

The Church Versus Science

I Chronicles 16:30

Psalms 93:1

Psalms 96:10

Psalms 104:5

Ecclesiastes 1:5

Job 26:7

The Galileo affair:

Who is Galileo? Galileo Galilei –

Born February 15, 1554, in Pisa Italy

Died January 8, 1642, near Florence at Arcetri

He was a natural philosopher, astronomer, and mathematician.

He believed the book of nature was written in the language of mathematics in which experimentation became a recognized method of discovering the facts of nature.

His discoveries with the telescope revolutionized astronomy.

This in turn paved the way for the acceptance of the Copernican heliocentric system.

His early life:

His father was a musician who made important contributions to music theory.

He was to study medicine at the University of Pisa but became enamored with mathematics and chose rather to study mathematics and philosophy.

He left the University without earning a degree.

He continued his study of motion and by 1609 had developed the law of falling bodies.

In the same year he discovered that the telescope had been invented.

He improved on this invention and developed a 20 times magnification telescope.

He began to observe the heavens.

He first discovered the moon surface was not smooth.

In 1610 he discovered four moons around Jupiter.

He wrote many works describing his discoveries.

The inquisition:

On February 19, 1616, the Inquisition asked a commission of theologians about the proposition of the heliocentric view.

On February 24, 1616, delivered a unanimous report stating that the proposition that the sun is stationary at the center of the universe was not only philosophically absurd but contradicts the sense of Holy Scripture.

Galileo was ordered to abandon the Copernican opinions and to abstain from teaching or defending them orally or in writing.

After the death of Pope Gregory XV Galileo published his Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems in which he compared the Copernican system and the traditional Ptolemaic system.

Trial and second judgement, 1633:

He was found vehemently suspect of heresy.

He was to abjure, curse and detest those opinions.

He was sentenced to imprisonment and placed under house arrest where he remained until his death.

His Dialogue was banned, and any future works were forbidden.

Modern Catholic views:

In 1758 the Catholic Church dropped the prohibition of books advocating a heliocentric system.

In 1979 Pope John Paul II expressed hope that a deeper study of the Galileo case would occur and recognize the wrongs on either side. This never happened but the project was closed in a vague speech in 1992.

On February 15, 1990, in speech by Cardinal Ratzinger (later Pope Benedict XVI) gave a quote from Paul Feyerabend which stated that:

“The Church at the time of Galileo kept much more closely to reason than did Galileo himself, and she took into consideration the ethical and social consequences of Galileo's teaching too. Her verdict against Galileo was rational and just, and the revision of this verdict can be justified only on the grounds of what is politically opportune.”

In 1992 it appeared as though the Catholic Church had turned toward vindicating Galileo with this statement by Pope John Paul II:

“Thanks to his intuition as a brilliant physicist and by relying on different arguments, Galileo, who practically invented the experimental method, understood why only the sun could function as the centre of the world, as it was then known, that is to say, as a planetary system. The error of the theologians of the time, when they maintained the centrality of the Earth, was to think that our understanding of the physical world's structure was, in some way, imposed by the literal sense of Sacred Scripture....”

How should we think about this today?

Does “science” trump scripture?

Is this scriptural issue or a hermeneutical problem?

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galileo_affair

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Galileo-Galilei>

<https://www.loc.gov/collections/finding-our-place-in-the-cosmos-with-carl-sagan/articles-and-essays/modeling-the-cosmos/galileo-and-the-telescope>