





# Theme:

You make springs gush forth in the valleys; ...  
--Psalm 104:10

... him who works all things according to  
the counsel of his will, --Ephesians 1:11





















Life

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

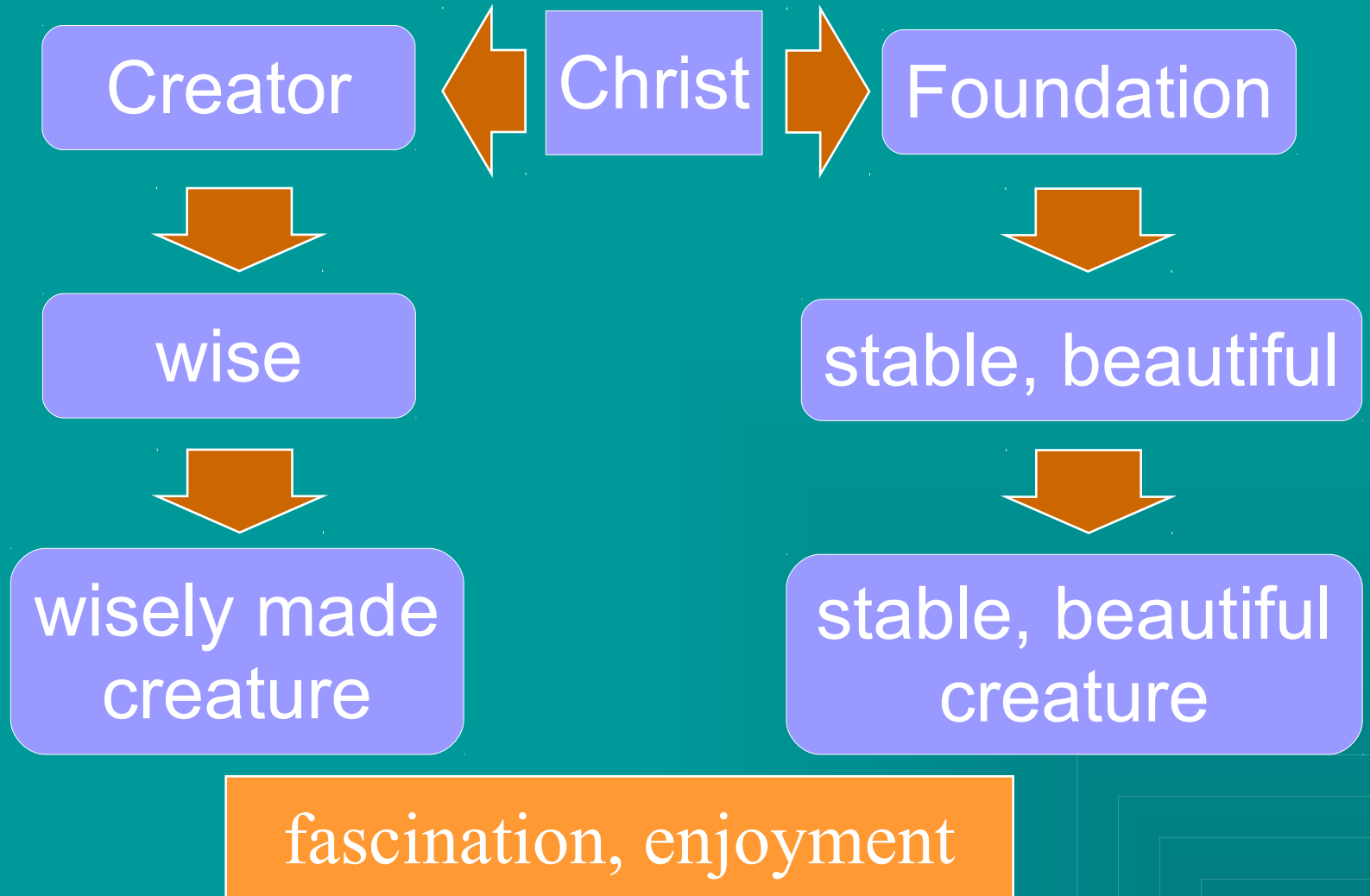
# Christ as Center of Creation

Colossians 1:16: "For by him [Christ] all things were created, ..."

Colossians 1:17: "... and in him all things hold together."

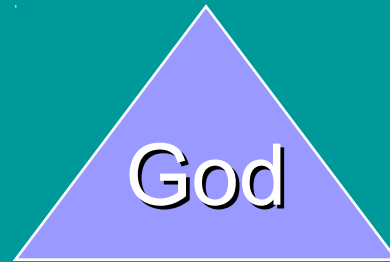
He is foundation as well as agent.

# Implications of Christ's Centrality





# God As Origin of Life



image

Adam



Imaging  
here



Then God said,  
"Let us make man  
in our image,  
after our likeness."  
--Genesis 1:26-27

# God As Origin of Life

When Adam had lived 130 years, he fathered a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.  
--Genesis 5:3

God

image

Imaging  
here

Adam



(Gen. 1:26-27)

image,  
reflection

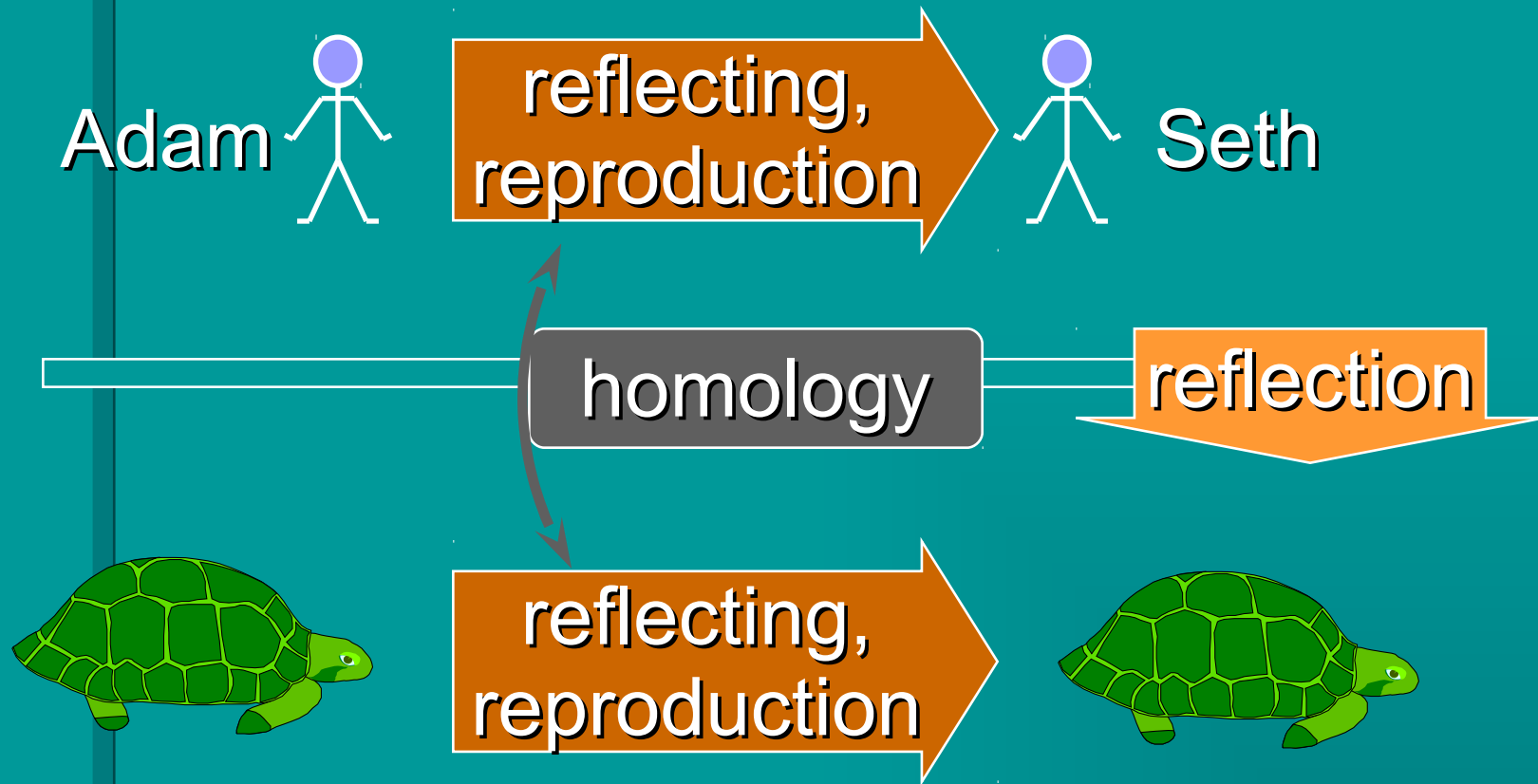


Seth

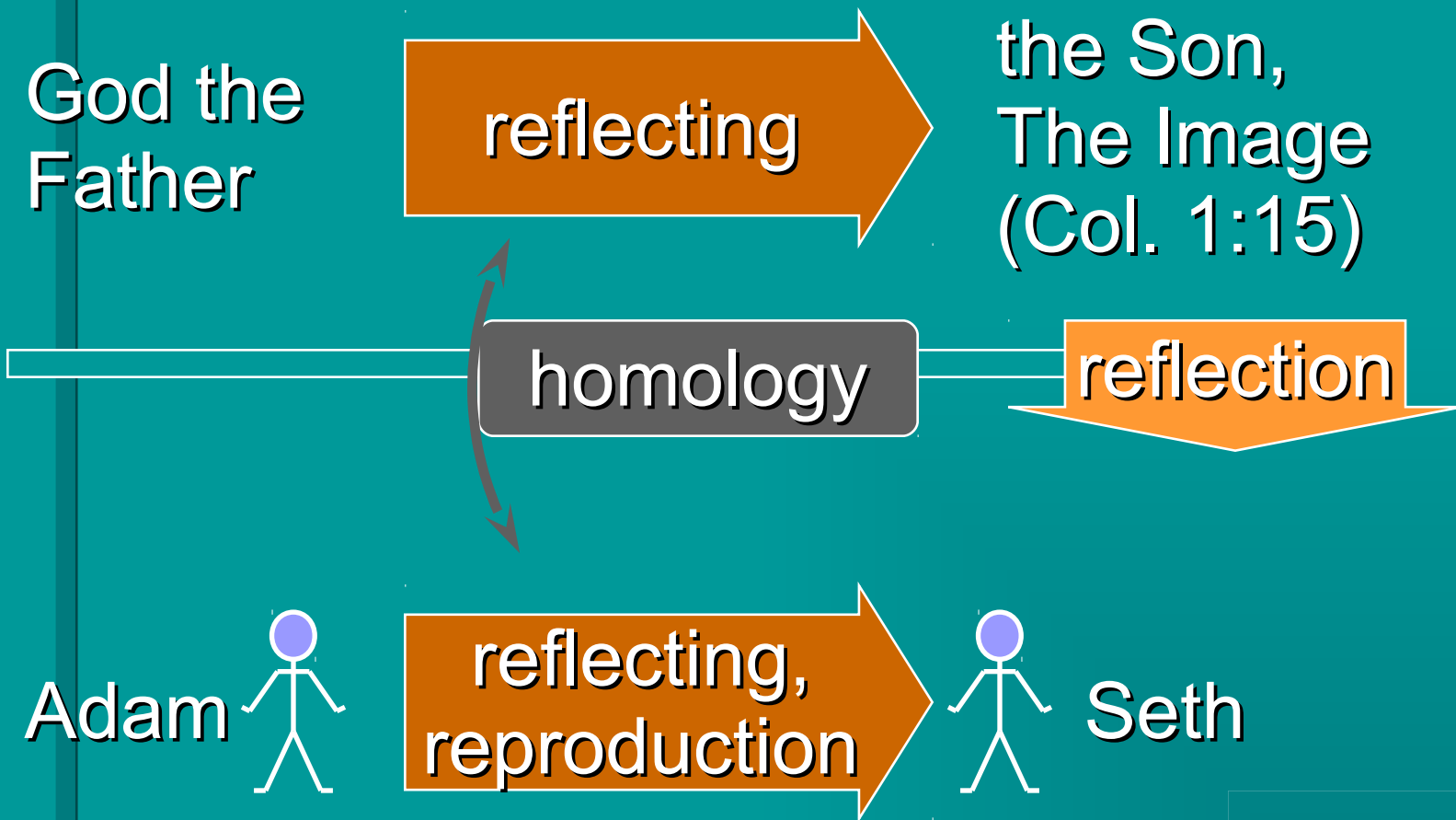
(Gen. 5:3)



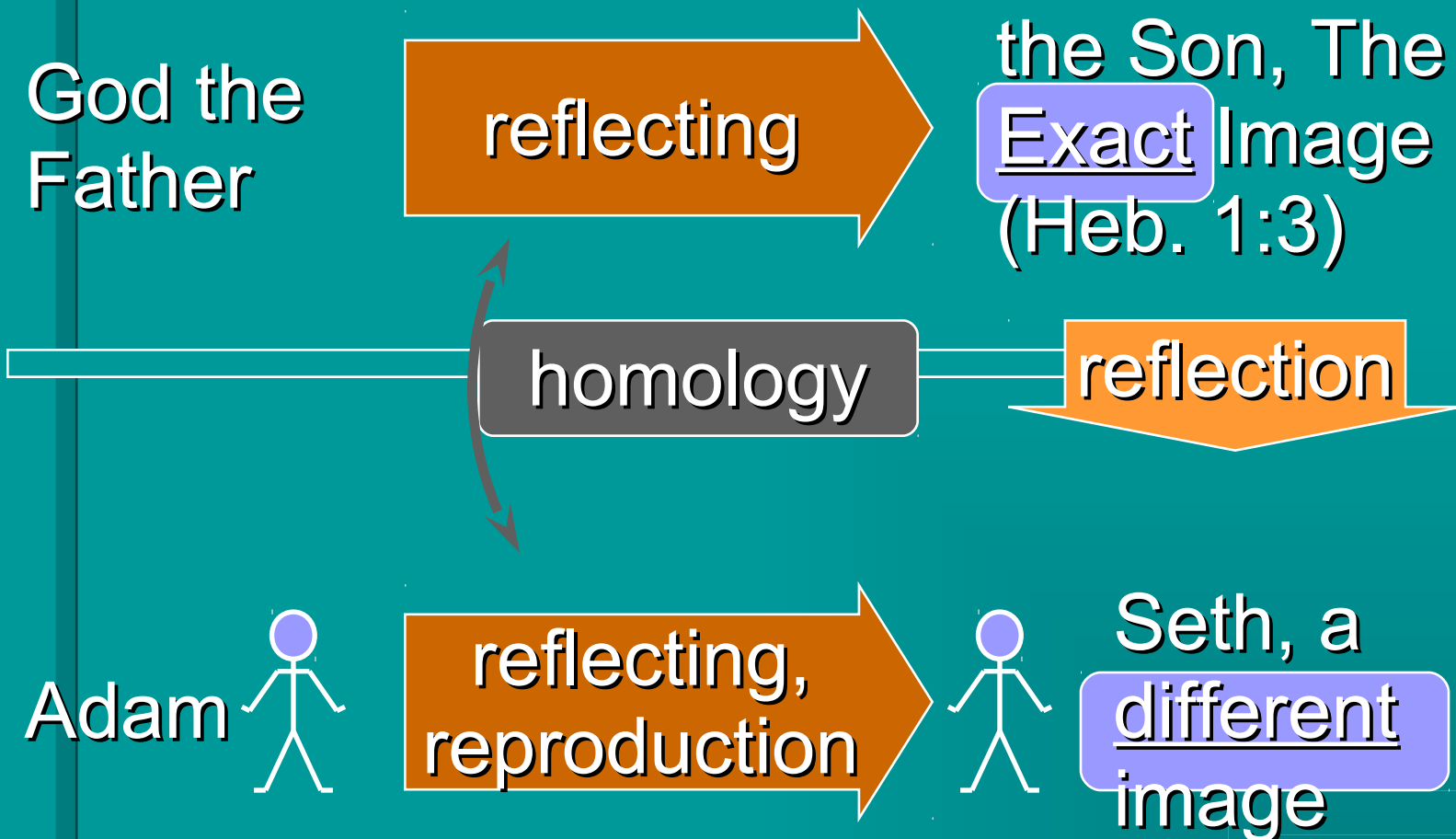
# Life Imaging Humanity



# A Divine Archetype



# A Divine Archetype Different





# Christ as Origin of the World

John 1:1-2: allusion to Genesis

"In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God, and  
the Word was God. He was in the  
beginning with God.

# Christ as Origin of Life

John 1:3-4:

"All things were made through him,  
and without him was not any thing  
made that was made.

In him was life, and the life was the  
light of men."

source of life on earth

# Spirit as Source of Life

Psalm 104:30:

When you hide your face,  
they [animals] are dismayed;  
when you take away their breath,  
they die and return to their dust.

When you send forth your Spirit,  
they are created,  
and you renew the face of the ground.

# Life in Christ

John 5:26:

“For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself.”

John 14:6:

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life.”

# Life in the Spirit

John 6:63:

It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is of no avail.



# Reinterpreting Life

- Macroevolution appeals to homologies (analogies).
- Analogy is indeed there.
- Analogy comes from God.
- The Father honors the Son (Col. 1:15-17).

Explaining.



# Reinterpreting Evolutionary Tree

Idealized tree



Actual fossils



# Role of Presuppositions



I see a tree,  
with some  
pieces missing.



I see pieces  
in a tree-like  
arrangement.

Actual fossils



In the eye  
of the  
beholder!



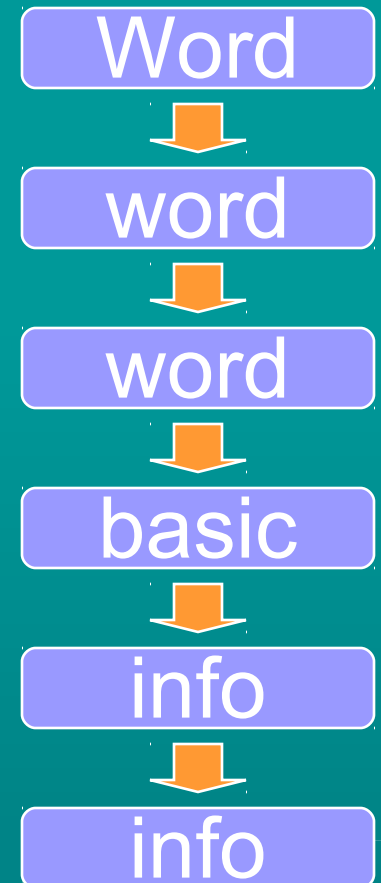


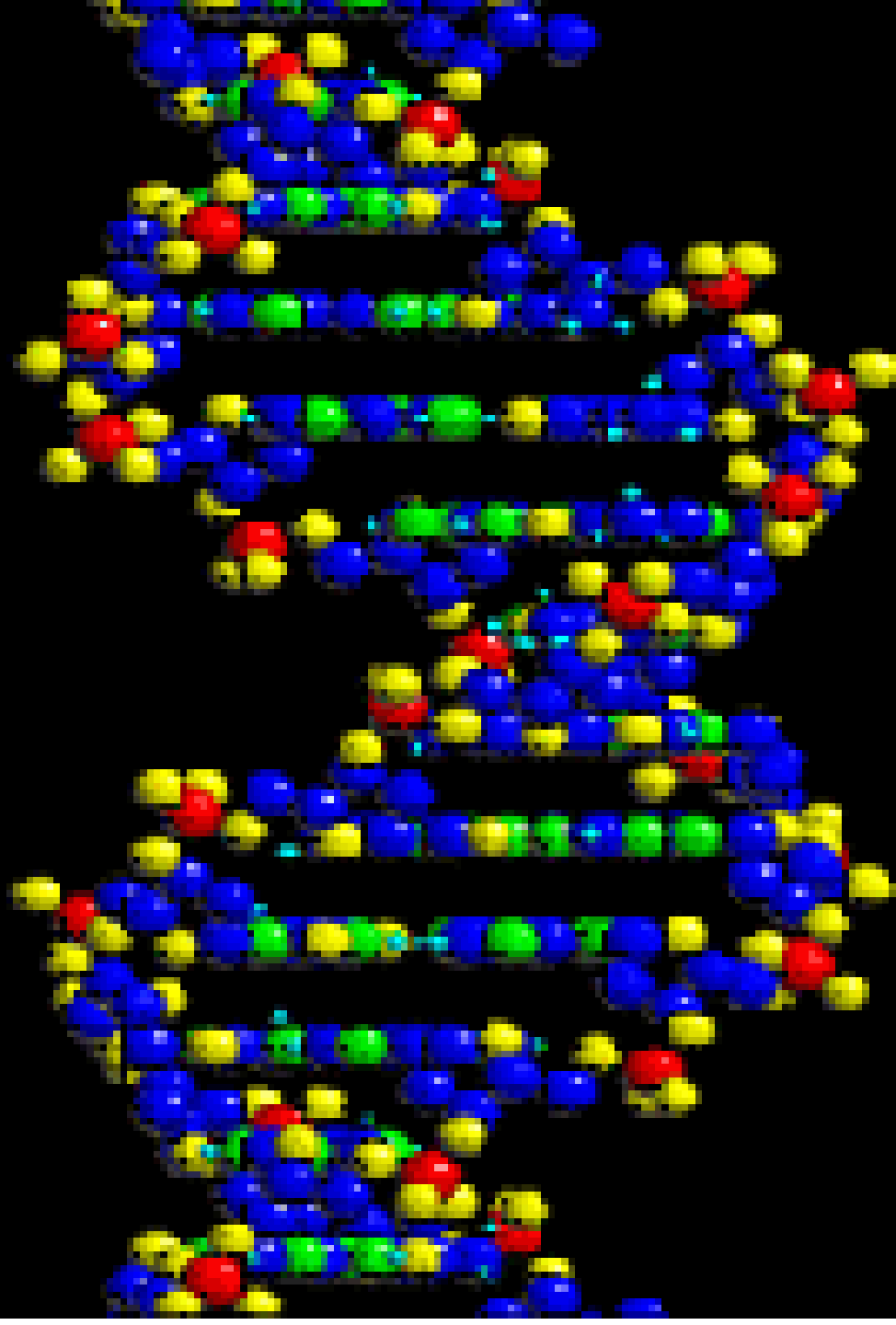
# Other Analogies from God



# 1. Image of the Word

- The Word with God (original)
- Word spoken to create
- Human speech
- Animal calls
- Information stored materially
- DNA





## 2. The Spirit as Origin of Life

Psalms 104:30:

"When you send forth your Spirit,  
they [animals] are created, and you  
renew the face of the ground."

life

creation

Romans 8:10:

But if Christ is in you, although the  
body is dead because of sin, the  
Spirit is life because of  
righteousness."

new  
life

re-creation

# The Spirit Empowers

- Spirit empowers the virgin birth (Luke 1:35)
- “The Spirit is life” (Rom. 8:10)
- Analogous to breath from God (Ezek. 37)
- Human beings given breath
  - God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life” (Gen. 2:7)
  - “the spirit in man, the breath of the Almighty” (Job 32:8)

# The Spirit Sustains

Job 34:14-15:

If he [God] should set his heart to it  
and gather to himself his spirit and his  
breath,  
all flesh would perish together,  
and man would return to dust.”

# The Spirit Empowers Lower Life

- Animals breathe ("breath of life" Gen. 7:22)
- Plants breathe ("respiration")
- Cells breathe (oxygen for metabolism)
- Chemical reaction for metabolism

God's wisdom  
displayed



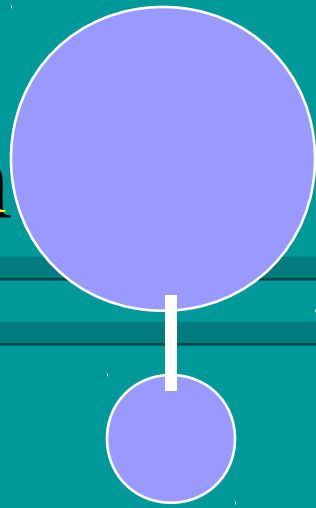


# Meaning of God's Presence



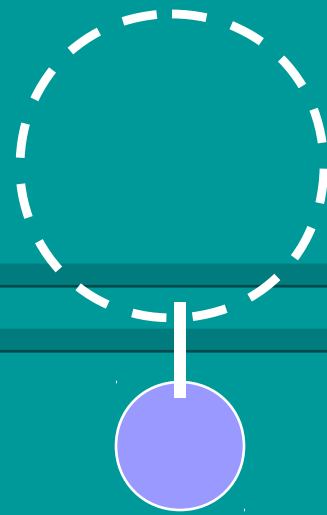
# Creator-creature Distinction

- Absolutely transcendent God
- Distinct creation
- God present controlling and judging
- Intimacy between God and creatures
- Distinct orders within creation
  - Personal creatures: Angels; Human beings
  - Animals
  - Plants
  - Nonliving things
- Spirit present to all, but distinctively to each



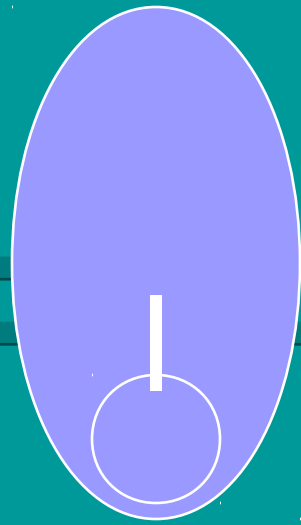
# Materialism

- Matter and energy; no God
- No distinct orders
- No real consciousness or purpose
- Then why and how is awareness?
  - Illusion?
  - Epiphenomenon?
  - Generated from mere complexity?
  - “Emergent”
- Problem: nothing comes from nothing



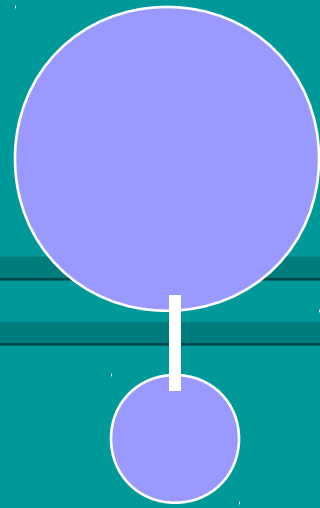
# Pantheism and Emanation

- World absorbed in god
- God present in divinization
- Identity between God and creatures
- Distinct orders within creation dissolved
- Spirit present to all, making everything Spirit/spirit



# Biblical Worldview

- Absolutely Transcendent God
- Distinct creation
- God present controlling and judging
- Intimacy between God and creatures
- Distinct orders within creation
  - Personal creatures: Angels; Human beings
  - Animals
  - Plants
  - Nonliving things
- Spirit present to all, but distinctively to each



### 3. Purpose

- Purpose of the Father
- Son as executor of purpose
- Human plans and purposes
- Animals (seeking, responding)
- Plants (living, growing)
- Cells
- Molecular machines

Goal



Goal



goals



goals



goals



living



producing



# Purpose in Machines

- A machine is designed to do something.
- We evaluate it:
  - intact or broken
  - working or idle
  - effective or ineffective
  - efficient or inefficient
- Understanding must see purpose
- Background of rational, purposeful intelligence







# Purpose in Visual Processing

“Vision, for example, begins its journey when the radiant energy of light triggers electrical activity in the approximately one hundred million primary light receptor cells that comprise the retina. Each cell records the level of brightness (or color) that touches it in each instance of time; the image transmitted through the lens is thus picked up as a pattern of electrical signals.” --Edward O. Wilson, On Human Nature (1978)

design



## 4. Control

- Omnipotence of the Father
- Son as executor of power;  
Spirit as energizer
- Human choice and control
- Animal behavior: choosing,  
eating, fighting, retreating
- Plant growth, defense
- Molecular control mechanisms

Control



Control



control



control



control



control

## 5. Particular attributes

- Personal Father
- Personal Son, Image
- Cherubim (Ezek. 1)  
man, lion, ox, eagle
- Over life, wild, tame, bird
- Fascination of each kind

Attributes



Attributes



Attributes



power,  
dignity

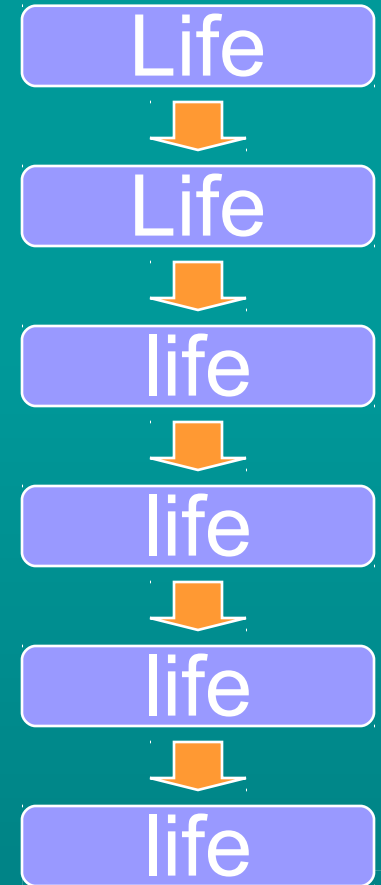


particular  
attributes



## 6. Tree of life

- God the Father
- Son, Vine (John 15:1)
- Tree of life (Gen. 2:9, 3:22)
- Aaron's staff (Num. 8:8)
- Lampstand (Exod. 25:33)
- Wisdom (Prov.3:18)



Final tree of life (Rev. 22:2)

# Testimony to God

- “The heavens declare the glory of God ...” (Ps. 19:1)
- “For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made” (Rom. 1:20)
- Includes specific reflections (images) of aspects of God’s character

