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Mathematical theology

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(Received)

Mathematical analysis of Bible passages promises surprising new insights into the meanings of the texts. Relations among God, man and sheep, for example, are clarified with simple algebraic manipulation.

1. Introduction

As the Bible is one of the foundations of western civilisation, it is important to understand the implications of biblical texts. Analysis of the mathematical meanings of statements in the Bible can become a powerful tool of interpretation, using precise new methods to interpret ancient texts. The new discipline of mathematical theology can resolve many of the controversies surrounding biblical interpretation, and add unexpected insights as well, because mathematical analysis is theologically neutral, without a belief or point of view.

Millions believe that the Bible is the infallible word of God, and that every word in it is true. For these people it is particularly important to know the exact, mathematically defined implications of the words in the Bible.

2. The Old Testament

The fundamental basis of Old Testament theology is the striving of a pastoral people for a higher meaning and guidance in life. As shepherds, the Hebrews saw that their sheep were hardly aware of the existence of those who cared for them and protected them from danger. The shepherds imagined that perhaps a higher shepherd was guarding them. The idea is summed up in the beginning words of the 23rd psalm, ‘The Lord is my shepherd’. The remainder of the psalm shows ways in which the writer of the psalm is protected by his God, just as the shepherd protects his sheep. The oft-repeated phrase ‘lamb of God’ also expresses this relationship.

‘The Lord is my shepherd’ contains three entities, which can be treated as variables. Their relationship can be expressed in logic: the relationship of God to man is the same as the relationship

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of man to sheep, or more compactly God is to man as man is to sheep. Mathematically, the relationship can be written as

$$\frac{\text{God}}{\text{Man}} = \frac{\text{Man}}{\text{Sheep}}$$  \hspace{1cm} (1)$$

This simple relationship has profound implications, for it enables us to define each of the entities in terms of the others. First, we can answer the age-old question ‘what is man?’ by solving the equation for man. Cross-multiplying, we obtain

$$\text{Man}^2 = \text{God} \times \text{Sheep}.$$  \hspace{1cm} (2)

Taking the square root, we discover that

$$\text{Man} = -\sqrt{\text{God} \times \text{Sheep}}.$$  \hspace{1cm} (2)

The answer to this difficult question, which has troubled scholars for millennia, turns out to be quite simple, an inevitable consequence of biblical wisdom: man, after all, is only the square root of God times sheep.

Now we can tackle an even more difficult question: what is God? Theologians (the word means ‘those who know God’) have elaborated numerous contradictory opinions, and many people believe that God does not exist. But again mathematical theology provides a simple answer: God does indeed exist, and can be defined. Solving Equation (1) for God, the answer is

$$\text{God} = \frac{\text{Man}^2}{\text{Sheep}}.$$  \hspace{1cm} (3)

So God, the omnipotent, universal master, is simply the square of man over sheep. It is left to the reader to solve for the biblical interpretation of sheep. The solution will make it clear why sheep assume such importance in the Holy Bible.

When Adam and Eve were driven from the Garden of Eden in the book of Genesis, God informed them that they were dust: ‘for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return’ (Genesis 3:19). (It is not clear how thou canst return to dust if thou art already dust, but we shall grant God some poetic licence and leave that one alone for now.) This direct quote from God is expressed mathematically in an identity,

$$\text{Man} = \text{Dust}.$$  \hspace{1cm} (4)

Substituting into Equation (3), we achieve further theological insights. Those sceptics who think that God is a human invention, and that God was made in man’s image, are proved wrong, for is now possible to define God in objective terms without direct reference to man. Substituting from Equation (3),

$$\text{God} = \frac{\text{Dust}^2}{\text{Sheep}}.$$  \hspace{1cm} (5)

Perhaps there is something holier than we thought about those Australian sheep stations. The realisation that God, according to the Bible, is compounded of dust and sheep somewhat reduces His former exalted position. In His anger at Adam and Eve, God seems to have got Himself into a lot of trouble. Perhaps in His anger He neglected to think through the mathematical implications of His condemnation.
3. The New Testament

The mathematics of the New Testament is simpler than that of the Old Testament: no sophisticated algebra of ratio comparisons here, only simple identities. In the first epistle of John, there is a verse that goes a long way towards clearing up the meaning of God to Christians: ‘He that loveth not knoweth not God: for God is love’ (I John 4:8). It is not that God bestows love, or that God is like love, but simply an identity. Using this simple identity,

\[ \text{God} = \text{Love}, \]  

and substituting into the above equations, we can arrive at further startling but biblically infallible conclusions.

Substituting into Equation (3), we can at last define the elusive nature of love: if

\[ \text{God} = \frac{\text{Man}^2}{\text{Sheep}} \]

and if God = Love, then by substitution it is obvious that

\[ \text{Love} = \frac{\text{Man}^2}{\text{Sheep}}. \] (7)

This equation opens up a Pandora’s Box of new possibilities for romantic poetry. But because Pandora is in pagan mythology, not Christian, this will not be discussed further.

We can also arrive at a new understanding of man by solving Equation (7) for man,

\[ \text{Man} = \text{Love} \times \text{Sheep}. \] (8)

This definition, while biblically accurate and true to the revealed word of God, is secular in that it requires no reference to the deity. The equating of God and love also means that love created the heaven and the earth (Genesis), love enabled the Hebrews to escape from slavery in Egypt (Exodus), etc. For Christians, mathematics reveals Jesus as the son of love, the original love-child.

Near the end of the New Testament we find another identity that changes the meaning of all that came before: ‘For our God is a consuming fire’ (Hebrews 12:29). Again, it is not that God has the power of a consuming fire, or that He sweeps all before Him like a consuming, fire, but that He is a consuming fire. Using the power of mathematics, this allows us again to create an alternative definition of man: substituting into Equation (2),

\[ \text{Man} = \text{Consuming fire} \times \text{Sheep}. \] (9)

This is real progress, for it offers an interpretation of mankind that has intuitive appeal. Man is part consuming fire and part sheep. The equation explains a lot about both psychology and human history. We know from converging evidence that the equating of God and fire is meant literally, for in the last book of the New Testament, John the divine encounters God: ‘His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire’ (Revelation 1:14).

The flame of fire is consistent with the mathematical identity from Hebrews, and the wooly look confirms the close relation between God and sheep from Equations (1) to (3).

The nine equations add nothing new to the Holy Bible. They only clarify or translate what is already present in the holy word of God.

Further revelations from mathematical theology await the discovery of more mathematically interpretable texts in the Bible, or perhaps in the Talmud, the Koran, and other religious works.