

# Does Science Disprove Faith?

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## THE QUESTION

*“Science and faith have always been enemies. Just remember Galileo.”*

When Galileo argued that the earth moves, his opponents cited Joshua 10:12–13 (“Sun, stand still”) and Psalm 93:1 (“The world is established; it shall never be moved”). They read those texts through Aristotle’s picture of perfect, unchanging heavens.

## SIDE WITH GALILEO

God wrote two books, **Scripture** and **nature**. Rightly read, they cannot truly contradict. Galileo’s prosecutors and today’s secular critics make the same mistake: both assume faith and science must fight.

### IF SCIENCE HAS DEMONSTRATED IT

Revisit how we have interpreted Scripture.

### IF IT IS SPECULATION AGAINST SCRIPTURE

Hold to Scripture, and check the science again.

Galileo’s rule, borrowed from Augustine: *Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina* (1615)

*“Philosophy is written in this grand book, the universe ... It is written in the language of mathematics.”*

Galileo, *The Assayer* (1623)

## THREE TEST CASES FOR GALILEO’S METHOD

### 1 The Beginning

Does science leave room for a Creator?

### 2 Life

Did Darwin make a designer unnecessary?

### 3 The Universe

Pitiless indifference, or fine-tuned for life?

## 1 · The Beginning

**Can science explain everything?** Science explains events *within* nature by earlier natural causes. The Big Bang points to the beginning of nature itself, where there is no earlier natural cause. That is not a gap science will someday fill. It is the edge of science’s job.

**Objections to weigh:** “Scientists are working on what caused it.” “The universe is eternal.” “It’s just a brute fact.”

### THE COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

1. Whatever begins to exist has a cause.
2. The universe began to exist.
- ∴ **The universe has a cause.**

## 2 · Life

*“The old argument of design in nature, as given by Paley, which formerly seemed to me so conclusive, falls, now that the law of natural selection has been discovered.”*

Charles Darwin, *Autobiography*

### THE DESIGN ARGUMENT

- 1. Whatever is ordered to a purpose was designed.
- 2. Life is ordered to a purpose.
- ∴ Life was designed.

“Natural selection may explain the **survival** of the fittest, but it cannot explain the **arrival** of the fittest.”

Jacob Gould Schurman (1888), later made famous by Hugo de Vries

Selection filters what already exists. Variation within kinds, like finch beaks and bacterial resistance, is real and observed. The question is where the new things came from.

### WHERE THE EXPLANATION RUNS OUT

| Origin of life                                   | Self-reproduction                                               | Sexual reproduction                         | Cambrian explosion                      | Beyond the family level                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chemistry had to produce the first living thing. | Selection needs copying, so it cannot explain the first copier. | Two matching systems had to arise together. | Most animal body plans appear abruptly. | Change within kinds is observed; large-scale change is inferred. |

## 3 · The Universe

The laws and starting conditions of physics fall within extraordinarily narrow ranges that permit life. Two examples:

|                           |                                     |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Cosmological constant     | 1 in 10 <sup>120</sup>              |
| Initial entropy (Penrose) | 1 in 10 <sup>10<sup>123</sup></sup> |

**Natural selection needs things that reproduce.**  
**Universes don’t reproduce.**

*“A common sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a superintellect has monkeyed with physics ... The numbers one calculates from the facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put this conclusion almost beyond question.”*

Sir Fred Hoyle, astronomer, who coined the term “Big Bang”

### TAKEAWAYS

- Honest science strengthens faith rather than undermining it.
- Science has limits. Philosophy and theology speak where it cannot.
- We can be open to scientific results without fear of what we may find.

### FOR FURTHER READING

- John Lennox, *Can Science Explain Everything?*
- Stephen C. Meyer, *Return of the God Hypothesis*
- Nancy Pearcey & Charles Thaxton, *The Soul of Science*
- Lee Strobel, *The Case for a Creator*
- Galileo, *Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina* (free online)