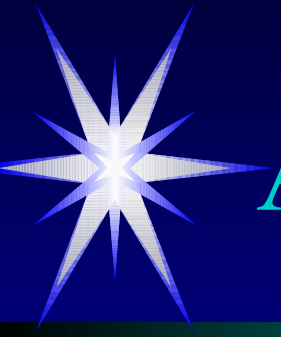


Failure of Theistic Evolution in its Picture of God

Vern Sheridan Poythress, Ph.D., Th.D.
Westminster Theological Seminary





A. Yes or No to Miracles?



Only Regularities—No Exceptions?

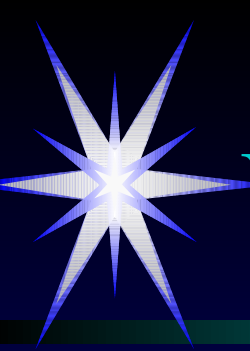
Alternatives:

- Deism: clockwork universe
- God sustains existence of pieces
- God sustains pieces and laws

physical
determinism
(no divine
choice)

randomness
(no divine
choice,
but Chance)

continual
divine choice,
design input (??)



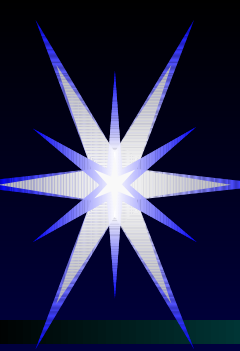
What Kind of World?

Issue:
how do you know
how the world functions?
(not just fashionable materialism)

How do you know
it existed
five minutes ago?

How do you know
it will exist
five minutes from now?

Tacit trust in God



Miracle: What Kind of God?

Alternatives:

- Exceptions to lawful regularities
- Randomness with guidance

Issue:
can God do as he
personally pleases?

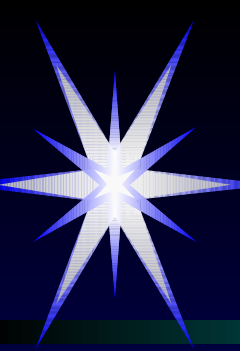
Or is he "trapped"
by his own laws?



God's Freedom

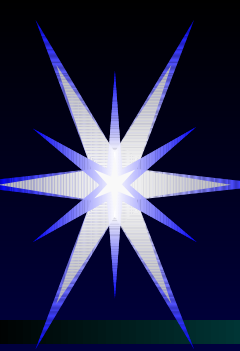
Whatever the LORD pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps.
– Psalm 135:6

For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, "My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose." – Isaiah 46:9-10



Particular Miracles

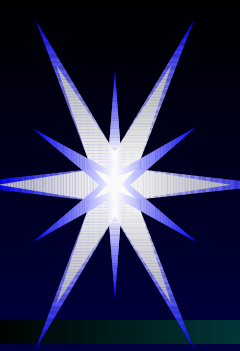
- ▶ Plagues of Egypt
- ▶ Dividing the Red Sea
- ▶ Elijah and Elisha raising the dead
- ▶ Christ walking on water
- ▶ The resurrection of Christ



God's Control of Randomness

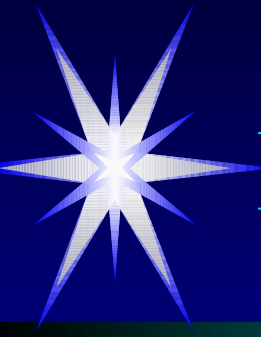
The lot is cast into the lap,
but its every decision is from the LORD.
– Prov. 16:33

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny?
And not one of them will fall to the
ground apart from your Father. But even
the hairs of your head are all numbered.
– Matthew 10:29-30

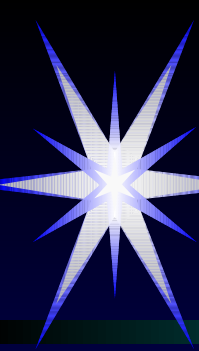


Result: Yes to Miracles

- ▶ God of the Bible can work miracles
- ▶ Does work miracles when he chooses
- ▶ This truth affects science



B. Effects on Science



Two Kinds of Science

nomothetic
science

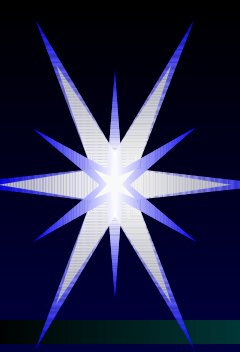
Newton's law
of gravitation

repeated
experiment:
ignore rare
exception

historical
science

first cell;
first mammal

once only;
possible
exception



Prestige in Science

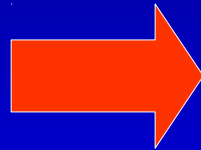
nomothetic
science

historical
science

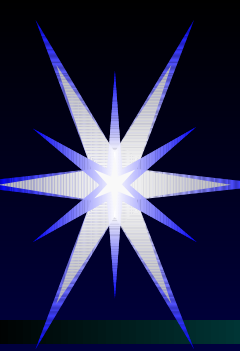
Newton's law
of gravitation

first cell;
first mammal

wonderful
success!

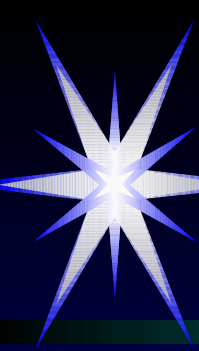


justifies
presumption?



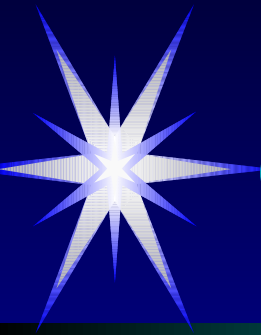
Historical Exception Points

- Initial creation (Big Bang)
- Unique earth
- First cell
- First instance of a major kind (new body plans)
- First human beings

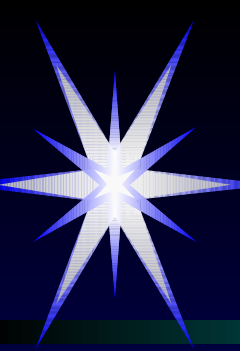


Theistic Evolution

- ▶ Exceptions only at Big Bang and redemption
- ▶ Not at other origin points
- ▶ Why?

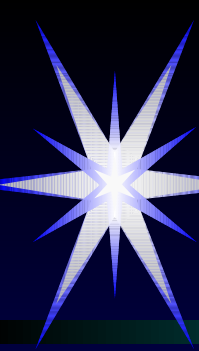


C. Desires concerning God



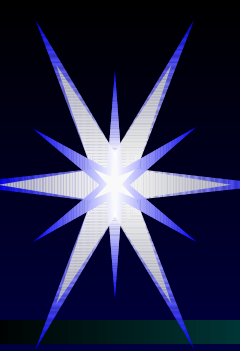
The Fall affects Human Desire

- ▶ Self as god
- ▶ Pride, including intellectual pride
- ▶ God remade to match us



Types of God Substitute

- ▶ Pantheism
- ▶ Hinduism
- ▶ Greek polytheism
- ▶ Islam
- ▶ Deism



God Revealing Himself

- ▶ General revelation (through the world)
- ▶ Special revelation, in the Bible
- ▶ Not enough for a modern conception of God to match some of the verses



Contrasting Views, For Convenience of Science

no miracle
no discernible guidance

"functional
integrity"

can do science
with everyone
else

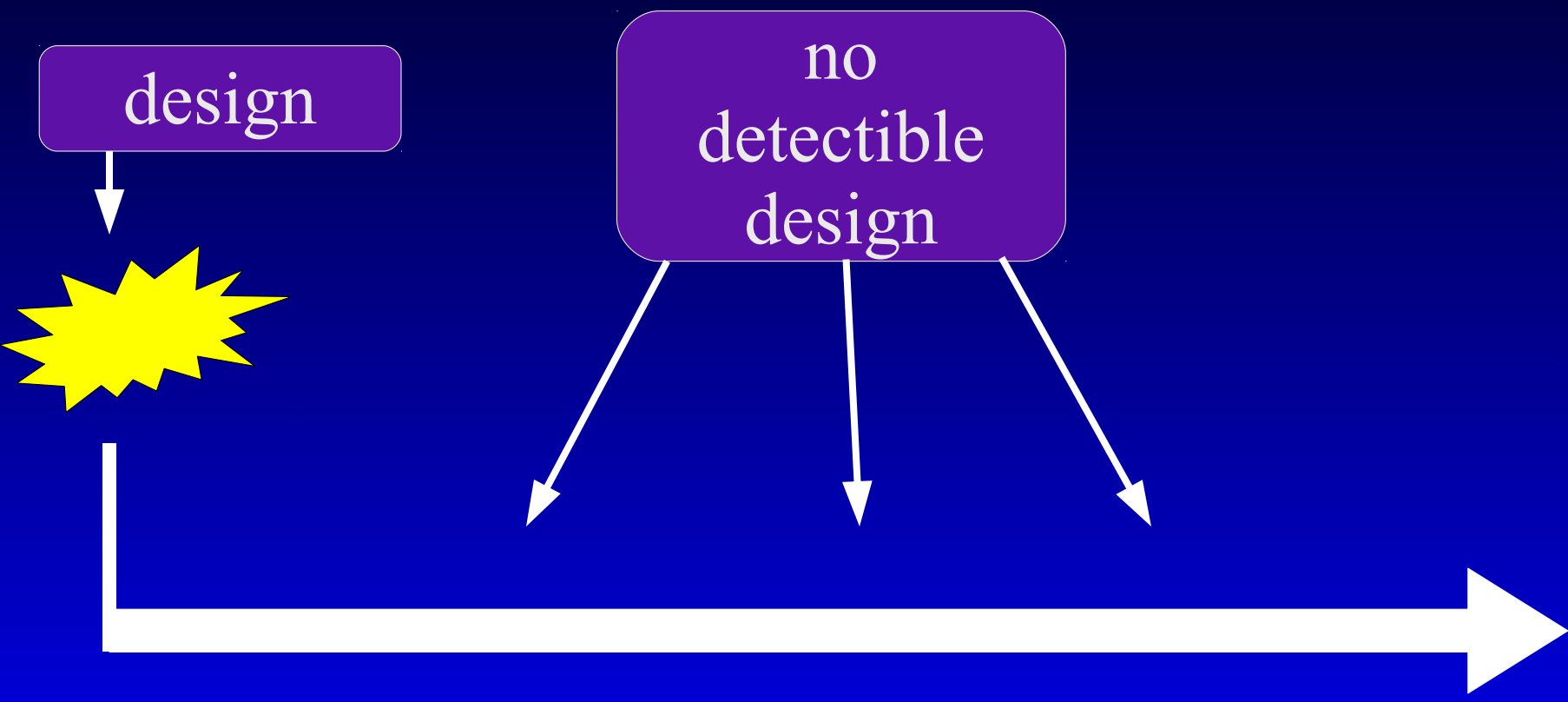
miracles possible;
guidance

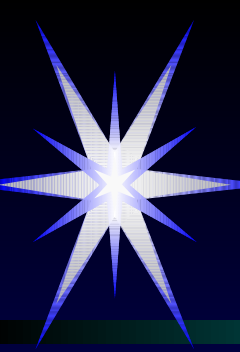
possible
point input
or continual input

allow
surprises
in history



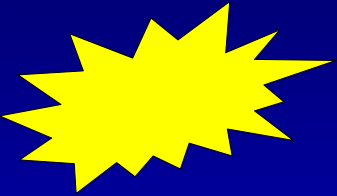
Why Design at One Point Only?



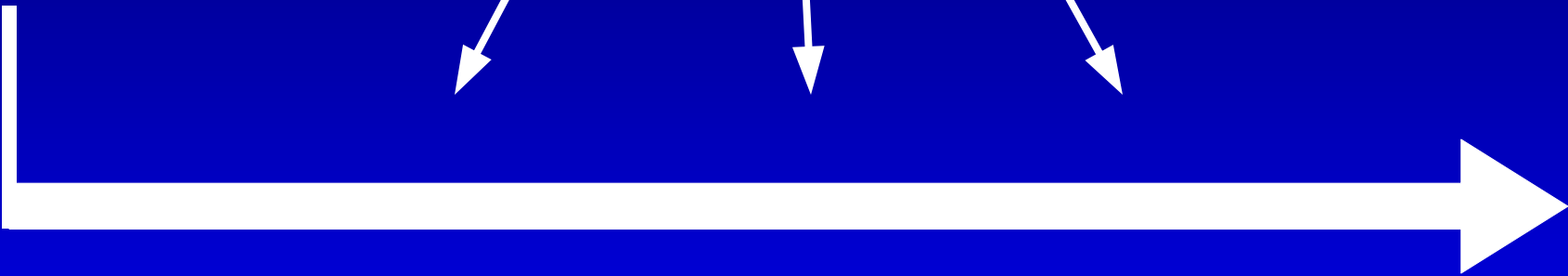
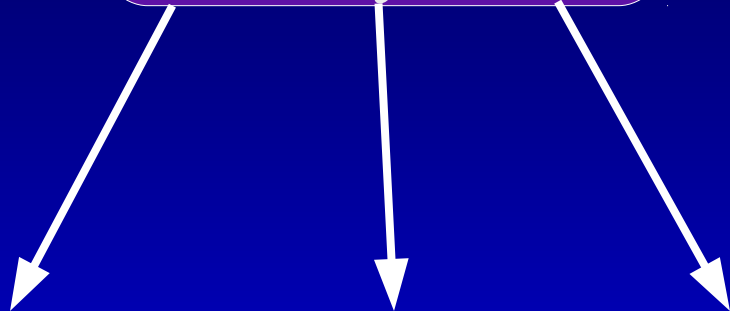


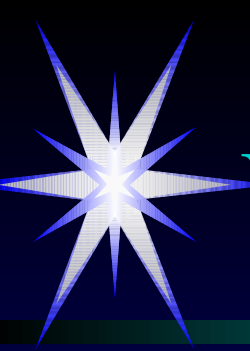
Design Everywhere!

design



design,
easy or
not easy to see





Who Decides Reality?

Theistic Evolution

- ▶ God sustains
- ▶ But no exceptions
- ▶ "Science" in current form untroubled

Biblical Worldview

- ▶ God sustains
- ▶ Exceptions allowed
- ▶ Science reconfigured to allow exceptions