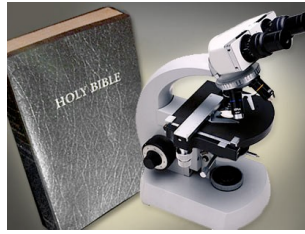


# Christianity and Science



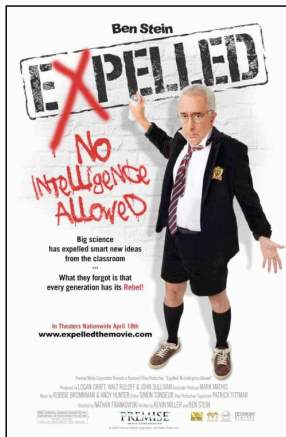
## Understanding the ~~conflict~~ (WAR)?

“A Slick New Packaging of Creationism”

“an attempt to replace science with a system of pseudoscience devoted to confirming Biblical narratives.”

*William Benetta*

Teaching Science in a Climate of Controversy  
A View from the American Scientific Affiliation



“Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed,” is a documentary which looks at how scientists who have discussed or written about Intelligent Design (and along the way hinted that there might be problems with Darwin’s theories of evolution) have been persecuted.

*Francis Collins*

“One of the greatest tragedies of our time is this impression that has been created that science and religion have to be at war.”

*Sam Harris*

“Collins’ book reveals that a stellar career in science offers no guarantee of a scientific frame of mind.”

*Richard Dawkins*

“To an honest judge, the alleged convergence between religion and science is a shallow, empty, hollow, spin-doctored sham.”

*William Provine* (historian of science - Cornell Univ.)

“Persons who manage to retain religious beliefs while accepting evolutionary biology have to check their brains at the church-house door.”

## Christianity and Science Must we choose?

Are Biological Evolutionists really spiritual terrorist?

Are Theistic Evolutionists really schizophrenic?

Is “Intelligent Design” really junk science?

Are critics of evolution ignorant, stupid, or insane?

Does the Bible teach that the universe is only a few thousand years old and that God created it in six 24 hr days?

Is evolution a scientific fact or a flawed hypothesis?

## Overview - How are we to understand the conflict between science and Christianity?

1.

**Psalm 8**

**Two faiths: David vs. Dawkins**

2.

**Psalm 19:1-2**

**Empirical reason can point to God.**

3.

**Rom. 1:18-25**

**Naturalism is an idolatrous faith.**

# 1. Psalm 8

“When I consider Your heavens,  
the work of Your fingers,  
The moon and stars, which You have ordained;  
. **What is man** that You take thought of him,  
And the son of man that You care for him?  
. Yet You have made him a little lower than God,  
And You crown him with glory and majesty!  
. **You make him to rule over**  
the works of Your hands;  
You have put all things under his feet,”

*It is natural & proper for man to observe himself in his environment and seek a rational understanding.*

**We are all called to be both theologians and scientists at heart.**

**We all “Assume”**

**We all “Observe”**

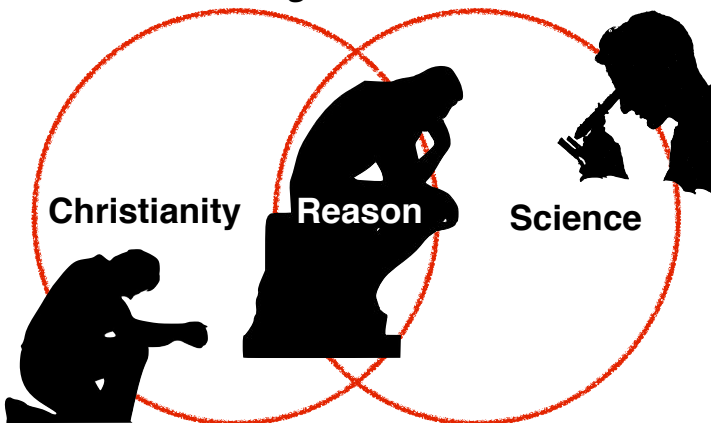
**We all “Question”**

**We all “Reason”**

**We all “Conclude”**



**Christianity and Science represent overlapping spheres that share a common ground - reason.**



**Tension #1 Two postures with respect to truth**

**Reason**

Inductive,  
Humble,  
Objective,  
Open minded  
search for  
truth and wisdom

*In both Science  
and Christianity*

**Dogma**

Deductive,  
Arrogant,  
Subjective,  
Close minded  
defense of  
tradition

*In both Science  
and Christianity*

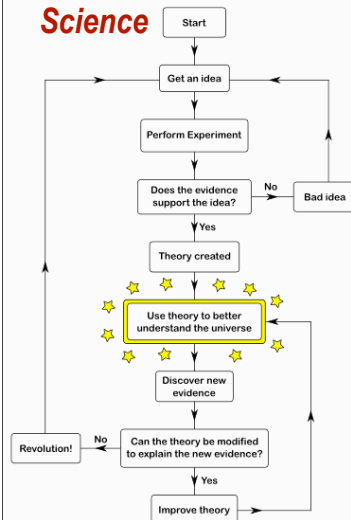
**Tension  
#1**

**Reason, Truth, and Objectivity are not unique to science and faith, dogma, and subjectivity are not unique to Christianity.**

*A common mistaken perception*

Science	Christianity
Reason	Revelation
Facts	Faith
Objective	Subjective

**Science**



**Faith**



## Respecting the limits of naturalism

### METHODOLOGICAL NATURALISM

- how the universe **usually** works.

(Science)

*The supernatural is not considered.*

*Christianity respects this methodology*

### PHILOSOPHICAL NATURALISM

- how the universe **exclusively** works.

(Scientism)

*The supernatural does not exist.*

*Christianity rejects this philosophy*

**Tension**

## Faith of (behind) science

“We **believe** that God created an orderly world and humans with rational, inquiring minds to understand and care for it.”

## Faith in science (as a naturalistic religion)

“We do not yet have an adequate natural mechanism to explain the origin of life, but **we believe** that in time, science will discover such a mechanism within nature.”

*Phillip E. Johnson*

“What it (theistic evolution) does do is imply that Christian theism is intellectually uninteresting and unsupported by evidence. That implication has been quite sufficient to make naturalism the ruling philosophy in the universities.”

**Psalm 8**  
 “When I consider Your heavens,  
 the work of Your fingers,  
 The moon and stars, which You have ordained;  
 What is man that You take thought of him,  
 And the son of man that You care for him?  
 Yet You have made him a little lower than God,  
 And You crown him with glory and majesty!  
 You make him to rule over the works of Your hands;  
 You have put all things under his feet.”

**David vs. Dawkins**

**RICHARD DAWKINS**  
 THE GOD DELUSION  
 THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH  
 THE EVIDENCE FOR EVOLUTION

**Richard Dawkins**

*Richard Dawkins*

“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.”

*Richard Lewontin* (Harvard geneticist)

“We take the side of science in spite of the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated stories, because we have an a priori commitment to materialism.”

*Sr. Arthur Keith* (anthropologist)

“The only alternative to some form of evolution is special creation, which is unthinkable.”

1. They both observe the **same cosmos**.
2. They both use **reason** to understand what they observe.
3. They both make **faith** assumptions that guide them in their understanding.  
*Dawkins* - there is nothing beyond the material world.  
*David* - there is a larger reality.
4. They each have **distinct** advantages.  
*Dawkins* - more technical data  
*David* - more options for answers.
5. They each come to **different** understandings.  
*Dawkins* - man is on his own and without meaning.  
*David* - the glory of both God and man.

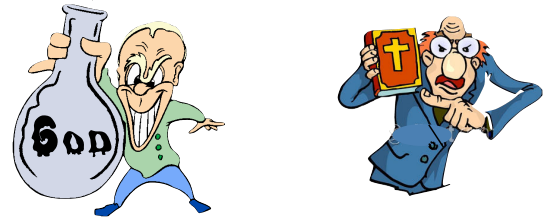
**The glory of God and dignity of man**

**More options allow David to follow wherever the data leads.**

**Psalm 8**  
 “3 When I consider Your heavens,  
 the work of Your fingers,  
 The moon and stars, which You have ordained;  
 4 What is man that You take thought of him,  
 And the son of man that You care for him?  
 5 Yet You have made him a little lower than God,  
 And You crown him with glory and majesty!  
 6 You make him to rule over the works of Your hands;  
 You have put all things under his feet.”



**1.** The conflict (war) is not between empirical reason and Christianity but between two fundamentalisms (naturalism and religious dogma).



*scientism verses religiosity*

*"Scientism" is science demanding authority outside its domain.*

**"Scientism"**

*Atheism and philosophical materialism*



**"true science"**

*Rational search for the most plausible understanding.*



**Examples of "science" out of bounds**

"Animals have rights just like humans."

"God does not exist."

"Miracles are a myth."

"There is no universal meaning to life."

"Science can account for the origin of life."

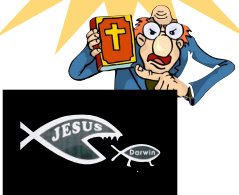
"Macro evolution is an irrefutable fact"

"Man made global warming is an established scientific fact"

*"Religiosity" is dogma dictating to science what it can and cannot say.*

**"Religiosity"**

*Theologians doing science from the Bible.*



**"true religion"**

*Scripture and reason in search of wisdom and understanding.*



**Examples of "religion" out of bounds**

"The earth 10,000 years old."

"All behavior is simply moral choice."

"Only Christians (my kind of) have the truth."

"Reason is the enemy of Christianity."

"The Bible is scientifically accurate."

"The church is the ultimate authority on all knowledge."

"Don't question, just believe."

2.  
Psalm 19:1-2

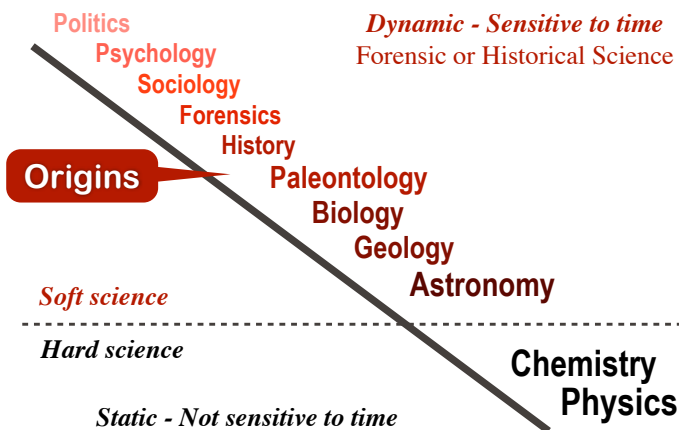
“1 The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. 2 Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.”

Empirical reason can point to God.

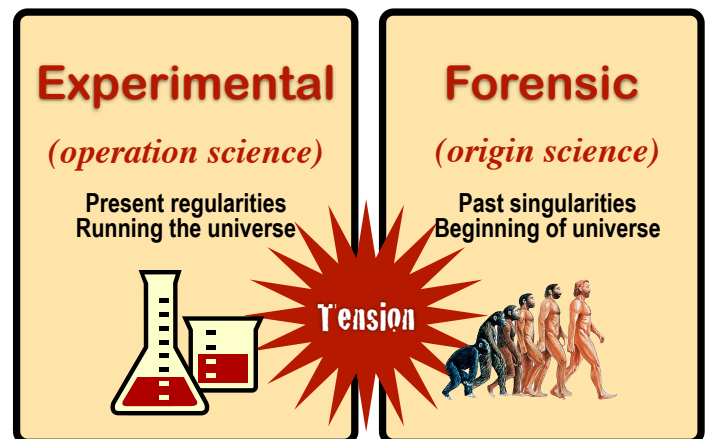
Tension #2 *Two scopes of inquiry.*



*Varieties of science*

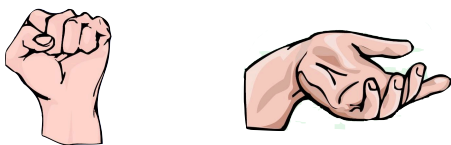


*Hard and Soft science*



2.

Science and Christianity conflict only when they take a “closed” vs. “open” view toward a full understanding of the truth.



*dogma verses reason*

*Example of a closed system - when science alone claims to answer all the important questions.*

“Defining reality and making decisions as though God did not exist or matter.”



- ✓ Total temporality
- ✓ Comprehensive contingency
- ✓ Absolute autonomy
- ✓ Radical relativity
- ✓ Metaphysical materialism

**Example of a closed system - when Christian tradition is arrogant and unreasonable.**

“God said it, I believe it,  
**that settles it.”**

✓ **Don't ask too many questions.**

✓ **“I don't interpret the Bible  
I just believe it.”**

✓ **Science is the enemy of faith.**

✓ **The Bible is a book of science.**



**We are all called to honesty  
and humility in our truth claims.**

**Christianity -**  
God's Revelation is perfect  
but man's reading of it is not.

**Science -**  
Human observations always come  
with faith assumptions and are often  
influenced by personal, economic  
and political agendas.

3.

**Rom. 1:18-25**

**Naturalism is an idolatrous faith.**

“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature - **have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. . . . For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever.**”

3.

**Science and Christianity conflict  
only when they are driven by  
something other than the  
evidence and an open mind.**



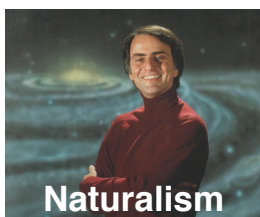
**personal or  
political agenda**



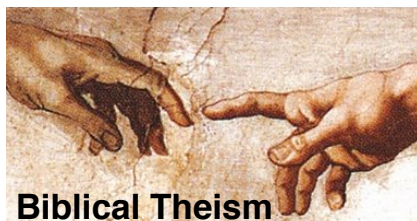
**truth and  
wisdom**

**The point:**

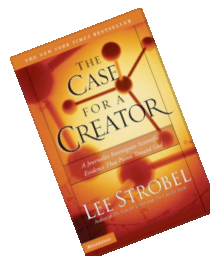
**The conflict is not between Christianity  
and empirical reason but between two  
world and life views (faiths) -  
naturalism and Biblical theism.**



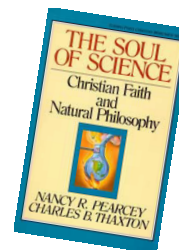
**Naturalism**



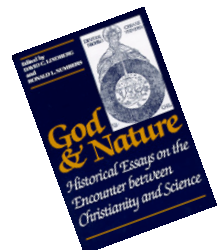
**Biblical Theism**



**Lee Strobel**



**Charles Thaxton**



**David C. Lindberg**