

## Isaac Newton by Jeremy Bowen

### Introduction

Isaac Newton was a remarkable man, one of the greatest scientists in modern times; he also had some amazing views on the Bible.

### Background of Isaac Newton

- Born on 25 December 1642 in Wools-Thorpe, Lincolnshire, England.
- Died on 31 March 1727 in London England.

Isaac came from a family of farmers. His father died at the age of 36 from poor health before Isaac was born; and Isaac was named after his father.

The first school he went to was called Kings and was 7 miles away from home. School was of little interest to Isaac in his younger days. He was quiet and didn't stand out to be anything special and at first he wasn't liked by the other boys.

After not showing any promise during his first few years at school, his mother called him back home, wanting to give him responsibility on the farm. But he wasn't interested in this either. His uncle William Ascoug decided that Isaac should prepare for entering university, and having persuaded his mother that this was the right thing to do, Isaac was allowed to go to Free Grammar School in Grantham in 1660 to complete his school education.

It was at this time that Isaac started to show some promise. The headmaster of the school saw that he showed academic promise and convinced Isaac's mother that he should go to University. So he went to Cambridge. He came out with a degree and from there started to really show his potential. He had had a hard upbringing with not knowing his father, not liking his step father and falling out with his mother.

### Newton's Science Legacy

In a book called "The Giant Book of Scientists – The 100 Greatest Minds of all Time" the author John Simmons says: "Isaac Newton is the most influential figure in the history of western science." When Newton came on the scene, the physical world was very poorly understood. When Newton died after all his work the world was known to be governed by mathematical laws of great and precise accuracy. Newton gave shape and provided the basic rules of the modern science of physics.

To Newton are credited the discovery of the three basic laws of motion; the law of gravity; he made important discoveries in optics and also touched on chemistry. He had an interest in astronomy, and his personal friend was Edmund Halley – known for his comet – Halley's Comet.

Newton's 3 Laws of motion are this:

1. The Law of Inertia A body in motion (i.e. an object) moves with the same velocity (or speed) unless another force acts on it. The same applies to a body at rest. It remains at rest (or not moving) unless a force acts on it. If we were in space where there is no gravity we would float endlessly because there is no force acting on us, until we bump into something.
2.  $f=ma$  A force acting on a body gives it an acceleration which is in the direction of the force and has magnitude inversely proportional to the mass of the body (force = mass x acceleration).
3. Third Law of Motion: "For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction." Think about if we step off a boat onto the bank of a lake; as we move in the direction of the shore, the boat tends to move in the opposite direction (leaving us face down in the water if we aren't careful!!!!).

All these important laws have been built on by other scientists since Newton published them in 1687; without these we would not have the knowledge and understanding that we do today of our world.

Isaac Newton was the first scientist to be knighted by Queen Anne in 1705. He got a job in the Royal Mint and supervised the re-coining for the whole of England – a massive but necessary job. He spent a lot of time searching out the counter-feit coin makers, and imprisoning them. Once Sir Isaac got the job in the Mint he became dedicated to studying economics and business and he also learnt every aspect of the coin making process. Spending a lot of time with each employee and ensuring that they were working to the best of their ability and doing it the best way!! By this time Sir Isaac's science and maths had taken a backseat in his life. We can see from his life that he was a most intelligent man. He was a dedicated worker and was respected by people around him – including Queen Anne.

The reason why he is interesting to me, and hopefully you, is that Isaac Newton had one more enduring passion in his life – and that was God and studying the word of God. Newton wrote 1 million 300,000 words on Biblical matters!! This passion lasted his whole life. I wanted to see what such an intelligent man thought on the Bible, seeing as he had put so much time and effort in to it.

What I discovered amazed me. Sir Isaac had written about trinity; creation; the devil, and a lot on prophecy. He studied Daniel, Revelation, and had written much on chronology and dates - even through until our times. Isaac Newton lived and died believing that there was a God, and that he is guiding events in this life.

He believed that God was responsible for maintaining planetary motion (with gravity). Although he formulated a theory to describe mechanical motion, including the movement of planets in their orbits, he could not explain how this worked or why – without there being a divine creator. He believed that a basic tenant of intellectual life was that some things will always be unknowable. His ideas on creation were found in one of his notebooks: and are interesting. He wrote "were men and beast made by fortuitous jumbings of the atoms, there would be many parts useless in them. Here a lump of flesh, there a member too much. Some kinds of beasts might have had but one eye, some more than two."

So here he is saying that if we were to put all the parts needed to make up a human body into a bag and shaken up, it's impossible for a live human to be assembled as perfectly as we are made with everything in the right places and working. The human body as made too perfectly for it to be just a coincidence. Sir Isaac acknowledges that there has been a designer that created the earth.

In signing for his BA in 1655 Isaac had to agree to accept the belief of the trinitianism which he found total blasphemy, but for the sake of his career he signed. He did this two more times, showing that although religion was important part in his life, he did put his career first.

But years down the track, Isaac's conscience got the better of him. However, it was a difficult and dangerous time for Isaac to make his ideas public. It has been written: "radical thinking along the lines of Newton's beliefs would have been perceived as dangerous and would have been viewed by his rivals as a potential threat to their studies." In 1660 Sir Isaac Newton wrote a manuscript called "A Historical Account of Two Notable Corruptions of Scripture" based on the inclusions of 1 John 5:7 and 1 Tim 3:16 in the 4th Century which I will go into later. But because of the dangerous political situation in England he felt it unwise to publish in English, and instead sent it to France to be translated to French and published there.

#### Newton and Trinity

After completing his study on the Trinity he came up with the conclusion that "the trinity was a deliberate calculated lie, perpetrated through the ages by a series of self-interested leaders looking to benefit themselves." Strong words! But true when you look at the many people that have been deceived by believing these people and the trouble and time that is wasted on the subject. He came up with two main faults with the trinity:

1. The first fault is that trinitarianism cannot be supported completely by scriptural analysis. Newton filled his notebook with quote after quote extracted from the Bible supporting this point.
2. The second problem was that it is just not logical. He described that in the Bible there is certain events like turning water to wine, gift of healing, that we will never be able to understand, but they did not defy logic. But the trinity – three in one, and one in three – definitely did.

#### The Beginnings of Trinity

As he saw it, the belief was an introduced lie and to prove this he reached further and further back to the roots of the doctrine. He did this and concluded that it began with the Council of Nicea arranged by Emperor Constantine in AD 325. Christianity had grown so large by this time that it was a global religion. Two important Bishops had differing views on whether God and Jesus were the same entity or separate. The Nicean Council agreed with the Bishop of Alexandria – that God and Jesus were of the same substance. The feud between the two Bishop's camps continued for several decades and became part of corrupt ministers and bishops ambitions for power. It was this discovery of corruption and lies that also fuelled Isaac Newton's hatred for Catholicism.

It was in AD 325 that this Nicean Council included a verse into 1 John 7 – verse 5: which says: "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the father, the son and the holy spirit, and these three are one." It is obvious then, that this verse isn't part of the original scripture, and therefore not part of the Canon of Scripture.

#### Prophecy

Isaac had given much time and careful thought and study to prophecy. His work on Daniel and Revelations occupied him until the day he died. Even during the last weeks of his life he was tinkering with his ideas on prophecy and Biblical interpretation, constantly revising the date at which the day of judgement would come.

He thought that this was an event that was pre-ordained, but at the same time, humans could work it out from the information in the Bible.

Newton believed that God created the world and controlled events with a divine hand, but humans constantly tarnished God's creation. Another of Newton's ideas was that ancient civilisations were more than just places of worship; they were representations of the universe. For example the pyramids in Egypt and the stone circles in Europe (Stonehenge is a famous one, but they are all over the UK). But the most important one was King Solomon's Temple. Isaac Newton called Solomon "the greatest philosopher in the world." Philosopher meaning "person who studies wisdom or knowledge." He thought that the Temple Solomon built around 1000 BC was a pattern for the future race. So taking descriptions of the temple from Ezekiel in three languages he set out to draw its floor plan. He ended up with a complex diagram which he thought represented a plan for the future world. He thought that the diminutions of the floor plan gave clues to the time scale of the great prophets – especially Ezekiel, John and Daniel. (Jere pg 160 & 157)

#### Other Beliefs

Isaac also found the book of Revelation of much interest. He wrote "there is no book in all the scriptures as much recommended and guarded by providence as this" meaning, recommended by the fact that if looked into, the result would really benefit us, but the information that is hidden. Daniel 12:9 says: "and he said, Go thy way Daniel for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end." So this verse agrees with what he is saying. Isaac when studying used different methods and rules to extract information. One rule he wrote when dealing with Revelations was: "It is the perfection of all God's works that they are done with the greatest simplicity, and therefore as they that would understand the frame of the world must endeavour to reduce their knowledge to all possible simplicity, so it must be in seeking to understand these visions."

Some more of his thoughts on prophecy:

He believed in creation (as I mentioned before). He believed that the earth was made in 7 days by a divine hand. But he believed that nowhere in the scripture account does it say that the days were of equal length. On the first two days there was no 24 hour day period of planetary rotation, so the length of a day could be anything the Lord wanted. He also went against the intellectual trend of the time by dismissing the fashionable belief that the devil and demons were actual creatures. He understood that evil spirits or demons were manifestations of a disordered mind and the devil an illusory figure created by the human mind. What impresses me about him is that he is a free thinker, everything that he has an opinion on has been researched and investigated; and from what I found written about that time, free thinking was not very common. Some quotes from Sir Isaac Newton:

- On atheism: "Atheism is so senseless. When I look at the solar system, I see the earth at the right distance from the sun to receive the proper amounts of heat and light. This did not happen by chance."
- On God, his Saviour: "The true God is a living, intelligent and powerful being."
- On the trials of life: "Trials are medicines which our gracious and wise physician gives because we need them; and he proportions the frequency and weight of them to what the case requires. Let us trust his skill and thank him for his prescription."
- On the sun and other heavenly bodies: "This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent Being."
- On God's presence: "His (God's) duration reaches from eternity to eternity. His presence from infinity to infinity."