

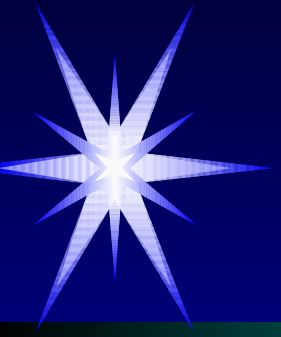


# Doctrine of Creation

Vern S. Poythress

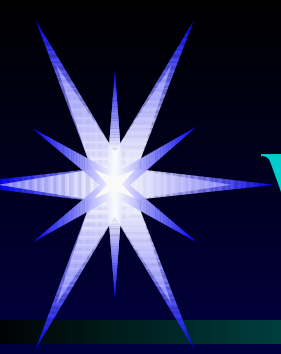
Westminster Theological Seminary

CC Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported,  
Ashlyak at ml.wikipedia.



# A. Definition of Creation

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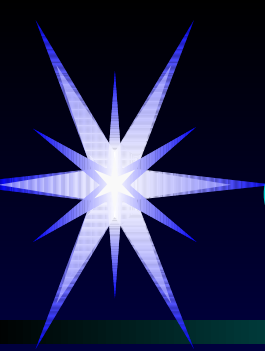


# What Is Creation?

“Creation is the act of God alone by which he brings into existence what had no existence prior to the created world.”

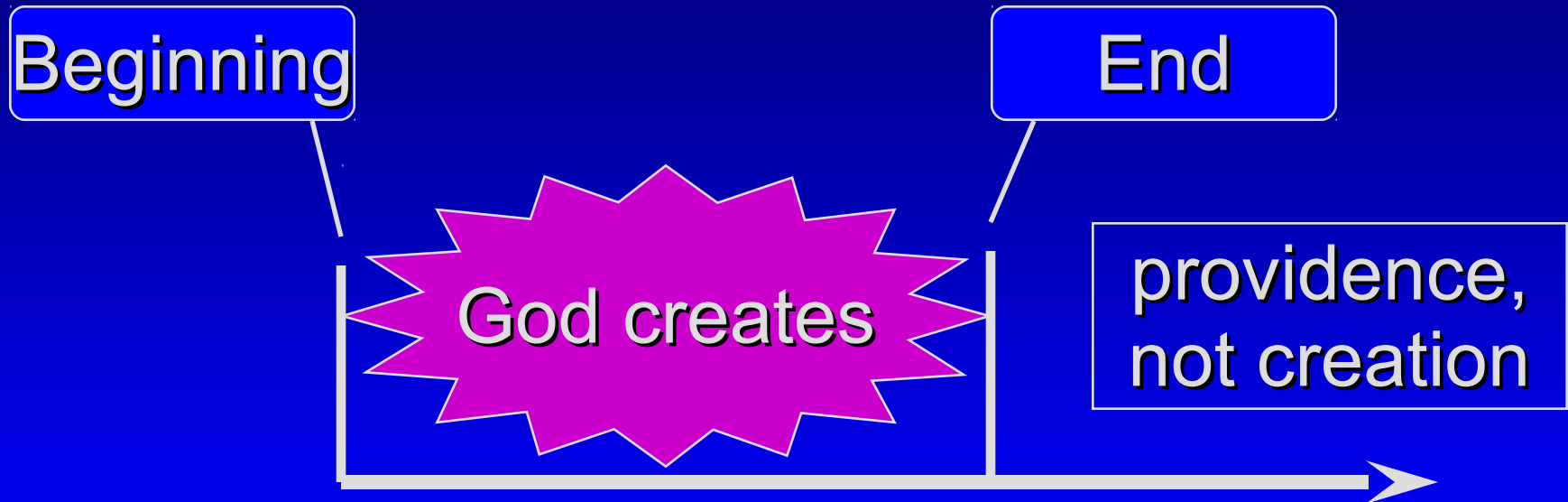
(As described in Genesis 1:1-2:1.)

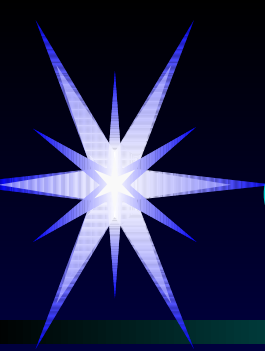




# Creation Takes Place in Time

- ▶ Creation involves specific acts in time.
- ▶ The act of creating has a beginning and an end.
- ▶ Creation is not eternal, not always taking place.



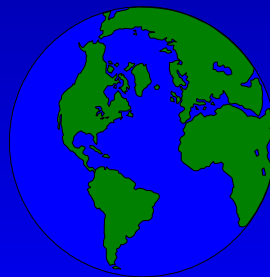


# Creation Is Distinct

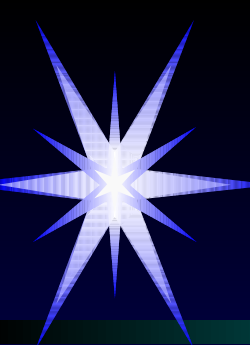
- ▶ Creation is distinct from God, not an emanation that participates in divine being.



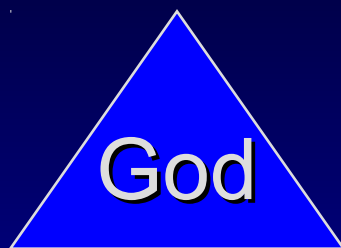
distinction



No gnosticism  
or pantheism



# Creation Is a Free Act of God



free choice

Choice A:

As self-sufficient  
remain God,  
with no creation

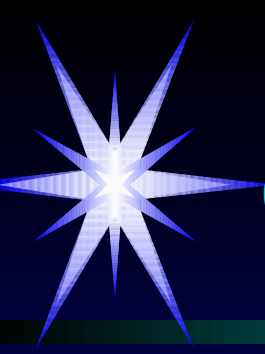
Choice B:

Create  
the world 1

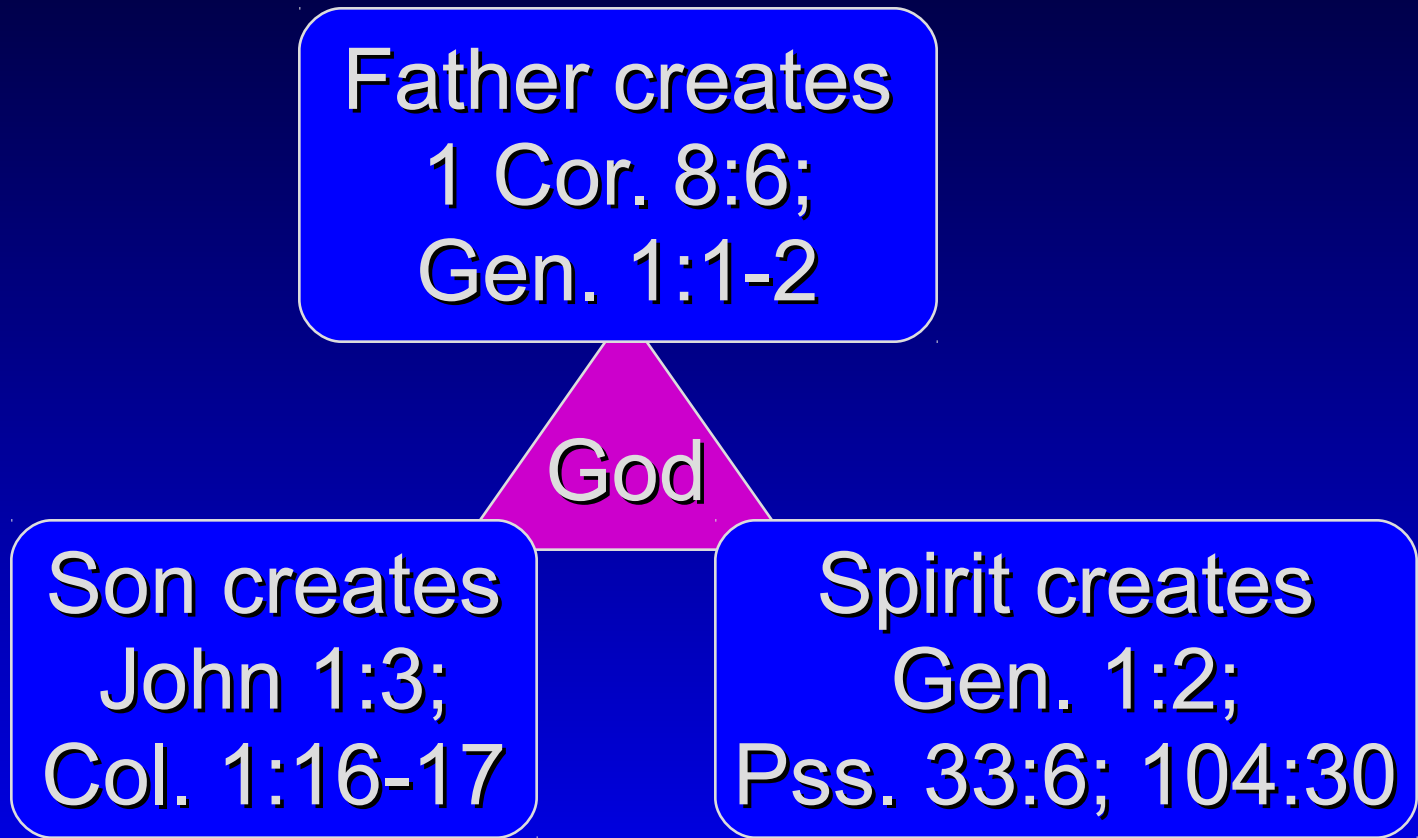
Create  
world 2

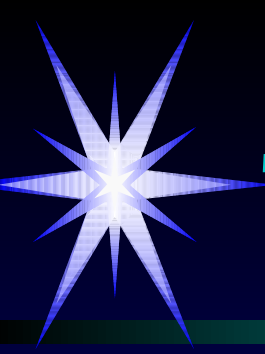
Why  
this one?



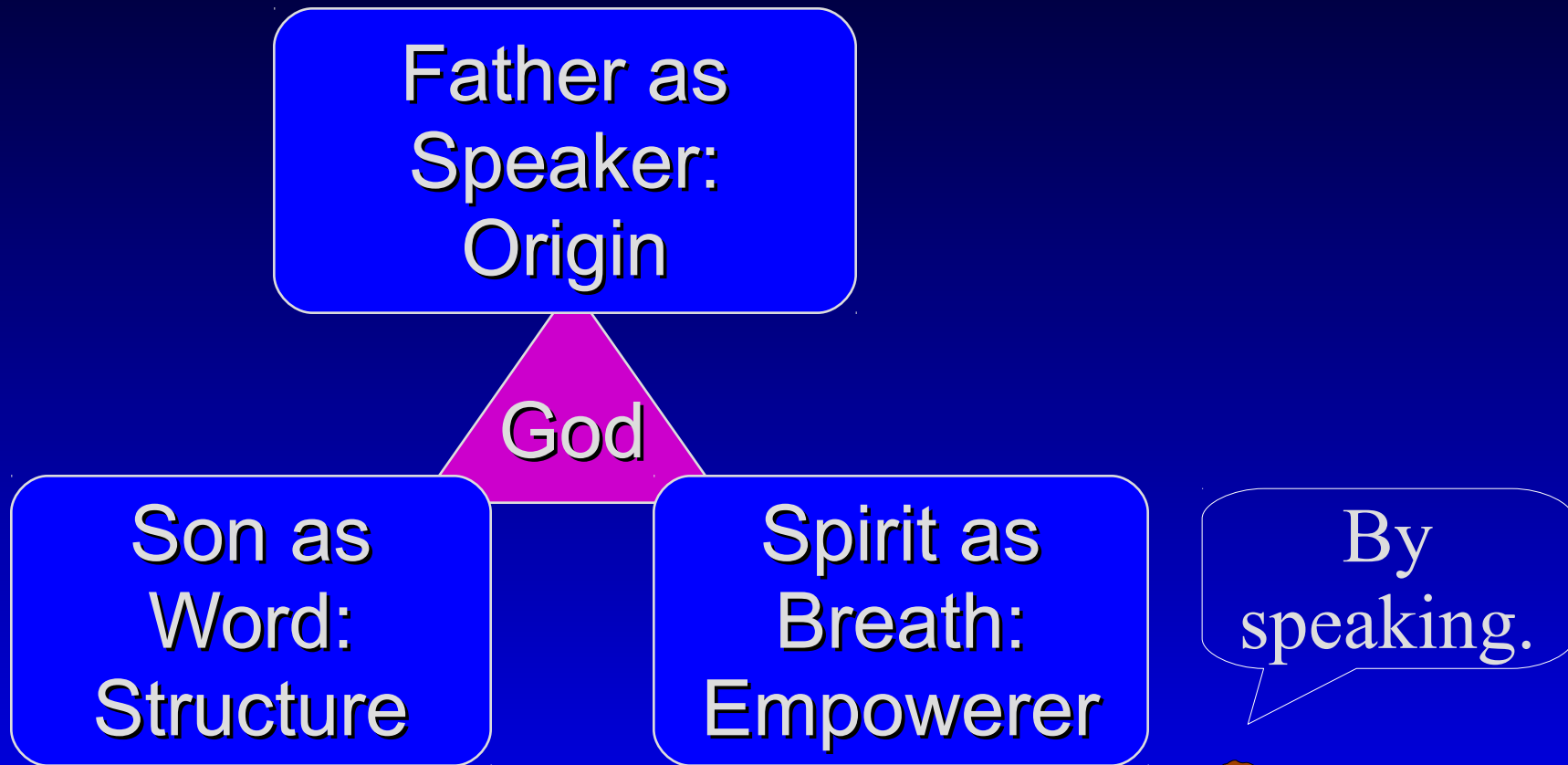


# Creation as Trinitarian

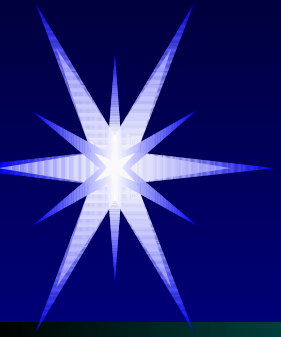




# Three Persons with Distinct Roles



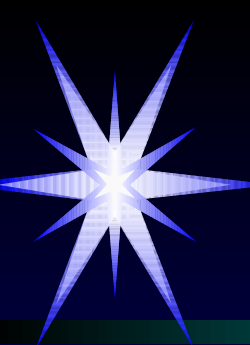




## B. Theism vs. Polytheism

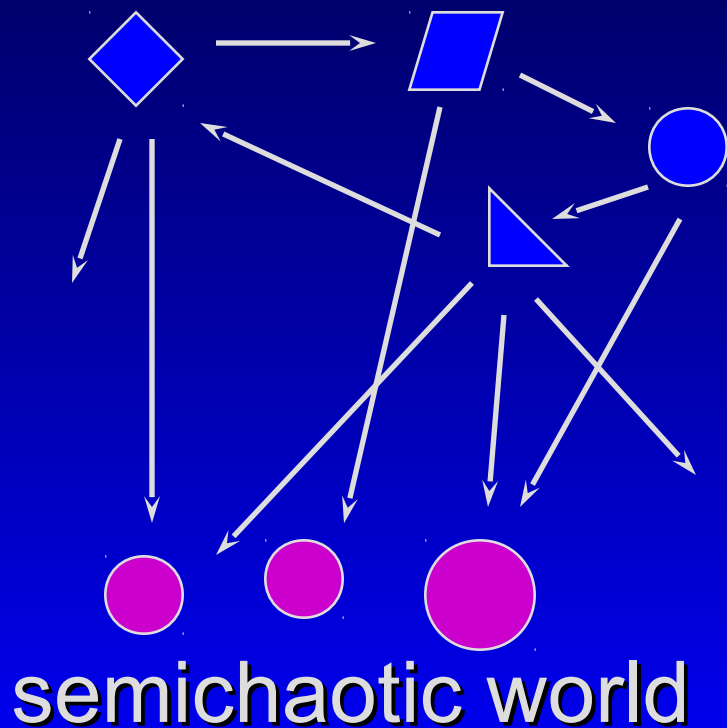
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in Genesis 1-2

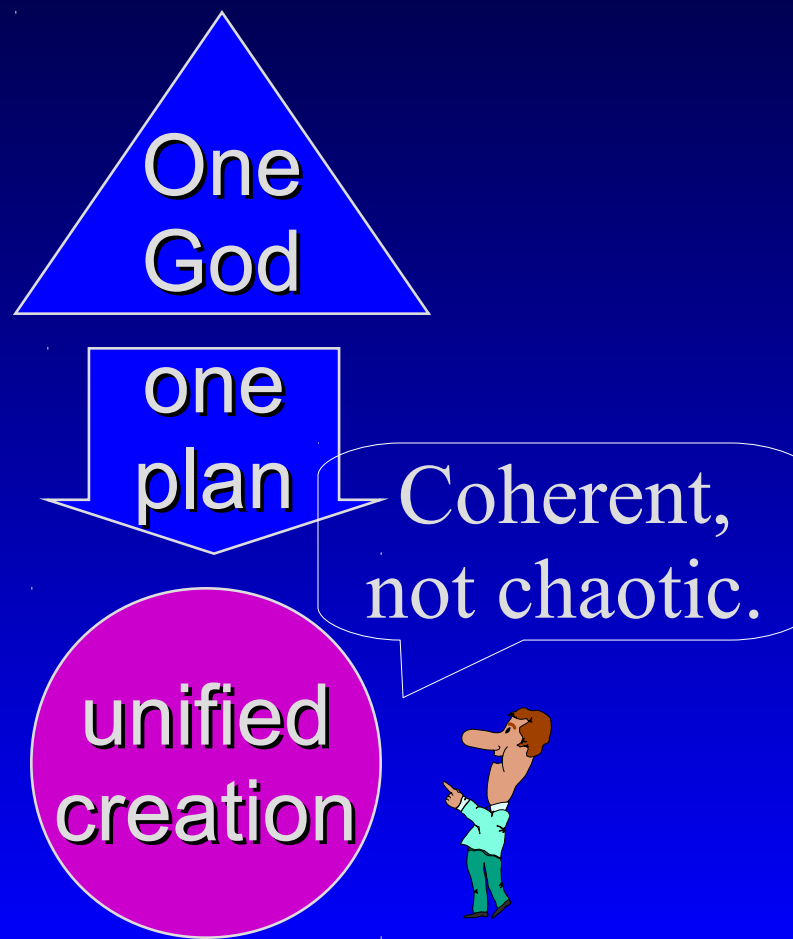


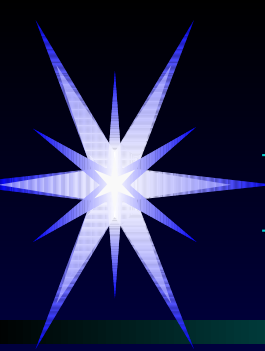
# Many Sources vs. One

## Polytheism:



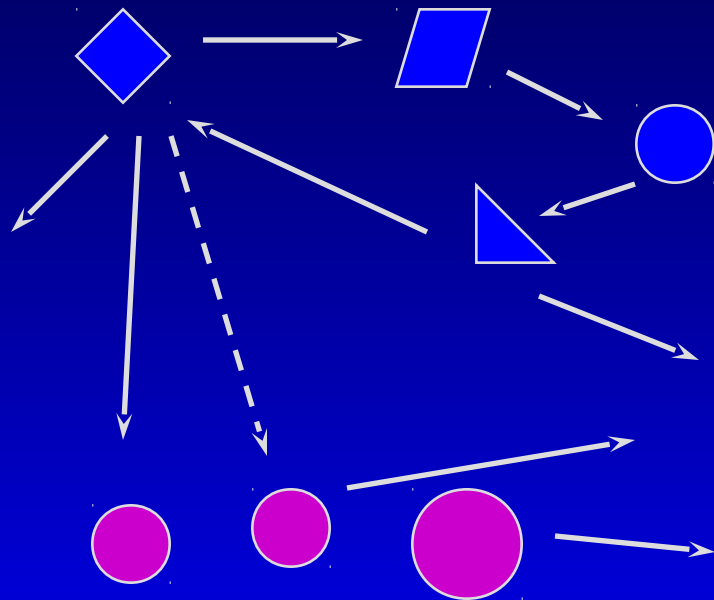
## Monotheism:





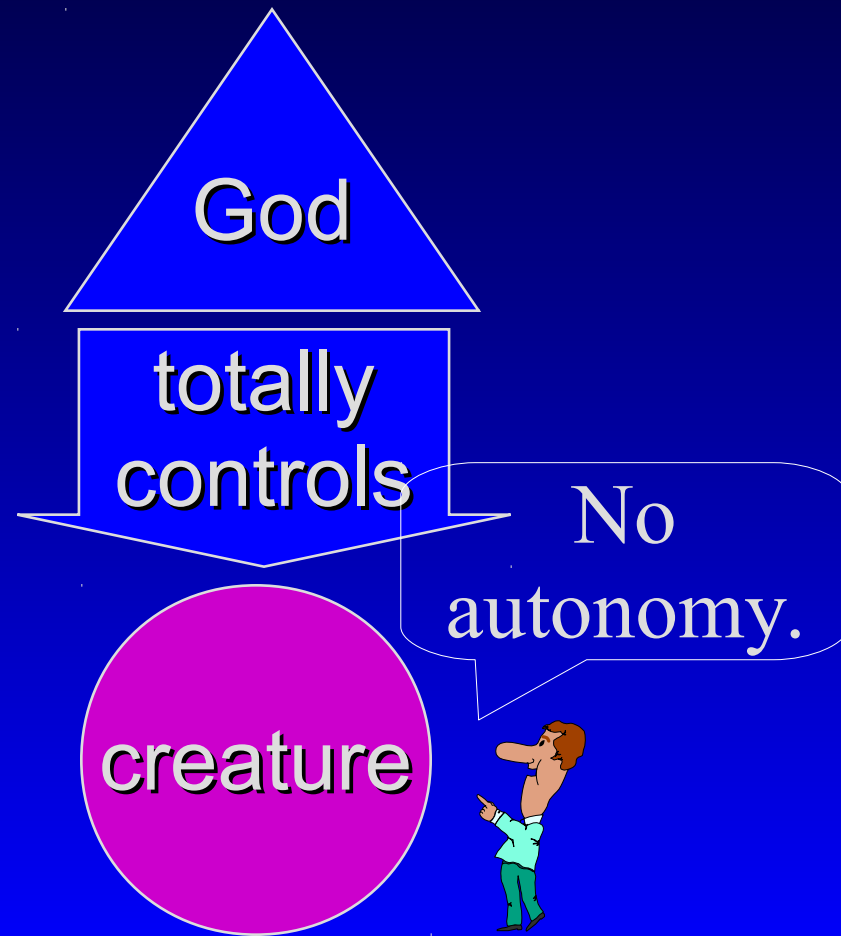
# Independent vs. Dependent World

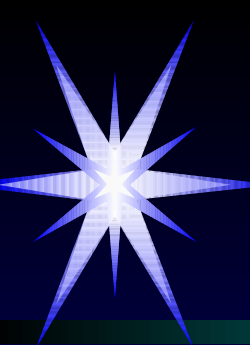
## Polytheism:



semi-independent world

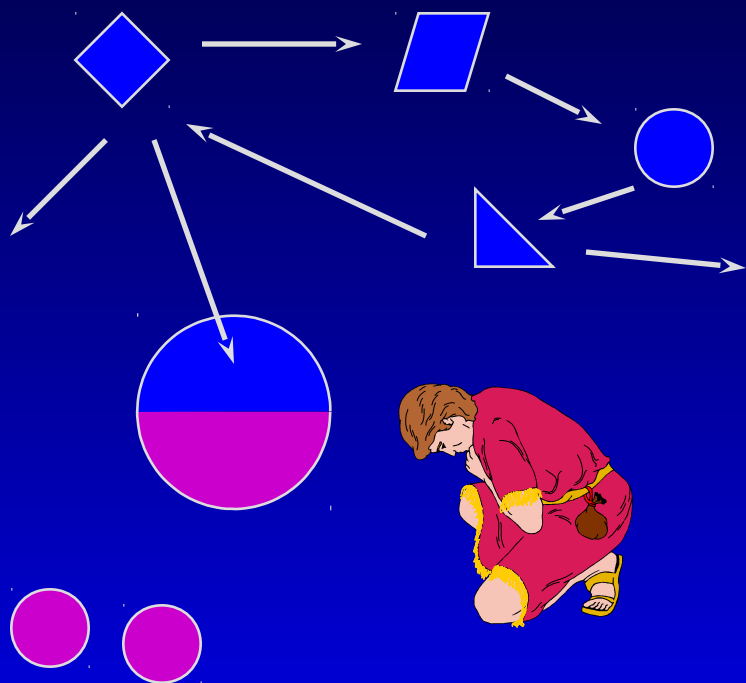
## Biblical theism:





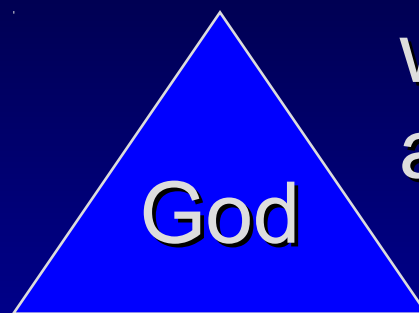
# Idols vs. God Alone

## Polytheism:



worship of images

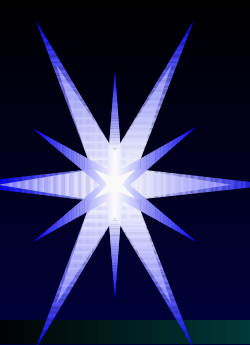
## Biblical theism:



worship God  
alone



creation is desacralized



# Position of Mankind

## Polytheism:

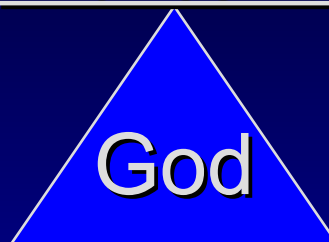


great men  
are semi-  
divine

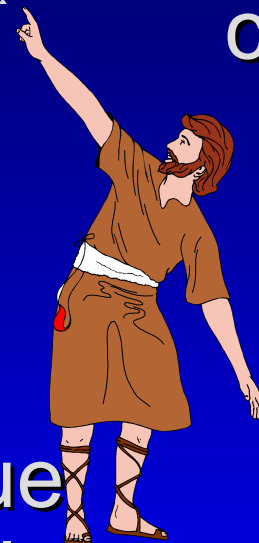


slaves  
are like  
animals

## Biblical theism:

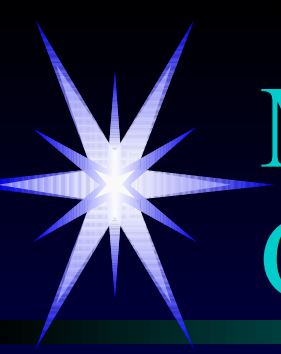


man is  
creature



with unique  
nature, role,  
and dominion





# Mythic vs. Factual Account of Creation

## Polytheism:

Let's make up a myth to express our feelings and guesses.



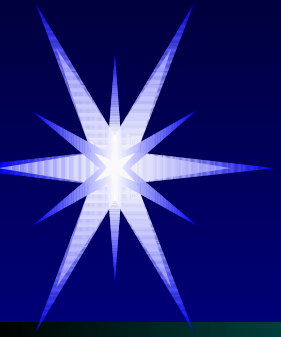
## Biblical theism:

God

Let me tell you how it happened.

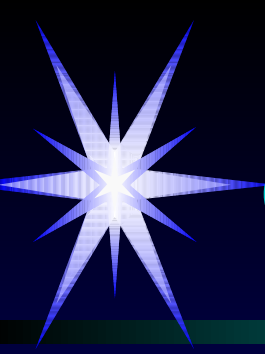
- ▶ Integrated into later genealogical histories (Gen. 5:1 ff).
- ▶ Treated as fact in later Scripture, 1 Cor. 15:22.



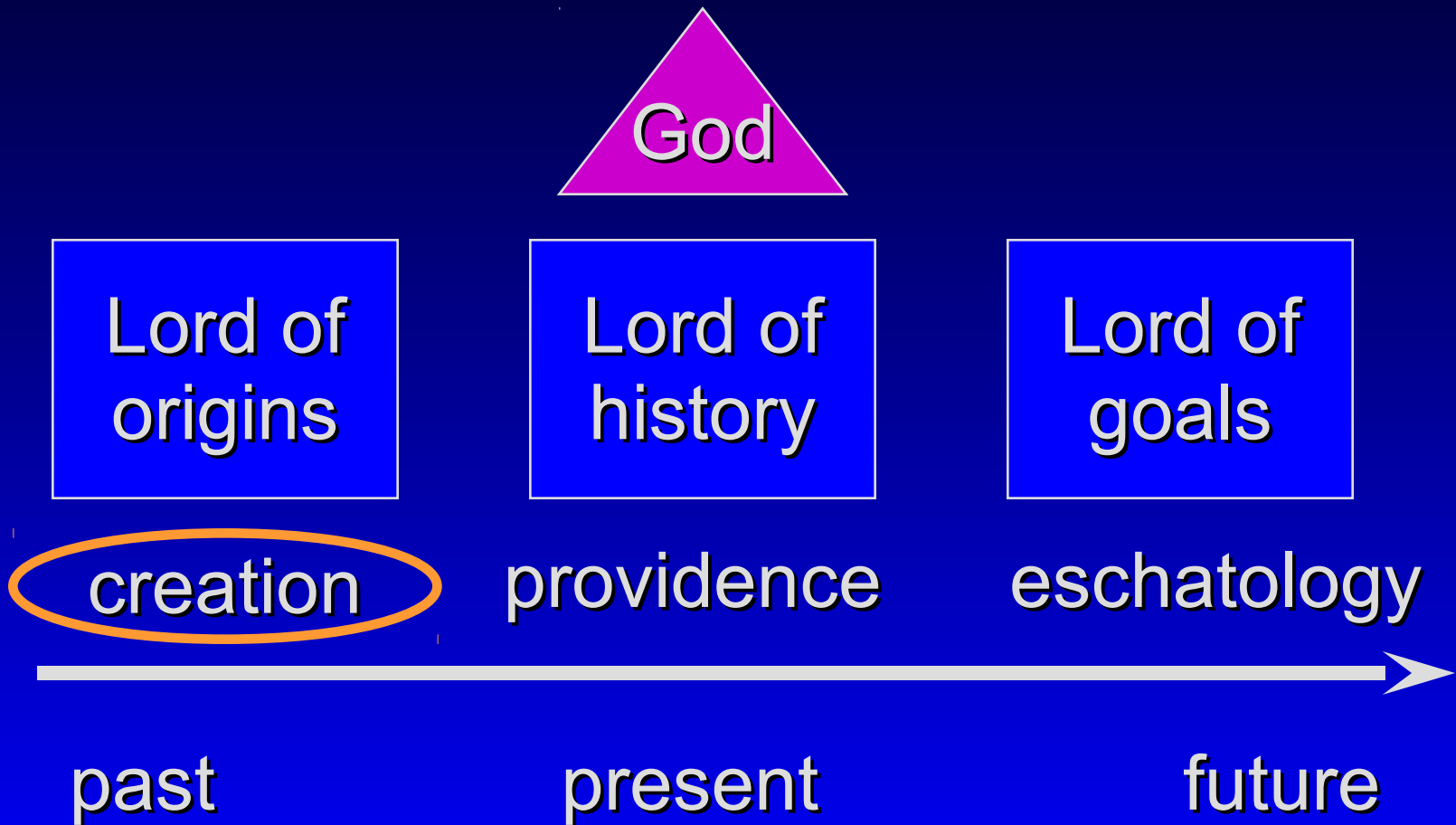


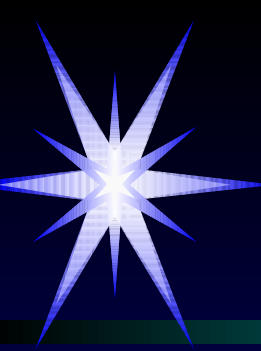
## C. The Importance of the Doctrine of Creation

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# Creation Asserts God's Lordship





# Creedal Importance

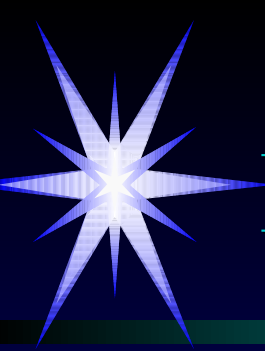
## The Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God the Father Almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth. And in  
Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord.

- Nicene Creed
- Augsburg Confession
- Belgic Confession
- Westminster Confession

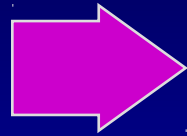
Pretty  
consistent.





# Biblical Appeal to Creation

power of God  
in creation

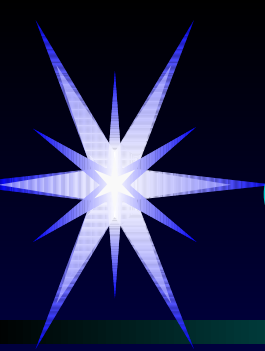


power of God  
in redemption

“Our help is in the name of the LORD,  
the Maker of heaven and earth” (Ps.  
124:8).



Confidence.



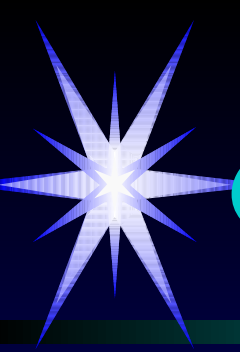
# Creation as Ultimate Framework

- ▶ Creation “frames” our understanding of everything.

Creation



CC SA BY 3.0  
Flappiefh.



# God Is Lord of “Insides” of Things

- ▶ God is complete Lord of all aspects of things; he is not just doing “the best he can” with recalcitrant material.

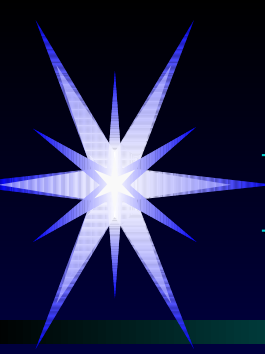


No problem.

Stupid machine!





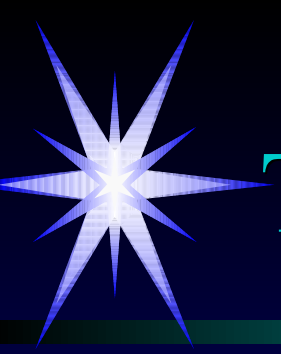


# Examples of God's Design: Hand



Remarkable!





# The Leaf as Energy Supplier



CC0



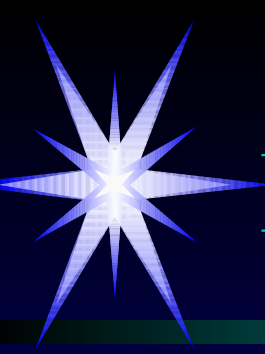
# God Acting for Grass



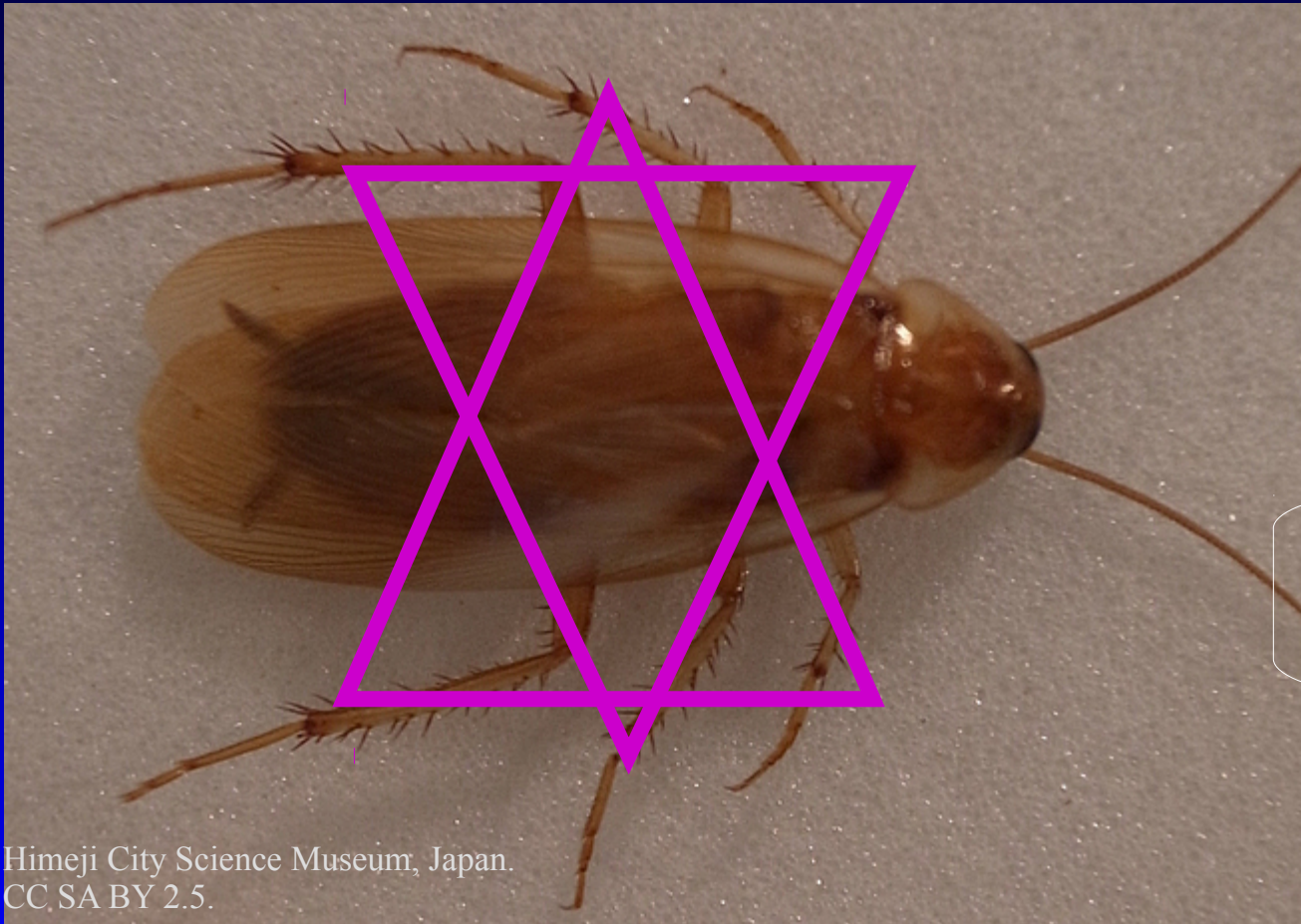
CC0

“You cause the grass to grow for the livestock,  
...” (Ps. 104:14).





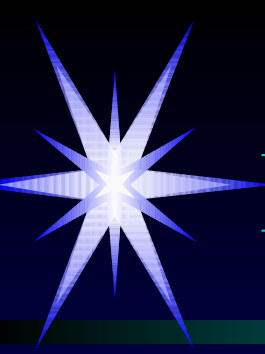
# Design: Cockroach Locomotion



Himeji City Science Museum, Japan.  
CC, SA BY 2.5.

Remarkable!



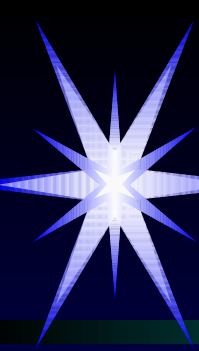


# Designing a Flagellum

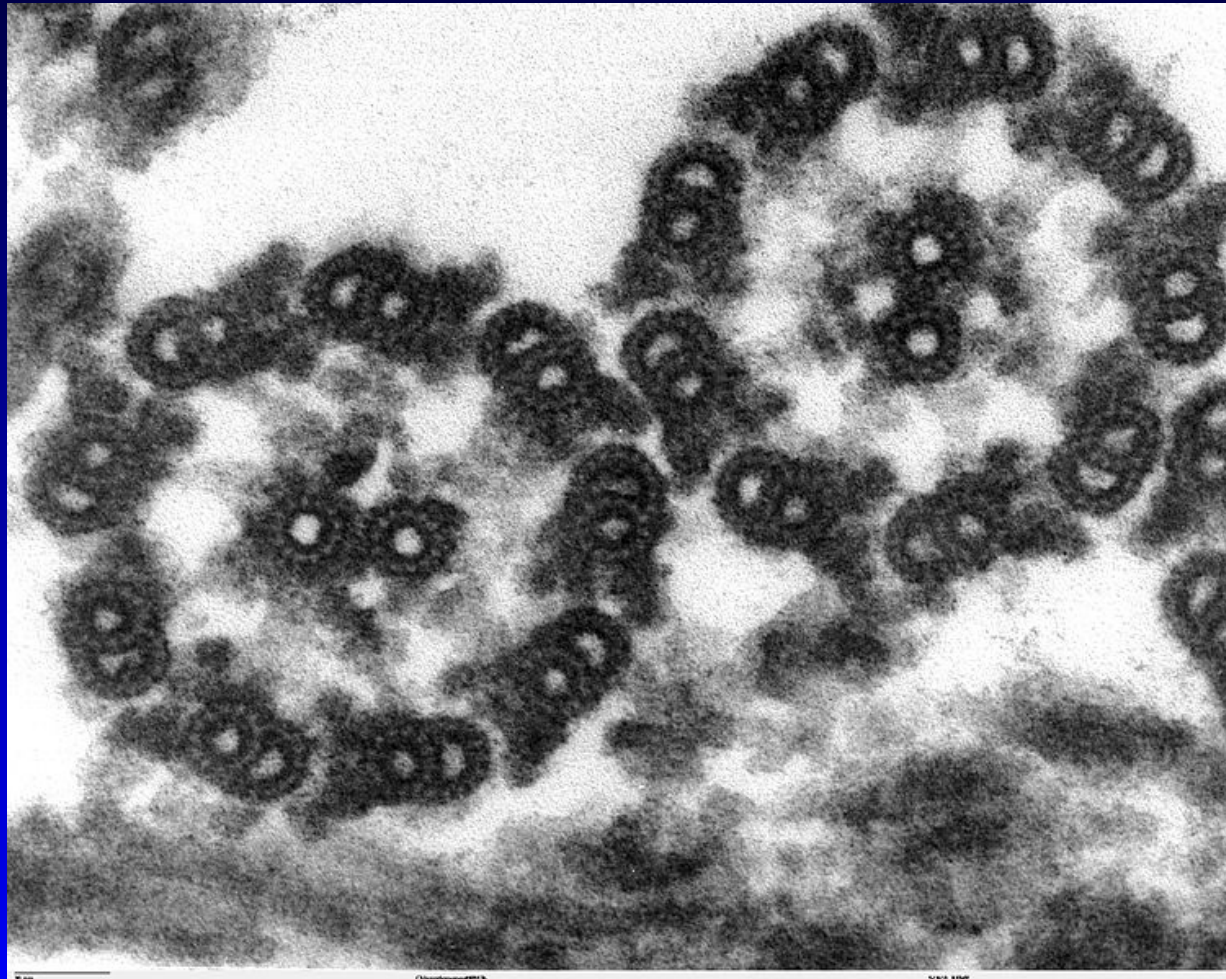


How'd  
he do  
that?





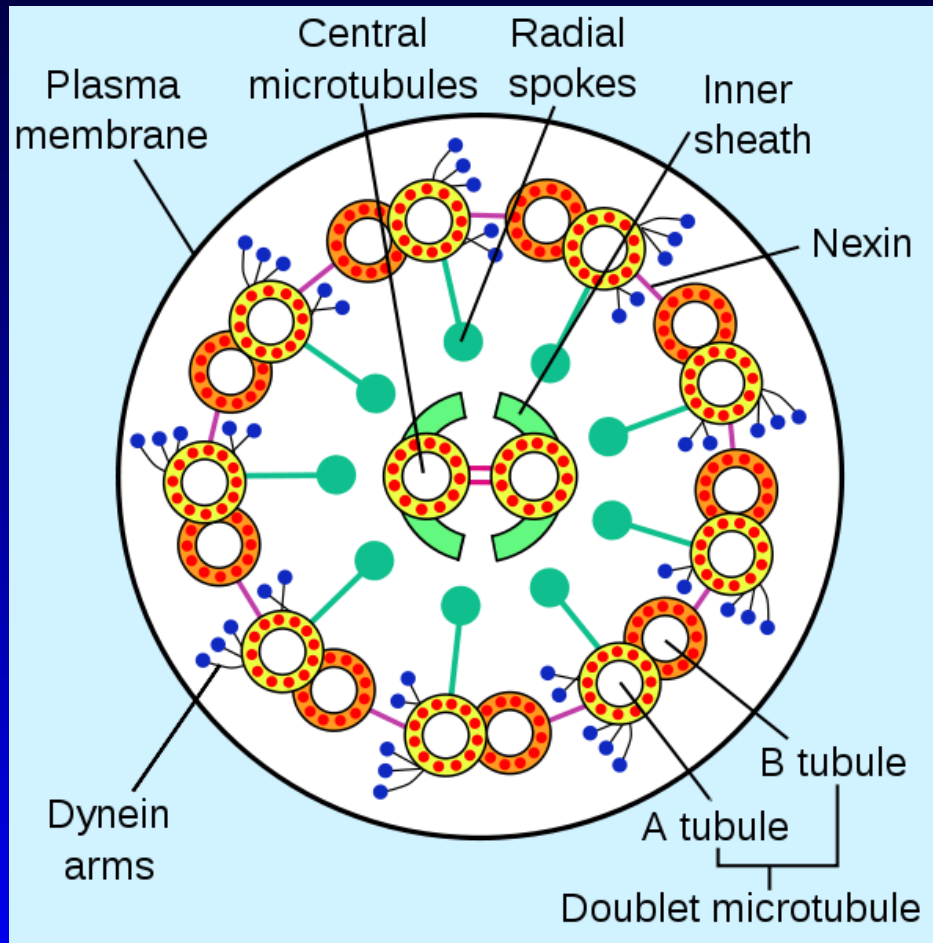
# Flagellum Cross Section

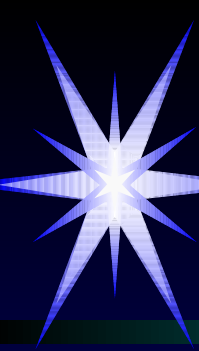


CC0

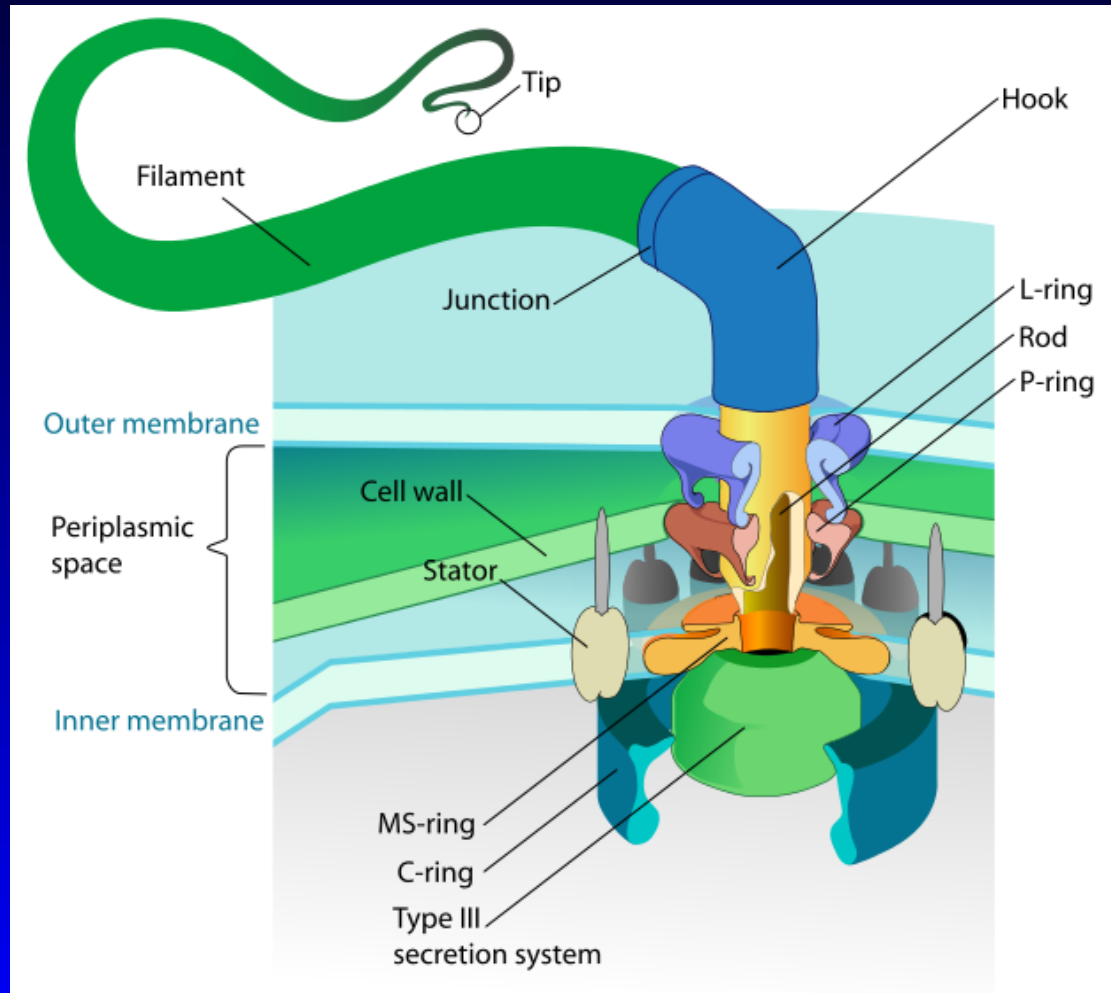


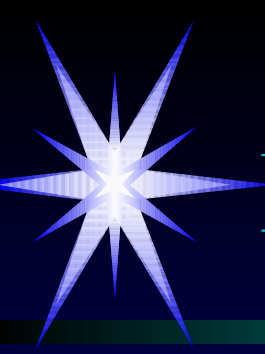
# Flagellum Cross Section (2)





# Flagellum Diagram





# Human Creativity Imaging God

God

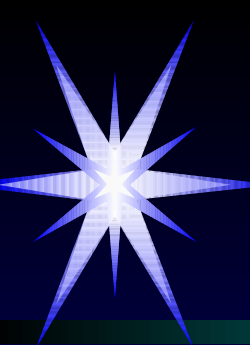
creates motor for flagellum

man

creates motor for car



Man shows God's glory.



# Response to God's Creation

Glory

Rom. 1:21

Thanksgiving

Rebellion

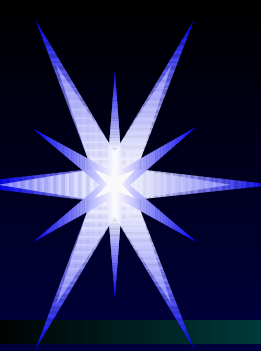


CC0

or



CC BY 2.0. DVIDSHUB.



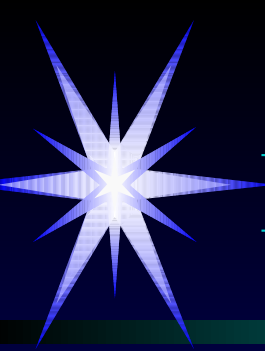
## Song from Rev. 4:11

Thou art worthy, Thou art worthy,  
Thou are worthy, O Lord.

Thou are worthy to receive glory,  
glory, and honor, and power.

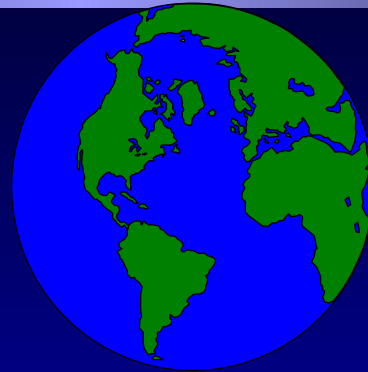
For Thou hast created--  
hast all things created,  
For Thou hast created all things.

And for Thy pleasure they are created;  
Thou art worthy, O Lord.

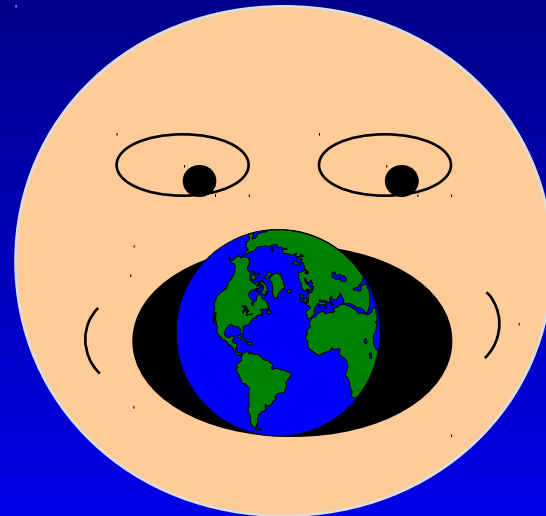


# Dangers with Secularism

➤ Pure rejection  
(fundamentalists)



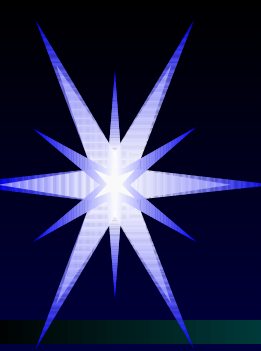
➤ Pure acceptance  
(evangelicals following  
lust and materialism)



Not so good.







# Biblical Response to Dangers

- ▶ Pure rejection (fundamentalists)
- ▶ Pure acceptance (evangelicals following lust and materialism)
- ▶ God's hand in creation invites engagement, not withdrawal.
- ▶ Seeing God satisfies and delivers from idols.
- ▶ Satisfaction with simple things.



## D. Modern Worldviews Opposing Creation

- Polytheism and spiritism.
- Pantheism, in Hinduism and New Age movement, as well as some philosophies.
- Process philosophy has a finite god.
- Secularism says that the universe is uncreated and man is independent, autonomous.
- Religion as personal choice: whatever god you want!