

# THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE ON TRIAL

## *Keys and Quotes to Understanding Research, Criticism & Defense of the Holy Scriptures*

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## FORENSIC SCIENCE & THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

### **Dr. James J.S. Johnson of the Institute for Creation Research**

“Most folks (including most creation scientists) don’t know what forensic science is – or how it differs from empirical science. (Having served as a part-time trial judge in Texas, for 25 years, I know the difference.)

What is “empirical science”? Studying and reporting physical facts of nature (like birds and butterflies) that are observable *in the present*, such as facts that are continually or repeatedly observable by almost anyone, is what empirical science is all about – and that’s what most people mean when they use the word “science”.(1),(2)

Example: What temperature does water boil at, assuming atmospheric pressure at sea level? Everyone can observe boiling water with a thermometer – this observation can be done (experimentally) in the present, so it is observation-based science – that’s what “empirical science” is. Many evolutionists are trained to do accurate empirical science – and you can verify (fact-check) their reports by observing the facts yourself. This is illustrated in **Daniel chapter 1**, when Daniel’s alternative diet results were observed by a Babylonian official.

***But empirical science cannot “see” the true facts of unique events of the no-longer-observable past, such as the unique events of Creation Week (which are not being repeated today) and the unique events of the Genesis Flood (which are not being repeated today).***

Forensic science blends observations of present effects (i.e., results existing today, of past activity causes, such as fingerprints or tire skid-marks on pavement) with the report of a reliable witness (or witnesses). ”

REFERENCE: Direct quote from personal interview with Dr. James J.S. Johnson by Donna L Lewis, Christian Life & Interest Content Manager, Christian Women Living Magazine.

**Dr. James J. S. Johnson**

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Bible, Apologetics, Education, Forensic  
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Dr. James Johnson serves ICR’s Christian education programs (including ICR’s School of Biblical Apologetics, Origins Matter Short Course series, and ACSI lectures). Previously he taught for LeTourneau University, Dallas Christian College, and Concordia University Texas (history, ethics, biosciences, ecology, apologetics, evidence, law, and international studies). Dr. Johnson’s forensic science background includes a J.D. (University of North Carolina, 1984), trial attorney and judicial experience, two post-doc certifications, and American Academy of Forensic Sciences membership. As a paternity establishment officer (certified by the Texas Attorney General’s Office), he has provided expert testimony in court proceedings, as well as biogenetic family history analysis used to change Texas birth certificates. Dr. Johnson’s biblical studies background includes biblical languages study (American Bible Society Award, 1982, mostly for Hebrew and Aramaic), a Th.D. (Emmanuel College of Christian Studies, 1996), ACSI credentials, and service as a Protestant chaplain (BSA, National Capital

Area). He is a contributor to *Guide to Creation Basics* and *Creation Basics & Beyond*.

## **WHAT IS FORENSIC SCIENCE?**

“The term *forensic science* involves *forensic* (or *forensis*, in Latin), which means a public discussion or debate. In a more modern context, however, *forensic* applies to courts or the judicial system. Combine that with *science*, and forensic science means applying scientific methods and processes to solving crimes.

From the 16th century, when medical practitioners began using forensic science to writings in the late 18th century that revealed the first evidence of modern pathology, to the formation of the first school of forensic science in 1909; the development of forensic science has been used to uncover mysteries, solve crimes, and convict or exonerate suspects of crime for hundreds of years.”

REFERENCE ([crimesceneinvestigatoredu.org/what-is-forensic-science](http://crimesceneinvestigatoredu.org/what-is-forensic-science))

## **WHAT IS EMPIRICAL SCIENCE?**

“The scientific method begins with scientists forming questions, or hypotheses, and then acquiring the knowledge through observations and experiments to either support or disprove a specific theory. "Empirical" means "based on observation or experience," according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary. Empirical research is the process of finding empirical evidence. Empirical data is the information that comes from the research.

Before any pieces of empirical data are collected, scientists carefully design their research methods to ensure the accuracy, quality and integrity of the data. If there are flaws in the way that empirical data is collected, the research will not be considered valid.

The scientific method often involves lab experiments that are repeated over and over, and these experiments result in quantitative data in the form of numbers and statistics. However, that is not the only process used for gathering information to support or refute a theory.

‘Empirical evidence includes measurements or data collected through direct observation or experimentation,’ said Jaime Tanner, a professor of biology at Marlboro College in Vermont. There are two research methods used to gather empirical measurements and data: qualitative and quantitative.”

REFERENCE: ([livescience.com/21456-empirical-evidence-a-definition.html](http://livescience.com/21456-empirical-evidence-a-definition.html))

## **WHAT IS THE HISTORICAL RESEARCH METHOD?**

“Understanding both the history of the discipline you are interested in and understanding the cultural, political, and social era of the particular text you are studying depends on reading and knowing history. History’s major activity is to gather evidence regarding the past, evaluate that evidence within the temporal scope of the period under study, and then assess how that evidence contributes to our understanding of that period.

**Historical research** relies on a wide variety of sources, primary and secondary and oral tradition.

### **Primary Sources:**

- Eyewitness accounts of events
- Oral or written testimony
- Found in public records or legal documents, minutes of meetings, newspapers, diaries, letters, artifacts such as posters, billboards, photographs, drawings, papers
- Located in **university archives** or **special collections**, or local historical society collections or privately owned collections

### **Secondary Sources:**

Are scholarly interpretations and critiques of the historical period of interest that you are studying. In the study of modern history the difference between primary and secondary sources are usually clear. In ancient and medieval history this distinction is not so clear.

- Secondhand accounts of events
- Oral or written
- Found in textbooks, encyclopedias, journal articles, newspapers, biographies, media such as **film or tape recordings**

**Oral Tradition:**

- Oral testimonies and personal narratives”

REFERENCE: (USC Libraries ~[libguides.usc.edu/humanitiesresearch/historical](http://libguides.usc.edu/humanitiesresearch/historical))