

God and Materialism

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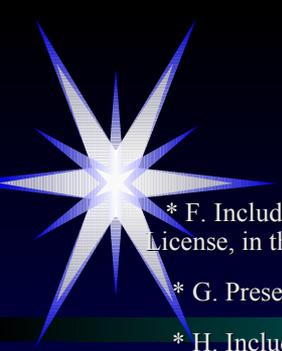
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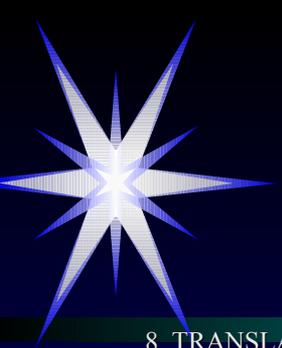
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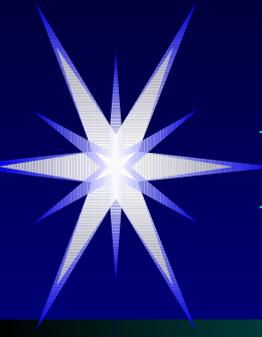
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Beauty? What Is Real?









Moral Issues

Moral values as merely feelings arising from accidental evolutionary adaptation for survival.

Moral values as transcendent reality.



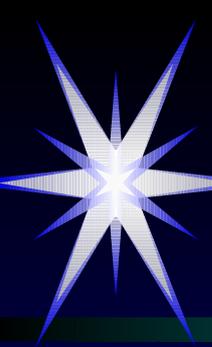


Love never ends. – 1 Cor. 13:8

No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. – Rev. 22:3-4

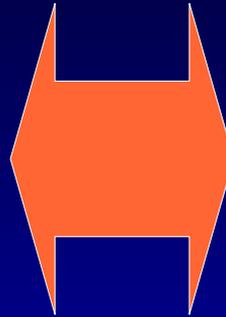


A. Materialism



Physical Bottom

matter, energy,
motion



God personally
created and rules



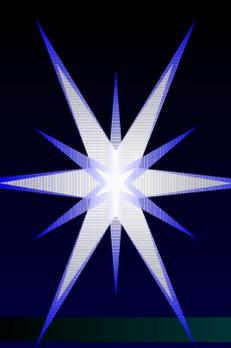
no innate purpose



purpose

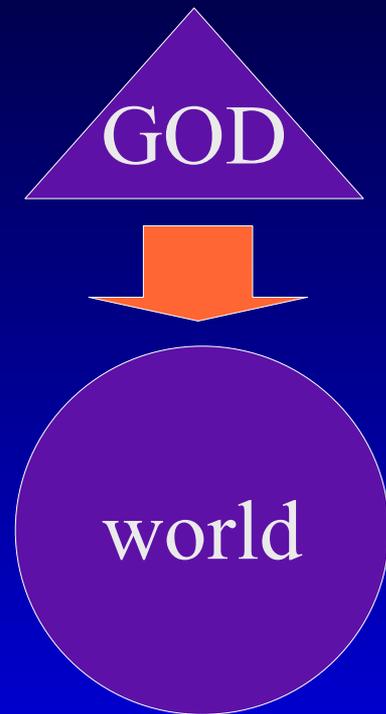
impersonalism

personalism

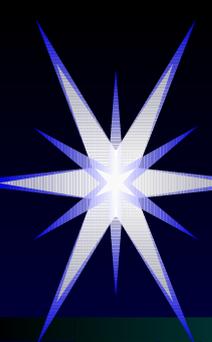


Creation

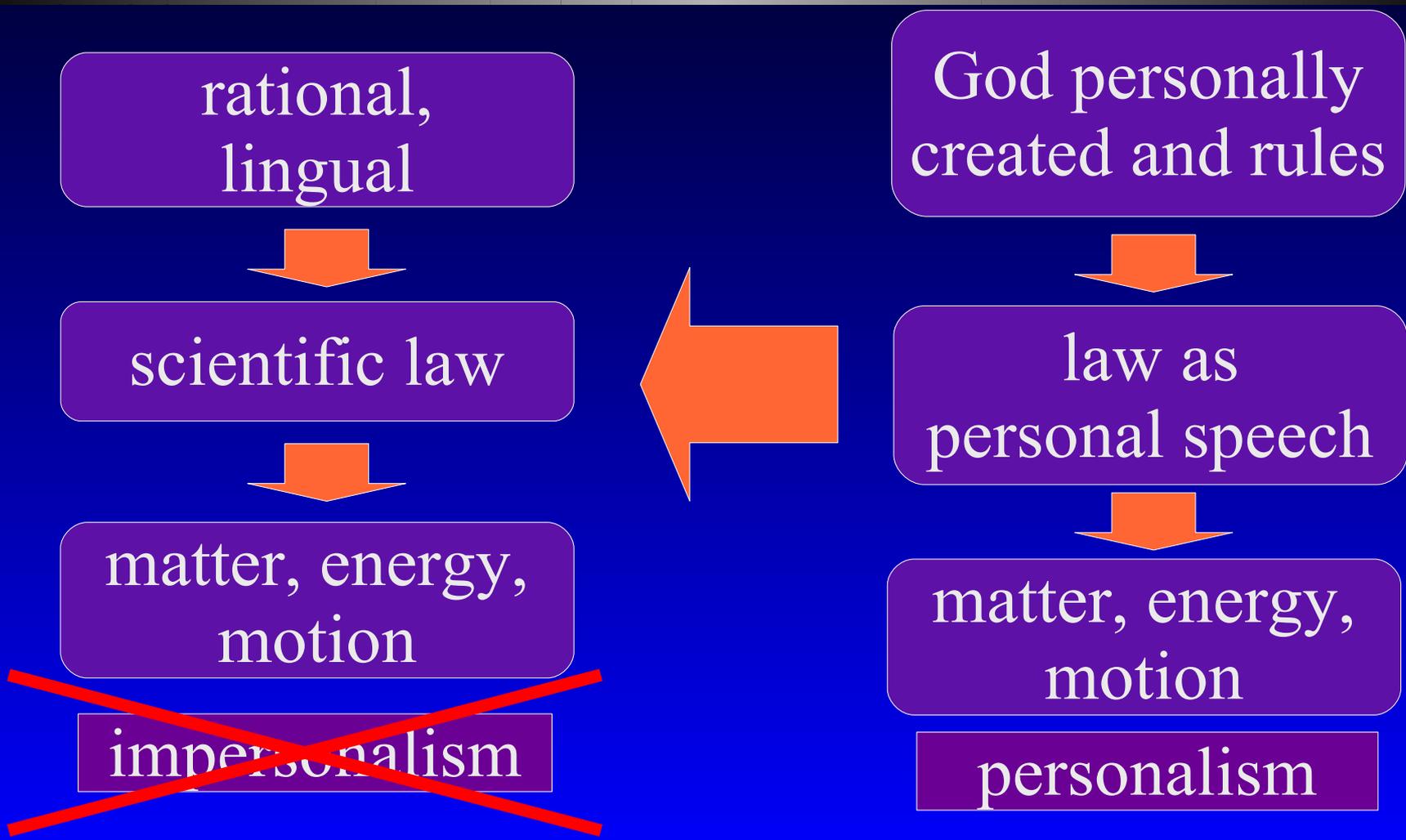
In the beginning, God
created the heavens
and the earth.
– Gen. 1:1 ESV

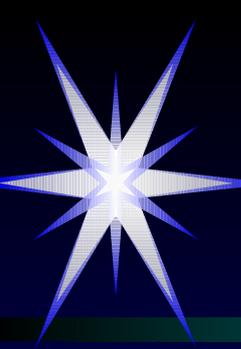


personalism



Physical Law



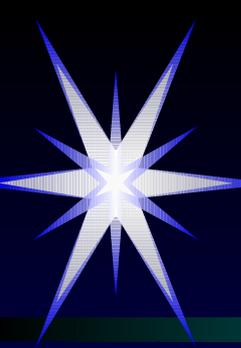


God's Word as Law

And God said, "Let
there be light," and
there was light.
– Gen. 1:3

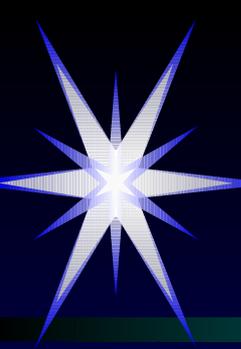


personalism



Why Materialism?

- Early scientists aware of providence
- Scientists praised God
- Stopped talking of God
- Stopped thinking about God
- Nothing buttery: matter only



Materialism versus Science

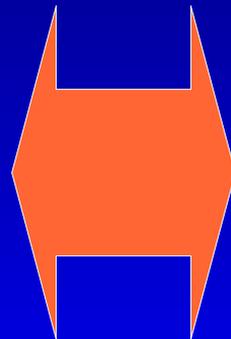
Philosophy: Materialism

Science

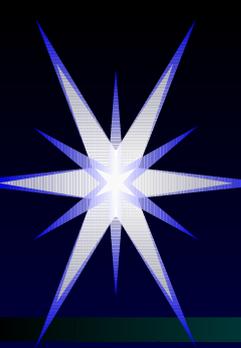
starting assumption

starting principle

reduction:
matter, energy,
motion alone--
nothing more



focus on
matter, energy,
motion



Support for Materialism?

- ▶ Prestige of science used for materialism
- ▶ Many scientists materialistic in philosophical outlook
- ▶ Presentation of science in media

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

"Mother Nature"



Pure Materialism

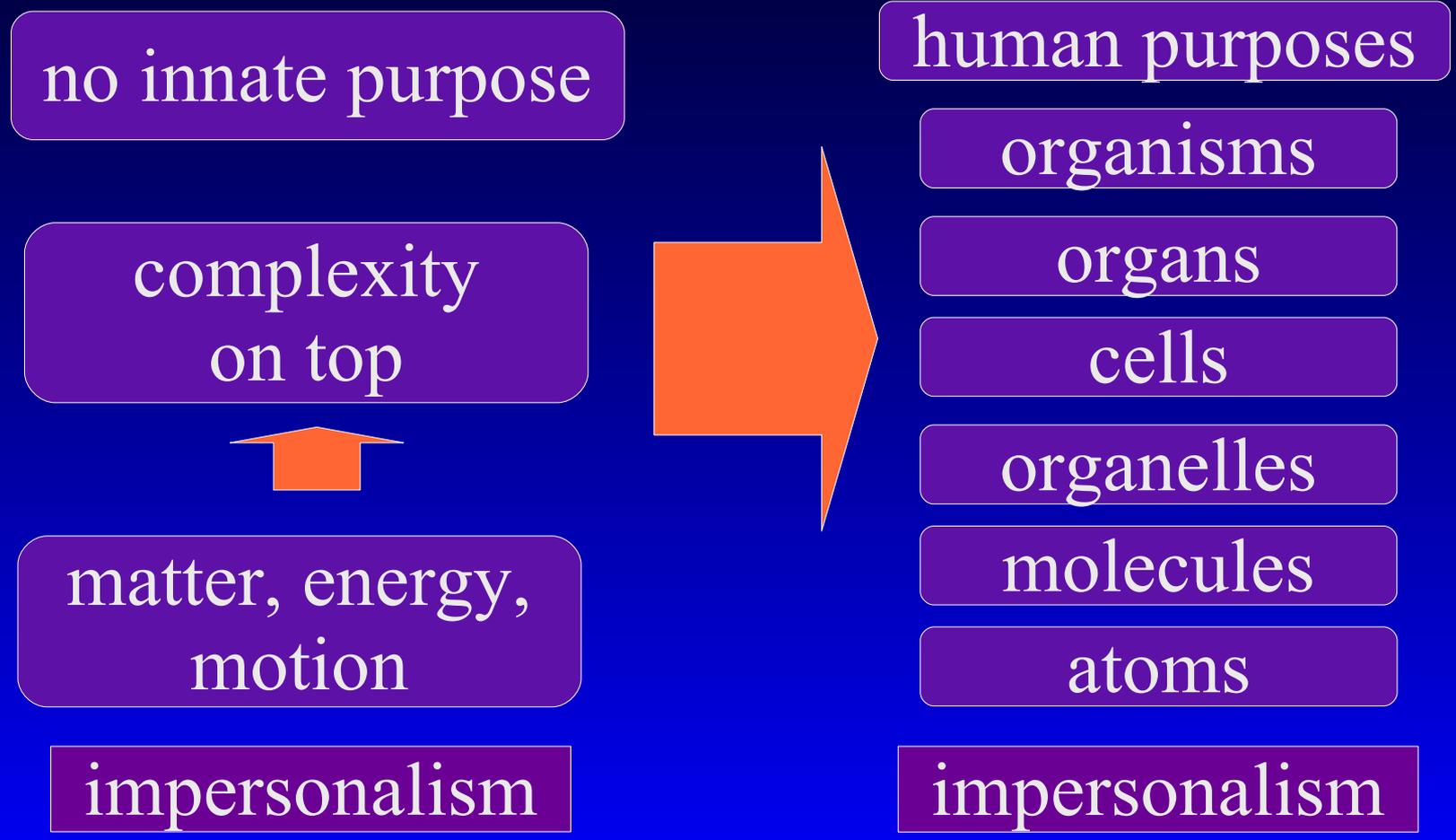
no innate purpose

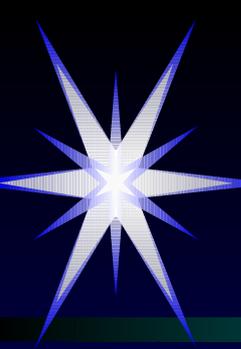
matter, energy,
motion

impersonalism



"Enhanced" Materialism





Impersonalism in Life

no innate purpose

matter, energy,
motion

impersonalism

human purposes



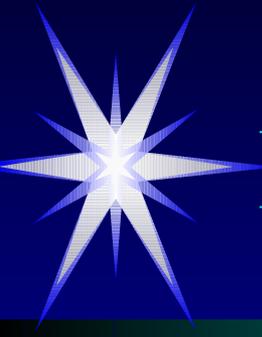
significance

love

life forever

spiritual
hunger

impersonalism

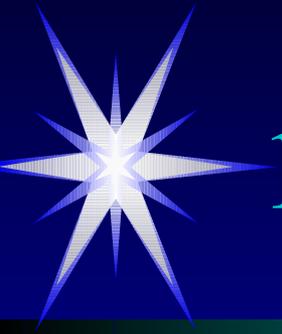


B. Alleged Conflicts with Science

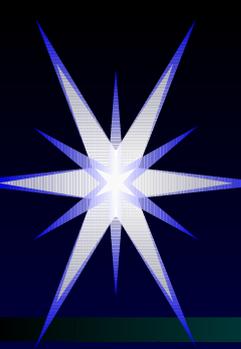


Real Conflict?

Real conflict is between
philosophical materialism
and the Bible.



1. Miracles



Worldviews on Miracle

impersonalism

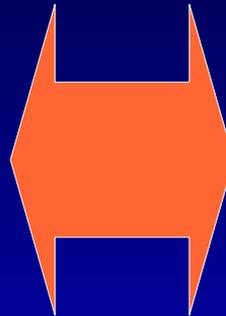
matter, energy,
motion



mechanism



no exceptions:
no miracles



personalism

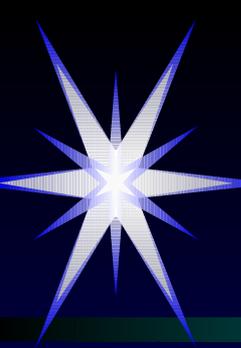
God personally
created and rules



personal purposes



exceptions: miracle



Miracle of a Plague

Thus says the Lord, "By this you shall know that I am the Lord: behold, with the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it shall turn into blood." – Ex. 7:17



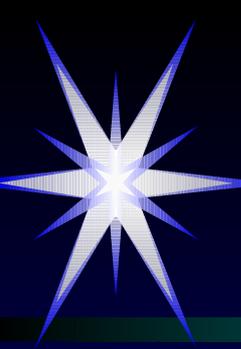
2. Earth-centered View?



Biblical Language

The world is established; it shall never be moved. – Psalm 93:1

The sun rises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it rises. – Eccles. 1:5



Worldviews on Earth

impersonalism

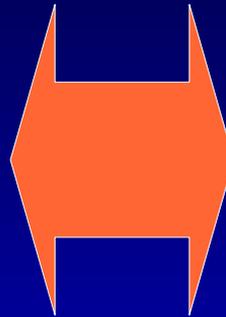
matter, energy,
motion



science gives
reality



human beings
accidental



personalism

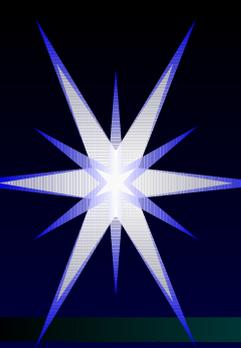
God personally
cares for us



personal perspectives
are real



God speaks
where we are



Humanity on Earth

The sun rises, and the sun
goes down, and hastens to
the place where it rises.

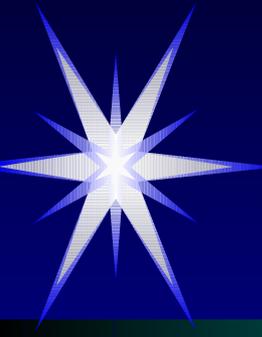
– Eccles. 1:5

personalism

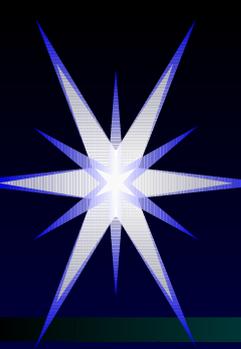
God speaks
where we are

I do see the sun rise,
from my vantage point!





3. Days of Creation



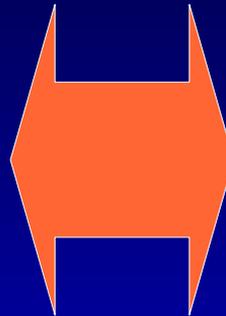
Worldviews on Creation

impersonalism

impersonal law



same
through time



personalism

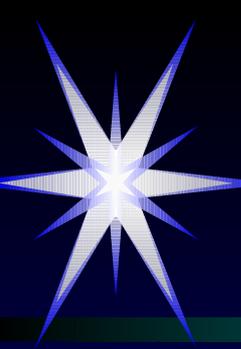
God speaks
law



days of creation
are distinct time

six days
lead to maturity
(exceptional)

providence =
current law



Personal Creation

personalism

God speaks
law



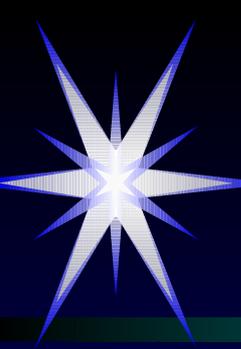
days of creation
are distinct time

mature;
by God's design
may have appearance
of age



six days
lead to maturity
(exceptional)

providence =
current law



Worldviews on Days

impersonalism

science
as ultimate



clock time
scientifically
measured



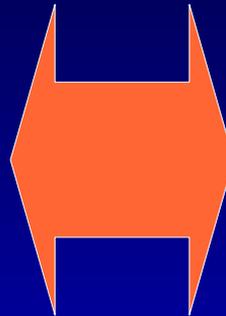
days by clock

personalism

God's work
and rest



human social time
of work and rest

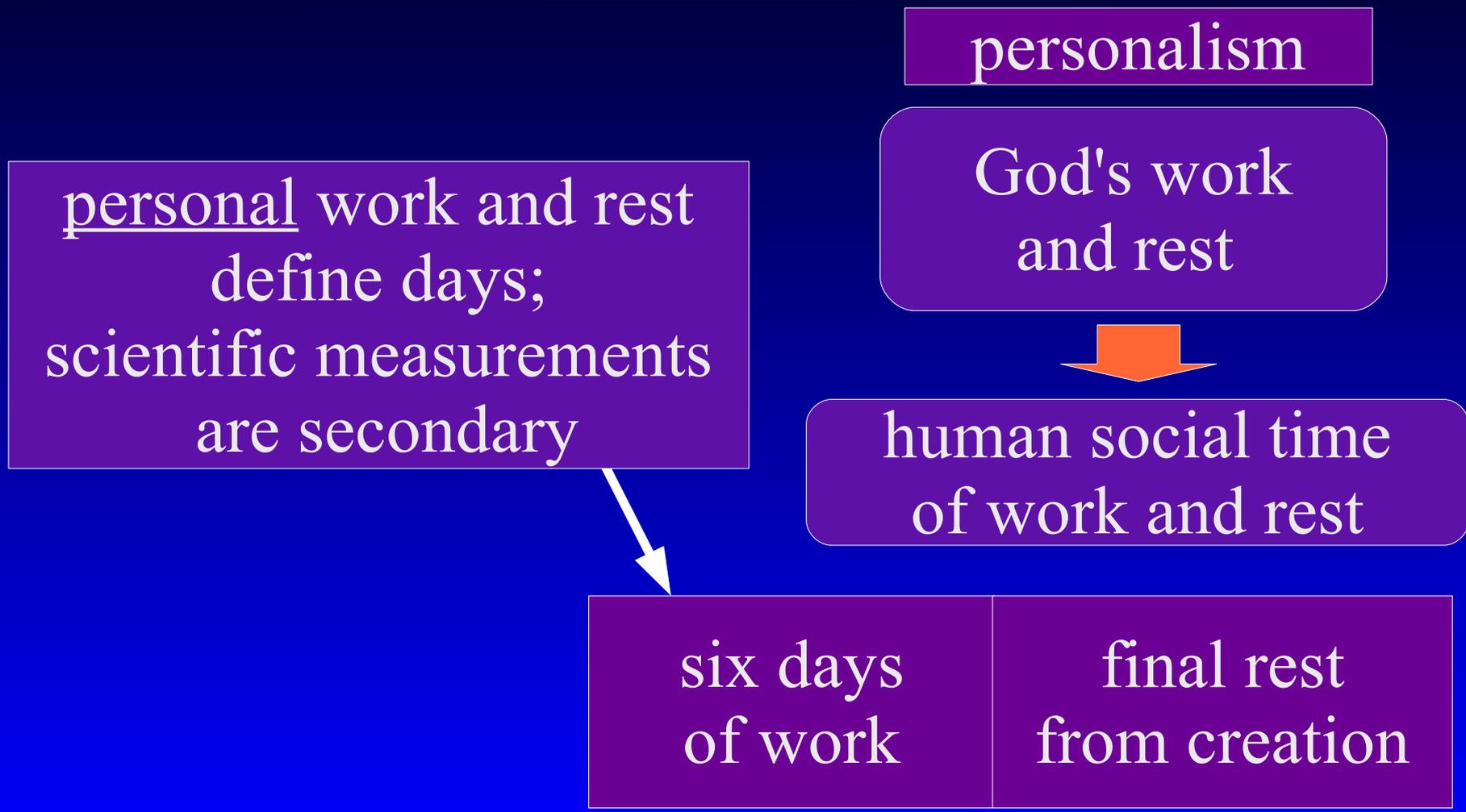


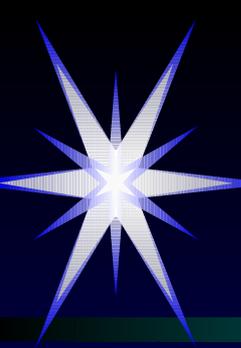
six days
of work

final rest
from creation



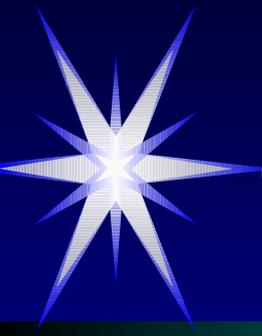
Personal Days



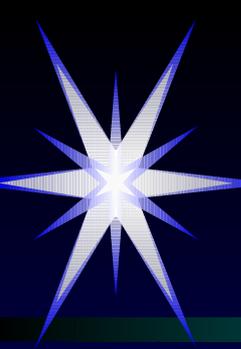


God's Rest

So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation. – Gen. 2:3



C. History



Worldviews on History

impersonalism

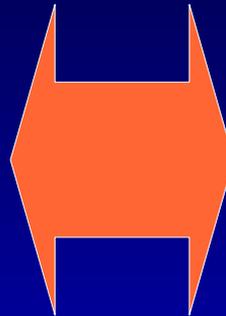
impersonal
events



same
through time



no miracle

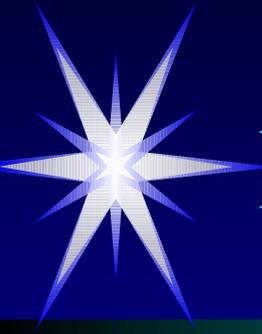


personalism

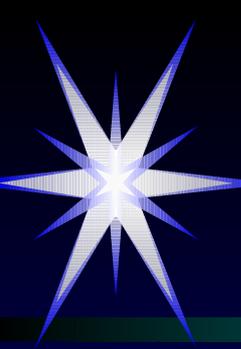
God's purposes
for history



exodus; resurrection



D. Morality as Straitjacket



Moral Absolutes Restrict Freedom

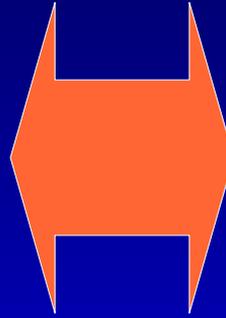
Materialist: freedom to make standards

individualism

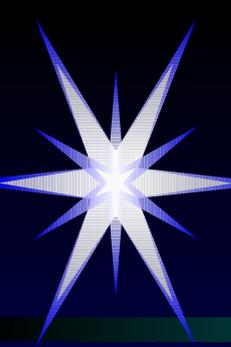
autonomy

no innate purpose

human beings
must
create purpose

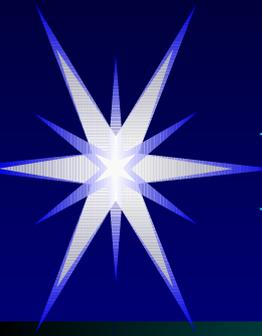


God designed us
and directs us
for our good

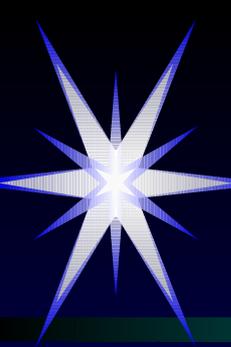


Guidance

Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and do not lean on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make straight your paths.
– Prov. 3:5-6



E. One Religion?

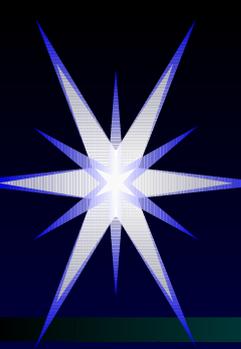


One Religion?

Don says all religions are wrong.

Their competing claims cancel each other out.

Don implies he knows
a lot about God
and the spiritual world



Conflict of Worldviews

culture generates
sociology of religion

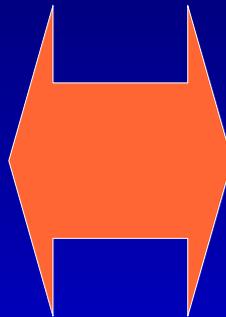


Don's sociology



culture generates
religion

impersonalism



God generates
cultures

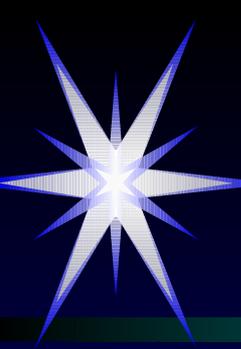


God reveals
himself



true and false
religion

personalism



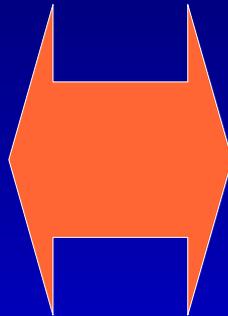
Conflict of Worldviews (2)

modern worldview
assumptions



cultural
relativism (Don)

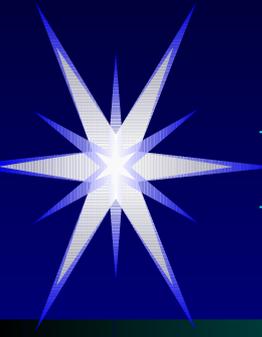
feelings of what
would be nice



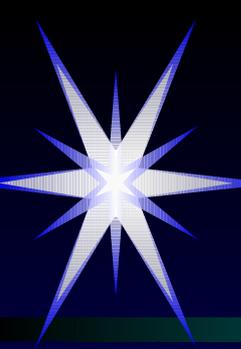
Biblical View



true and false
religion



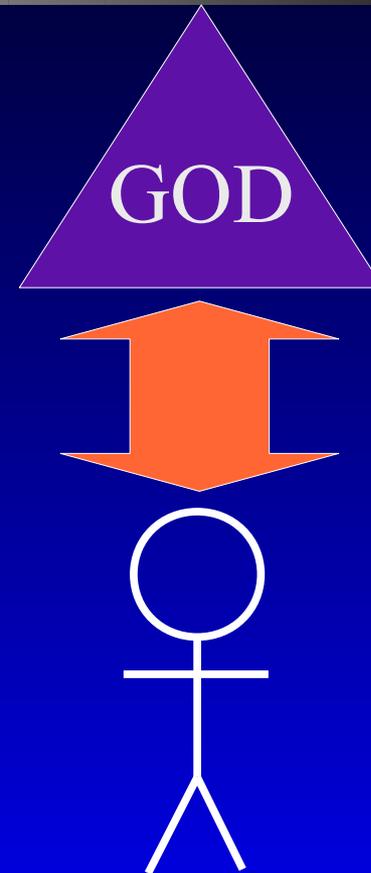
F. Alleged Limits of Language



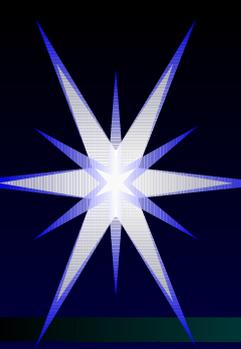
Language as Limited to World



impersonalism



personalism



Competing Views of the Bible

Bible as Social
Product for
Anthropological
Study



NO EXIT

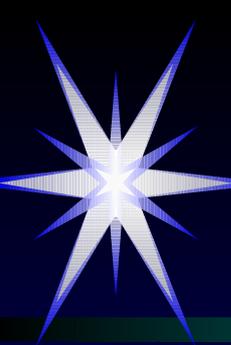
impersonalism

GOD

Bible as
God's Voice

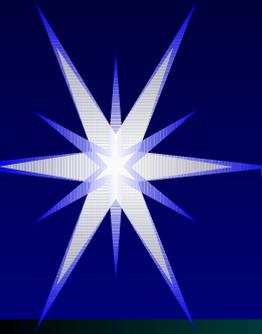


personalism

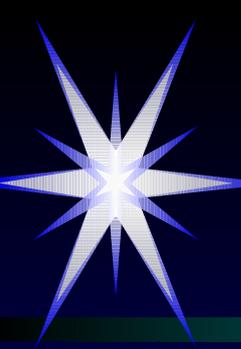


Guidance

Sanctify them in the truth; your word
is truth. – John 17:17

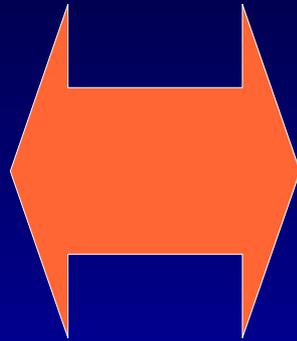


G. Where to Go?



The Difficulty: Conflicting Views

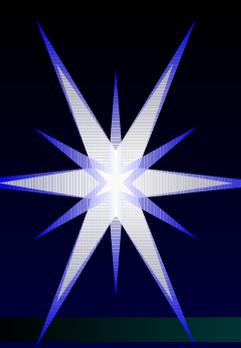
materialism



God of the
Bible

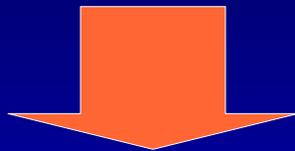
impersonalism

personalism



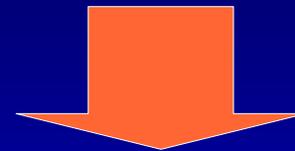
Taking Counsel

unbeliever



lay aside modern
prejudices and
meet Jesus:
"I am the way, the truth,
and the life." – John 14:6

believer
in Christ



renewal:
"Your word is a lamp
to my feet
and a light to my path."
– Ps. 119:105



One Religion?

Sue says all religions are right.

CORE

a loving God

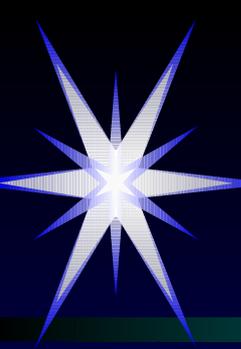


Buddhism:
no personal God

kindness



child sacrifice



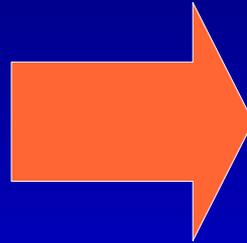
Essence of Religion

Sue says all religions are right.

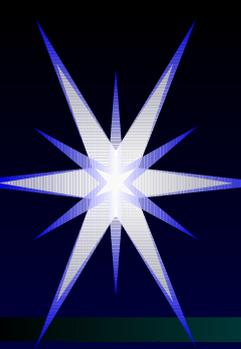
CORE

a loving God

kindness



Sue claims
to know
essence



Conflicting Claims

Islam

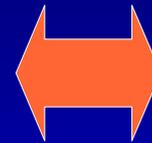
Christianity

Orthodox
Judaism

Jesus is
prophet



Jesus is
son of God



Jesus is
not Messiah

Sue claims
to know
better