

## The Doctrine Of Interaction

### Lesson Three

*The Issue:* For the last four hundred years we have constantly been taught that the laws of nature govern the universe. These laws, we are told, are pervasive throughout the universe and our part of it. In consequence of their presence, we feel that it is in our best interest not to ignore such powerful influences and controlling dicta. Philosophers through the modern period such as J.S. Mill, Thomas Hobbes, and Darwin have asserted that only ignorance would cause someone to take lightly the reality of these laws. However, the Scriptures paint a very different picture of reality.

*Underlying Assumptions as Expressed in Everyday Terms:*

- 1) God has withdrawn from the business of daily administering the universe and now rules indirectly through the laws of nature.
- 2) There was a time in history when God dealt more directly with events on the earth and especially with certain people. But that time has now passed.
- 3) The Bible does not contradict the laws of nature. Nor should we expect any such state of contradiction to exist between the two, since God is the author of them both.
- 4) It is our business to discover these laws of nature and try to live within their scope; and perhaps find a way to use them to our advantage.

*Generalization:* **The laws of nature are in fact contradicted by the Word of God and repeatedly so.**

*The Scripture Passage:* Psalms 25 and other associated texts

*The Lesson:*

- 1) One of the so-called laws of nature is the Law of the Conservation of Energy. The law states that, in a closed system, if we start out with a certain amount of energy we will end up with the same amount of energy.
- 2) But in the Scriptures we are forced to consider that this law of nature does not necessarily apply to those who choose to live by faith! If this sounds bizarre, then let us consult a string of passages to prove the point:

1 Samuel 17 – This is the famous case of David and Goliath. The Israelites and the Philistines were drawn up for battle on this occasion. The army of Israel had only so much energy at their disposal and their enemies had a great deal more! The natural

consequence of such facts is fear. And the Israelites were afraid. On the other hands, Philistines were certain of victory –or so they thought.

However, the Lord pumped more energy into the situation than was there originally; and the proof of that is that the army of Israel won the day and their freedom. The Law of The Conservation of Energy did not apply.

**Exodus 17** – When the tribe of Israel arrived at the place called Rephidim there was no water nor food to be found. The desert of Sinai was the master. The Israelites had no equivalent amount of energy with which to overcome the harsh conditions of the environment. But the Lord pumped more energy into the situation than was there originally; and the proof of that is that water came from the rock and the people were fed by the hand of the Lord. The Law of the Conservation of Energy did not apply.

The desert was an open system. For those whom God has chosen to help, the desert – any desert – is not a closed system. That means that no human situation is a closed system. Quite to the contrary: all of our circumstances, events, states of being are open to the direct intervention of the Almighty.

Psalm 25 – Therefore David says to the Lord:

“In you I trust, O my God” (v.2)

“My hope is in you all day long” (v.5)

“My eyes are ever on the Lord” (v.15)

“Look upon my affliction” (v. 18)

“Guard my life and rescue me” (v.20)

“Redeem Israel, O God, from all their troubles!” (v. 22)

David believes that the Lord can put much more energy into a situation than is originally there. No situation is beyond Him. David interacts with the world of matter and energy based on faith.

**John chapter 11** – Lazarus is dead. His lifeless body lies in a tomb. Yet more energy is pumped into the situation and Jesus’ good friend is brought to life. Those gathered around Mary and Martha including Jesus’ own disciples did not see the situation as open; that is, open to the power of God.

The Law of the Conservation of Energy did not apply.

**Numbers chapters 13 and 14** – As an army, the Israelites had a certain amount of energy. But after the mission to spy out the land they knew that they lacked the critical levels of energy necessary to win the battle. They concluded that it was impossible to interact with the matter and energy of Canaan and be successful.

Joshua and Caleb understood that faith in the promises of God dictate the expectation that God will put more energy into the situation than was there in the beginning.

So then, based on these passages, we know that some will interact with matter and energy based on experience and others will interact by choice on the foundation of faith in the Word of God. Their responses to situations demonstrate a revealed Doctrine of Interaction.

3) The truth is that faith is primarily tested and proved in its relation to the world of matter and energy—not just in the hypothetical and theoretical. James chapter 2 contains the same principle.

4) David's mind will interact with the cold world of matter and energy and it will do that on the basis of the belief that the Word of God is truthful. Although David's body and those of his loved ones are composed of materiality, despite the presence of real needs, David conducts himself on the spiritual.

*Discussion questions:*

1. State in your own words the “Law of Conservation of Energy.”
2. Think about a social, political, or current events issue that troubles you. (An example might be Hurricane Katrina.) In what ways have you expressed in your own language the sentiment expressed in either (or both) of these statements:
  - a. “God has withdrawn from the business of daily administering the universe and now rules indirectly through the laws of nature.”
  - b. “There was a time in history when God dealt more directly with events on the earth and especially with certain people. But that time has now passed.”
3. How would you answer a Christian who asserts that there is no contradiction between the laws of nature and the events of the Bible?
4. The Scriptural examples in this lesson were mostly taken from the Old Testament. Other than the John chapter 11 passage, what New Testament teachings could you point to in order to demonstrate that the generalization, “The laws of nature are in fact contradicted by the Word of God and repeatedly so,” is valid for today and for the future?
5. What coming event, common to every human being, will demonstrate the validity of this generalization?
6. What steps can you take this week to make sure that your language is free from the assumptions contained in the Law of Conservation of Matter and Energy?
7. How would you teach a child that God is not bound by the laws of nature?

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