

# Christianity and Science Part One: Christian Foundations of Modern Science

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**PROCLAMATION**  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

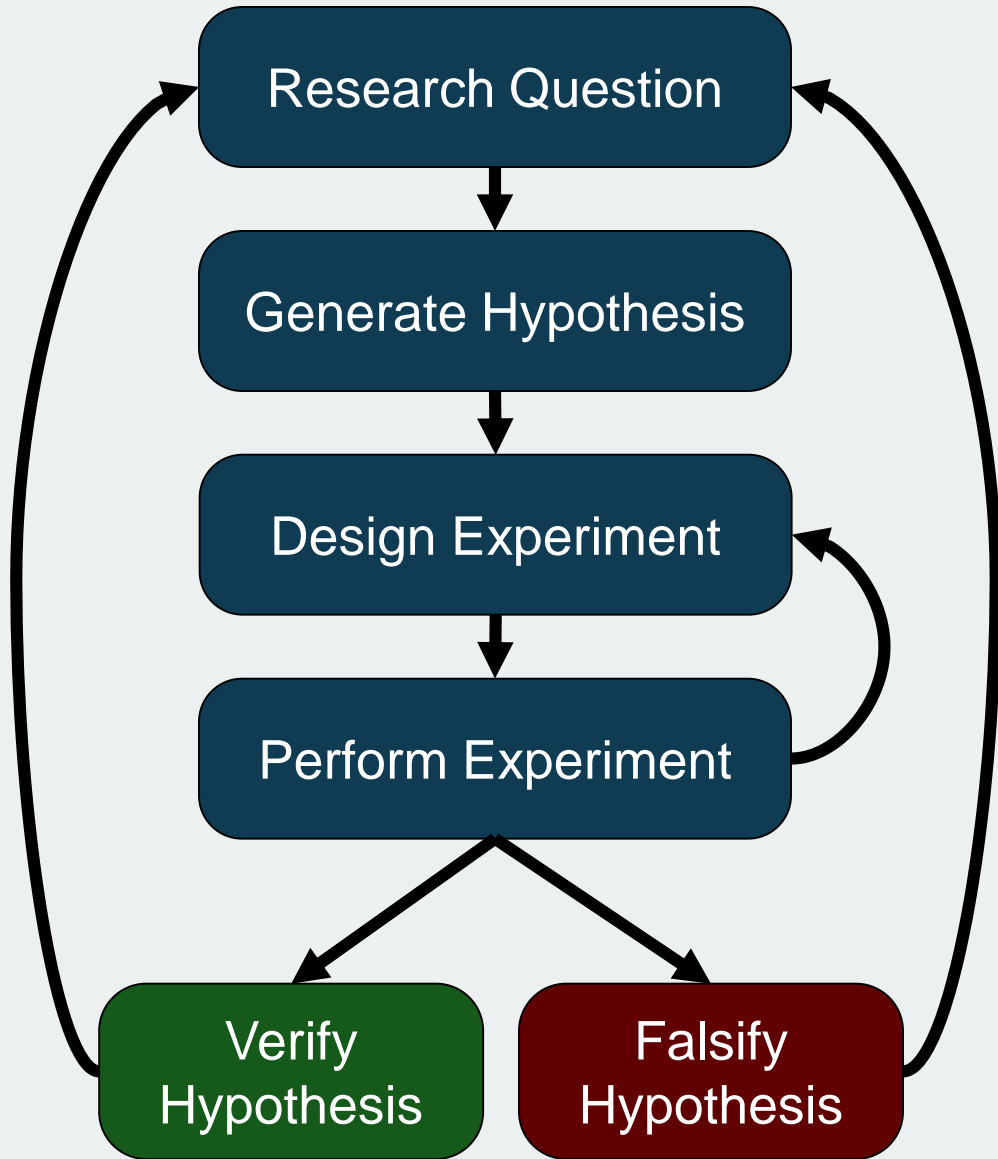
# Definitions - What is Science?

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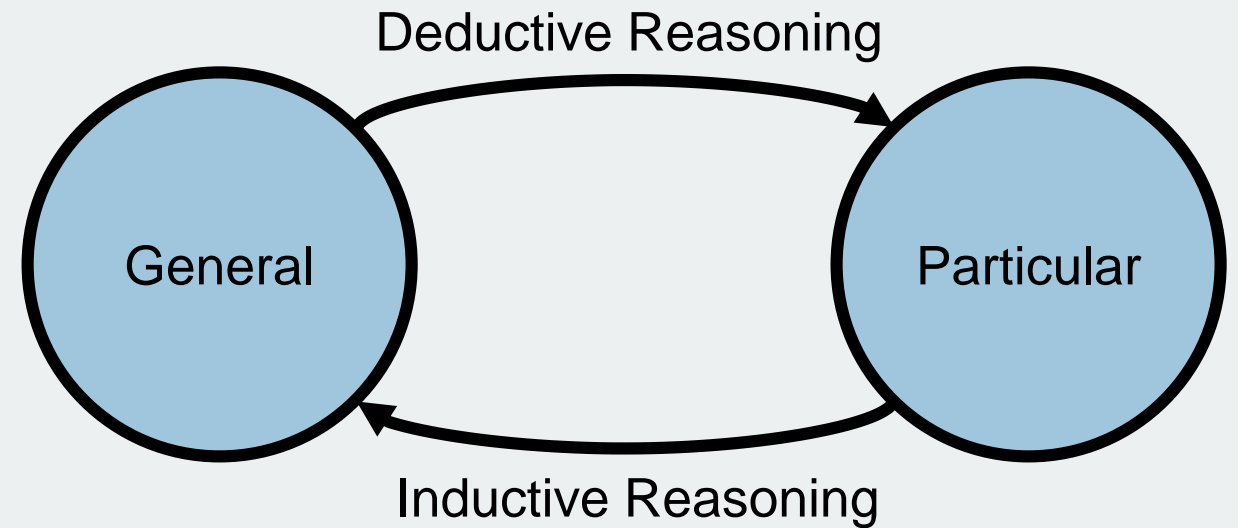
**Oxford Languages Definition:** the systematic study of the structure and behavior of the physical and natural world through observation, experimentation, and the testing of theories against the evidence obtained

**Possible Broader Definition:** a systematized body of knowledge

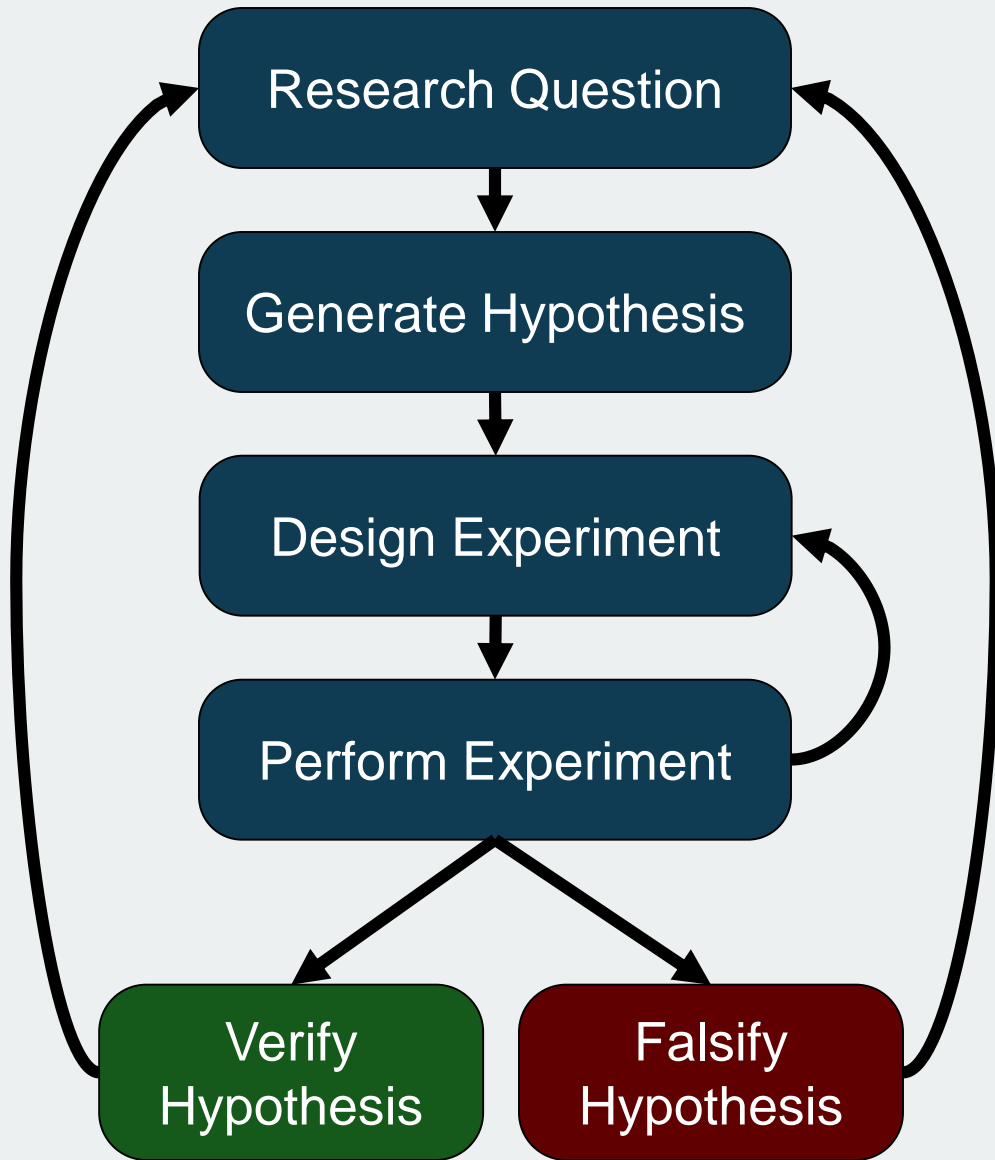
# The Scientific Method



Science is objective???



# The Scientific Method: Problem of Induction

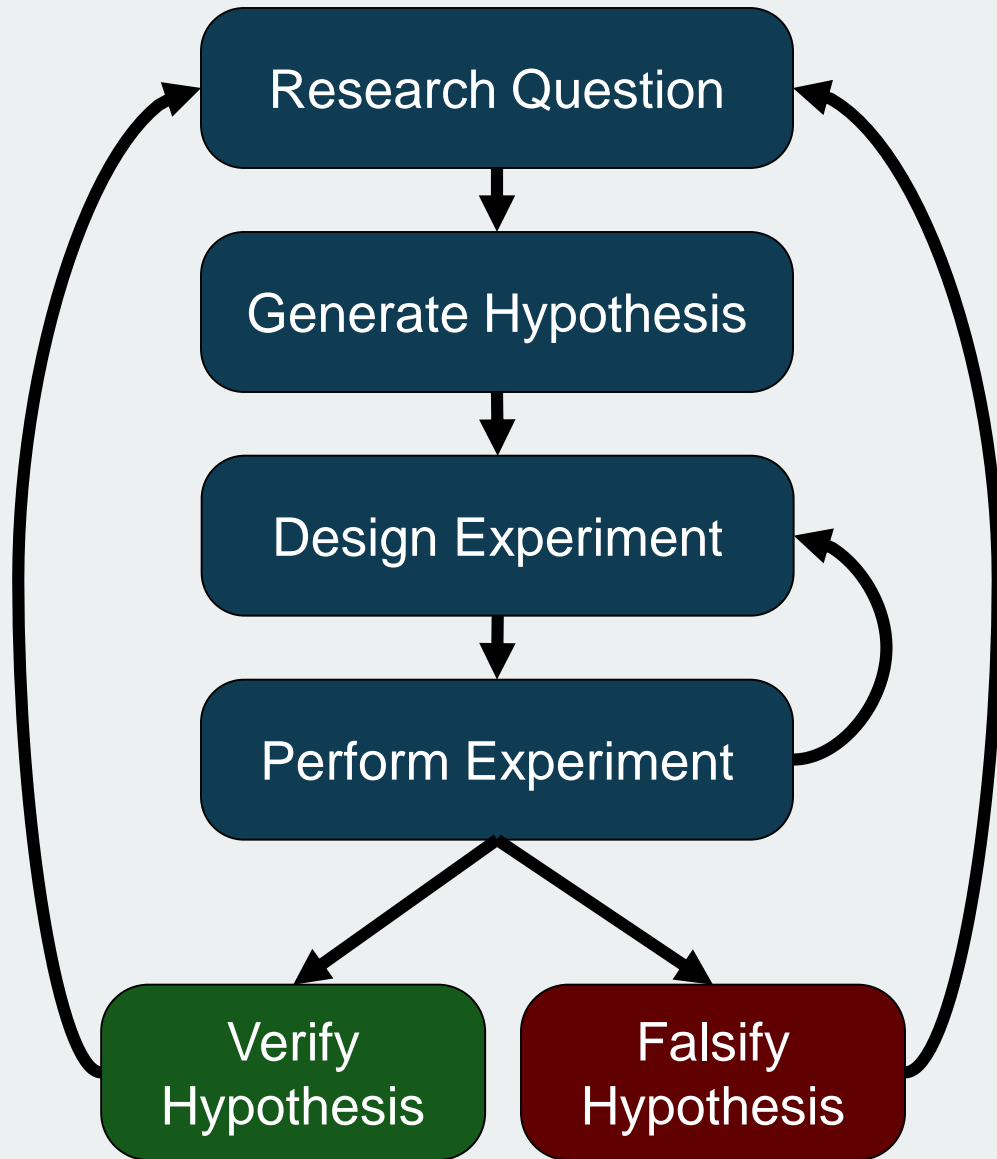


## The Problem of Induction

- ◆ Inductive reasoning alone is unable to prove anything without *a priori* assumptions
- ◆ “...not only our reason fails us in the discovery of the ultimate connection of causes and effects, but even after experience has informed us of their constant conjunction, it is impossible for us to satisfy ourselves by our reason, why we should extend that experience beyond those particular instances, which have fallen under our observation.”

David Hume

# The Scientific Method: Philosophical Assumptions



## **Nature is ordered and uniform**

- ◆ Natural laws apply in all places
- ◆ Natural laws apply at all times
- ◆ Nature has a rational order

## **Nature exists and is real**

- ◆ What we experience has true existence

## **Nature is discoverable**

- ◆ Human senses are reliable
- ◆ The human mind can comprehend nature

*Christian theism provides the only foundation for these assumptions by asserting that God created rational man in his image with the faculties to understand his creation that he upholds and governs*



# Context of the Scientific Revolution

- ◆ “Let us begin from God, and show that our pursuit from its exceeding goodness clearly proceeds from him, the Author of good and Father of light.”  
Francis Bacon
- ◆ “The laws of nature are written by the hand of God in the language of mathematics.”  
Galileo Galilei
- ◆ “God would not have made the universe as it is unless He intended us to understand it.”  
Robert Boyle
- ◆ “The chief aim of all investigations of the external world should be to discover the rational order and harmony which has been imposed on it by God.”  
Johannes Kepler
- ◆ “Gravity explains the motions of the planets, but it cannot explain who sets the planets in motion.”  
Isaac Newton

# The Protestant Reformation and the Scientific Revolution

## Noetic Effects of Sin

- ◆ Human reason was impaired by the fall and needs external evidence to make sense of the physical world
- ◆ “To explain nature is too difficult a task for any one man or even any one age.”

Isaac Newton

## Work Ethic and Vocation

- ◆ Recognition of the importance and value of non-clerical work and an active life
- ◆ “I wished to be a theologian; for a long time I was troubled, but now I see how God is also praised through my work in astronomy.”

Johannes Kepler

## Away with Allegory

- ◆ Interpreting creation on its own terms, instead of as a puzzle for obscured truth
- ◆ “No longer a ‘book’ replete with symbolic objects bearing hidden theological meanings that could be revealed through contemplation and allegorical interpretation, it became instead a material resource to be exploited and mastered for human benefit.”

Peter Harrison

# Models of Science and Religion

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# Models of Science and Religion: Positivism

**Meaningful**



**Meaningless**



# Models of Science and Religion: Scientism



**Trumps**



# Models of Science and Religion: Dichotomy

**Fact**



**Value**



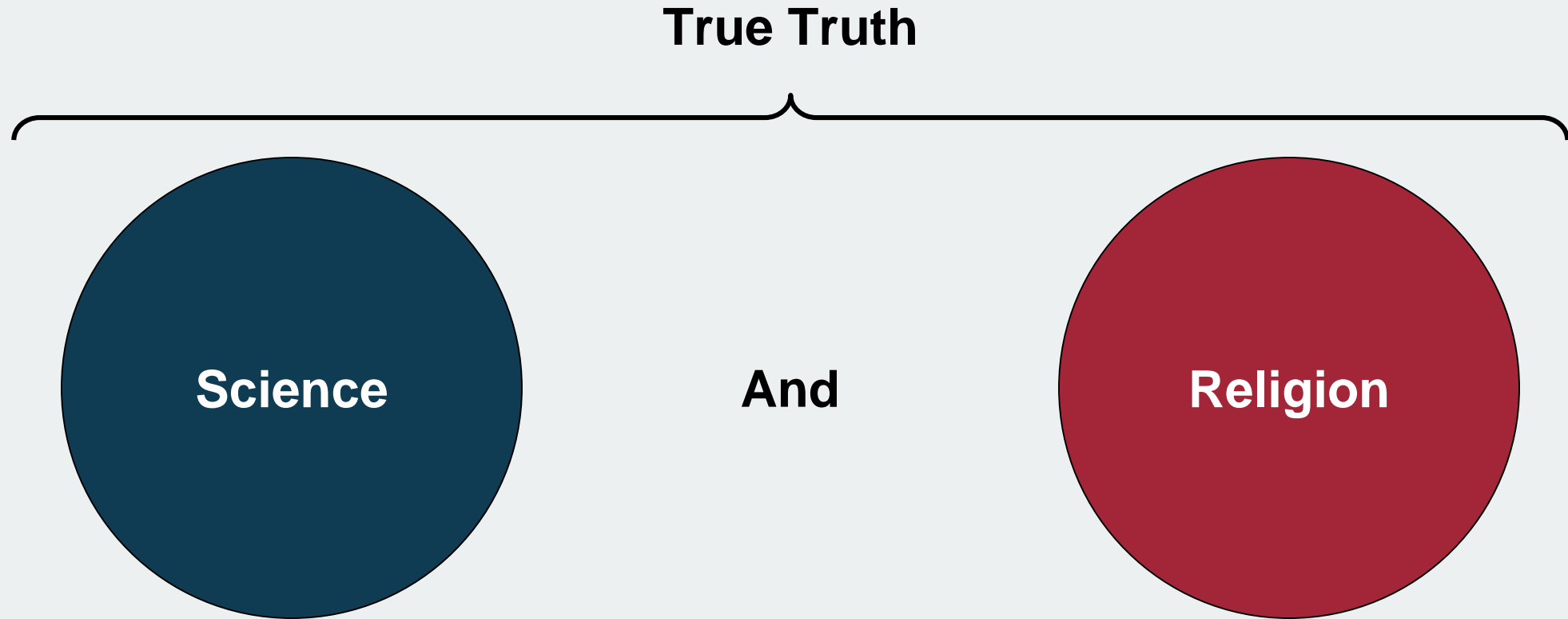
# Models of Science and Religion: Conflict



Or



# Models of Science and Religion: Truth



# Why Christians Should Care About Science

<b>Glorify God</b>	<b>Glorify man</b>
Display God's handiwork in creation	Demonstrate man's own ingenuity
Obey the cultural mandate as vice-regents	Establish the kingdom of man
Love our neighbor	Oppress our neighbor
Defend the faith	Debunk the faith

# King David the Astronomer vs. The Masons of Babel

## Psalm 8

*To the choirmaster: according to The Gittith. A Psalm of David.*

<sup>1</sup>O LORD, our Lord,  
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory above the heavens.

<sup>2</sup>Out of the mouth of babies and infants,  
you have established strength because of your foes,  
to still the enemy and the avenger.

<sup>3</sup>**When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,**

<sup>4</sup>**what is man that you are mindful of him,  
and the son of man that you care for him?**

<sup>5</sup>Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings  
and crowned him with glory and honor.

<sup>6</sup>**You have given him dominion over the works of your hands;**  
you have put all things under his feet,

<sup>7</sup>all sheep and oxen,  
and also the beasts of the field,

<sup>8</sup>the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea,  
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.

<sup>9</sup>O LORD, our Lord,  
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

## Genesis 11:1-4

<sup>1</sup>Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. <sup>2</sup>And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. <sup>3</sup>And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. <sup>4</sup>Then they said, "Come, **let us build ourselves a city** and a tower with its top in the heavens, and **let us make a name for ourselves**, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth."



# Christian Foundations: Summary

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- 1. The philosophical assumptions of science can only be accounted for from a Christian worldview**
- 2. Modern science developed within a distinctively Christian context**
- 3. True scientific and religious claims are both parts of a single system of knowledge that has its origin in God**
- 4. It is important for Christians to understand and engage in scientific endeavors and to glorify God in doing so**