

Are religion and science in conflict?



Old Testament story of Creation

- The story of Creation is found in Genesis 1:1 – 2:3. It says that God made the world from nothing in six days and that he rested on the seventh day.
- Understanding the genre of writing of Genesis might change how we interpret it.
- It could be read as a poem expressing worship and wonder or as an allegorical story.
- **Very few Christians** see Genesis as a literal, historical account of the creation of the world.

Religious and scientific theories about ‘creation’

Religious and philosophical arguments	Scientific theories based on evidence
The first cause • Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274) a Christian priest, philosopher and theologian.	The “Big Bang theory” (1927) • George Lemaitre (1894-1966) a Christian priest and astronomer.
Intelligent Design Argument • Socrates (470-399 BC), ancient Greek philosopher.	Theory of natural selection and evolution • Charles Darwin (1809-1882) a Christian theologian and a scientist.
Watchmaker Analogy • William Paley (1745-1805), a Christian philosopher.	

Pope Francis (1936-2025)



As the world leader of the Catholic Church from 2013-2025, Pope Francis reconciled his religious faith in God as creator with scientific explanations for the origins of the world. He did not see a conflict between his religious beliefs and science

Key vocabulary

- **accurate:** correct in all details
- **allegory:** form of art or writing with a hidden meaning
- **analogy:** comparison between two things in order to explain an idea
- **conflict:** a serious disagreement
- **creationism:** religious belief that the universe originates from a divine (Godly) act of creation
- **evolution:** process where organisms (animals and plants for example) change over very long periods of time
- **Genesis:** first book of the Old Testament from Greek meaning origin or source
- **theology:** the study of God, religion and belief
- **theologian:** a person who studies God, religion and belief




Are religion and science in conflict?



Old Testament story of Creation

- The story of Creation is found in Genesis 1:1 - 2:3. It says that God made the world from nothing in six days and that he rested on the seventh day.
- Understanding the genre of writing of Genesis might change how we interpret it.
- It could be read as a poem expressing worship and wonder or as an allegorical story.
- **Very few Christians** see Genesis as a literal, historical account of the creation of the world.

Religious and scientific theories about ‘creation’

Religious and philosophical arguments	Scientific theories based on evidence
<p>The first cause</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274) a Christian priest, philosopher and theologian.• He claimed every effect can be traced back to a cause.• Believed this was a strong argument for the existence of God: if everything has a cause, then something must have been the first cause. The first cause has no beginning, it just is.• Aquinas believed that first cause was God. <div><p>Many Christians today believe that God was the 'first cause' and caused the Big Bang.</p></div>	<p>The “Big Bang theory”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In 1927, Christian astronomer George Lemaitre suggested the universe began as a single, very hot point and began expanding.• Gradually, over 13.7 billion years, stars, galaxies and planets formed.• The theory was first jokingly referred to as the “Big Bang Theory”, but the name stuck!
<p>Intelligent Design Argument</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• First associated with Greek philosopher, Socrates (470-399 BC),• Says our complex world looks like it has been designed, and what is designed must have a designer and that must be God.	<p>Theory of natural selection and evolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Charles Darwin’s (1809-1882) theory showed that life on Earth did not have a creator; lifeforms change and evolve due to natural processes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• William Paley (1745-1805), was a Christian philosopher who used the Watchmaker Analogy to explain the design argument• Paley did not have the scientific understanding and evidence that we have today.	<p>(He was a Christian theologian and a scientist).</p>
<p>Pope Francis (1936-2025) As the world leader of the Catholic Church from 2013-2025, Pope Francis reconciled his religious faith in God as creator with scientific explanations for the origins of the world. He did not see a conflict between his religious beliefs and science</p>	

Key vocabulary

- **accurate:** correct in all details
- **allegory:** form of art or writing with a hidden meaning
- **analogy:** comparison between two things in order to explain an idea
- **conflict:** a serious disagreement
- **creationism:** religious belief that the universe originates from a divine (Godly) act of creation
- **evolution:** process where organisms (animals and plants for example) change over very long periods of time
- **Genesis:** first book of the Old Testament from Greek meaning origin or source
- **theology:** the study of God, religion and belief
- **theologian:** a person who studies God, religion and belief

