstrate this point are taken from the King James version because this interpretation is commonly used by many creation scientists. Entirely different nuances of meaning can be obtained from other translations, but basically the same point can be made. By choosing only the King James version, I have attempted to follow the aforesaid restrictions imposed by the creation scientists. For example, if a creation scientist chooses only what he or she wants to hear from each of many different translations, then such selectivity violates the dictum that "doctrine cannot be twisted at the whim of the interpreter."

On that basis, the following is written to test the restrictions, imposed by creation scientists, as to how the Bible ought to be used. Illustrations are presented from three areas in modern biology: (1) the function of the heart versus the brain, (2) the male and female roles in procreation, and (3) the manner in which wheat kernels germinate.

The Heart versus the Brain

In Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, which is a listing of primary words contained in the King James's version of the Bible, the brain is not mentioned once, whereas the heart is cited 826 times. Thought and emotions, however, can be said to occur in one's head or mind, and, therefore, the citations of "head" (360 times) and "mind" (96 times) must be examined. An analysis shows that although the head contains the brain, in the Bible the word "head" is used only in two senses: (1) as a reference to that part of the body that can be, or example, bowed, injured, or crowned, or (2) to represent leadership when someone is described as being the "head" of a household, church, or a government. But the "head" is not represented as the site where all thinking and emotional feelings originate.

This analysis also applies to the word "mind," although in a few places "mind" is simultaneously used in the same sentence with the word "heart." In these places, however, it still is not clear from the context that the mind is located in the brain or head. For example:

...which is in mine heart, and in my mind ... I Sam 2:35

...perfect heart and with a willing mind... Chr 28:9

...with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind... Luke 10:27

These examples, however, could just as well represent the writer's use of different words to mean the same thing in
order to give emphasis, which is a literary technique commonly used in the Bible.

In the Bible the heart is considered the seat of life or strength. Hence, it means mind, soul, spirit, or one's entire emotional nature and understanding. The heart also is the primary source of such bad behavior as adultery, hatred, lust, mischief, pride, and rebellion as well as such neutral or good behavior as desire, doubt, fear, gladness, love, obedience, and sorrow. The heart is the organ that is said to have the ability to reason, question, meditate, motivate, and think. All of these mental processes in today's world are normally associated with one's mind or brain and not the heart (except metaphorically).

God or the Lord is described as being able to know, search, enlighten, open, recreate, examine, strengthen, and establish one's heart --- not the mind. One can have a clean, contrite, perfect, pure, or wise heart, but those qualities are not biblically attributed to the mind.

The following are biblical examples from the King James Bible of emotional states or mental abilities of the heart¹.

...he will be glad in his heart... *Ex* 4:14
...he will harden his heart... *Ex* 4:20
...hate thy brother in thine heart... *Lev* 19:17
...For as he thinketh in his heart, so is... *Prov* 23:7

...But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a man. For out of the heart comes evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness... *Mt* 15:17-20

Today we may ask, "How did I get this thought in my mind?" Not once does the Bible attribute having thought(s), thinking, understanding, considering, meditating, or pondering as coming from the mind.

These mental processes generally are cited as coming from the heart. For example²:

...consider in thine heart, that the... *Deut* 4:39
...understand with their heart, and convert... *Is* 6:10
...thine heart shall meditate terror... *Is* 33:18
...and pondered them in her heart... *Luke* 2:19
...perceiving the thoughts of their hearts... *Luke* 9:47

One example exists of thoughts coming into a person's mind:

"...thy thoughts came into thy mind..." *Dan* 2:29.

But this "thoughts-mind" association is immediately followed in the next passage by an explanation of where the mind is:

"...that thou might know the thoughts of thy heart..." *Dan* 2:30.

Reasoning (questioning), which is a mental process that is generally associated with the brain or mind, is also clearly defined as coming from the heart. For example:

...and reasoning of their hearts... *Mark* 2:6

...Why reason these things in your heart... *Mark* 2:8
...What reason ye in your hearts... Luke 5:22

Being wise, having wisdom, knowing, or having knowledge or learning are also normally considered as mental processes occurring in the mind or brain, but these qualities are associated in the Bible only with the heart. For example:

...He is wise in heart, and mighty in... Job 9:4

...ye know in all your hearts and in all... Josh 23:14

...and apply thine heart unto my knowledge... Prov 22:17

...I applied my heart to know wisdom... Eccl 8:16

The process of learning and acquiring knowledge and wisdom, therefore, in the Bible is an application primarily of the heart rather than the mind.

In one place in the Bible the word "mind" is associated with the word "wisdom," "...and here is the mind which has wisdom..." Rev 17:9. But here again, there is no clue that the writer knows where the mind is. The other dominant citations certainly imply that the mind is considered to be in the heart.

Because of the biblical influence on language, the word "heart" has continued in modern usages to parallel biblical patterns. For example, we speak of a "broken heart" in a jilted love relationship, and we have bumper stickers today that say "I heart (symbol) my dog," or "I heart (symbol) Jesus." We do not interpret the latter to say "I muscle Jesus," even though we know that the feeling of love cannot reside in cardiac muscle tissue. Moreover, we do not translate the heart symbol into any feeling other than love, even though the Bible says that hate or lust also originates in the heart.

As another example of biblical influence on language, a young man may woo a girl by saying: "I love you with all of my heart." Likely, she would not react as favorably if he told her: "I love you with all of my brains."

The lack of a modern scientific interpretation of the function of the heart in the Bible occurs because in the time of Jesus, the people considered the heart as the center of the body. All arteries lead from the heart. It pulses with life. The brain was thought to be some kind of organ that filtered the blood, but otherwise it was relatively unimportant.

The custom of offering blood and sacrifices to gods was common in many ancient cultures and supports the contention that ancient cultures considered the heart to be more important than the brain. The Israelites also continued this custom when they offered blood from animals that were sacrificed to Jahweh in the Temple in Jerusalem. In none of these ancient cultures was the brain sacrificed.

This misunderstanding of the importance of the brain is also illustrated by the Egyptian culture. When their temple priests mummified their pharaohs, they carefully cut out the heart and saved it for the preserved body, but they scraped the brains out of the skull through the nostrils and threw away the scrapings.

On the basis of the above analyses, if the Bible were an accurate guide today to medical science, then, emotional feelings, knowledge, and wisdom should be considered to reside in the heart and not the brain. Therefore, in our medical institutions, if creation scientists are correct about the scientific accuracy of the Bible, we should be teaching today's psychiatrists and medical doctors to treat the heart with drugs for mental diseases, to operate on the heart for mental problems, and to ignore the brain in these situations.

**Male and Female Procreation**

When ancient farmers planted a grain of wheat, it grew to produce a wheat plant, which in turn produced more wheat seed. From this observation, it was only logical for these Old Testament people to conclude that sperm or semen that come from the male are like kernels of seed, which a male inserts into the womb of a female. In this case, the female
is a vessel to hold the seed. On that basis, the female in ancient cultures was important only to carry and nurture the prospective offspring; e.g., Gen 16 and Gen 19:32-36.

The semen or sperm that came from the male was imagined to be a fully-formed human being, only miniature in size. The male just planted these tiny humans into the female. Therefore, it was a sin for a male to spill his seed or semen on the ground, because he was killing little human beings (Gen 38:8-10).

With the understanding that the male is the source of life, and not the female, it was extremely important for the male to have a son to pass on his life to the next generation. If the female did not bear any children or only female babies, then there was something wrong with her, but never anything wrong with the husband. Therefore, the cultural pressure on her was enormous to have a son. If she did not, she would beg her husband to find a concubine to bear him a son (Gen 16).

We now know, of course, from modern science that it is the union of an egg from the female and the sperm from the male that produces a child, and neither parent is more important for reproduction than the other. But in the male-dominated society and culture of the Old Testament and during the time of Jesus, the Old and New Testament writers would not have known this.

**Growth of a Wheat Seed**

Concerning the growth of a wheat seed, we read in the Bible a parable by Jesus, who says, "...Truly, truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." (John 2:24)

The Greek word used in this passage to indicate to "die," is used in all other places in the Bible to mean physical death. Therefore, no other translation of this word is likely. On that basis, if the Bible is supposed to be an accurate science book, this passage produces an error. A dead seed does not germinate and grow. You can treat the passage metaphorically and obtain a moral lesson, but you cannot say that the Bible truly represents modern science.

**The Creation Science Response**

How does a creation scientists handle these three scientific problems in the Bible? I corresponded with one to find out. (This person is identified by using "he" or "his," but the reader can also assume a female.) He has written many articles on science and the Bible and will not be identified in this article to preserve anonymity. I assume, however, that his replies are typical.

**Heart versus the Brain Response**

My correspondent chose to avoid my suggestion that the omission of the word "brain" in the Bible implies that the brain had little importance to biblical writers and/or that its function was poorly understood. Instead his reply concentrated on three relationships: (1) the significance of the word "head," (2) whether "thought" is said to come from the "heart," and (3) whether "mind" and "heart" have equivalent usages in the Bible. I have paraphrased his responses.

1. **Significance of "Head"**

My informant chose not to use the King James version of the Bible but cited the New American Standard Bible as having significant statements.

...wise man's eyes are in his head... Eccl 2:14

...Christ is the head of every man... II Cor 11:3

...Him as head over all things... Eph 1:22
And then he pointed out that it is obvious that wisdom dwells in the head and not the heart and that Christ is the head and not the heart of man.

In spite of these reasonable biblical quotes and points, it is not obvious from the first quotation (Eccl 2:14) that the source of wisdom is in the head. The eyes of a wise man are obviously in the head and not the stomach or the leg, for example, but are eyes to be equated with wisdom? The source of wisdom of the wise man could just as well be in the heart or anywhere in the body. This scriptural passage does not elucidate where wisdom originates.

In the other three biblical quotations concerning Christ as the head of every man, head over all things, and head of the church, "head" is used to represent a leadership role and has nothing to do with wisdom or thought. All four quotations in no way suggest that thinking, thought, or reasoning originate in the head.

2. Thought from the Heart?

The response continues by pointing out that in II Cor 10:5, "bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" certainly does not mean "heart." But how does he know? Who can tell from the biblical quote where "thought" comes from?

3. Equivalent Usages of Heart and Mind in the Bible

In regard to the equivalency of the words "mind" and "heart," his response provided the following quotations from the New American Standard Bible, which is then followed by the creation scientist's arguments.

...in his right mind... Mark 5:15-20

...changed their minds... Acts 28-6

...over to a depraved mind... Rom 1:28.p.

...complete in the same mind... I Cor 1:10

...being of the same mind... Phil 2:2

He avers that here the word "mind" cannot be replaced with "heart" and make any sense out of them. He opines that although heart and mind are comparable in many places, they are certainly not equal and do not refer to the same entity.

In the aforesaid arguments he dodges the issue. The word "heart" could very well be substituted in each of these quotations on the basis of the many examples given in the first part of this article in which emotional expressions and mental thoughts are attributed to the heart.

If it is true that the Bible is scientifically accurate in separating the mind from the heart as being distinctly different, then somewhere that distinction might be expected to be clearly "spelled out." For example, let's look again at three examples of the aforesaid quotations to emphasize points previously made.

...he will be glad in heart... Ex 4:14

...why do thoughts arise in your heart... Luke 24:38

...nor understand with their heart... John 12:40

In all usages recorded in Strong's Concordance of the words that apply to emotions or mental capacities, which for some words is several hundred citations, there are no equivalent passages that read, for example:
...he be glad in his mind (head)...

...why do thoughts arise in your mind (head)...

...nor understand with your mind (head)...

And this lack of equivalency applies to all other quotations listed in the first part of this article as well. The few examples are those aforesaid quotations in which emphasis is likely being used or in which "mind" is explained to be equivalent to "heart."

A passage that the creation scientist did not include in his response is, "...a wise man's heart discerneth...: Ecc 8:5. This passage seems to be a direct indication that wisdom comes from the heart. Moreover, the following passage was also omitted in the response: "...The words of a wise man's mouth are..." Ecc 12:11. It might be equally logical, therefore, to argue that "it is obvious" that the source of wisdom lies in the mouth.

In all arguments made by the creation scientist for the three items which were discussed above, he uses modern-day knowledge that the mind is in the brain, when, in fact, if he were true to a literal reading of the Bible, he would have to argue that this knowledge is false. For example: "...why do thoughts arise in your heart..." (Luke 24:38).

Response to the Question of Human Procreation

I did not pose this question to the creation scientist because it was my experience from a year's correspondence on geology and other science topics that this question was unanswerable from a creation science point of view. Like our modern knowledge of chemistry, the biology of sex is not discussed in the Bible, and, therefore, the Bible has no opinion on this subject from which the creation scientist could argue or defend.

Response on the Question of a Dead Seed

The creation scientist responded to my questions on the ability for a dead seed to germinate in two separate letters. In the first response he indicated that although such germination cannot naturally occur to produce a plant, creation scientists believe in the supernatural. God can make a lifeless seed grow. He posited that although miracles are rare, a plant does not need a soul in order to be resurrected. His final points were that Jesus in this biblical passage was merely using a parable to demonstrate the need for self-sacrifice, and that there is no need for naturalism to explain a miracle.

Three contradictory points were made here by the creation scientist. The first is the agreement that modern science is correct in showing that dead seeds cannot germinate. The second is that a miracle can explain the process in the time of Jesus. The third is that the biblical passage should not be interpreted scientifically, but metaphorically in which a parable is used to illustrate the need for self-sacrifice. He says that miracles are rare, but the quotation implies that every wheat seed that was planted in Jesus' time went through the miraculous resurrection. That number is a lot of miracles. A supernatural explanation is certainly an easy way out of the difficulty of explaining what happened, but such an explanation is not science.

After having more time to think about the issue, the creation scientist wrote again and re-emphasized his feelings that this passage should not be taken literally but be interpreted as a parable. He felt that the people whom Jesus addressed would have understood its proper interpretation for the need for his followers to make self-sacrifices. Then, the suggestion was made that my interpretation implied that Jesus used a wrong analogy for self-sacrifice, thereby I could be behaving improperly as a Christian. To hammer home his arguments further, the point was made that the Bible contains a great deal of literature, including similes, metaphors, hyperboles, analogues, personifications, and many other forms of speech, which should not be taken literally. The obvious example was then presented, using the paraphrased statement from Jesus: "This is my body. Take and eat," when it is understood that the bread of communion "represents" his body.
Thus, the creation scientist in the second response admits that the Bible cannot be taken literally, and by doing so, he admits that in this example, the Bible is not scientifically accurate. He escapes the problem by insisting that the Bible must, in this case, be interpreted metaphorically. This examples presents a problem, however, because creation scientists must now choose which places in the Bible are to be treated literally and as true science and which places are to be treated as moral lessons without scientific accuracy.

**Conclusion**

The Bible contradicts three modern basic biological concepts. (1) The heart is not the source of emotions or the seat of learning, reasoning, and thinking; the brain is. (2) The male does not carry complete miniature human beings in the sperm, as the scripture imply but do not specifically say. And (3) wheat kernels cannot germinate if they "die."

Efforts by "creation scientists" to explain these concepts and to make the Bible a perfect science textbook simply fail because the creation scientists rely on modern science to support their arguments rather than on evidence in the Bible. They conveniently avoid using literal translations, where necessary, in order to make the Bible fit our present scientific understanding. The absence of scientific accuracy in some places in the Bible should not be surprising because it was never written by trained scientists to produce a science textbook. Even if it were written by scientists, because science is constantly producing new knowledge, it would be impossible for biblical science-writers to anticipate all the changes that new discoveries require.

**Notes**


**References**


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