

Session 1: The Science Delusion

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Credit: JWST/NASA/ESA

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From the Big Bang to Biology:
do we detect the hand of God?

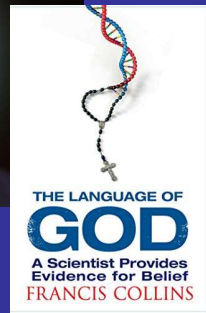
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Session 1: The Science Delusion

Francis Collins



"Science is not threatened by God; it is enhanced. God is certainly not threatened by science; He made it all possible."



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Motivations

- ❑ **To acquire a greater appreciation of who God is**
 - using science to reveal more of His creation and character (Romans 1:20)

- ❑ **To reawaken our sense of awe at God's creation**
(Psalm 8)

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Approach

- ❑ **A personal, and broadbrush, view about what the Bible and science tells us about the world**
 - Focus mainly on the scientific account
 - God's books of creation – Scripture and scientific revelation (Lennox, 2011; Isaiah 55: 8,9)

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Something about me ...



- Came to faith in 2001, at age 51
- Prior to that – an agnostic scientist & engineer
- Subsequently, a 23 year journey as a scientist & engineer, and a 'young' Christian

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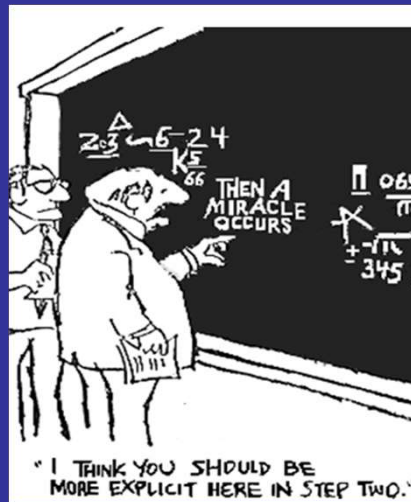
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'The science thing' – the Science Delusion

- ❑ **A widely-held view that science**
 - explains everything
 - can ultimately produce a 'Theory of Everything'
 - leaves no room for God
- ❑ **Scientific truth is the only 'truth' worth knowing**



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- ❑ **The power and influence of science.**
- ❑ **The domain of scientific investigation**
 - The scientific world view adopts an emphasis on 'materialism'.
- ❑ **Can science prove that God exists?**

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Motivations

- ❑ **To show that our shared faith can live side by side in harmony with science**
 - Science is simply **God's revelation in Nature**
 - Our appreciation of God's creation can be enhanced through science
 - Scientific research, and learning, can be a form of worship

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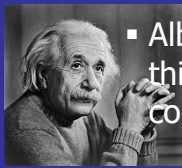
The scientist's step of faith

□ We live in a structured, ordered world

- It need not necessarily be like this!



- Isaac Newton (1643-1727) "Whence arises all that order and beauty we see in the world?"



- Albert Einstein – "the most incomprehensible thing about the world (Universe) is that it is comprehensible" (1936).



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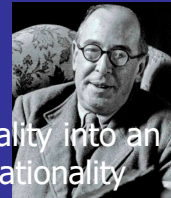
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The scientist's step of faith



- C.S. Lewis – "We are not reading rationality into an irrational universe but responding to a rationality with which the universe has always been saturated" (Christian Reflections - 1967)



□ Science is a response to this 'rationality' (order)

- Science's progress relies on the scientist's faith in an ordered Universe

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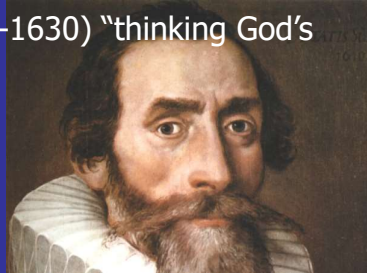
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The scientist's step of faith

□ Many pioneering scientists were Christians, and their faith was a driving influence in their delight in scientific discovery:

- Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) "thinking God's thoughts after him"



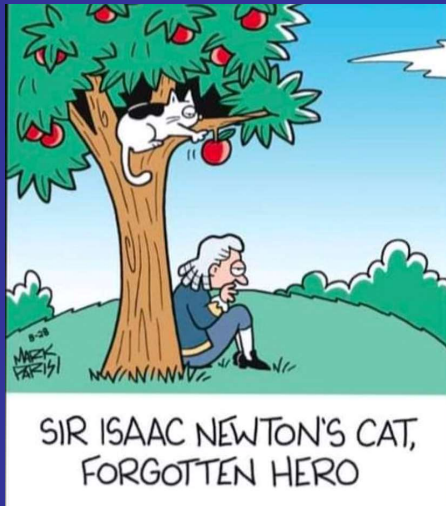
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You may have heard of
'Schrodinger's cat' ...?



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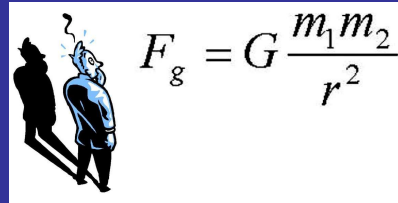
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Science explains everything?

□ Formally, what is science and how does it work?

- A systematic way of investigating the world (Universe) by a process* of

- Hypothesis
- Theory
- Evidence
- Prediction



– For example: **gravity**

- » Isaac Newton
- » Albert Einstein

* Physical sciences

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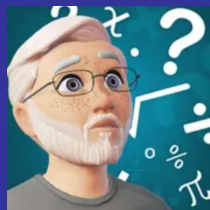
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Science explains everything?

□ The 'laws of nature' vs. 'the laws of science'



- How come we can understand the laws of nature?
 - Is it because we are made in God's image?
- Where did the laws of nature come from?
 - Who or what is the law giver?

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Science explains everything?

□ What science does ...

- Science is concerned with **how** things work, but is blind to the issues of **why** they do (meaning and purpose).
- Once a theory has been established ...
 - it is good at describing 'how' things happen
 - it is good at predicting the outcome of a physical process

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Science explains everything?

□ What science doesn't do ...

- Questions that can't be addressed by scientific method:
 - **Why?** (rather than **How?**)
 - Questions of meaning or purpose
 - For example:
 - » Why did you bake this cake?



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- **Alister McGrath** sums it up in his book 'Inventing the Universe', Hodder Press, 2015.

"Because [scientists] are human beings, they ... have views on the deeper questions such as ... the meaning of their own individual existence. ... But what happens if science cannot answer these deeper questions? In the end, most scientists end up believing rather a lot of things that lie beyond the scope of scientific method. These are things that really matter to us – not the shallow truths of reason, but **the deep existential truths about who we are and why we are here.**"

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Science explains everything?

- **So, can we have a 'Theory of Everything' (TOE)?**
- **Scientifically, what is a TOE?**
 - A theory that unifies the 2 pillars of modern physics
 - Quantum mechanics (the theory of the very small)
 - Einstein's gravity (general relativity – the theory of the very big)
 - A theory of 'quantum gravity'
 - Our efforts over a century have been **unsuccessful!**

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Science explains everything?

□ So, can we have a 'Theory of Everything' (TOE)?



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Challenges for the scientific method

□ Major issues currently evading the power of scientific explanation include ...

- the origin of life
- the origin and nature of mind/consciousness
- the origin of the laws of Nature
- the origin of the Universe
- the development of a theory of everything ...

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□ Resources

- Faraday papers
 - www.faraday.cam.ac.uk, and click on 'Resources'
- Equipping Christian leadership in an age of science
 - www.eclasproject.org

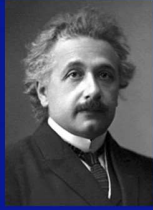
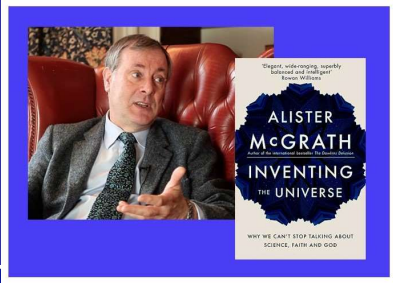
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☐ Quotes, etc



"Everyone who is seriously committed to the cultivation of science becomes convinced that in all the laws of the universe is manifest a spirit vastly superior to man ..."

Albert Einstein

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