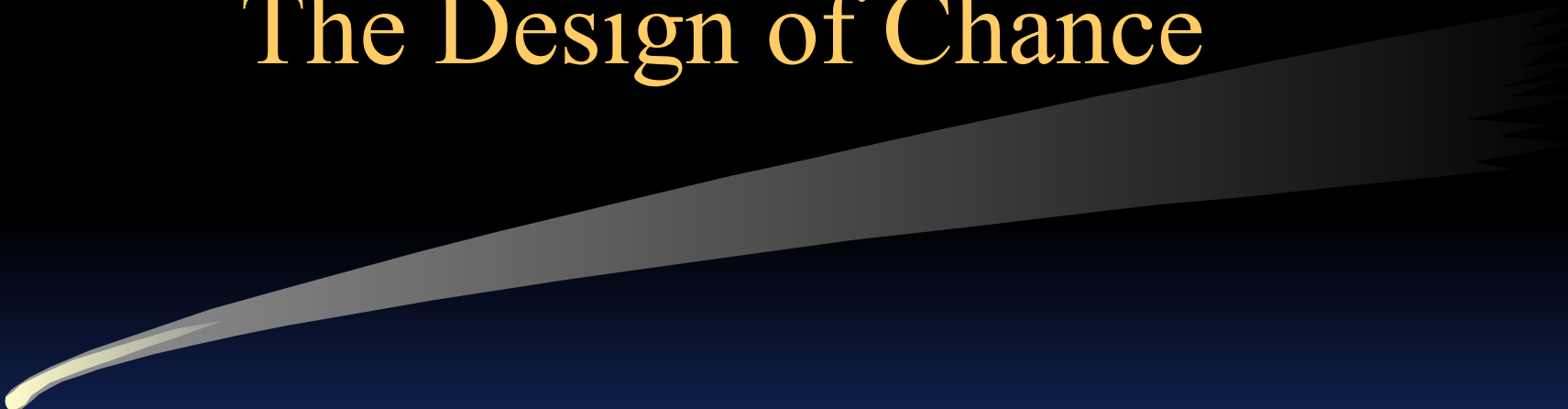


The Design of Chance

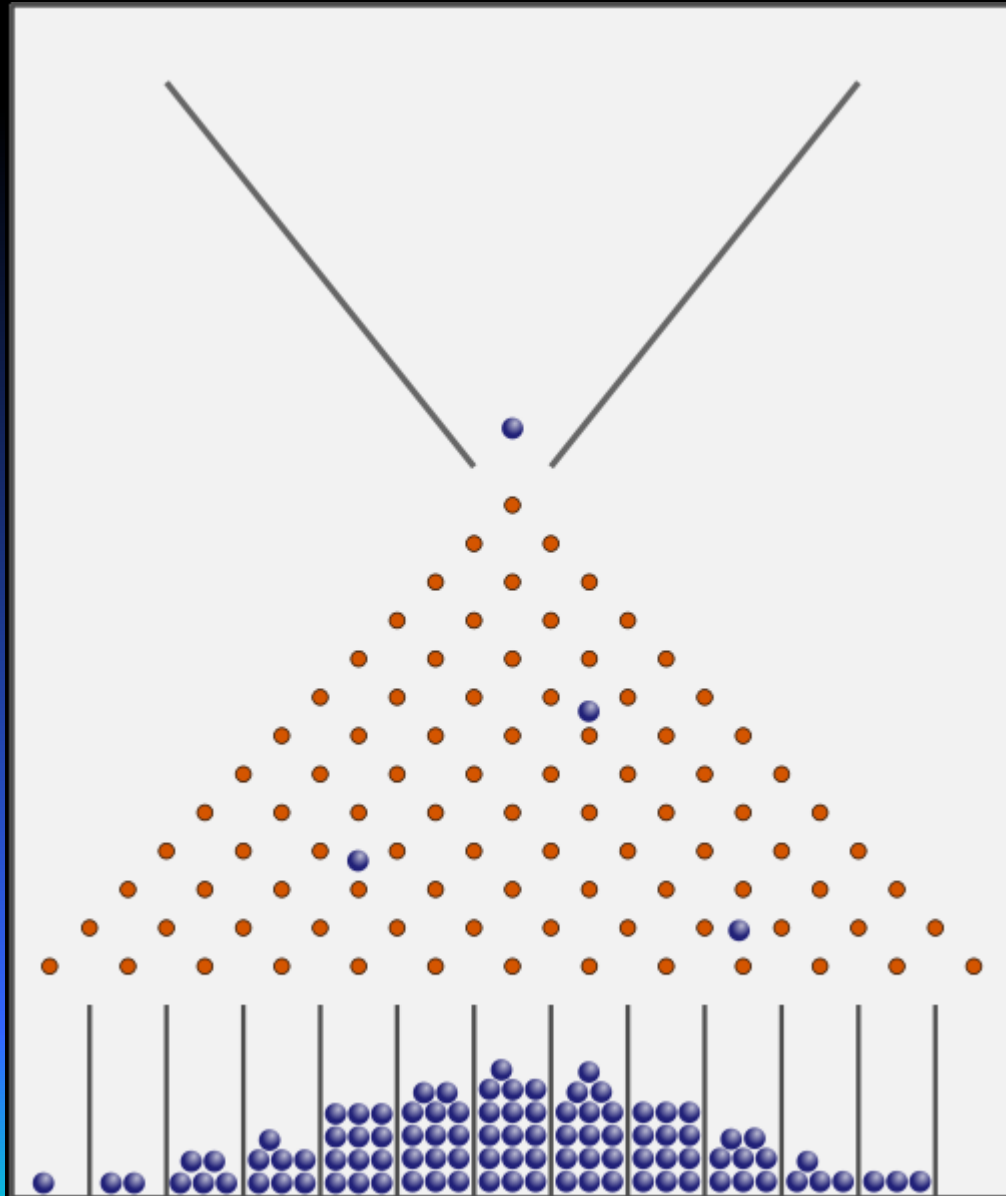


Vern S. Poythress
Westminster Theological Seminary

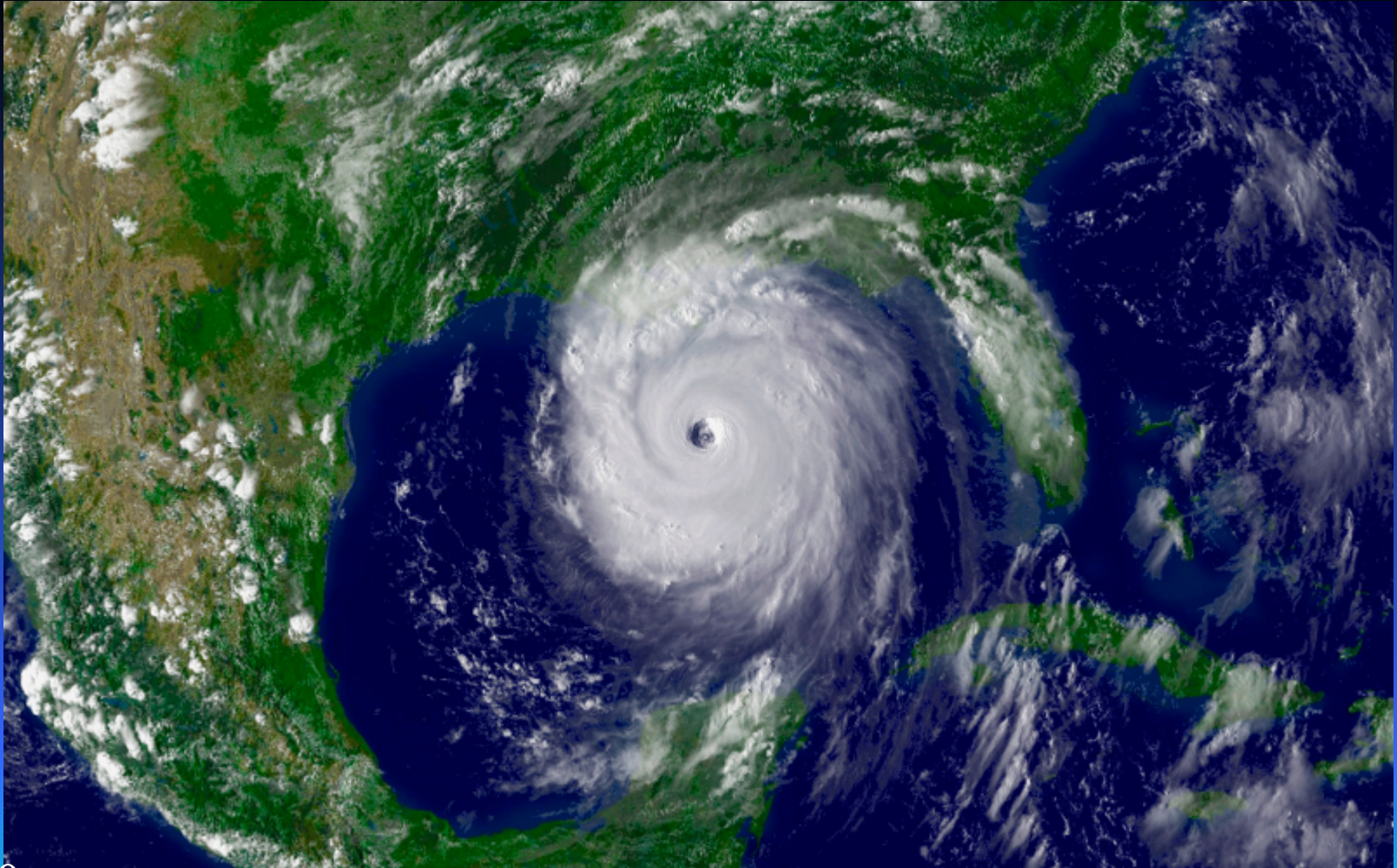
A. The Significance of Chance



Patterns in Chance



Chance in the World: Hurricane Katrina

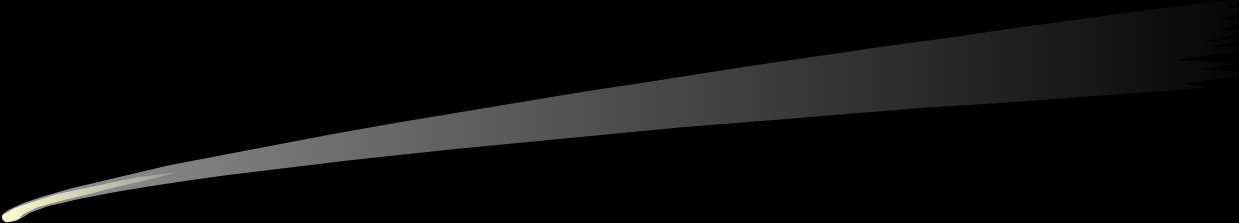


Chance in Science

- Chance variations in repeated experiments
- Chance preservation from the past
- Accumulated data
- Chance is at the foundation of science
- Chance has key role in Darwinism
- Chance in the origin of the universe

B. The Specification for Chance





What Is Chance?

Something that happens unpredictably without discernible human intention or observable cause.

– Merriam-Webster

Predicting Chance?

Time and chance happen to them all.
– Ecclesiastes 9:11

You can predict that
chance occurs
all the time in everyone's life.

C. Why Chance Does Not Explain: Regularities in Chance



Regularities in Chance

- Weather: summer once a year
- Hurricanes in hurricane season
- Car wrecks
- Casinos take in money
- Coin flips: about half heads

Regularity of Probability

- Coin flips: about half heads

Predictably,
reliably

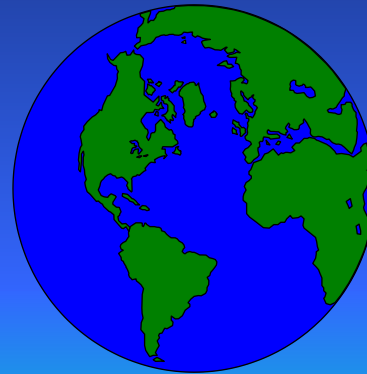
Three Kinds of Probability

- Logical
(on principle)
- Subjective
(personal info)
- Objective
(factors in world)
- Chance of heads: $1/2$
- Chance of two heads:
• $1/4$
- Chance of two heads,
given you know one head
- Chance of an earthquake
in San Francisco

Roots of Probability

- Logical
- Subjective
- Objective
- In general principle
- In the person
- In the world

$$E = mc^2$$

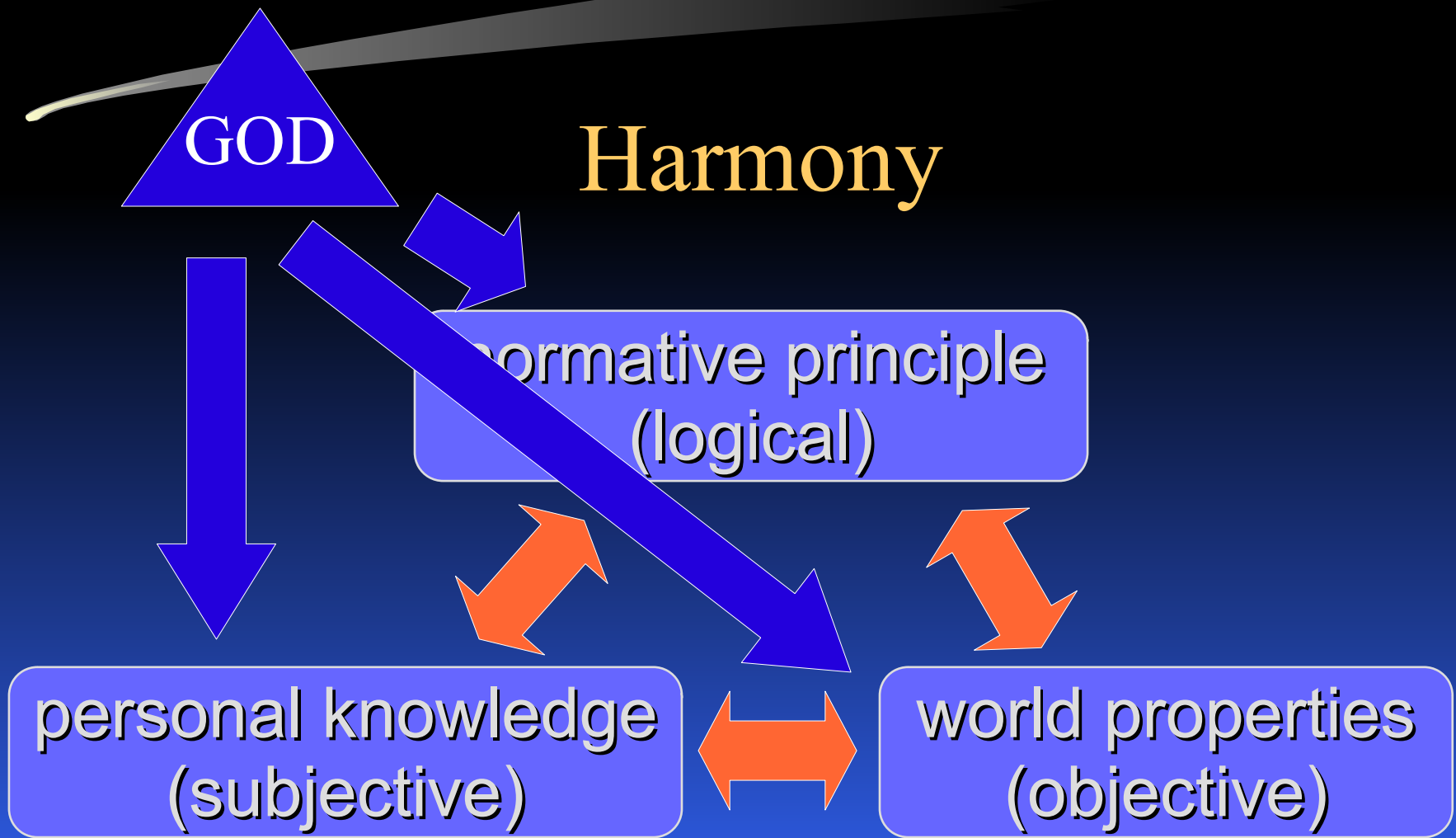


Simultaneous Probability

- Logical
- Subjective
- Objective
- Half heads
- Altered by info
- Altered when test shows biased coin

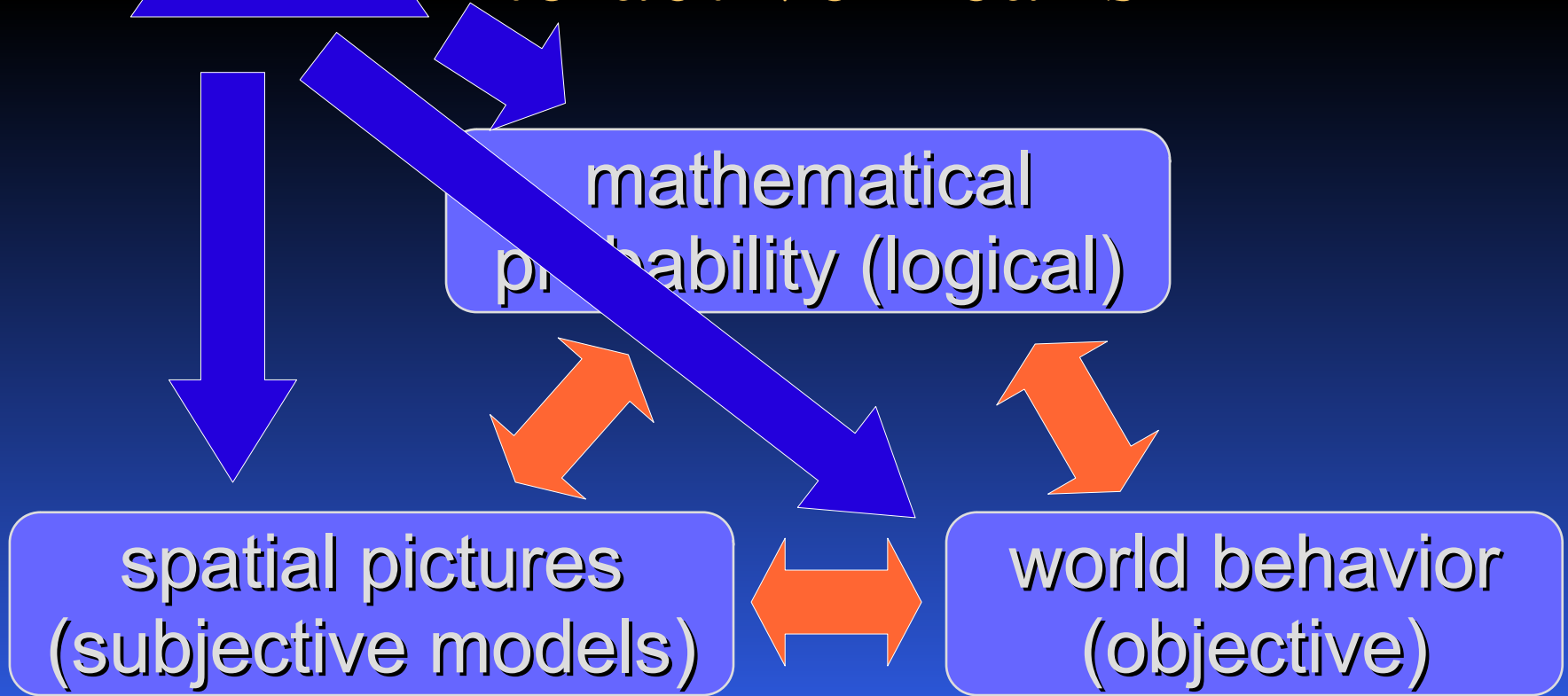
GOD

Harmony



GOD

Interactive Realism



D. Why Chance Does Not Explain: God's Control



God's Rule (weather)

Psalm 147:17-18:

He [God] hurls down his crystals of ice like crumbs;
who can stand before his cold?

He sends out his words, and melts them;
he makes his wind blow and the waters flow.



control

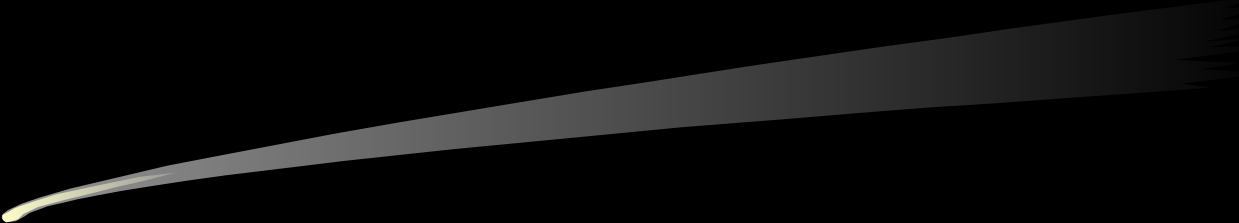
Death of Ahab

But a certain man drew his bow at random and struck the king of Israel between the scale armor and the breastplate.

– 1 Kings 22:34

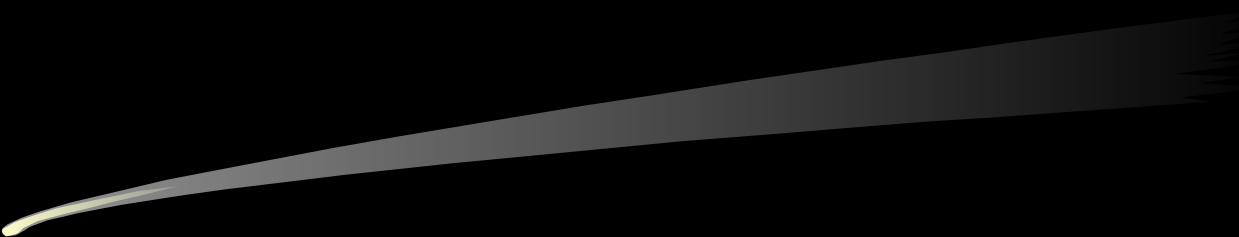
Life of Joseph

- Caravan of Ishmaelites go by (Gen. 37:25)
- Joseph in Pharaoh's prison (Gen. 39:20)
- Pharaoh angry at cupbearer and baker (Gen. 40:1-2)
- They land in the prison (Gen. 40:3)
- They land in Joseph's care (Gen. 40:4)
- The cupbearer forgets (Gen. 40:22)
- The cupbearer remembers (Gen. 40:9-13)



Life of Christ

- Death by crucifixion (John 18:32)
- Soldiers cast lots (John 19:24)
- No bone broken (John 19:33)
- Side pierced (John 19:34-37)



Thorough Control

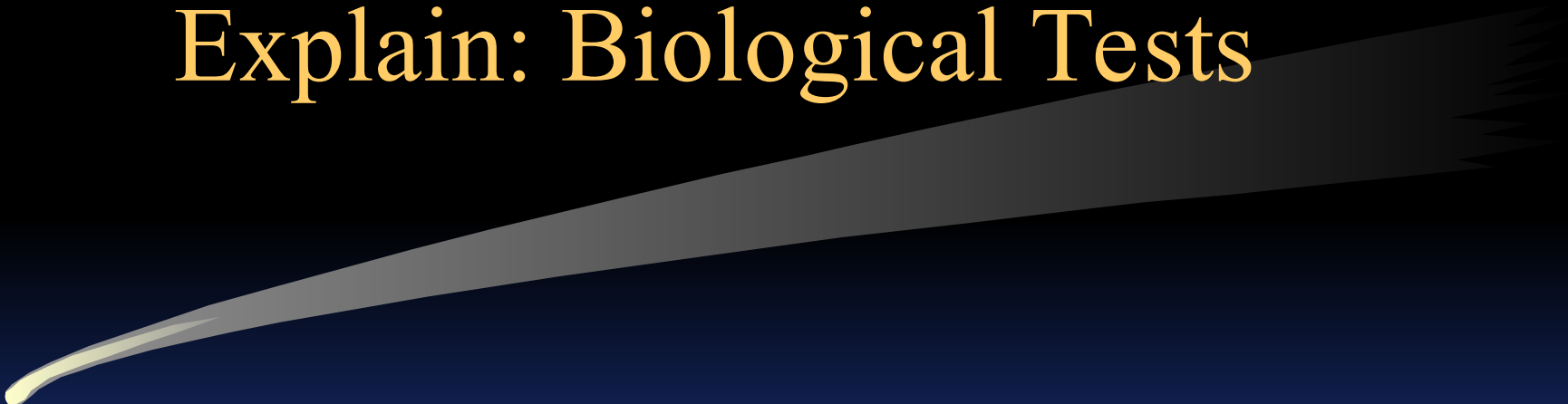
The lot is cast into the lap,
but its every decision is from the LORD.
– Proverbs 16:33

Compatibility with Human Responsibility

This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

– Acts 2:23

E. Why Chance Does Not Explain: Biological Tests



How likely mathematically?

Doug Axe, 1 in 10^{64} to get a new working protein fold.

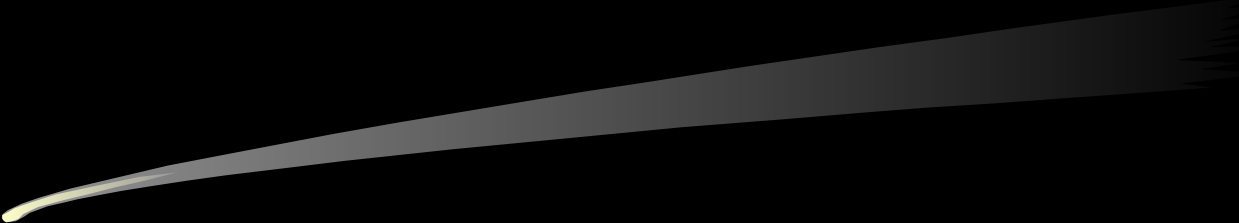
1 in 10,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,
000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,
000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000

A trillion times more difficult than hitting the head of a pin with a random throw of a dart
— from the other side of the Milky Way Galaxy

How Many Proteins to Start?¹

- 182 proteins in the simplest bacterium (*Carsonella ruddii*)
- 1,354 proteins in the simplest *free-living* organism (*Pelagibacter ubique*)
- What does it take to get 1,354 proteins from scratch?

¹Jay L. Wile, *Proslogion*, <http://blog.drwile.com/one-way-to-think-about-the-complexity-of-the-simplest-life-form/>



How likely experimentally?

- Try with generations of bacteria (E. coli)
- Try by mutating fruit flies
- Observe malaria parasite (billions in one human body)
- Observe HIV mutating

How likely philosophically?

- Plants and animals are here
- Therefore, they must have got here by some process, however unlikely
- It presupposes materialistic philosophy in the assumptions

Purpose in What Appears Random

- "Junk" DNA
- Alleged dysfunctional biological systems (human eye has blood vessels out front)
- Alternate genetic (DNA) codes
 - GUU, GUC, GUA, GUG all code for Valine
 - but may vary in production

H. Chance as a Substitute God



Second Definition of Chance

The assumed impersonal purposeless determiner
of unaccountable happenings: LUCK
– Merriam-Webster

Chance in Darwinism

- "Chance" describes what we cannot explain.
- "Luck" is just a word: "what we cannot explain explains it."

Chance as a substitute
for God

Quantum Mechanics

- Practical limitation in accuracy?
- Permanently unpredictable?
- By us?
- By God?
- No, by us. Proverbs 16:33.
- Does it make sense to give a man-based pronouncement about what we admit is beyond us?

I. Enjoying Design in Chance



Pascal's Triangle

1										
1										1
1									2	1
1								3	3	1
1							4	6	4	1
1						5	10	10	5	1
1					6	15	20	15	6	1
1				7	21	35	35	21	7	1
1			8	28	56	70	56	28	8	1
1		9	36	84	126	126	84	36	9	1
1	10	45	120	210	252	210	120	45	10	1

