

## Facts Up, Fuzz Up

One thing that the teacher of these lessons, Dr. Richard Pratt, often tells his classroom students is that the serious study of theology involves something he likes to call “Facts Up, Fuzz Up.” It’s his way of letting the students know what to expect as they embark on a serious study of theology, perhaps for the first time in their lives — and this is an appropriate point to discuss it, before we get too far along.

As an example of what we’re talking about, I recall learning about atoms and molecules for the first time when I was in grade school. I can remember very clearly the illustration in the book of what an atom was supposed to “look” like: a perfect sphere in the center called the “nucleus,” being orbited by smaller perfect spheres called “electrons.” It was a very simple picture and it gave me a good idea of what atoms and molecules were like.

At least I thought so at the time. As I got older I learned more about atoms. The perfect sphere of the nucleus was replaced with a collection of smaller spheres called “protons” and “neutrons.” And then I found out that those electrons didn’t have those precise and regular orbits. They were jumping all over the place, not only circling wildly around the nucleus, but ascending and descending from one “electron shell” to another. And when I studied Chemistry and Physics in college, the original picture was still more indistinct. By the time I learned the rudiments of Quantum Mechanics, my “picture” of an atom could only be described as a big blur. While I know far more about atoms and molecules than I did as a child, my original picture has been replaced with a very “fuzzy” rendering.

As you proceed through these lessons, there’s a very good chance (unless you’ve been doing this seriously for a very long time) that you will have the same experience in your understanding of Christian Theology. You will (hopefully!) know far more than when you started, but the many clear and distinct notions of Christianity that you once had will likely be replaced with this “fuzzy” rendition. This can be somewhat disconcerting for believers, young and mature alike, but you can also see it as an encouraging sign that the teachings in these lessons are beginning to take root. As this process takes place, continue to pray for understanding, patience and humility as the Holy Spirit uses his Word, along with these lessons, in guiding you to a greater understanding of His truth.