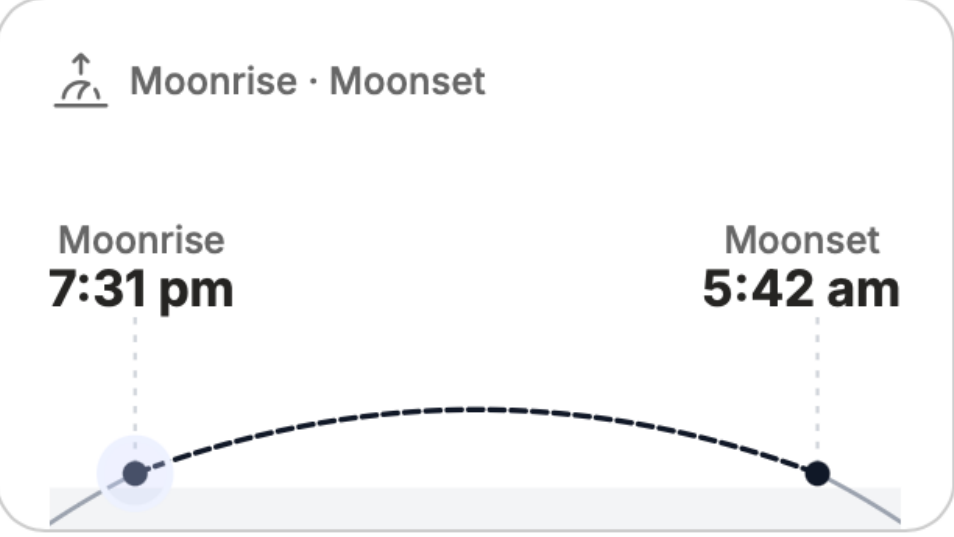
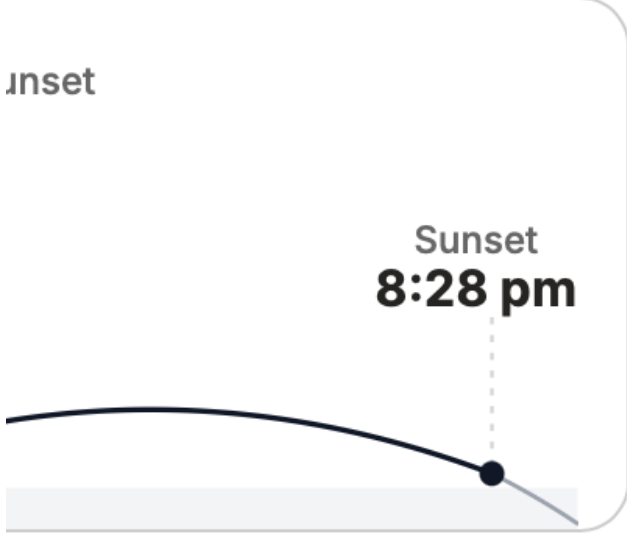
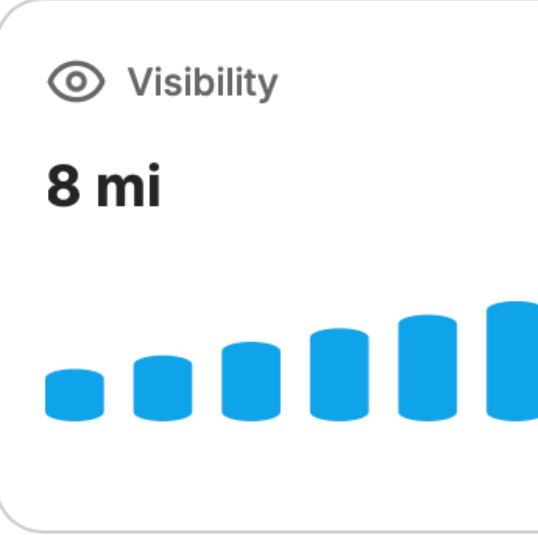
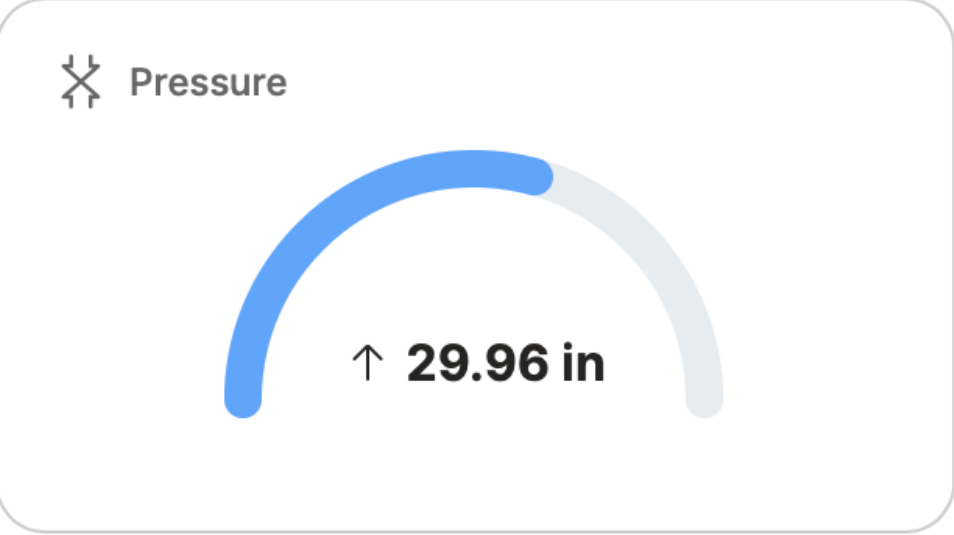
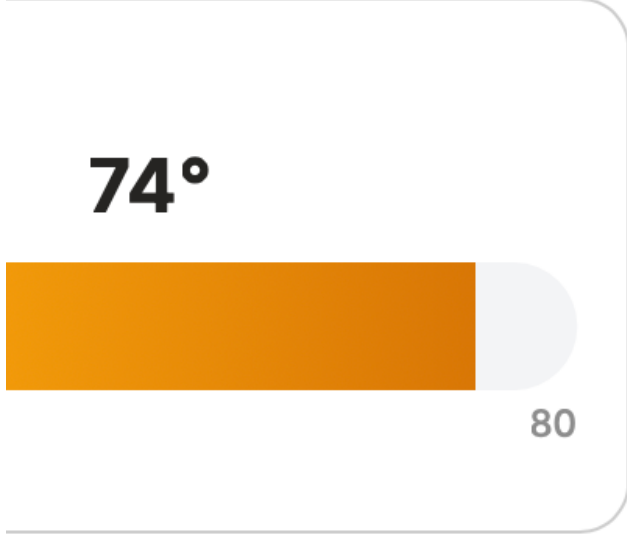
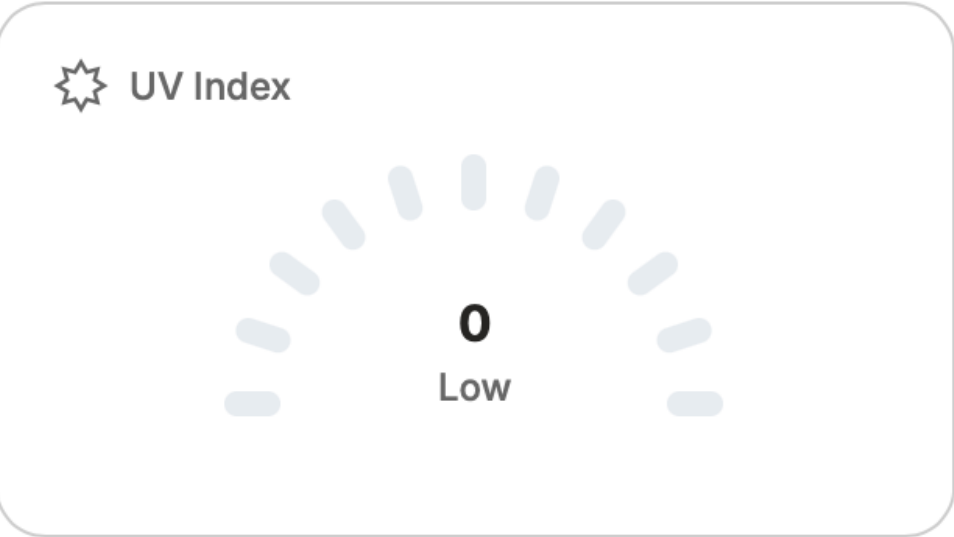
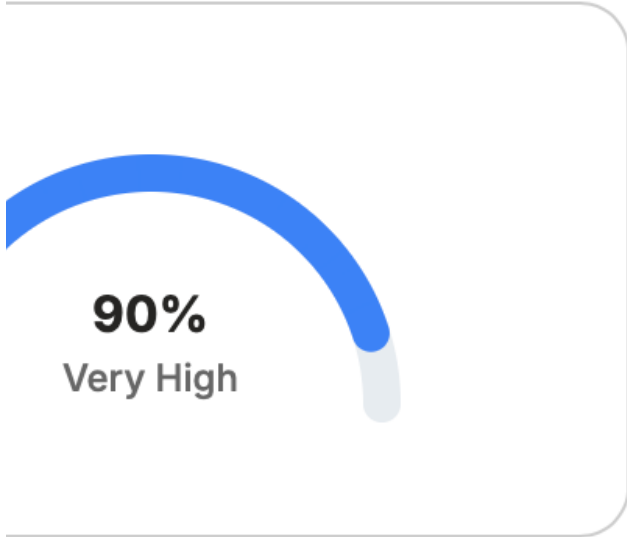
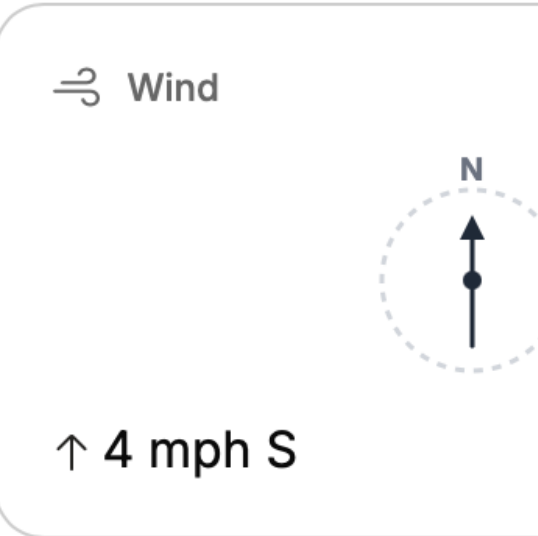
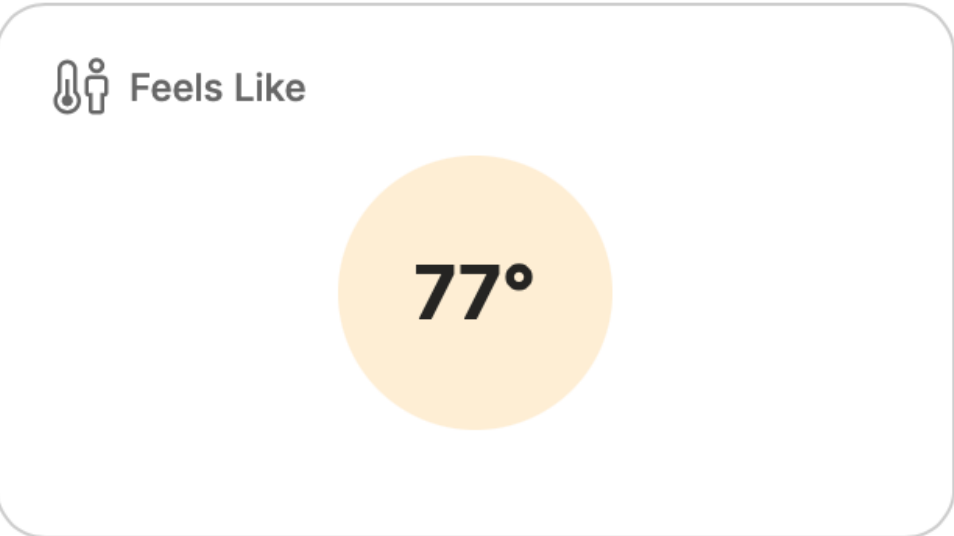
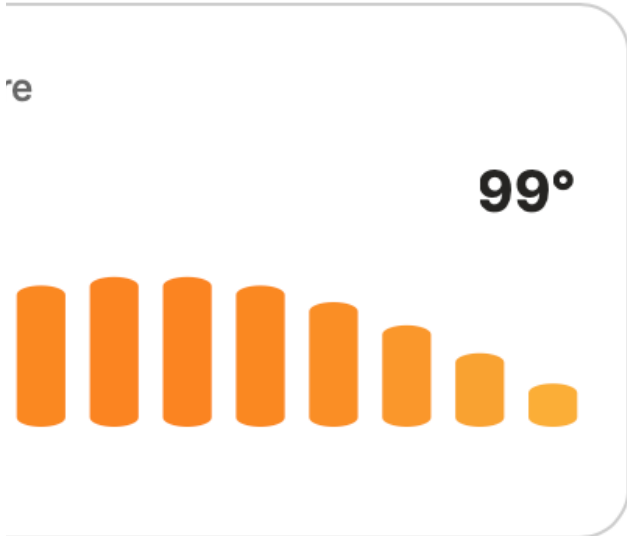


Science and Religion

Common Ground

If I tell you the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, will you agree?

Back in the day, we used to dial phone numbers. And in this context, “the day” means a time period of appropriate length.



People do a lot of arguing about science and religion, but a lot of those arguments are based on nitpicking over what somebody said. I would like to see us all do more listening and less nitpicking. We have more in common than you might think.



Science and religion both have the goal of making life better for people. Some people might disagree, such as victims of the atomic bomb or the Spanish Inquisition.



But overall, our life today is amazingly better than the way people lived in the ancient world.



Both science and religion are based on some kind of faith in eternal truth. In science, we start with the belief that all physical phenomena follow the same laws of nature, so we can discover those laws and use them. There are many varieties of religion in the world, but all include a divine source of morality and purpose in life.

Faith:

The Universe has
consistent laws of Nature.

There is a divine source of
morality and life purpose.

Progress in science is something we expect to hear about in the news every day. Progress in religion is not so much expected, but it does happen.

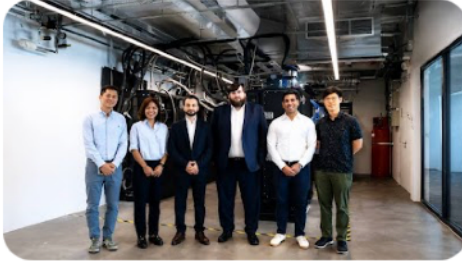
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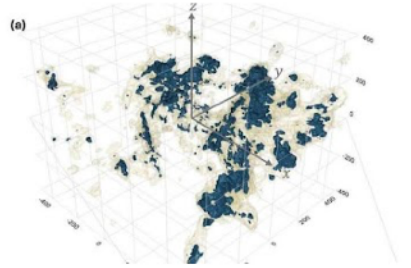
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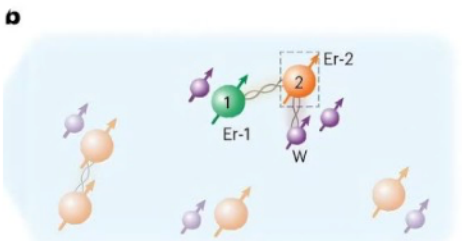
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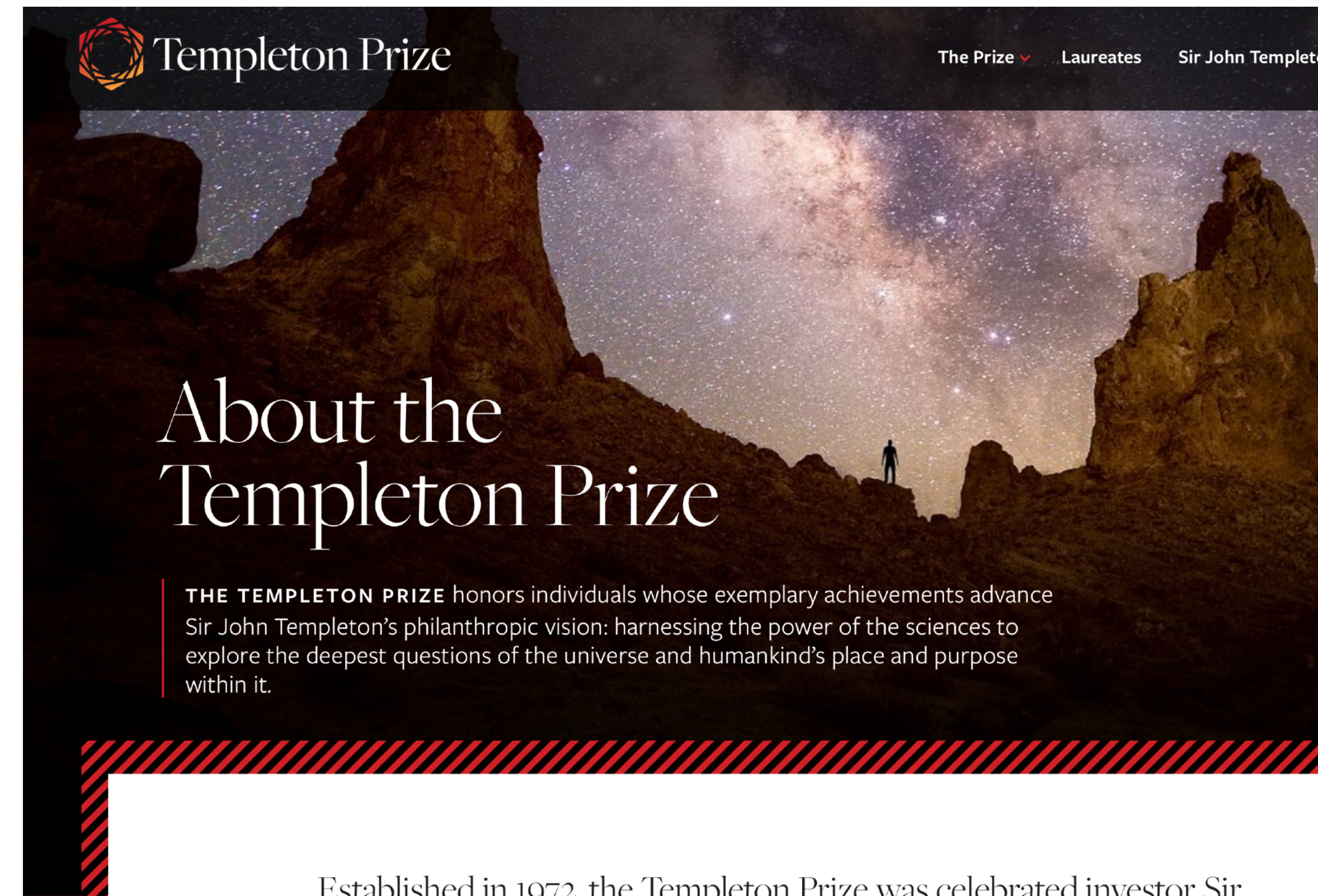
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Years back, I was happy to see that several physicists won the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion. Today the name has been shortened to just Templeton Prize, but its mission is the same.



If my grandmother could watch this video, she would object that there can't be any progress in religion, because God's revelation ended with the book of Revelation in the Bible. Well, she lived in a time when she had to work very hard "to keep body and soul together", as she put it. I always thought it was an odd theory, that God revealed the Bible to many generations of prophets in the Old Testament, and then Jesus Christ came as the Son of God to reveal a lot more truth, and then the revelations continued to just a few more people.

Most of the New Testament was written by the Apostle Paul and a few others, after the death of Christ. Now if theology told me God's revelations ended with the sermons of Christ, who was the incarnation of God, I would consider that a reasonable possibility. But no, some Christians tell me God continued adding revelations for a short time and then cut off progress for all future generations. For me, this makes no sense.

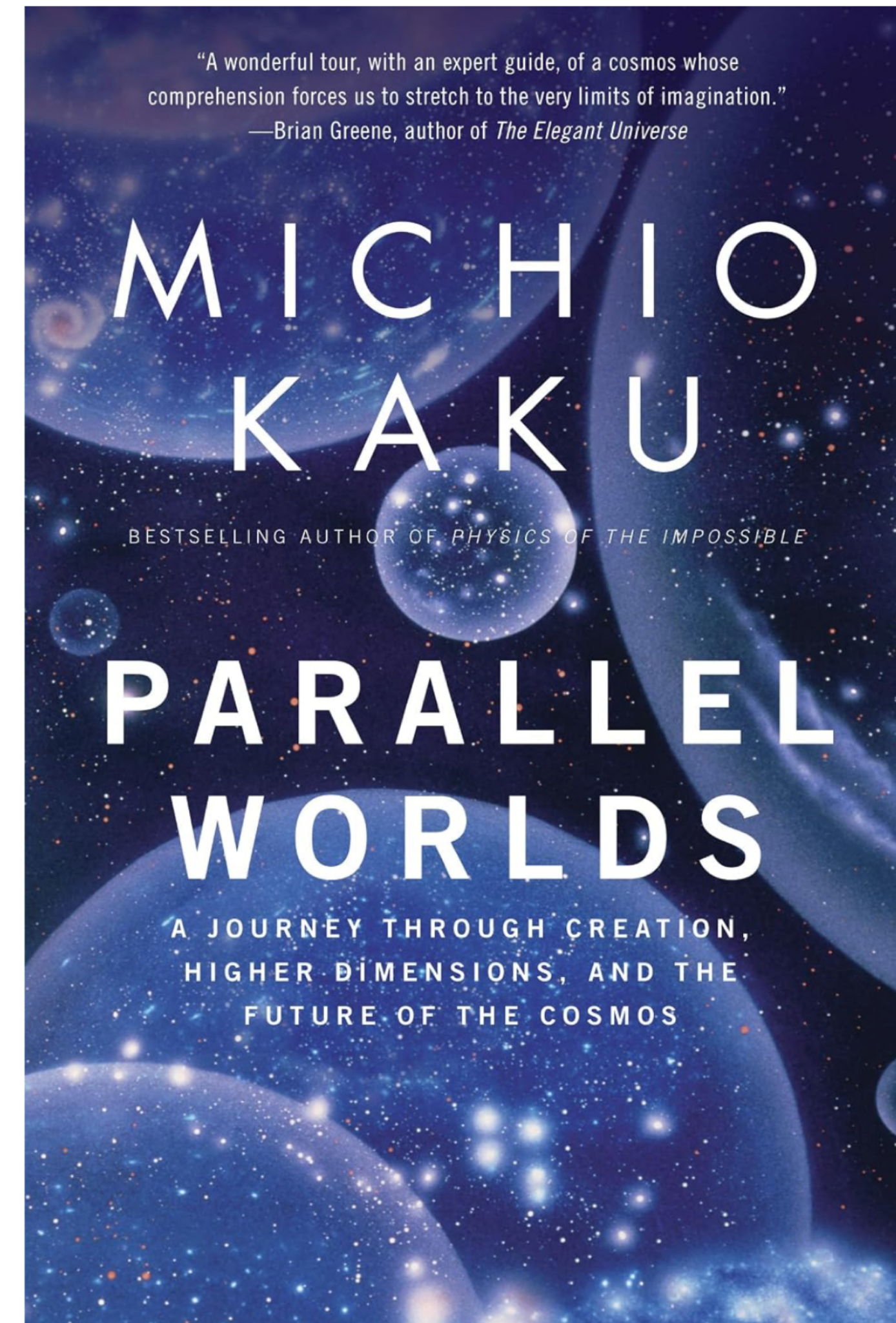
Scientists and religious people are both people, and people are not perfect. Now there are some scientists who are also religious, notably John Polkinghorne, who has written numerous books. So I don't want to suggest that all scientists are atheists, but a lot are.



Results
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People can behave in contradictory ways. As an example for scientists, we are supposed to be neutral about ideas which are beyond our current ability to test. When a scientist writes there may be an infinite number of parallel universes, other scientists say, “Yes, very interesting idea!”



But when a priest says there is one parallel universe where God lives, a lot of scientists will say that's a silly superstition.



As an example from religion people, the Bible tells us not to judge other people. Many Christians claim they follow the Bible, but they want to throw other people in prison for abortion or homosexual relations, or teaching the theory of biological evolution to children.



It's easy to understand people want to protect their own interests. Nobody likes to hear "I'm right and you're wrong."



Nobody wants the police taking
somebody else's side in a
philosophical conflict.

Well, conflicts are what make the
headlines.



But most of the time, we actually like other people.



And we're all curious about
what kind of world we live in.
As we explore the unknown,
from our own backyards to
the depths of space, the
journey can be more
interesting with people who
have different viewpoints.