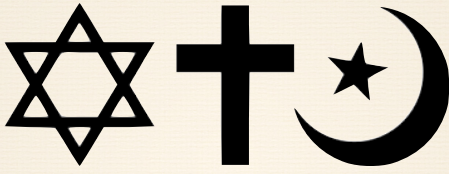


There are three great monotheistic religions in the world.



Judaism - Christianity - Islam

John's prologue highlights one important area where Christianity is unique.

The Incarnation

John 1:14

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

What does the incarnation reveal to us about God?

1.

He exposes Himself

to the scrutiny of empirical reason.

2.

He empties Himself

of His rights and becomes a servant to us.

3.

He exhibits Himself

as a sin offering for the redemption of His people.

1.

He exposes Himself

God opens Himself to the empirical world inviting us to see, touch, feel, not just blindly believe.

1 John 1

“¹ What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life — ² and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us.”

1.

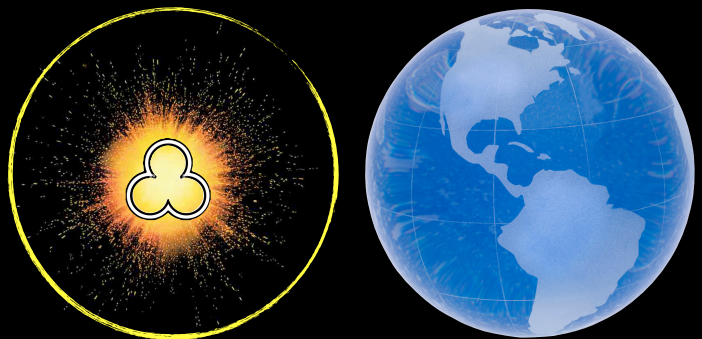
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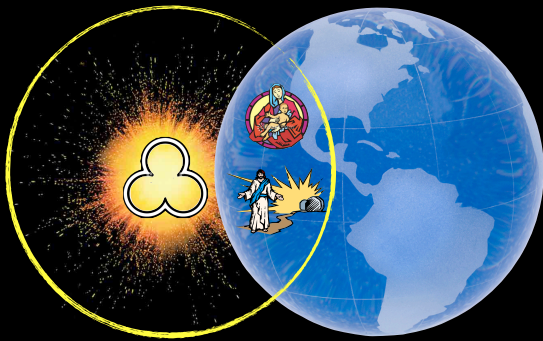
Hebrews 1:3

“And he is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When he had made purification of sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”

The material world and the spiritual world are different spheres of reality



*The material world
and the **spiritual** world
are different spheres of reality
that overlap in the Biblical story.*

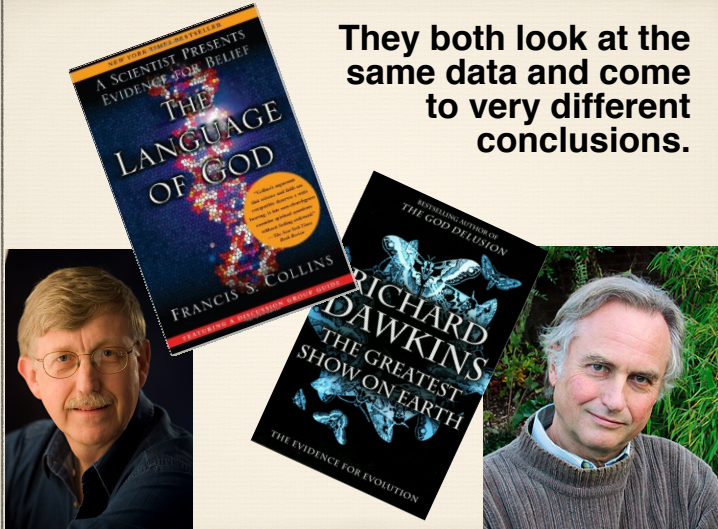


The Verification of Christianity

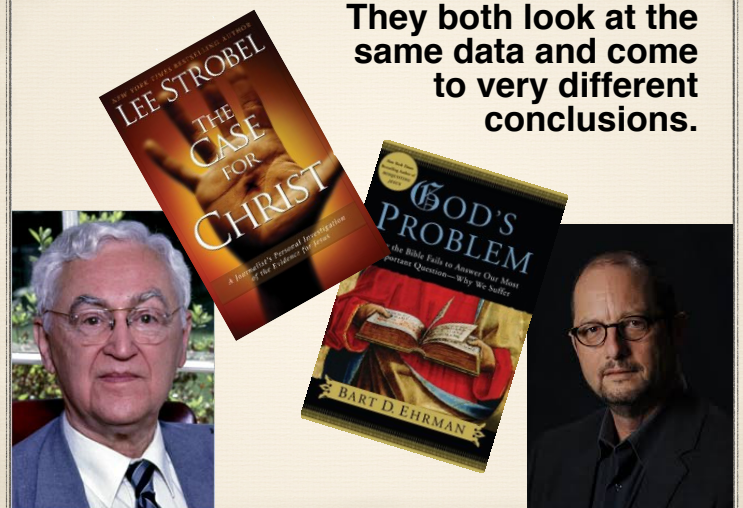
**Christianity is open
to rational challenge.
It is not an escape from reason.**

**The dissonance is not between
Christianity and Science but in
the differing presuppositions
interpreters bring to the data.**

**They both look at the
same data and come
to very different
conclusions.**



**They both look at the
same data and come
to very different
conclusions.**



*The "faith" world
of subjective
values and religion*

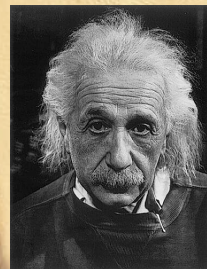


**The "factual" world
of objective,
natural science,
and reason**



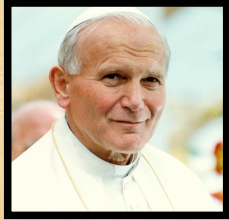
*When Christianity retreats
from this world and reason,
it gives up too much.*

Albert Einstein



*"Science without
religion is lame,
religion without
science is blind."*

Pope John Paul II



“Science can purify religion from error and superstition; religion can purify science from idolatry and false absolutes.”

2.

He empties Himself

God became a bond-servant to the human race so that we would see our worth and calling.

Philippians 2

“⁵ Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

God leaves us a method and message.

Method

Christmas



Identification with humanity

humility and sacrifice

Message

Easter



The Word of the Cross

redemption from sin

The Focus of Ministry

The incarnation gives us a message & shows us our method.

We must not neglect nor confuse them.

3.

He exhibits Himself

God puts Himself under the Law as a sin offering so that we might be set free from its curse.

John 12

““³² And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.” ³³ But he was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which he was to die.”

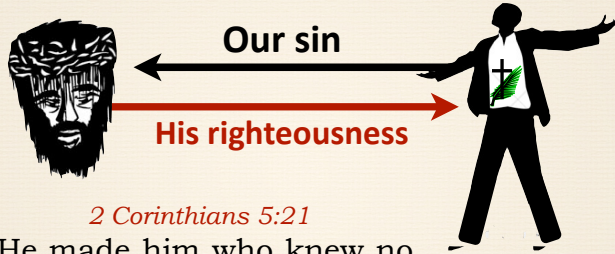
Galatians 4

“⁴ But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵ so that he might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”

Romans 8:3

“For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh.”

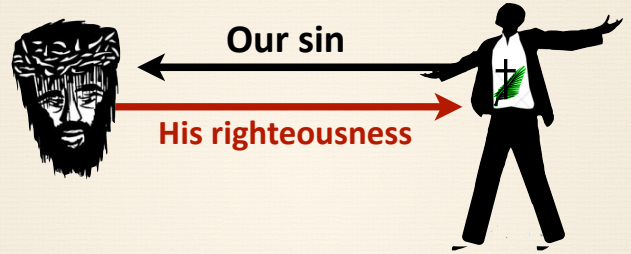
The great exchange



2 Corinthians 5:21

“He made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him.”

The great exchange



- On the Cross Jesus actually became the sinner (bearing the sins of the world).
- In the same way that Jesus bore our sins so we bear his righteousness.

The Gospel story includes three great imputations.



What does the incarnation reveal?

about Man

His dignity

His neediness

His value

about God

His majestic Spirit

His empathetic Love

His sacrificial Grace

2 Corinthians 4:6

“For God, who said, “**Light** shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the **glory** of God in the face of **Christ**.”

“As a child I received instruction both in the Bible and in the Talmud. I am a Jew, but I am enthralled by the luminous figure of the Nazarene. No one can read the Gospels without feeling the actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates in every word. No myth is filled with such life.”

*Albert Einstein,
Saturday Evening Post,
Oct.26, 1929*

What does all this mean?

- We know and serve a God of unimaginable glory, which we will review next week as we consider His GRACE and TRUTH.
- We must take seriously the worth of our souls and the souls of all who are bearing the image of God.
- God has made Himself vulnerable to being vilified, and victimized, as He is verified.
- We are called to follow the example of our Lord in his vulnerability, as we spread the Word of the Cross to the world.