BELIEF



=REASONABLE

# Evidence For God

Psalm 19 | Romans 1

Kirk Bertsche

September 3, 2023



# Evidence for God

- Two Questions
  - Is there a God?
  - Is God still active?
- Two Worldviews
  - Naturalism
  - Biblical theism

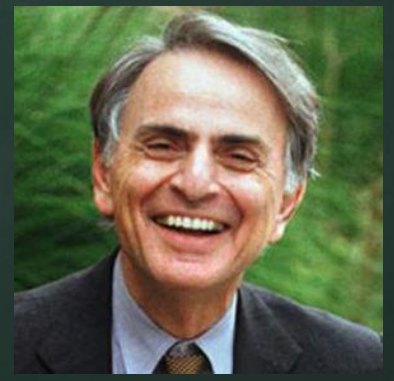


# Naturalism

"I went up to space, but I didn't encounter God" – Nikita Khrushchev for Yuri Gagarin, 1961



"The cosmos is all that is or was or ever will be" – Carl Sagan, *Cosmos*.



# Biblical Theism: Psalm 19:1-4a

*For the choir director. A Psalm of David.*

1. The heavens are telling of the glory of God;
   And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.
2. Day to day pours forth speech,
   And night to night reveals knowledge.
3. There is no speech, nor are there words;
   Their voice is not heard.
4. Their line has gone out through all the earth,
   And their utterances to the end of the world.

NASB 1995



# Biblical Theism: Romans 1:19-20

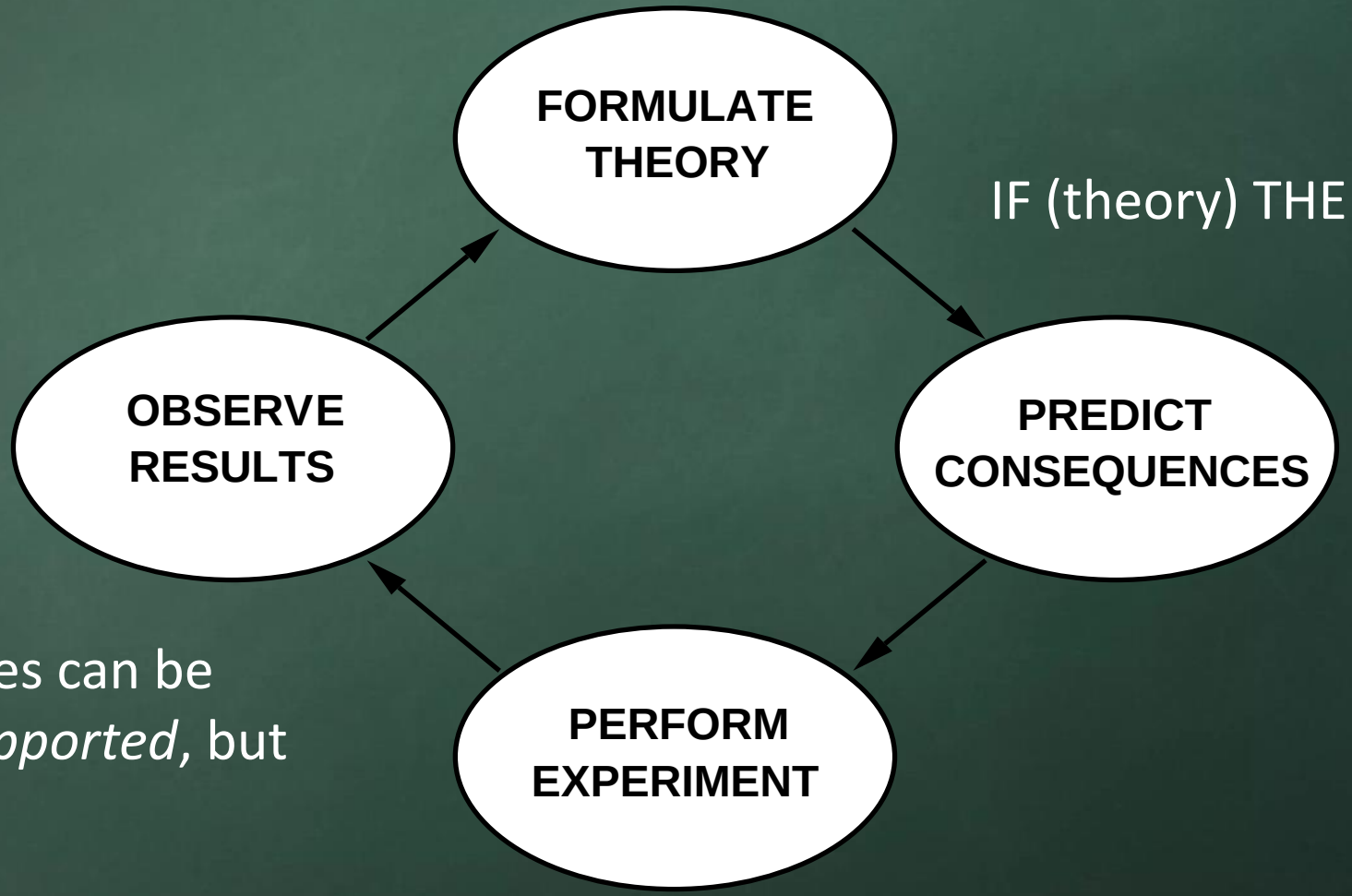
19. … that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

20. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

NASB 1995



# The Classic Scientific Method




IF (theory) THEN (predictions)

Scientific theories can be *evidenced* or *supported*, but never *proven*!

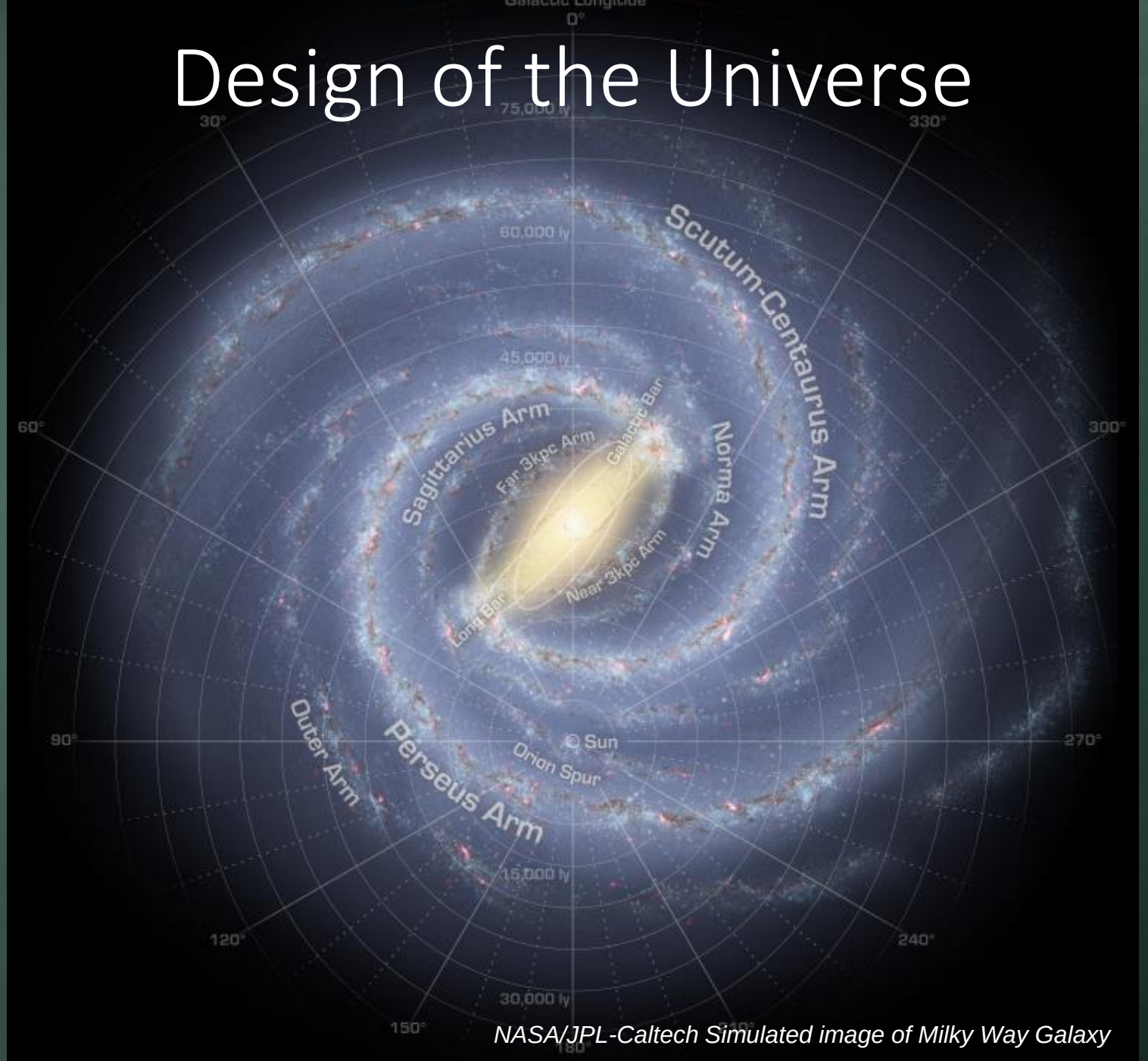


# Is There a God?

- Design of the Universe
- Existence of the Universe
- Comprehensibility of the Universe
- Mathematics
- Beauty
- Morality



# Design of the Universe



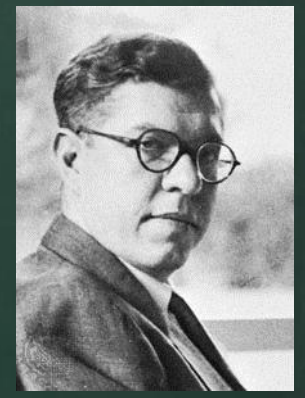

*NASA/JPL-Caltech Simulated image of Milky Way Galaxy*

For more details, see:

- Gonzalez, Guillermo and Jay W. Richards. *The Privileged Planet*. Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing, 2004.



# Design of the Universe



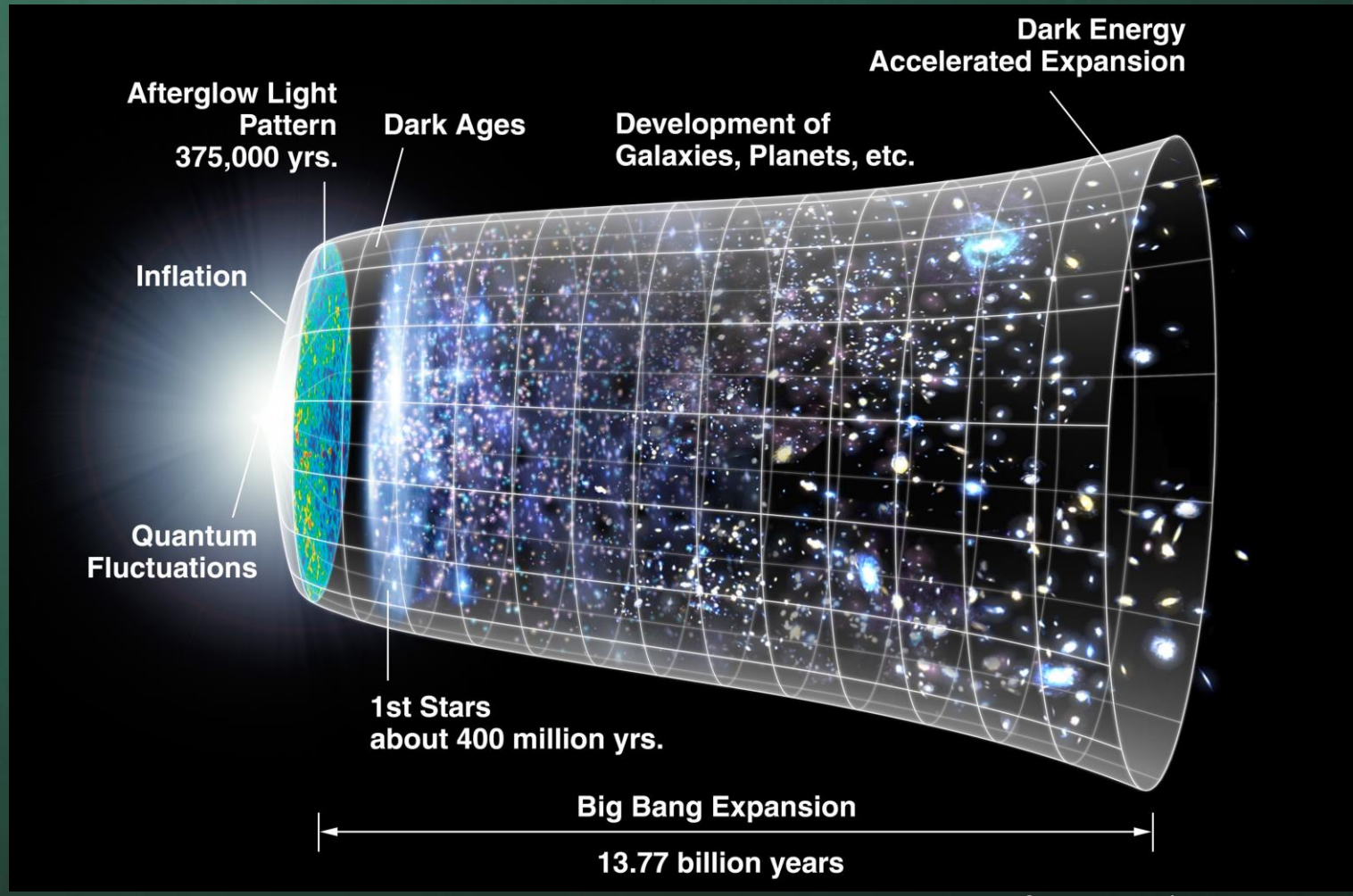
*Fred Hoyle (1915-2001): Astronomer*

- Hoyle explained nucleosynthesis of heavy elements in stars (1957)
  - Predicted previously unknown resonant state in 12C, later found by Fowler
  - This “fine tuning” of carbon implied design, left Hoyle (an atheist) “greatly shaken”
  - “A common sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a superintellect has monkeyed with physics, as well as with chemistry and biology, and that there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature.”—Fred Hoyle



# Design of the Universe—The "Big Bang"

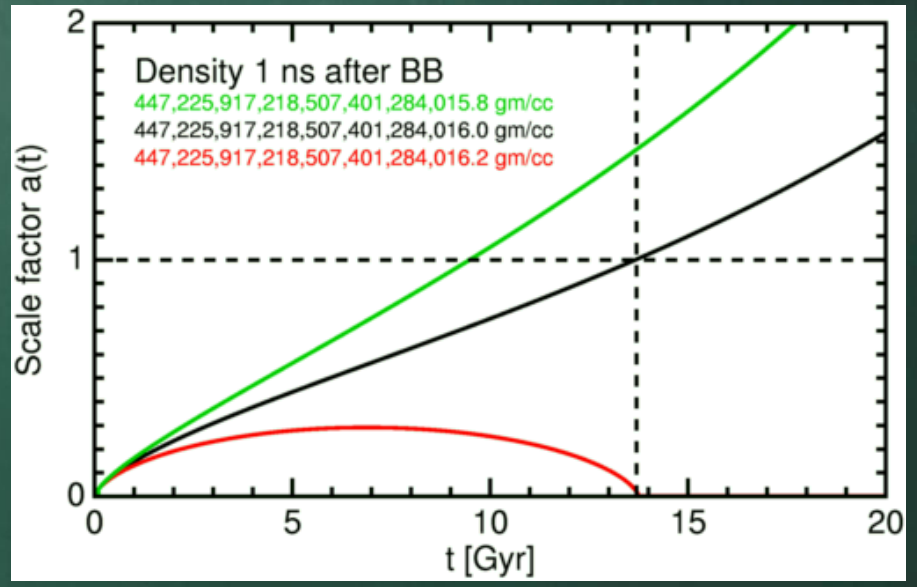
- Proposed in 1931 by Lemaitre (physicist, astronomer and Catholic priest)
- Strongly resisted by naturalists
- Beginning of all space, time, and matter
- An EXTREMELY fine-tuned expansion




NASA WMAP science team

# Fine-Tuning of Big Bang

- Mass density of early universe must be *very* precisely tuned
  - Too high: universe collapses too early
  - Too low: universe expands too rapidly
  - Tuning precision: $10^{-60}$ of Planck scale
    - "Planck scale" is natural scale factor, set by quantum mechanics and Heisenberg's uncertainty principle




(Ned Wright's Cosmology Tutorial, www.astro.ucla.edu/~wright)

- How/why so finely tuned?
  - Unknown physics?
  - Cyclic universe?
  - Multiverse?
  - Divine design?

# Design of the Universe

- "The laws of science, as we know them at present, contain many fundamental numbers, like the size of the electric charge of the electron and the ratio of the masses of the proton and the electron. … The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life." — Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (Bantam, 1988), p. 125.




*Stephen Hawking (1942-2018): Theoretical Physicist and Cosmologist, Professor Emeritus, Cambridge University*



# Design of the Universe

- "It seems as though somebody has fine-tuned nature's numbers to make the Universe. … The impression of design is overwhelming." –Paul Davies, *The Cosmic Blueprint* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), p.203.



*Paul Davies (1946-): Professor of Physics, Arizona State University*



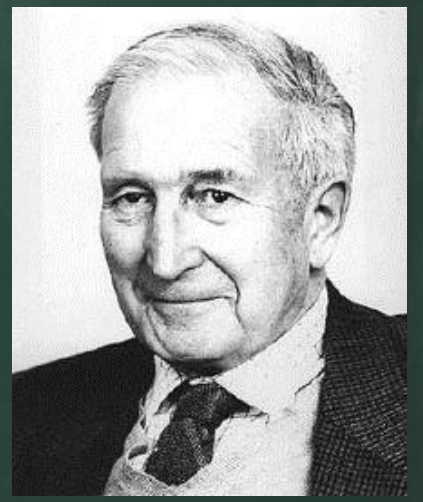
# Biological Design






# Biological Design

- “The philosophical question that has not been answered in origin-of-life studies is this: How can a universe of mindless matter produce beings with intrinsic ends, self-replication capabilities, and 'coded chemistry'? Here we are not dealing with biology, but an entirely different category of problem.”– Antony Flew; Roy Abraham Varghese, *There is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind*, (New York: Harper One, 2007), p. 124



*Antony Flew (1923-2010):*
*Philosopher, long-time atheist. Became a desit at age 81*



# Existence of the Universe




*Stephen Hawking (1942-2018): Theoretical Physicist and Cosmologist, Professor Emeritus, Cambridge University*

- "The usual approach of science of constructing a mathematical model cannot answer the questions of why there should be a universe for the model to describe. Why does the universe go to all the bother of existing? Is the unified theory so compelling that it brings about its own existence? Or does it need a creator, and, if so, does he have any other effect on the universe?" – Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (Bantam, 1988), p. 174.



# Comprehensibility of the Universe

$$\nabla \cdot \mathbf{D} = \rho$$

$$\nabla \cdot \mathbf{B} = 0$$

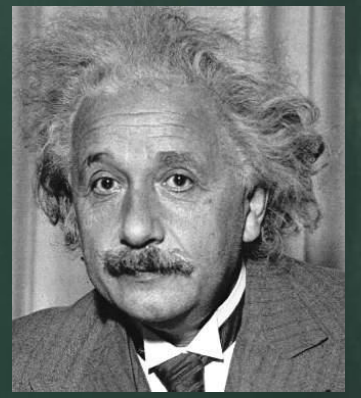
$$\nabla \times \mathbf{E} = -\frac{\partial \mathbf{B}}{\partial t}$$

$$\nabla \times \mathbf{H} = \mathbf{J} + \frac{\partial \mathbf{D}}{\partial t}$$

Maxwell's Equations



# Comprehensibility of the Universe



*Albert Einstein (1879-1955): Theoretical Physicist, Nobel Laureate*

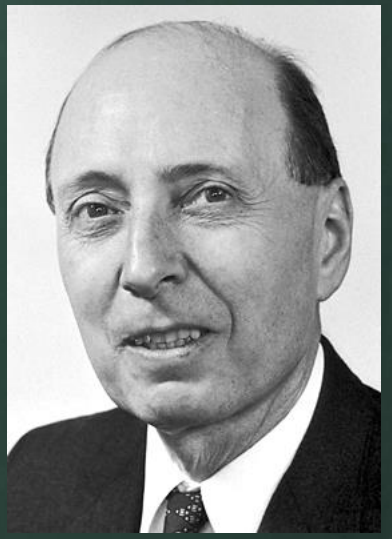
"The most incomprehensible thing about the universe is that it is comprehensible. You find it strange that I consider the comprehensibility of the world … as a miracle or as an eternal mystery. Well, ***a priori***, one should expect a chaotic world, which cannot be grasped by the mind in any way …

… a high degree of ordering of the objective world … could not be expected ***a priori***. That is the 'miracle' which is being consistently reinforced as our knowledge expands." – Albert Einstein



# Mathematics

- "… the enormous usefulness of mathematics in the natural sciences is something bordering on the mysterious and that there is no rational explanation for it. … The miracle of the appropriateness of the language of mathematics for the formulation of the laws of physics is a wonderful gift which we neither understand nor deserve."– Eugene Wigner, "The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics in the Physical Sciences", *Communications in Pure and Applied Mathematics* 13(1), Feb. 1960



*Eugene Wigner (1902-1995): Theoretical physicist, Nobel laureate*



# Beauty



*Crab Nebula M1 Composite Image*
*NASA, ESA, NRAO/AUI/NSF and G. Dubner (University of Buenos Aires)*

# Morality

- “The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference. DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music.”— Richard Dawkins, *River Out of Eden* (1995), pp. 131-132.



*Richard Dawkins (1941-): Evolutionary Biologist, Oxford University*



# Is There a God?

- Design of the Universe
- Existence of the Universe
- Comprehensibility of the Universe
- Mathematics
- Beauty
- Morality



# Caution

- Arguments to Avoid:
  - “God of the Gaps”
  - “Science is *Wrong*”
- Instead:
  - “Science is *Limited*”



# Limits to Science

"… the scientific picture of the real world around me is very deficient. It gives us a lot of factual information, … but it is ghastly silent about all and sundry that is really near to our heart, that really matters to us. It cannot tell us a word about red and blue, bitter and sweet, physical pain and physical delight; it knows nothing of beautiful and ugly, good or bad, God and eternity." – *Erwin Schroedinger*



*Erwin Schroedinger (1887-1961): Physicist, Pioneer of Quantum Mechanics, Nobel Laureate*



# Is God Still Active?




*Stephen Hawking (1942-2018): Theoretical Physicist and Cosmologist, Professor Emeritus, Cambridge University*

These [natural] laws may have originally been decreed by God, but it appears that he has since left the universe to evolve according to them and does not now intervene in it. – Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (Bantam, 1988)



# Is God Still Active?

- Interactions in History
- Fulfilled Prophecy
- Answered Prayer
- Changed Lives
- Miracles & Natural Law



# Is God Still Active?--Natural Law

- Because there is a law such as gravity, the Universe can and will create itself from nothing. … It is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the Universe going. – Stephen Hawking, *The Guardian*, 02 Sept. 2010




*Stephen Hawking (1942-2018): Theoretical Physicist and Cosmologist, Professor Emeritus, Cambridge University*



# Is God Still Active?--Natural Law



*John Lennox (1943-): Emeritus Professor of Mathematics, Oxford University*

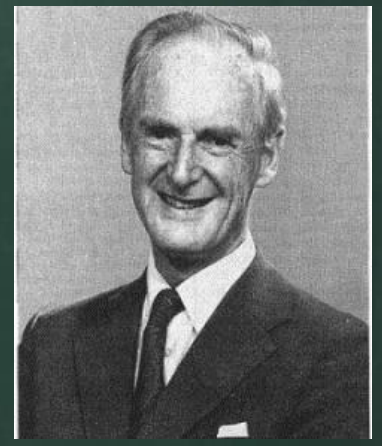
… Hawking's claim is misguided. He asks us to choose between God and the laws of physics, as if they were necessarily in mutual conflict.

But contrary to what Hawking claims, physical laws can never provide a complete explanation of the universe. Laws themselves do not create anything, they are merely a description of what happens under certain conditions. -- *Daily Mail Online*, 03 Sept. 2010



# Is God Still Active?--Natural Law

- Scientific laws do not *prescribe* what *must* happen; they *describe* what *has* happened. The earth does not go round the sun because Newton's (or Einstein's) law makes it, or tells it to. The earth goes its own way, and the scientific laws are our generalized way of describing how it goes. – Donald M. MacKay, *The Clockwork Image* (InterVarsity Press, 1974), p. 31.



*Donald M. MacKay (1922-1987): Physicist and Professor of Neuroscience, Keele University*



# Is God Still Active?

"He waters the mountains from His upper chambers; The earth is satisfied with the fruit of His works.

He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, And vegetation for the labor of man, So that he may bring forth food from the earth," – Ps. 104:13-14

"You appoint darkness and it becomes night, In which all the beasts of the forest prowl about. The young lions roar after their prey And seek their food from God." – Ps. 104:20-21




NASB 1995

# Is God Still Active?

"And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power." – Heb. 1:3

"He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together." – Col. 1:17




NASB 1995

# Summary

- Is There a God?
  - Design of the Universe
  - Existence of the Universe
  - Comprehensibility of the Universe
  - Mathematics
  - Beauty
  - Morality
- Is God Still Active?
  - Interactions in History
  - Fulfilled Prophecy
  - Answered Prayer
  - Changed Lives
  - Miracles & Natural Law



# Naturalism: Is it Self-Defeating?

- "If minds are wholly dependent on brains, and brains on bio-chemistry, and bio-chemistry (in the long run) on the meaningless flux of the atoms, I cannot understand how the thought of those minds should have any more significance than the sound of the wind in the trees."— C.S. Lewis, "Is Theology Poetry?" presented to the Socratic Club, 1944.



*C.S. Lewis (1898-1963):*
*Literary Scholar and Author*



# Biblical Theism

- "I believe in Christianity as I believe that the Sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else."– C.S. Lewis, "Is Theology Poetry?" presented to the Socratic Club, 1944.



*C.S. Lewis (1898-1963):*
*Literary Scholar and Author*



# Some Recommended Resources


Alexander, Denis and Alister McGrath. *Coming to Faith Through Dawkins: 12 Essays on the Pathway from New Atheism to Christianity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2023.

Bickel, Bruce and Stan Jantz. *Creation and Evolution 101: A Guide to Science and the Bible in Plain Language*. (formerly *Bruce & Stan's Guide to How it all Began: A User-Friendly Approach*.) Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2004 (2001).

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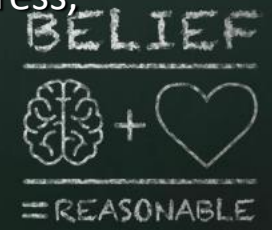



BELIEF
+
=REASONABLE


BELIEF
+
=REASONABLE

# Is God Still Active?



*C. John Collins: Professor of Old Testament, Covenant Theological Seminary*

"First, every natural event is the work of God, as well as the work of the created things involved. …

"Second, we should *not* say that a supernatural event has God more "directly" involved, while a natural event has him only "indirectly" involved. God is working directly in both kinds of events: in the natural, to maintain the natural properties; in the supernatural ones, to go beyond those properties." – C. John Collins, *Science and Faith: Friends or Foes?,* p. 168



# Biblical View of Naturalism: Romans 1:20-25

20. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

21. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. …

25. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

NASB 1995



# Psalm 19

7 The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;

8 The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;

9 the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether.

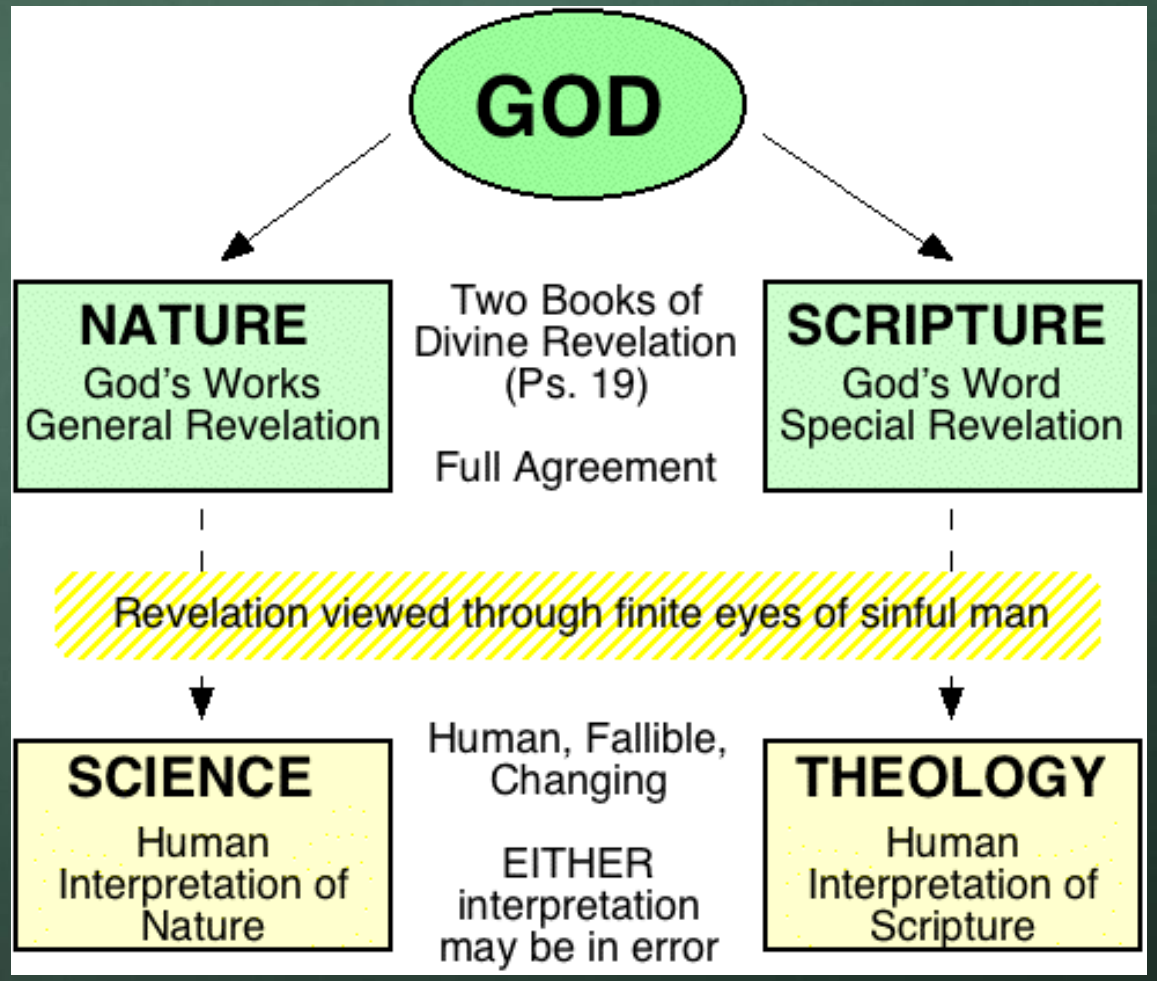
10 They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.

11 Moreover by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward.

NASB 1995



# Two “Books” of Revelation




BELIEF + = REASONABLE

# Natural Law



*John Lennox (1943-): Emeritus Professor of Mathematics, Oxford University*

What Hawking appears to have done is to confuse law with agency. His call on us to choose between God and physics is a bit like someone demanding that we choose between aeronautical engineer Sir Frank Whittle and the laws of physics to explain the jet engine.

That is a confusion of category. ... -- *Daily Mail Online*, 03 Sept. 2010



# Design of the Universe

- “Whether atheist or theist, a thoughtful person can only stand in awe of the way the universe seems designed as a home for humankind.” — Owen Gingerich, *God’s Universe* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 40.



*Owen Gingerich (1930-2023): Professor Emeritus of Astronomy and History of Science, Harvard University*



# Naturalism

- "… we need no God to explain the universe and life … We cannot, of course, disprove God, just as we can't disprove Thor, fairies, leprechauns and the Flying Spaghetti Monster. But, like those other fantasies that we can't disprove, we can say that God is very very improbable." – Richard Dawkins, *"Why There is Almost Certainly No God"* (2006)



*Richard Dawkins (1941-): Evolutionary Biologist, Oxford University*

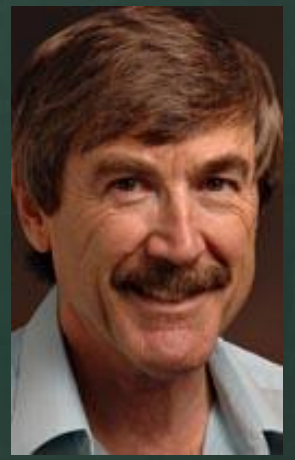


# Big Bang—Naturalistic Explanations

- "To the hard-line physicist the multiverse may not be entirely respectable, but it is at least preferable to invoking a Creator. Indeed … physicists like Susskind and Weinberg are attracted to the multiverse precisely because it seems to dispense with God as the explanation of cosmic design." — Bernard Carr, *Universe or Multiverse?* (Cambridge University Press, 2007) p. 16



# Design of the Universe—The "Big Bang"



*Paul Davies (1946-): Professor of Physics, Arizona State University*

- "It is trivially true that, in an infinite universe, anything that can happen will happen. But this catch-all explanation of a particular feature of the Universe is really no explanation at all. We should like to understand the bio-friendliness of *this* universe. To postulate that all possible universes exist does not advance our understanding at all." — Paul Davies, *Universe or Multiverse?* Bernard Carr, ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2007) p. 494



# Design of the Universe



*Owen Gingerich (1930-2023): Professor Emeritus of Astronomy and History of Science, Harvard University*

- "I am personally persuaded that through the eyes of faith one can see numerous vestiges of the designer's hand in the universe. I have many good friends who cannot see it that way, so I am rather doubtful that one can argue a skeptic into faith with the evidences of science. Nevertheless, I find some of these circumstances of nature impossible to comprehend in the absence of supernatural design." — Owen Gingerich, "Modern Cosmogony and Biblical Creation" in *Is God a Creationist?* Ed. By Roland Mushat Frye (Scribner's, 1983), p. 132.



# Beauty



*JWST "Pillars of Creation": NASA, ESA, CSA, STScI; Joseph DePasquale (STScI), Anton M. Koekemoer (STScI), Alyssa Pagan (STScI).*

# Beauty



*JWST Deep Field Image*

# Beauty



*Isaac Newton(1642-1726/27): Mathematician, Physicist, Astronomer, Theologian*

- "This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being. . . . This Being governs all things, not as the soul of the world, but as Lord over all; and on account of His dominion He is wont to be called Lord God."
  – Sir Isaac Newton, *Principia Mathematica, Book 3* (1687)



# Is God Still Active?--Natural Law

- The dazzlingly obvious conclusion now arose in my mind: *in the whole history of the universe the laws of Nature have never produced a single event.* They are the pattern to which every event must conform, provided only that it can be induced to happen. – C.S. Lewis, "The Laws of Nature" in *God in the Dock*

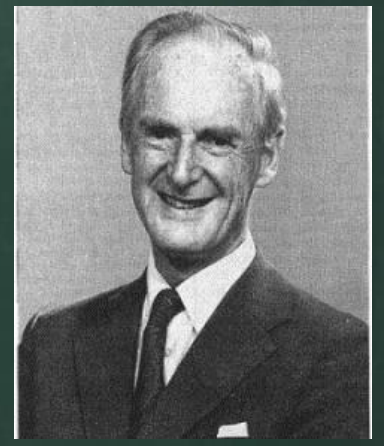


*C.S. Lewis (1898-1963):*
*Literary Scholar and Author*



# Is God Still Active?

... the continuing existence of our world is not something to be taken for granted. Rather it hangs moment by moment on the continuance of the upholding word of power of its creator. -- Donald M. MacKay, *The Open Mind*



*Donald M. MacKay (1922-1987): Physicist and Professor of Neuroscience, Keele University*

