



Welcome to Science and Christianity

Science and Christianity

- Course overview
- Philosophical framework

Course Overview: Goals

- Address the common view that well-established scientific facts contradict clear statements from scripture

Course Overview: Goals

- Address the common view that well-established scientific facts contradict clear statements from scripture

“Evolutionary biology is intertwined with other sciences...if evolutionary biology is to be dismissed, then the fundamental principles of other sciences will have to be excised...If we let the Creationists have their way, we may as well go whole hog. Let us reintroduce the flat-earth theory, the chemistry of the four elements, and mediaeval astrology.” Philip Kitcher

Course Overview: Goals

- Address the common view that well-established scientific facts contradict clear statements from scripture

"It is absolutely safe to say that if you meet someone who claims not to believe in evolution, that person is ignorant, stupid or insane (or wicked, but I'd rather not consider that)..." Richard Dawkins.

Course Overview: Goals

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- Examine the biblical claim that scientific investigation of the natural realm reveals evidence of a Designer

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“...since the creation of the world [God’s] invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made...”

Romans 1:18

Course Overview: Goals

- Address misconception that well-established scientific facts contradict clear statements from scripture
- Examine the biblical claim that scientific investigation of the natural realm reveals evidence of a Designer

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- Address the common view that well-established scientific facts contradict clear statements from scripture
- Examine the biblical claim that scientific investigation of the natural realm reveals evidence of a Designer
- Clarify what we currently know and how well we know it in areas of overlap between science and scripture

What do we know and how well do we know it?



What do we know and how well do we know it?

Biblical Interpretation

A diagram illustrating the spectrum of biblical interpretation. At the top, the text 'Biblical Interpretation' is enclosed in a light blue box. Below this box is a long, horizontal, light blue double-headed arrow. On the left end of the arrow is a vertical orange line, and on the right end is a vertical green line. Below the orange line is an orange box containing the text 'No Reason to Affirm'. Below the green line is a green box containing the text 'Absolute Certainty'.

No Reason
to Affirm

Absolute
Certainty

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Course Overview: Requirements

- Not: particular scientific training or theological background
- Reading: 35 + 15 optional pages a week
- Writing: 1 page a week, answering questions on reading
- Grading: pass/fail, attending 3 of the 5 weeks; handing in 3 of the 4 writing assignments.

Course Overview: Outline

- Week 1: Philosophical Framework
- Week 2: Evolution Part 1
- Week 3: Evolution Part 2
- Week 4: Cosmology, Bible Part 1
- Week 5: Bible Part 2

Philosophical Framework

Philosophical Framework

- Does the Bible need to harmonize with science?
- Worldviews: what are they and how are they relevant to our discussion?
- A philosophy of science that recognizes the roles of worldviews

Does the Bible Need to Harmonize with Science?

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"But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." II Peter 1:20-21

Does the Bible Need to Harmonize with Science?

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 - The Bible claims to be revelation, not speculation
 - The Bible claims that God works in and has entered history

Does the Bible Need to Harmonize with Science?

“In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth...” Luke 1:5

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Does the Bible Need to Harmonize with Science?

- Unlike post-modern spiritualities, biblical Christianity offers objective verification of its claims
- Therefore, the Bible is open to falsification
- Therefore, too, it potentially offers real hope...hope with a reasonable basis

Does the Bible Need to Harmonize with Science?

For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty...and so we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.” II Peter 1:16, 18

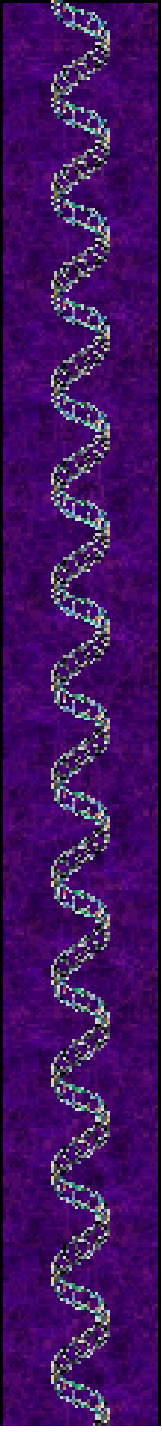
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Philosophical Framework

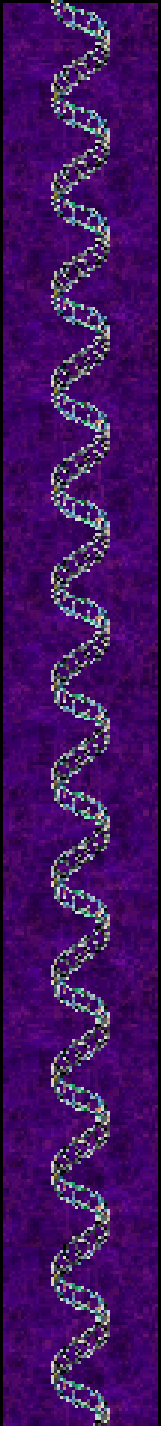
- Does the Bible need to harmonize with science? Yes!

Philosophical Framework

- Does the Bible need to harmonize with science?
- Worldviews: what are they and how are they relevant to our discussion?



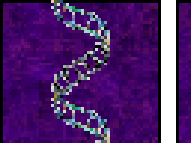
“Creation is not a scientific explanation for biological life, but evolution is.”



“Creation is not a scientific explanation for biological life, but evolution is.”

“...evolution is a substantiated scientific theory and supernatural ‘creation’ is a religious belief. The former is based on objective analysis of natural evidence; the latter is based primarily on faith.”

Letter to the editor of the Westerville News,
11/15/00



“Modern science directly implies that...there are no gods and no designing forces that are rationally detectable. Second, modern science directly implies that there are no inherent moral or ethical laws, no absolute guiding principles for human society. Third, human beings are marvelously complex machines. The individual human becomes an ethical person by means of two primary mechanisms: heredity and environmental influences. That is all there is. Fourth, we must conclude that when we die, we die and that is the end of us. Finally, free will as it is traditionally conceived...simply does not exist.”

William Provine, Cornell University, from Darwin on Trial, pg. 124

11/15/00

Philosophical Framework

- Worldviews: what are they and how are they relevant to our discussion?

Worldviews

- Definition: a worldview is a set of “postulates”, bedrock assumptions, upon which all other reasoning is based

	Naturalism	Theism	Pantheism
Does God Exist?	No	Yes	Yes
Is Reality Personal?	No	Yes	No
Is Reality Infinite?	No	Yes	Yes
Is There a Personal Afterlife?	No	Yes	No
What is the Significance of Human Life?	No ultimate significance	Great significance	Individuals have no special significance

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 - Pervasive filter

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“It seems clear that everybody has got some kind of metaphysics, even if he thinks he hasn’t got any. Indeed, the practical ‘hard-headed’ individual who ‘only goes by what he sees’ generally has a very dangerous kind of metaphysics, i.e., the kind of which he is unaware...such metaphysics is dangerous because, in it, assumptions and inferences are being mistaken for directly observed facts, with the result that they are effectively riveted in an almost unchangeable way into the structure of thought.”

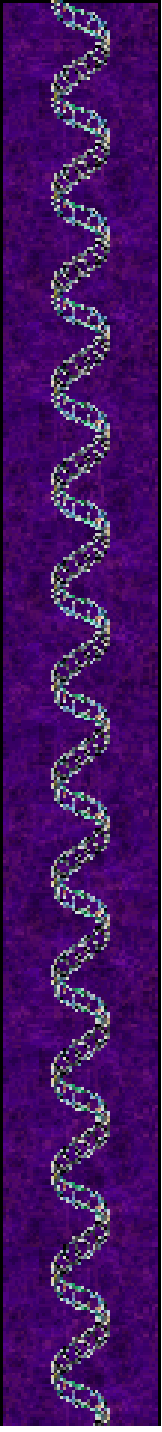
David Bohm, from Thaxton/Bradley/Olsen’s The Mystery of Life’s Origin, p. 207

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 - Pervasive filter
 - Provides the answers to the most important questions in life



“The argument of this book is that we, and all other animals, are machines created by our genes. Like successful Chicago gangsters, our genes have survived, in some cases for millions of years, in a highly competitive world. This entitles us to expect certain qualities in our genes. I shall argue that a predominant quality to be expected in a successful gene is ruthless selfishness. This gene selfishness will usually give rise to selfishness in individual behaviour. However, as we shall see, there are special circumstances in which a gene can achieve its own selfish goals best by fostering a limited form of altruism at the level of individual animals.”

Richard Dawkins, The Selfish Gene, p2

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“Then God said ‘Let us create man in Our image’ ...and God created man in His own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female He created them...whoever sheds man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God_He made man.”

Genesis 1:26-27, 9:6

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Worldviews

“Morality...is merely an adaptation put in place to further our reproductive ends...Ethics as we understand it is an illusion fobbed off on us by our genes.”

Michael Ruse and E. O. Wilson, The Evolution of Ethics

Worldviews

“But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you in order that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax-gatherers do the same... therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”

Jesus, Matthew 5:44-48

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- How do we get our worldview? By absorption and preference...

INTERVIEWER: How did your atheism begin?

SARTRE: . . . (at the age of eleven) I don't know where the thought came from or how it struck me, yet all at once I said to myself, "But God doesn't exist!" . . . I remember very well, it was on that day and in the form of a momentary intuition, that I said to myself "God doesn't exist." It's striking to reflect that I thought this at the age of eleven and that I never seriously asked myself the question again until today, that is to say for sixty years. . . even if one does not believe in God, there are elements of the idea of God that remain in us and that cause us to see the world with some divine aspects.

INTERVIEWER: What, for example?

SARTRE: . . . As for me, I don't see myself as so much dust in the world, but as a being that was expected, prefigured, called forth. In short, as a being that could, it seems, come only from a creator; and this idea of a creating hand that created me refers me back to God . . . (This idea) contradicts many of my other ideas; but it is there, floating vaguely. And when I think of myself I often think rather in this way, for want of being able to think otherwise.

INTERVIEWER: (Then) what is the benefit to you of not believing in God?

SARTRE: It has strengthened my freedom and made it sounder: at the present time this freedom is not there to give God what he asks me for; it is there for the discovery of myself and to give me what I ask of myself. That is essential . . . This life owes nothing to God; it was what I wanted it to be

Worldviews

“Use the Force, Luke!”

	Naturalism	Theism	Pantheism
Does God Exist?	No	Yes	Yes
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Is There a Personal Afterlife?	No	<u>Yes</u>	No
What is the Significance of Human Life?	No significance	significance	Individuals significance

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- Worldviews are the heart of our topic

“I have not even made my farewell to the past. I tell myself now I will think no more of these things, but something in me that knows nothing of time refuses to believe in death. In the dusk when three miles from this grave I stand at a corner in the winebrick colony of my teens to stare up at a lighted window I will see upon it the shadows that an hour ago were ours, but no longer are, the four of us are vanished into nowhere, and my adult wits stammer in me like a bewildered child, how can it be, how can it be, how can it be? and I have no moment worse; the meaning I have made of my life is as idiotic as a match that winks and is out in the spin of a dark planet toward its extinction, uninhabited and senseless. It is a moment of truth, upon which philosophies are built, but will pass, a child's bleat of despair.

“My foot standeth in an even place, headstone, grass in the snow, the earth healed over their remnants of rag and skull, and on what may still be a finger of her hand is a ring of plain gold. I remember it in her housework, never taken off since the day of her wedding...it was a ring of some import, for within its circle we had been born, fed, clothed, and sheltered in a house which was safe and faithful...into paradise may the angels in whom I do not believe lead thee, at their coming may the martyrs long decomposed take thee up, in eternal rest, and may the chorus of angels lead thee to that which does not exist, the holy city, the perpetual light.”

William Gibson, [A Mass for the Dead](#)

	Naturalism	Theism
Ultimate reality	Matter+time+chance	The infinite-personal God
Definition of human	Not qualitatively different from animals, or matter	Created in the “image of God”, with great significance
Essence of history	Progress from matter to beast to primitive, superstitious man to modern scientific man	Humanity’s rebellion against God and God’s intervention to restore humanity
View of science	Sole source of reliable truth; reveals the correctness of naturalism	Valuable source of truth, though limited; points to existence and character of Creator

Worldviews

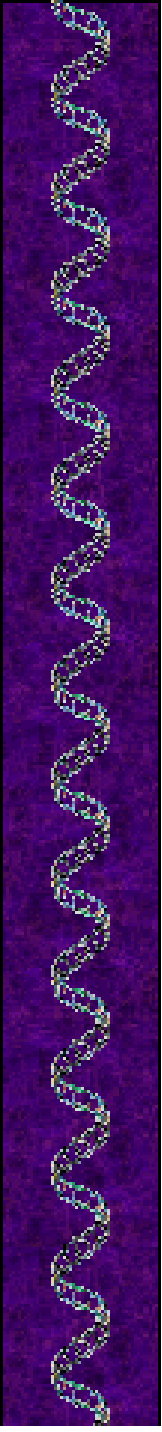
- A worldview is a set of “postulates”, bedrock assumptions, upon which all other reasoning is based
- What impact does our worldview have on us? Pervasive filter; answers key questions for us!
- How do we get our worldview? Usually by absorption...
- Worldviews are the heart of our topic

Philosophical Framework

- Does the Bible need to harmonize with science?
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- A philosophy of science that recognizes the roles of worldviews



A Worldview-Aware Philosophy of Science

- The relationship of physical science to metaphysics

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“Creation is not a scientific explanation for biological life, but evolution is.”

“...evolution is a substantiated scientific theory and supernatural ‘creation’ is a religious belief. The former is based on objective analysis of natural evidence; the latter is based primarily on faith.”

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“Creation is not a scientific explanation for
“Creationism is not science, said [the National Academy of Science’s friend of the court brief], because ‘it fails to display the most basic characteristic of science: reliance upon naturalistic explanations...’”

Phillip Johnson, Darwin on Trial, pg. 8

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The Relationship of Physical Science to Metaphysics

Methodological Naturalism: science must exclude all theories that have potentially non-material implications



Physical
Sciences

Metaphysics
(ethics,
philosophy,
religion, etc.)

Problems with Methodological Naturalism

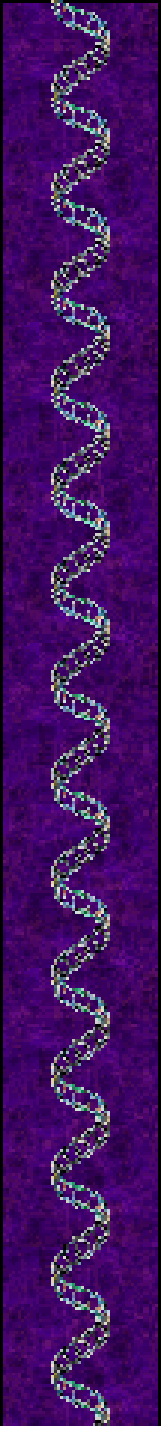
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Michael Ruse and E. O. Wilson, The Evolution of Ethics



“There seems to me too much misery in the world. I cannot persuade myself that a beneficent and omnipotent God would have designedly created the Ichneumonidae with the express intention of their feeding within the living bodies of Caterpillars, or that a cat should play with mice. Not believing this, I see no necessity in the belief that the eye was expressly designed.”

Charles Darwin, in a letter to Asa Gray, May 22, 1860



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- It is not practical to maintain a complete separation between physical science and metaphysics
- It is self-defeating: either it excludes evidence FOR evolution as well as creation, or it reduces evidence for evolution to a circular argument

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William Provine, Cornell University, from Darwin on Trial, pg. 124

“Creationism is not science, said [the National Academy of Science’s friend of the court brief], because ‘it fails to display the most basic characteristic of science: reliance upon naturalistic explanations...’”

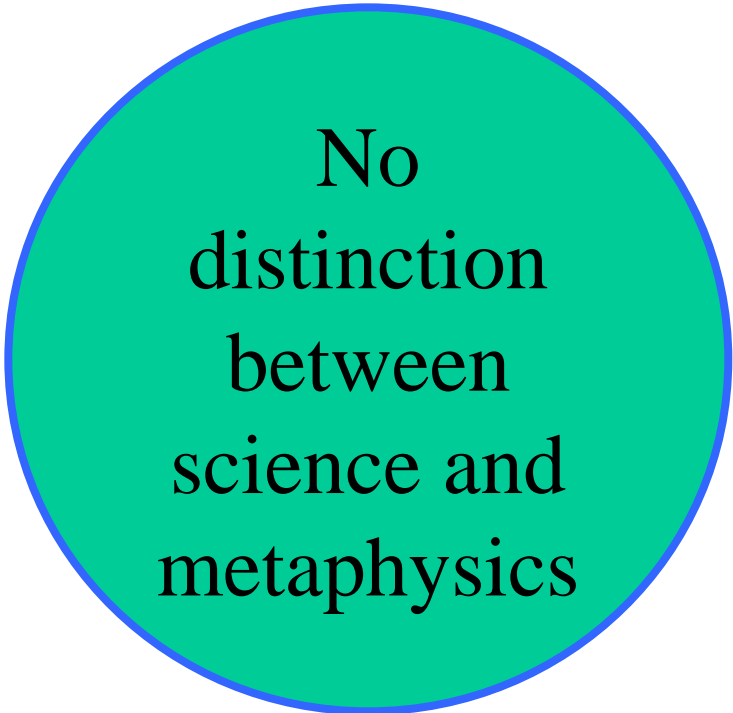
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The Relationship of Physical Science to Metaphysics

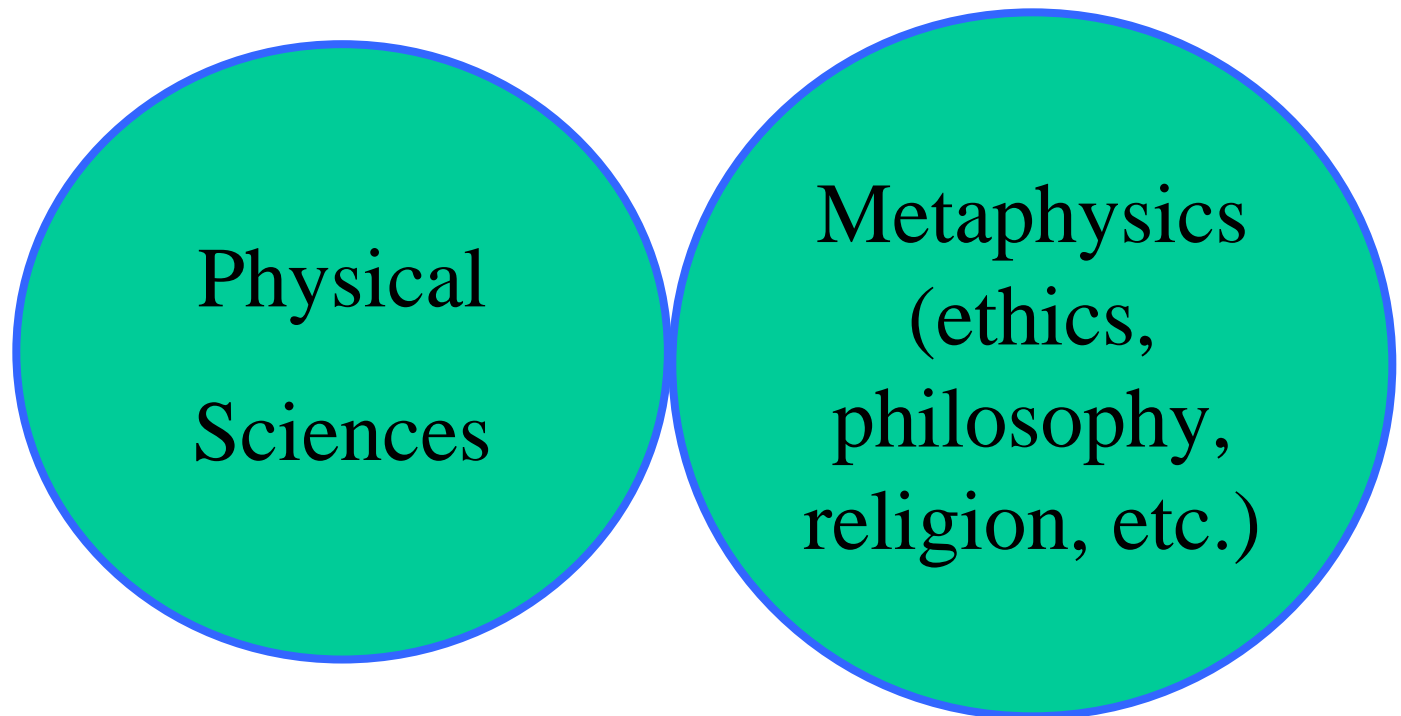
An error made by some Christians, who have argued for introducing the study of text from Genesis into science curricula:

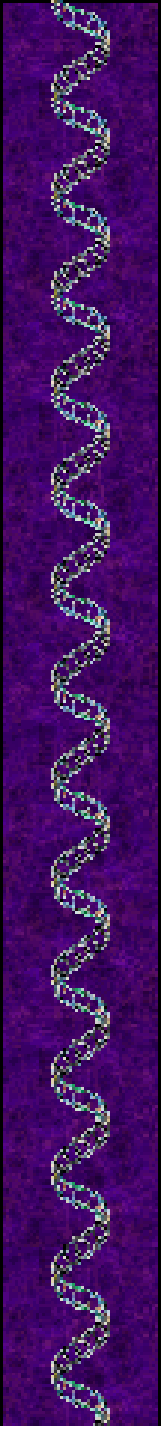


No
distinction
between
science and
metaphysics

The Relationship of Physical Science to Metaphysics

The practical reality: although it is possible and desirable to make these categories, the fact is that they have common borders, allowing scientific data to be referenced in arguments for various world-views:





A Worldview-Aware Philosophy of Science

- The relationship of physical science to metaphysics: separate, but contact

A Worldview-Aware Philosophy of Science

- The relationship of physical science to metaphysics: separate, but contact
- Solve definitional issues...the assumption that...
science=rationality=naturalism

Key Definitions

- Scientific

Key Definitions

- Scientific

“...evolution is a substantiated scientific theory and supernatural ‘creation’ is a religious belief. The former is based on objective analysis of natural evidence; the latter is based primarily on faith.”

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Multiple Uses of ‘Scientific’

- Rational; opposite of superstitious
- Modern; post-medieval thinking
- Naturalism; exclusion of supernatural because science deals only with material, natural causes and effects

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PROBLEM: Rationality is not new,
nor limited to Naturalists

“Now in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; and his spirit was troubled and his sleep left him. Then the king gave orders to call in the magicians, the conjurers, the sorcerers and the Chaldeans, to tell the king his dreams. So they came in and stood before the king. And the king said to them, 'I had a dream, and my spirit is anxious to understand the dream.' Then the Chaldeans spoke to the king in Aramaic: 'O king, live forever! Tell the dream to your servants, and we will declare the interpretation.' The king answered the Chaldeans, 'The command from me is firm: if you do not make known to me the dream and its interpretation, you will be torn limb from limb, and your houses will be made a rubbish heap.’”

“But if you declare the dream and its interpretation, you will receive from me gifts and a reward and great honor; therefore declare to me the dream and its interpretation.’ They answered a second time and said, ‘Let the king tell the dream to his servants, and we will declare the interpretation.’ The king answered and said, ‘I know for certain that you are bargaining for time, inasmuch as you have seen that the command from me is firm, that if you do not make the dream known to me, there is only one decree for you. For you have agreed together to speak lying and corrupt words before me until the situation is changed; therefore tell me the dream, that I may know that you can declare to me its interpretation.’”

“The Chaldeans answered the king and said, 'There is not a man on earth who could declare the matter for the king, inasmuch as no great king or ruler has ever asked anything like this of any magician, conjurer or Chaldean. Moreover, the thing which the king demands is difficult, and there is no one else who could declare it to the king except gods, whose dwelling place is not with mortal flesh.' Because of this the king became indignant and very furious, and gave orders to destroy all the wise men of Babylon. So the decree went forth that the wise men should be slain; and they looked for Daniel and his friends to kill them.”

Daniel 2:1-13

Rationality is not new, nor limited to Naturalists

“Faith in the possibility of science, generated antecedently to the development of modern scientific theory is an unconscious derivative from medieval theology.”

Professor Whitehead, quoted in Thomas Kuhn’s Copernican Revolution, pg. 123

Rationality is not new, nor limited to Naturalists

“I implore my reader not to forget the divine goodness conferred on mankind, and which the psalmist urges him especially to consider. When he has returned from church and entered on the study of astronomy, may he praise and glorify the wisdom and greatness of the creator. Let him not only extol the bounty of God in the preservation of living creatures of all kinds by the strength and stability of the earth, but also let him acknowledge the wisdom of the Creator in its motion, so abstruse, so admirable.”

Johannes Kepler, Astronomia nova

Rationality is not new, nor limited to Naturalists

“Even the most atheistic scientist accepts as an act of faith that the universe is not absurd, that there is a rational basis to physical existence manifested as a lawlike order [i.e., the rules of the game] in nature that is at least in part comprehensible to us. So science can proceed only if the scientist adopts an essentially theological worldview.”

Paul Davies (author of God and the New Physics), 1995, 32

Key Definitions

- Scientific

Key Definitions

- Scientific:
 - not: a viewpoint that excludes the supernatural, and that appeared after 1800
 - instead: a rational approach to answering life's questions

Key Definitions

- **Scientific:** a rational approach to answering life's questions

Key Definitions

- Scientific: a rational approach to answering life's questions
- Science

Key Definitions

- **Scientific:** a rational approach to answering life's questions
- **Science:** the study of the physical, material realm via observation and hypothesis testing

Key Definitions

- Scientific: a rational approach to answering life's questions
- Science: the study of the physical, material realm via observation and hypothesis testing
- Faith

Key Definitions

- Scientific: a rational approach to answering life's questions

“...evolution is a substantiated scientific

- theory and supernatural ‘creation’ is a religious belief. The former is based on objective analysis of natural evidence; the latter is based primarily on faith.”
- Letter to the editor of the Westerville News, 11/15/00

Key Definitions: Faith

- not: a belief that is held in spite of or completely without evidence
- instead: a belief that is based on evidence, but also includes an element of pure decision based on our verdict on God's goodness and power

Key Definitions: Faith

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep...”

I Corinthians 15:3-6

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“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen...without faith it is impossible to please God, because he who comes to God must believe that he exists, and that he is a rewarder of those who seek Him. By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark...”

Hebrews 11:1, 6-7

~~instead, a belief that is based on~~
evidence, but also includes an element of pure decision based on our verdict on God's goodness and power

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- **Scientific:** a rational approach to answering life's questions
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A Worldview-Aware Philosophy of Science

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Examples of Design Inferences

- Trail markers
- Someone cheats us in a card game
- SETI
- Hominid tools (archeology)

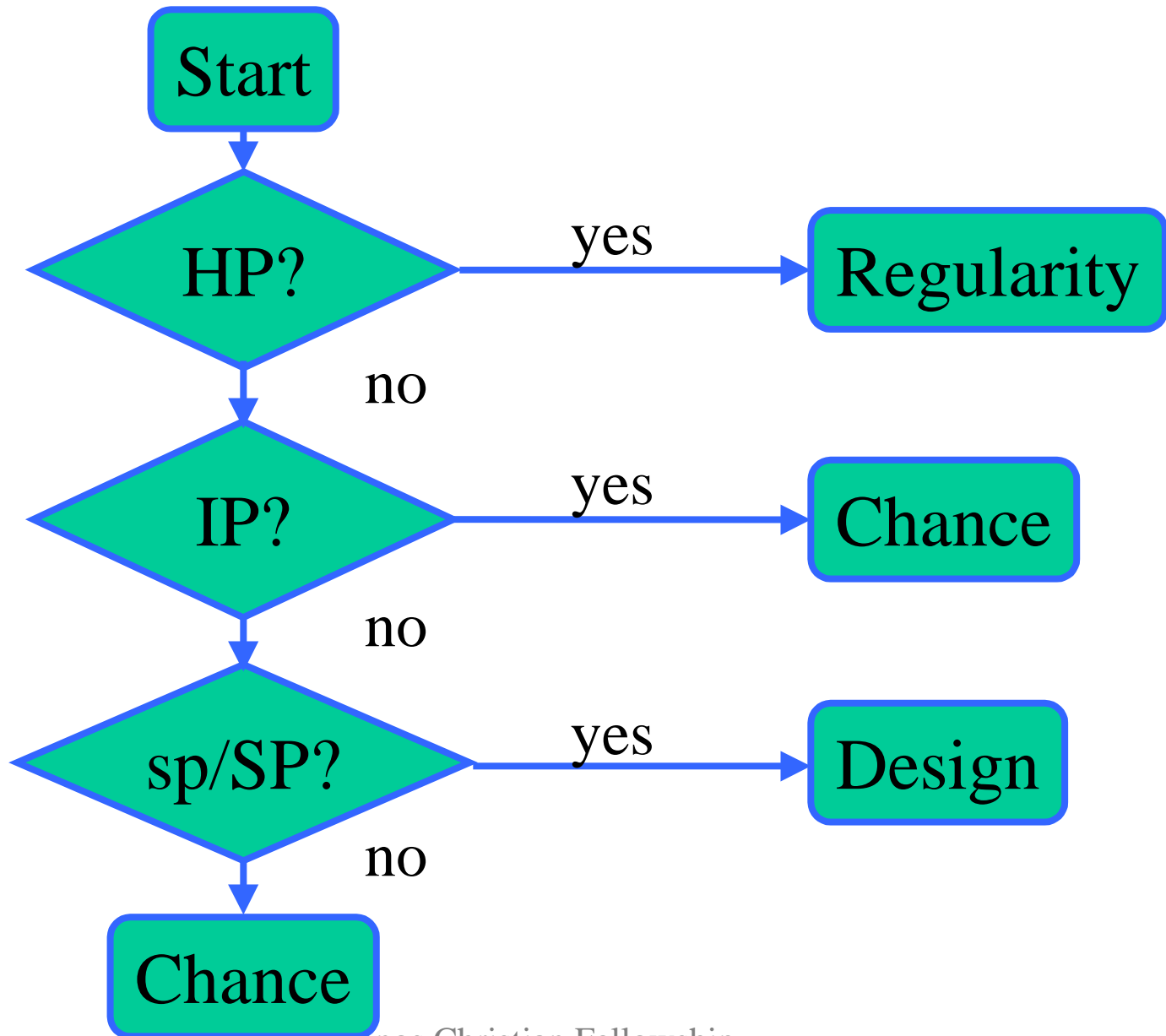


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Magdalenian harpoons



Dembski's Explanatory Filter



Behe's Irreducible Complexity

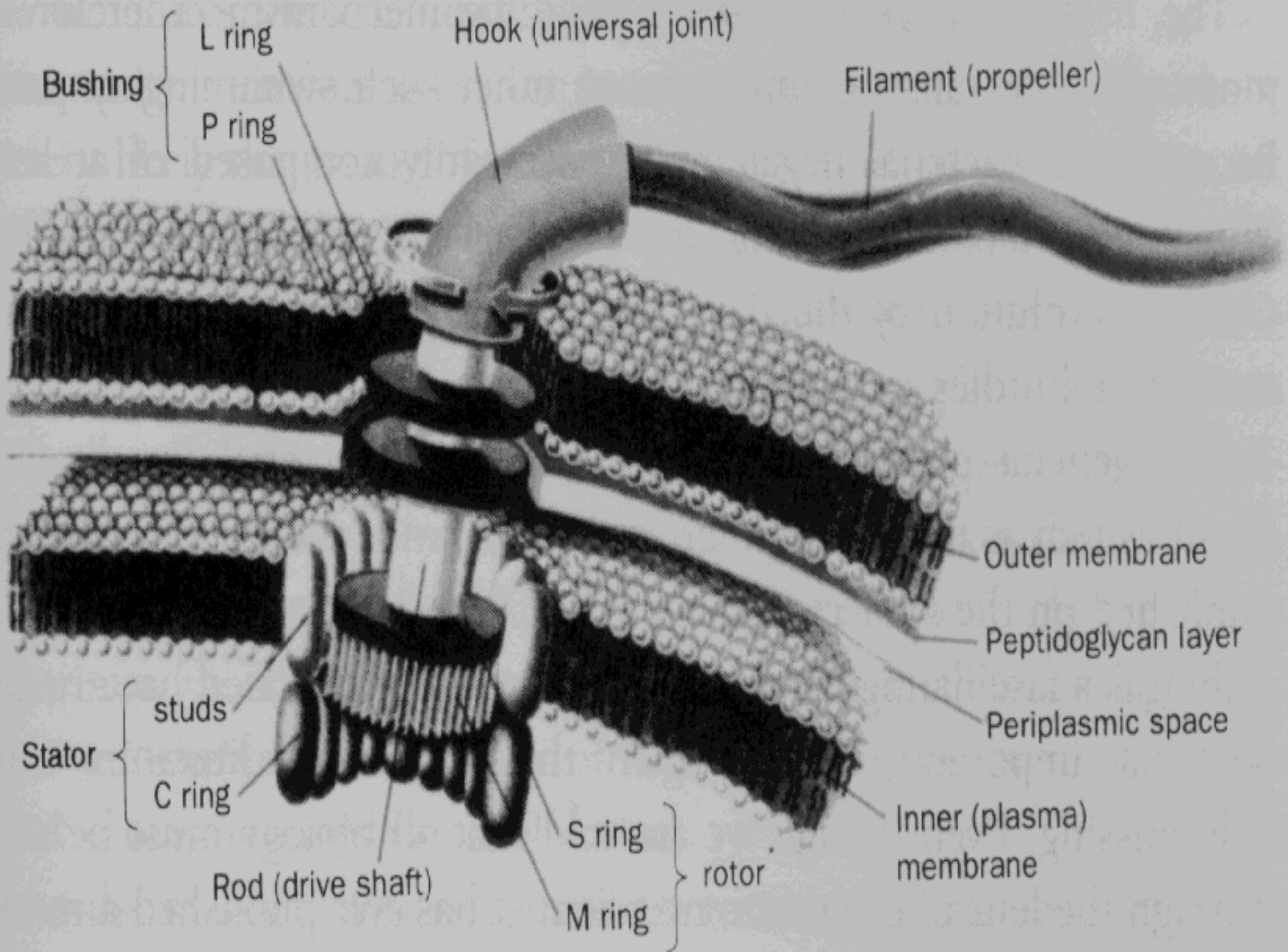
“A system composed of several well-matched, interacting parts that contribute to the basic function, wherein the removal of any one of the parts causes the system to effectively cease functioning”

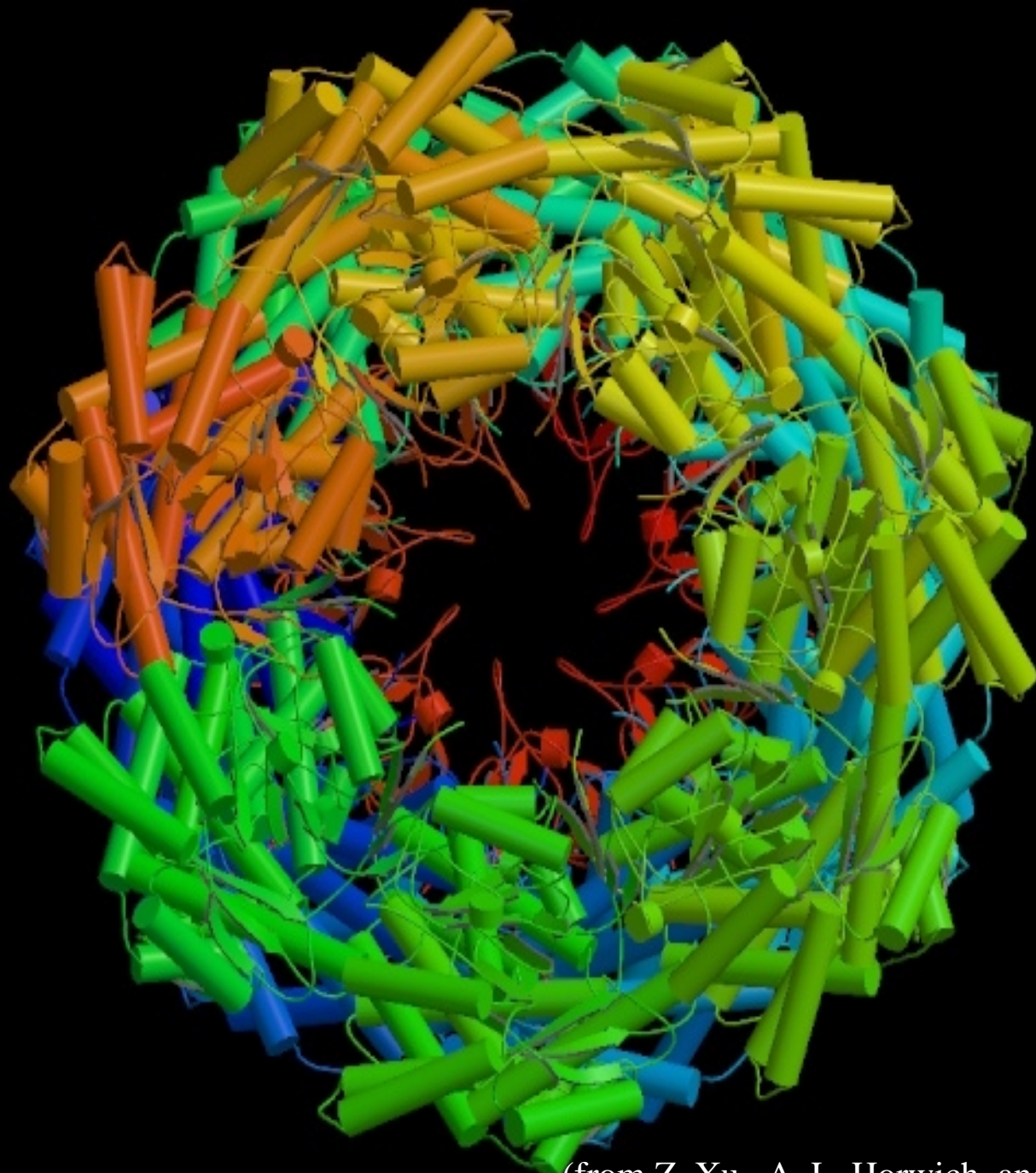
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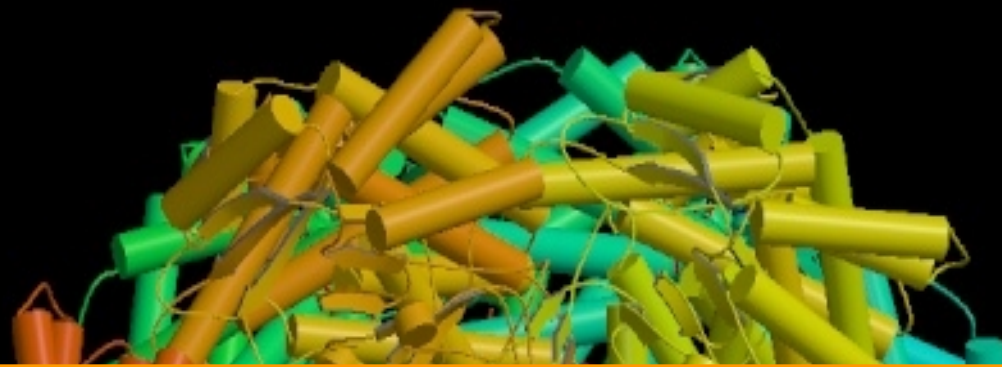
“An irreducibly complex biological system, if there is such a thing, would be a powerful challenge to Darwinian evolution. Since natural selection can only choose systems that are already working, then if a biological system cannot be produced gradually it would have to arise as an integrated unit, in one fell swoop, for natural selection to have anything to act on.”

Michael Behe, Darwin's Black Box, p39



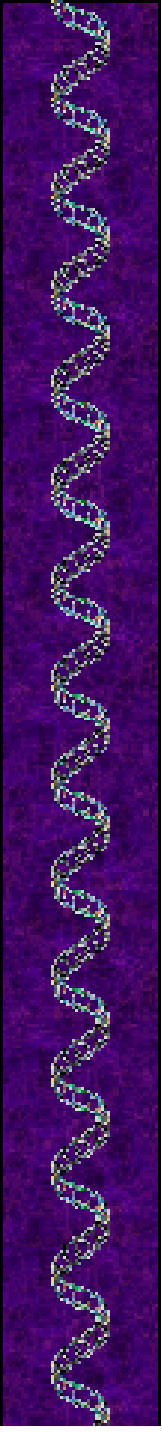


(from Z. Xu., A. L. Horwich, and P. B. Sigler, 1997)



“For life to have originated on the earth it would be necessary that quite explicit instruction should have been provided for its assembly...there is no way in which we can expect to avoid the need for information, no way in which we can simply get by with a bigger and better organic soup, as we ourselves hoped might be possible a year or two ago...the correct position we think is...an intelligence...indeed such a theory is so obvious that one wonders why it is not widely accepted as being self-evident. The reasons are psychological rather than scientific.”

Hoyle and Wickramasinghe, Evolution from Space



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Philosophical Framework

- Does the Bible need to harmonize with science?
- Worldviews: what are they and how are they relevant to our discussion?
- A philosophy of science that recognizes the roles of worldviews

Course Overview

- Week 1: Philosophical Framework
- Week 2: Evolution Part 1
- Week 3: Evolution Part 2
- Week 4: Cosmology, Bible Part 1
- Week 5: Bible Part 2