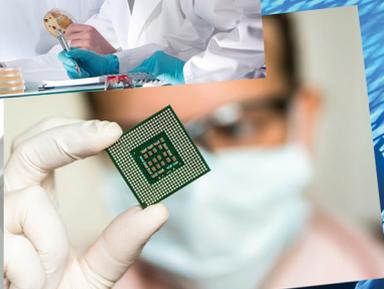


DOES GOD EXIST?

May/June 2016
Volume 43 Number 3

A nonprofit effort
to convince mankind
that God is real and
the Bible is His Word.



Science and Faith: Conflict and Harmony

Does God Exist? Lectureships

No lectures are scheduled for the next several months. Please check our website, www.doesgodexist.org for our up-to-date lecture schedule. You can always find John's lectures on-line at www.doesgodexist.tv or via our catalog page at <http://www.doesgodexist.org/Catalog/Catalog-DGE-DVDs.html> with links to those files.

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Correspondence should be addressed to John Clayton
1555 Echo Valley Dr., Niles, MI 49120-8738
e-mail: jncdge@aol.com

Home phone: 269-687-9426 FAX: 269-687-9431

Does God Exist? websites: <http://www.doesgodexist.org>;
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Send subscription requests, orders, or address changes to:

Does God Exist?, PO Box 2704, South Bend, IN 46680-2704
Phone: 574-514-1400 or by e-mail: marcusen@michiana.org

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SCIENCE AND FAITH: CONFLICT AND HARMONY

Numerous writers have made strong statements describing Christianity as the fountainhead of modern science. Equally strong statements have been made by numerous writers calling Christianity the greatest opponent of scientific progress. There is great inconsistency in both of these viewpoints if for no other reason than the fact that not everyone interprets “Christianity” the same way. The name “Christian” is a label applied to the followers of Jesus for the first time at Antioch (Acts 11:26) well after the church had been established. The word literally means “belonging to Christ” (*Young’s Analytical Concordance*). It had nothing to do with any denomination but was applied to individuals.

Thirteenth-century theologian Thomas Aquinas and his contemporaries taught that God was separate from the world and that experience was necessary to discover what God had done in creation. The view maintained that there were two great books which came from God—knowledge from Scripture and knowledge about the physical world. At the time of the Reformation a movement away from this idea culminated in Francis Bacon’s *Novum Organum* written in 1620. Bacon insisted that gathering facts through experimentation was the way to get a true picture of the world. The Reformation also prompted the claim that the Scriptures should be read in a “literal” way. That led to the view that the Scriptures should be studied first for what they described historically and for their connection to Christ. This meant that all science had to fit into the theologians’ interpretation



of what the scripture said. In today's world "literal" has many different meanings. Some attach "literal" to a particular translation or a particular denominational interpretation and want to filter science through denominational teachings. There are others who want science to tell us how to interpret Scripture.

Roman Catholicism produced great scientists and great scientific breakthroughs in the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries. Copernicus, a Roman Catholic, gave us the heliocentric view that the planets orbit the Sun rather than everything orbiting the Earth. Martin Luther and John Calvin denounced this view as heretical because they believed this was not taking the Bible literally. As leading Protestant theologians of their day, these two men viewed science as unrelated to Scripture or faith while major scientists at the time credited God with their understandings and discoveries. Johannes Kepler, a Lutheran, credited God with his understanding of the motions of the planets. When the Royal Society was established in 1660 there were many Puritans who were part of the formation of this auspicious scientific organization. Isaac Newton, one of the greatest scientists of all time, spent more time studying the apocalyptic books of the Bible than he did doing scientific investigations.

When Charles Darwin came on the scene with his *Origin of the Species* in 1859, there were numerous social and political issues with religious implications. Mark Noll of the University of Notre Dame has written, "Conservative white Protestants in the American South mostly opposed evolution, because it undercut the biblical literalism that had provided their defense for slavery" ("The History of Science and Christianity," *When God and Science Meet*, ©

2015, NAE Publishers, page 14). In modern times we have seen evolution opposed for similar reasons. As far back as 1860 we see theologians like Asa Gray of Harvard promoting evolution as the method by which God accomplished the creation. Others have made similar statements since then. Opponents of evolution have focused on issues like the age of the earth and dispensational doctrines rather than what Scripture actually says. The media have interpreted opposition to evolutionary theory



as opposition to science as a whole. Many conservative Christian writers and speakers have left the impression that science is an enemy of faith, and any attempt at reconciling science and faith is viewed as compromising and weakening faith.



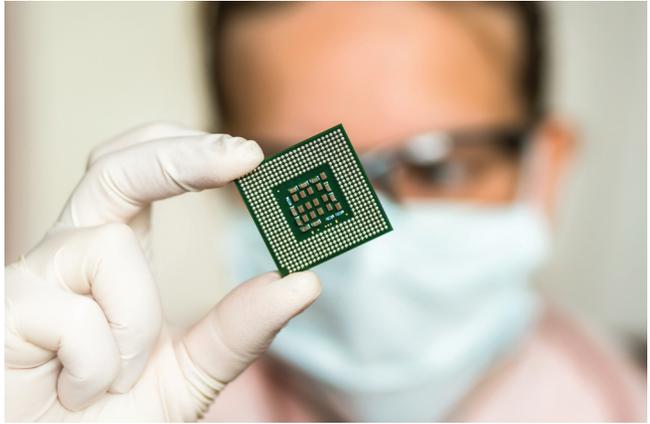
If we listen to what the Bible says about science and faith, we will understand that true science and biblical faith **MUST** be in harmony because they have the same author—God. Webster’s dictionary defines science as “knowledge” and points out that the word comes from the Latin “*sciens*, meaning to know.” The word “science” in the King James Bible is used once in the Old Testament and once in the New Testament. In Daniel 1:4 it is from the Hebrew *madda*, meaning knowledge. In 1 Timothy 6:20 it is from the Greek word *gnosis*, meaning to know.

Both science and theology need wisdom. Proverbs 8 is a fascinating chapter written by “Wisdom.” In verse 12 (KJV) wisdom says, “I, wisdom dwell with prudence, and find out knowledge of witty inventions.” Starting in verse 22 wisdom tells us that God possessed me in the beginnings of his way, before his works of old. “I was formed long ages ago, at the very beginning, when the world came to be.” Wisdom then describes critical elements of the creation of the earth and ends with “For those who find me find life and receive favor from the LORD” (verse 35).

Psalm 19 begins by stating, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the skies proclaim the work of his hands.” Psalm 139:14 speaks of the intricacies of the human body and moves on to praise God for what can be seen in how our bodies are made. Proverbs 6:6–8 tells the indolent to study the ant and see how its life processes can bring them to wisdom. To bring Job into an understanding of how he needs to change his thinking, God uses science to challenge him. In chapters 38 and 39 scientific challenge after scientific challenge are given to Job. We are still struggling with many of those challenges today. Jesus challenged people to look and learn from the flowers in Matthew 6:28. Romans 1:19–20 calls us to know God is real by looking at the creation around us.



The conflict between science and faith always has been and continues to be a battle between humans on both sides of the conflict who put their personal agenda above what is real. It is preachers versus scientists, not science versus faith. It is bad science and bad theology in the minds of misguided human beings that create the conflict. Not only is this stated by seeking people on both sides of the issue, but it is also stated in 1 Timothy 6:20–21, “... Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge, which some have professed and in so doing have departed from the faith.”



The purpose of the **Does God Exist?** ministry is to plead with people of science and people of faith not to view their disciplines as enemies of the other. Our articles and materials seek understanding and reconciliation. That does not mean we know it all or that there are not some conflicts that need to be resolved. Galileo was a scientist and a Christian who got into trouble for showing that science indicated things that were contrary to official religious doctrines of his day.



In a letter defending himself he wrote, “The Bible shows the way to go to heaven, not the way the heavens go.”

Wisdom is critical to both science and faith, but our attitude toward science and

faith determines how we apply the knowledge available to us. The more we know of the creation, the closer we get to the Creator.

—John N. Clayton

THE WISDOM OF GOD IN STRATIGRAPHY



We are standing at the end of the observation deck at Desert View, looking into the depths of the Grand Canyon. As the picture shows, the view is incredible. This is our 26th trip we call the “Canyonlands Tour” where we take people into the canyons of Arizona and Utah and show them the beauty in God’s creation. We try to help them understand how the things they see support the existence of God and the Bible as his Word. Looking into the canyon we see the various layers of rock with each layer having a different set of properties. The study of those layers is called stratigraphy and their design is what allows us to live on this planet.

Our trips always begin with an introduction to petrology—the study of rocks. In Proverbs 8 “wisdom” speaks about God’s creation and wisdom’s role in it. “I was formed long ages ago, at the very beginning, when the world came to be. . . . before the mountains were settled in place, before the hills, . . . before he made the world or its fields or any of the dust of the earth” (verses 23–26). The materials that make up the layers (strata) of the earth all came from the original molten material that made up the original earth. From molten materials like granite, came the red orthoclase material that weathers out of granite quickly producing clay. Other feldspars-containing vital elements like iron, magnesium, calcium, and potassium came out of the granite, leaving quartz behind. The quartz became sand and the other elements became soil, limestone, and all the other materials we see in strata today.





As we stand on the edge of the canyon we can easily see the alternating layers of sandstone (made out of quartz), shale (made out of mud), conglomerate (made out of gravel), and limestone (a chemically precipitated rock made slowly in an area of quiet water). Deep within the canyon we see layers tilted at a high angle indicating catastrophic geologic activity. Below that we see rocks that have been altered by heat and pressure. At the very bottom we see the original volcanic rock from which all of this was formed called the Zoroaster granite. Walking into the canyon through all of this, many other lessons become clear. The Coconino sandstone is clearly a layer produced by sand dunes that were caused by wind. We see other sandstones that are clearly water-deposited. Minerals containing iron have stained some layers, so the “Redwall limestone” is actually white, but was stained by iron oxide leaching from layers above it.

There are religious people, whose denominational traditions are threatened by this. They want to deny all that has been said in the last two paragraphs. Their view of God is that he is a mystic along





the lines of Harry Potter or Houdini who created all of this by magic and mystical processes just by speaking. Their God is a god of “abracadabra” like the pulling of a rabbit out of a hat or making a tiger appear and disappear apparently by “magic.” To those who hold this view, the layers were not produced by the processes we have described, but were simply spoken into existence by God. The reasons for the different layers are in God’s mind and are not for us to understand. This is an unfortunate view of God and his nature. Even those with no denominational pressure to make God’s processes beyond the reach of human understanding, may resist any attempt to make sense of what they see in the Grand Canyon. Their faith stops at the belief that God did it and humans should not stretch their minds to try to understand anything about how God did it.



Our response to those true seekers is that nearly all people who believe in God will speak of God’s wisdom, purpose, and design. We use passages like Romans 8:28 to encourage one another to believe that God has a plan



and will make all things work for the good. We also refer to passages like Psalms 19:1; 139:14; and Romans 1:18–22 which speak of the beauty and design we see in creation. We also view God as incapable of evil and point out that he never tempts us in any way to do what is evil (James 1:13) by making the earth look old when it is not, causing us to disbelieve. God is a God of purpose, intelligence, design, love, provision, and integrity. The study of the strata in the earth's crust is a wonderful testimony to all of these things.

Each of the layers of strata we have referred to has properties that are of great importance to humans. Some layers, like shale, do not allow liquids to pass through them. They are impermeable. Some layers, like sandstone, are very permeable. Water and oil pass through them easily. As a geologist looking for water in the ground for human use, I always looked for a large layer of permeable rock which had a thick impermeable layer underneath it. Sometimes we could find a rich water deposit high on a mountain if we could locate such an area. (We call that a “perched” water table.) A spring high up on a mountain is a hint to where such a strata might be.



Another property of



different strata is their porosity. If a rock has large pockets between the solid mineral fragments, those pockets could be filled in with a liquid and the rock is said to have a high porosity. Hydraulic fracturing or “fracking” is a process by which the pore spaces in a rock layer are filled by high-pressure liquid injection, allowing more oil to be extracted from the layer.

When we look at strata in the Grand Canyon we see how God has provided for human life. Instead of “zapping” a constant layer of rock into existence, God has engineered a system that not only stores oil, water, gas, coal, and other resources we need, but concentrates them into places where we can find and extract them. The Grand Canyon shows us that God’s actions are logical and intelligently engineered for our benefit. They are not a magic trick done for entertainment or some meaningless act of divine power.

In addition to providing a way to concentrate things like water and oil and provide a way for us to locate these resources, God has prepared the very basis for our biological existence. Genesis 2:7 tells us that God “formed man from the dust of the ground.” The Hebrew word used here is *yatshar* which is usually used to describe an act of a potter. To form a bowl, a potter must have clay. There has to be a material to mold or shape. Genesis 2:8 tells us that “God planted a garden.” God did not “zap” a garden into existence by waving





a magic wand. He planted. To plant requires soil. Genesis 2:15 tells us that Adam was told “to dress” the garden, to care for it. Again, this is an act involving conscious activity. Just making soil and clay involves a deliberately intelligent act. Soil is something that is made. It is not a natural element. It is made from the materials which God made through the process of creating the heavens and the earth. God used the strata to produce soils. We use the plural of “soil” because there are many kinds of soils. Soil science is highly complex and involves different combinations of elements. Different minerals and rocks have different elements in them. Plagioclase, for example, is a mineral high in potassium. Travertine is made of calcite, high in calcium. Dolomite has concentrations of magnesium. As these elements are mixed with organic material they produce different soils that allow different kinds of plants to grow. The bluegrass of Kentucky, I am told by soil chemists, is blue because of the magnesium that is in the soils of that area. The magnesium comes from the dolomite which underlies much of the state. Most plants have special needs which are met by the soils in which they grow.

We recently enjoyed a visit to Yellowstone National Park. Yellowstone is basically a huge volcano, with a caldera some 40 miles in diameter. The volcano is dormant, but the magma which fueled the eruption many years ago is still present. All over the huge park there are geysers, mud pots, hot springs, and other emissions of chemicals carried to the surface of the earth. As these materials come to the surface, bacteria take critical elements and turn them into the beginnings of materials we can use. The colors seen in these springs and



flows are bacteria which take sulfur compounds, normally toxic to life, and turn them into harmless organic compounds. Once the sulfur is removed, photosynthetic plants and the animals dependent on them can live and prosper. Signs in the park call these areas “pristine” and make the point that when the earth was first created, these volcanic features produced the environment that could support higher forms of life.

As we stand and look into the Grand Canyon we see God’s wisdom displayed in the strata of the canyon. Not only are the strata beautiful, but they speak of God’s wisdom and planning for us. These strata were laid down long before humans and our animals were created and placed on the earth. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” is the simple description given by the inspired writer in Genesis 1:1. Wisdom speaks of the creation in Proverbs 8:22–23 saying, “The LORD brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old; I was formed long ages ago, at the very beginning, when the world came to be.”

What a joy it is to be able to understand a small part of that wisdom and to know there is a God through the things he has made (Romans 1:20).

—JNC



HOW GOD MADE THE ELEMENTS

“Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone—while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?” (Job 38:4–7).

“The Lord brought me forth as the first of his works, before his deeds of old; I was formed long ages ago, at the very beginning, when the world came to be” (Proverbs 8:22–23).

“The heavens declare the glory of God” (Psalm 19:1).

One of the most interesting free websites is <http://apod.nasa.gov/apod/astropix.html>. Every day there is a new picture of something in space and a comment about it by a professional astronomer. Those of us with backgrounds in astronomy enjoy looking at the latest pictures of galaxies seen through the most powerful telescopes. I continue to be amazed at the size and majesty of the creation in which we live. What we also see in a very special way, is the ongoing processes that populate the creation with new stars and elements. In the laboratory we have been able to duplicate many of these processes.

The periodic table of the elements shown on the next page is from that NASA website. It shows where we think the elements were made. The elements with an “s” against a yellow background have been synthesized by nuclear fusion in special nuclear reactors. The conditions present in those reactors are only seen naturally in small stars and some large stars in space. We assume that a similar process in those stars has produced the carbon of which we are made.

In some cases we have seen elements being produced in space. In 1987 observers on earth witnessed a star exploding. It was given the name Supernova 1987A (see the NASA picture on the next page). Neon appeared in the spectra of the star after the explosion which had not been seen before it exploded. Some elements like gold and platinum would require conditions that can only be seen in the explosions of massive stars called supernovae.

I was recently in a planetarium where all of this was being presented to a class of third graders. One young man listened carefully

Top: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nucleosynthesis_periodic_table.svg; bottom: http://www.nasa.gov/centers/ames/multimedia/images/2011/06/supernova_1987.jpg.html

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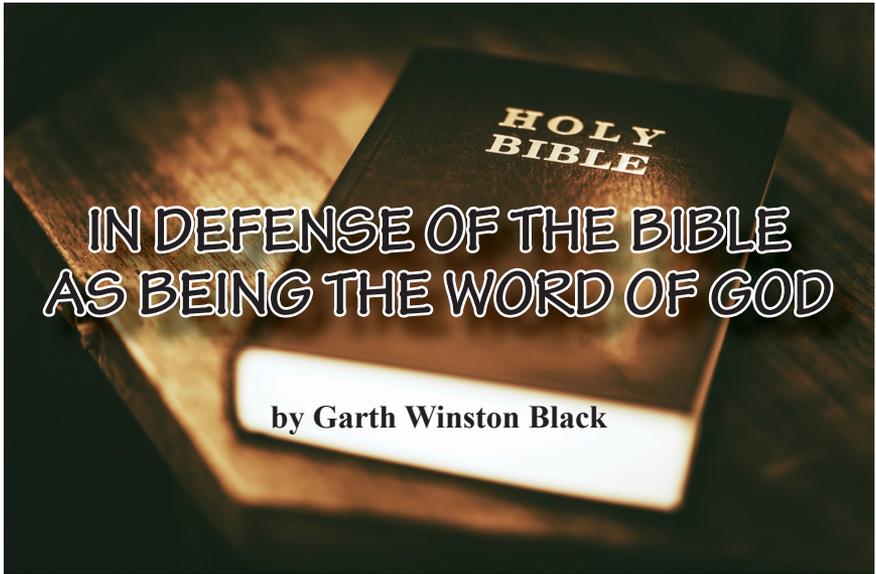
Credit: Wikipedia: Cmglee

to the explanation of the astronomer and responded with, “I thought God did it!” I could not help myself as my teacher instincts kicked in, and I responded, “He did, but what you are learning here is how he did it.” I got a grateful nod from the astronomer and the teacher, but I feel very strongly that the issue of real creation needs to be presented to young people in a complementary way to what they see through the telescope. What you believe about how God did it is up to you. However, suggesting that God did some kind of a magic act that we can never understand is not helpful. As we see how God did it, we see his wisdom and power in all that he does. That opens the minds of young people in the twenty-first century.

The “big bang” is simply an observation that the appearance of space/time and matter/energy happened at a specific beginning. That agrees with the Bible (Genesis 1:1). What banged and who caused the bang is not answered by science. Wisdom speaks in Proverbs 8 as saying God used wisdom in what he did. The foundation of space/time is referred to throughout Scripture, but is clearly stated by God in his discussion with Job. God’s process of producing matter from energy continues today, and we can watch it as we see that “the heavens declare the glory of God and the earth shows the work of his hands.”

—JNC





Regardless of what code of conduct (morality) you accept, one point that cannot be denied is that throughout history we have illustration after illustration of man mistreating his fellow man. That conduct might be as extreme as torture and murder, or as simple as lying, cheating, and stealing. In contrast, the two greatest commands given by God are to love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength and to love your neighbor as you love yourself. These commands are included in both the Old and New testaments.

If we believe there is life after death and there is some kind of eternal reward, then our greatest need is to receive forgiveness for our immoral conduct. Of course, if there is no God and no heaven, this discussion is moot. However, there is great risk to accept that thesis in case we would be wrong.



The one consistent theme throughout the Bible is the theme of forgiveness. From the first book of the Bible (Genesis) to the last

(Revelation), the constant theme in the 66 books written by at least 40 authors, over several hundred years, is forgiveness. In fact, if we were to give the Bible a title, it might be “Forgiveness—Why, How, and When We Receive It.”

First and foremost, we do not receive forgiveness because we obey more often than we disobey. God does not forgive based on our being more good than bad. Contrary to most religions and most people, God judges on the basis of law, and not on a basis of bonus points. We live in a world system that is based on law. Without laws and rules there would be chaos. What if you were arrested for running a red light and your defense was, “I have stopped a thousand times at red lights, so shouldn’t I get credit for doing right those times against this one infraction?” You know what the answer would be.

One of the main points of the Bible is to convince us that we are law-breakers and cannot save ourselves from the penalty for disobedience by simply making the right decision most of the time. Disobedience under any system of law or morality leads to a penalty. The Bible teaches us that we are all disobedient sinners who cannot by our own efforts save ourselves from the penalty of disobedience. How then can we receive forgiveness without suffering the penalty for our sins of disobedience? The answer to that question is the story of the Bible.



The answer is simple. God gives us forgiveness through the gift of his Son, Jesus Christ. We owed a debt we could not pay without being separated from God for all eternity. Jesus paid the debt he did not owe, since he never sinned. That sounds unbelievable, but, that is the story of the Bible. God’s love for his creation may be difficult to grasp, but that is the depth of God’s love. Such love should motivate us to live our lives as God directs in appreciation and gratitude for our forgiveness that comes through the gift of his Son’s death on the cross. The Bible calls this “grace,” which means it is a gift which cannot be earned or merited.

From the time of creation, this was God’s plan for our salvation. The Old Testament is a story of God preparing the world for the coming of his Son to earth, through the descendants of Abraham, the nation of Israel. Two thousand years ago God’s plan would have been thwarted if there had not been a faithful nation who still believed and served him and through which he would send his Son to earth. God needs a faithful church today, willing to carry the message of God’s love to a lost world.



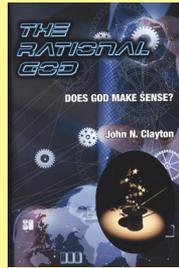
“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

The words of Jesus in John 3:16

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GREAT SCIENTISTS AND GOD

Editor's Note: Atheists attempt to suggest that scientists are intelligent people who have rejected faith and do not believe in God. The fact is that some of the most productive scientists who have ever lived were profound believers in God. We share some of those with you in this column.

JOSEPH F. ENGELBERGER

1925 – 2015

An America physicist and engineer
who is regarded as the “Father of Robotics”



Joseph Engelberger was educated at Columbia University and along with inventor George Devol produced the first industrial robot arm called the “Unimate.” He once said, “When you’re a roboticist, you end up having an awful lot of respect for what God created.” This statement to the *Business Times* of Singapore in 1995 was a reference to the complexity of the human arm and the robotic arm created by his company, Unimation. Later he did much of his work in building robots with the

hope that his invention would be used to “act as a servant for the elderly or the disabled providing services such as fetching, cleaning, cooking and calling for assistance in the event of an emergency.” His statement to his peers was that God had called him to build a backup to what God had created.

Engelberger recognized the complexity of God’s design in nature, and our responsibility to take care of what God has given us. His observation was, “We’re doing [a] ... lot of abuse to the world in which we live. Maybe we’ll become obsolete.”

We have pointed out in the design features of this journal that many great inventors created their ideas from what they observed in nature. From velcro to a robotic arm, God’s wisdom and design are seen in the world around us. Many times a great scientist is simply one who sees what God has done and copies it. Source: *Washington Post*, December 6, 2015, page C8.

Cynthia's Corner



SCIENCE AND FAITH: CONFLICT OR HARMONY?

For almost 50 years, my husband's ministry, **Does God Exist?**, has been devoted to the proposition that God's creation, which is understood by scientific discoveries, and God's inspired Word cannot be in conflict. If there is an apparent conflict between science and faith in God, it is because we humans have misinterpreted either science or God's Word.

One good example comes to mind. Some believers interpret the Bible in such a way that they believe it supports the idea of a young earth (less than 7,000 years). This interpretation goes against a massive amount of known scientific, historical, and archeological facts. Is it reasonable to throw out all such data to force a human interpretation on the Bible? God is not the author of confusion or deceit. His Word does not contradict what his creation reveals to us. Romans 1:19–20 says, "What may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse." We can KNOW there is a God through the things he has made! All credible science points us to an intelligent Creator and Designer as the source of everything. We do not live in a world of chaos or accidental happenings. There are order and design and great beauty and diversity in all that we see. This reveals something of God's creativity, patience, nature, and power.

The Bible is not a science book, but whenever the Bible reveals facts about creation or God's creative processes, science has usually confirmed what the Bible says is true and has never proven the Bible to be false. There is absolute harmony between God's Word and science. If there appears to be a conflict, it usually turns out that human knowledge has not caught up with the revelations in God's Word. Science is continually discovering "how God did it." Believers in God can intelligently and logically believe in the inspiration of the Bible as God's Word and know that his Word does not conflict with or contradict what science has discovered about God through the things he has made.



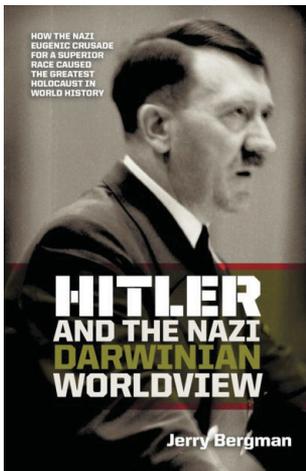
BOOK REVIEWS

The books that are reviewed in the Book Reviews section are not available through us, but can be obtained from a local bookstore or through many online bookstores.

Hitler and the Nazi Darwinian Worldview

by Jerry Bergman, Joshua Press, © 2012,

364 pages, \$19.09 (paperback), ISBN-13: 978-1-894400-49-7



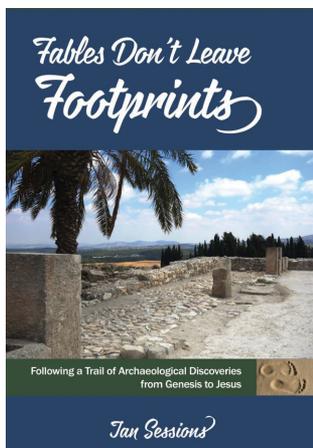
This is an awful book. It is not awful because of the author or the printing, but because of the content of the book. I am extremely sensitive to the pain of other humans, even when it is portrayed in a TV show or movie, and this book brought me to tears. What Bergman has done is to show “How the Nazi Crusade for a superior race caused the greatest holocaust in world history” (a recommendation statement by Kitty Foth-Regner). The main thrust of the book is the massive documentation of statements by German Darwinists showing the use of social Darwinism to justify exterminating whole populations.

The unique value of this book is that it shows that even the German intellectuals of the time, some of them Nobel laureates, backed the eugenic practices of Hitler. What is most disturbing is that many of the things that happened during the early days of the Nazi movement are going on in America today—especially the attacks on Christianity, and the governmental denigration of religion and faith’s role in culture.

The details of historical persecution in the name of social Darwinism by the Nazis is disturbing. When we see prominent American educators like Peter Singer making statements like those made by Hitler’s mentors, one has to be concerned. This is a disturbing book, but one that should be read by people concerned about what is happening in America today. Just do not read it when you are getting ready to go to bed.

Fables Don't Leave Footprints

by Jan Sessions, Self Published, Available on Amazon, © 2015,
198 pages, \$15.99 (paperback), ISBN-13: 978-0-692-54666-6



Over the years, we have reviewed a number of books that discuss the relationship of the Bible to archaeological discoveries. The problem with most of these books has been that they are too technical for the average reader and too dull to keep young people interested. This book is for beginners, and it is unique because of its simple and straight-forward approach.

The book is subtitled “Following a Trail of Archaeological Discoveries from Genesis to Jesus.” It is filled with full-color pictures with short and easy-to-understand text (see sample below). This is not an academic resource for college

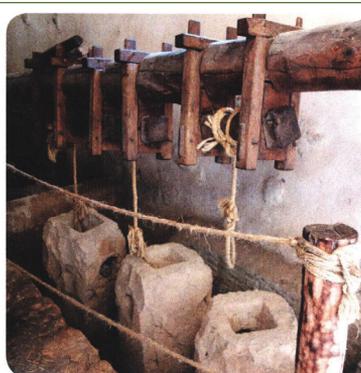
students, but it is a great book for upper elementary and secondary students and everyday adult readers.

The book is divided into seven sections starting with the cradle of civilization and ancient stories of the flood and the Tower of Babel.

It shows the archaeological support of the history of Israel up to the time of Christ. This is a very positive book. The author acknowledges that controversy exists on some points, but sticks to the positive things we do know.



The City of David, excavated by archaeologist Eli Shukron, where ruins of a tenth-century-BC palace have been discovered underneath a parking lot (II Samuel 5:9)



Nazareth, where Jesus grew up (Matthew 2:19-23), and where a first-century olive press was recently found, indicating the presence of a farming village

This is an excellent book for parents to give young people interested in history and archaeology. We recommend it highly for that use.

DANDY DESIGNS

WHY DON'T BIRD-PLANTED SEEDS SPROUT?

We all know that many different species of birds plant seeds so that they can eat them later. Some trees depend on the birds to plant their seeds, and some birds depend on just one kind of tree for the seeds they need to survive. A recent study of Swiss stone pine trees in the Carpathian mountains and the Alps has given scientists an understanding of how well this system works, and how it is designed into the DNA of the spotted nutcracker.



Swiss stone pine trees produce their seeds in August, September, and October. The spotted nutcracker is a bird that feeds on the seeds from the stone pine. In order to survive, the nutcrackers have to store these seed for eight months. Most seeds will sprout well within eight months, especially if there is a spring thaw with rain and warmth.

Researchers from universities in Germany gathered 900 stone pine seeds and randomly cached them in likely storage places—under snow, near shrubs, beneath a tree, etc. They then spent 400 hours watching spotted nutcrackers hide the seeds. What they found was that the nutcrackers universally planted the seeds where germination was very unlikely—places with no moisture, heavy shading, etc. The stone pine tree is a tree with a life expectancy of about 500 years. The tree is totally dependent on the nutcrackers for planting, and the birds are dependent on the tree for food. Since the tree has such a long life, only a few seeds need to germinate. The nutcracker needs to have most of the seeds not germinate to provide a good supply of food.

Constructing a possible evolutionary scenario to explain this symbiotic relationship requires a great deal of faith. Believing that the system was carefully constructed by an intelligence that built the genetic codes of these two organisms together is easy to believe. God has designed the creation in which we live. It is not a function of blind, mechanical processes. Source: *Scientific American*, March 2015, page 14.

SYNCHRONIZED HATCHING

One of the most interesting natural reproductive events is the hatching of sea turtles. Most of us have seen articles or TV documentaries about how sea turtles reproduce. The females return to the island where they were hatched and lay large clutches of eggs. About 51 days later all the eggs hatch at the same time. It is quite a sight to see dozens of baby turtles suddenly erupt from the sand and dash (at turtle dash speed) to the sea.

Because they all hatch at once, the chance of some of them surviving is greatly improved. Sea birds, crabs, fish, and raccoons all feed on the baby turtles, but multiple turtles coming from their



nests greatly improves the success of some of them reaching the relative safety of the ocean. Until recently there was no good explanation of how all the turtles know the exact minute to escape their eggs, dig to the surface of the sand, and race for the sea.

Recently biologists studying leatherback sea turtles in Oaxaca, Mexico, found the answer. It turns out that baby turtles communicate with each other. More than 300 different sounds have been identified, many of them at very low frequencies. Recording equipment has shown that the baby turtles ears develop after 51 days of incubation and their ability to produce sounds occurs at the same time.

The baby turtles not only synchronize their time of hatching and run together to the sea, but they continue to communicate, so they migrate in groups once they are in the ocean. The turtles are designed to synchronize their early life, giving them the greatest chance to avoiding being eaten. All living things are designed to survive in a world of predation, and yet their numbers do not exceed the available food supply. Designs like the sea turtle abound in the natural world, and we are challenged to know there is a God through the things he has made (Romans 1:20). The more we study living things, the more we realize how easy it is to see God's hand in the design of life. Source: *National Wildlife*, Spring 2015, page 10.

News and Notes

FETAL TISSUE. Since the 1930s, fetal tissue has been used to make progress in medicine. Fetal kidney cells were used to develop the polio vaccine, but formal legalization was not until 1968. Even then a five-year moratorium was imposed on fetal cell research. Recently



several videos by a group known as “The Center for Medical Progress” was circulated showing Planned Parenthood blithely discussing selling fetal tissues and describing how their physicians worked to keep the fetal tissue intact for sale. There is big money involved here. A vial of fetal liver cells can bring \$24,000. From a moral standpoint, it is very difficult to argue that the baby sacrificed to get the fetal cells is

“just an extension of the mother’s body.” There are other alternatives than to take the fetal cells from aborted babies. With new stem cell technology, adult cells can now be reprogrammed into “blank check cells.” If we put more emphasis on new stem cell technologies, the need for stem cells from aborted babies could be gone. For more see *The Week*, October 30, 2015, page 11.

CHINESE BATTLE FAKE FOSSILS. Pingyi, China is home to the largest collection of complete dinosaur fossils in the world. The Tianyu Museum of Nature in Pingyi is the biggest dinosaur museum on earth. It houses 1,100 fossilized dinosaurs along with 2,300 early bird specimens and a fossilized tree trunk that is 125 feet long. The area has had lakes and volcanoes in the past which provided ideal habitat for the dinosaurs. Farmers in the area discovered they could make a lot of money by selling to scientists the fossils they found in their fields. The result was that forgeries became commonplace. *National Geographic* got taken in 1999 when they acclaimed a fossil as a missing link between dinosaurs and birds. It later turned out to be a hoax. Chinese paleontologists have estimated that more than 80% of marine reptiles displayed in China’s museums have been forged or altered in some way. It is important to be careful when drawing conclusions about any kind of fossils. Source: *Austin American-Statesman*, December 6, 2015, page A19.

EDIT OF HUMAN GENOME APPROVED. When the human genome was made known, there were concerns as to whether people would decide to try and improve the human species by altering human DNA. On February 1, 2016, approval was given to do just that. A genetic tool known as CRISPR-Cas9 has been successfully used as an editor for DNA in experiments with many animal species. The United Kingdom's Human Fertilization and Embryological Authority approved the use in humans stipulating that the embryos should be destroyed after seven days. The rationale for allowing this work is that some diseases like sickle cell anemia could be cured by this method. Already proposals to change DNA to facilitate weight loss have been proposed. The issue of abortion and the possible science-fiction type of nightmare are all concerns that many have about humans playing God in this way. One is reminded of Einstein's famous statement "Religion without science is lame, but science without religion is blind." Source: *Scientific American*, February 15, 2016, page 9.

SUICIDE NUMBERS GOING UP. Probably every reader of this column has known someone who has taken his own life in the past year. In Colorado, suicides increased 24% in 2014. In some U.S. cities, the number is over 25 suicides for every 100,000 people. Las Vegas is the top with 34.5. In 2013, 22 United States veterans committed suicide every day. The predictions are that by 2018 the global rate will be a suicide every 30 seconds. This information comes from Carole L. May, who has written a book from a Christian perspective about suicide. The book is designed to help people who are wrestling with suicide either personally or in a loved one. The book is titled *Learning the Truth About Me* and is available from Amazon.

WHY NO ALIENS? A large amount of money has been spent looking for a life-bearing planet. Many prominent scientists are saying that the universe is probably full of habitable planets and thus teeming with aliens. The problem is that their basis for a planet being called "habitable" has been whether conditions would allow water to exist in a liquid state. Planetary scientists in Australia have now pointed out "most theoretically inhabitable planets have unstable environments." In our material on the design of places for life to exist, we have identified some of these factors. Forty-seven requirements for a habitable planet are listed in a booklet titled "Evidence for Design in the Universe." If you send a postage-paid envelope to us, we will be glad to mail one to you, or go to <http://www.does-godexist.org/Charts/EvidenceForDesignInTheUniverse.html>. There have also been many articles on this in popular science magazines (see *Science News*, January 23, 2016, page 8; *Astronomy*, February 2016, page 25; and *The Week*, February 12, 2016, page 19).

USEFUL CHART. *Smithsonian* magazine has a chart in their January/February 2016 issue showing archaeological finds useful in understanding biblical events. It also gives a comparison of the life of Jesus and world events that took place during that time period. The archaeological finds listed include: (1) The 1968 discovery of the heel of a crucified Jew with the seven-inch nail still in it. (2) A Menorah stone carving from 2000 years ago discovered in 2011. (3) A fishing boat made for 12 people from the time of Christ discovered in 1986. (4) An inscription of Pontius Pilate verifying his title and authority discovered in 1961. (5) A private home found in Nazareth, which would have been the kind of place where Jesus lived, discovered in 2009. (6) The Magdala stone bearing carvings of the temple's menorah, probably an altar in a first-century synagogue where Jesus may have preached. These are just a few examples as more and more archaeological data is being found verifying much of the biblical record.

FEW HAPPY LOTTERY WINNERS. We hear about people winning the lottery and suddenly having massive amounts of money. However, winning the lottery was not a long-term positive experience in most cases. Happiness is not found in money. With taxes taking 40% of the money, relatives demanding gifts, financial advisors offering bad investments, and greed tearing up relationships, the aftermath of winning the lottery is pretty negative. *The Week* magazine (February 12, 2016, page 11) reports that lottery winners are disproportionately likely to wind up bankrupt. One winner is quoted as saying, "I wish we had torn the ticket up." The lottery itself is defined as "a shell game" and "a tax on stupidity" as the money from the lottery is not spent on education, but to prop up badly conceived political budgets. Christians need to realize that there is a reason we should not support any sin industry. There are too many good things to do with our resources that ultimately bring greater joy and satisfaction.



RENTBOY FINALLY SHUT DOWN. Another sin industry is prostitution. For 20 years the gay escort service Rentboy.com functioned with no government interference. In September 2015, the Department of Homeland Security suddenly shut down the service and arrested its CEO and six employees. The reason for action by Homeland Security was not clear. The promoters of prostitution

claim that making prostitution legal allows it to be controlled and that since it is consensual, no one is being exploited. Rachel Lloyd, who worked in Germany's legal sex industry, has responded to these claims saying that a vast majority of sex workers are young women and men who sell their bodies out of desperation. She goes on to say that most of the sex workers in Germany had a history of trauma and abuse, answered to pimps, and used copious amounts of alcohol and drugs to get through each night. It is disturbing to hear Christians defending legalization of sin industries, because in places where they have been legalized the result has been disastrous. If we are going to change the world and save the lost, we must study Ephesians 5:1–14 carefully and obey it. Source: *The Week*, September 11, 2015, page 19.

SEX ATTACKS BY MIGRANTS AND ISLAM. Germany and Sweden have taken in large numbers of Islamic refugees. They also found themselves involved over last New Year's Eve with mobs of foreign men who circled women and molested over 200 of them. Melanie Phillips writing in *The Times* pointed out, "These men come from societies where women are deemed inferior, and nonbelievers despised." In Sweden, the rape rate has skyrocketed. We want to state very clearly, that not all Muslims endorse this, but it is a natural consequence of Islamic teaching in the Middle East. Many people do not understand the unique teaching of Jesus Christ and the early church about women. Practices like polygamy and the control of women seen in the Koran are very different from what Jesus taught (see Suras 4:24, 34; 33:49–52; 70:22–29; 4:2–4). Quotations from the Koran are available in our handout on Islam. Send a postage paid envelope or go to Appendix A and B on our website (www.doesgodexist.org/INDEX-Folders/Charts.html). Source: *The Week*, January 22, 2016, page 14.



“SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST” BEING RE-WRITTEN. In elementary biology we were told that “survival of the fittest” is the force behind nature. In Greg Graffin's book *Population Wars: A New Perspective on Competition and Coexistence* he calls “survival of the fittest” a sham. This has opened a discussion among scientists which changes our perspective on God's design for living things. In our bodies, microbial cells outnumber human cells 10 to 1. These microbes help us digest food, build our immune systems, and affect our DNA. Instead of viewing microbes in a negative way, science is now suggesting that cooperation, not war between organisms, is the key to biology. It would make sense that God designed these organisms for positive roles, not competition.

Managing the coexistence of our cells and microbes may be the ticket to solving the tough health issues that we are facing today. Source: *Time*, August 31, 2015.

NUCLEAR DATA ON CHERNOBYL IS ALARMING. The problem of human suffering has many dimensions to it. One of the least heard is how much of human suffering is due to human mismanagement of the environment. The 1986 nuclear accident in the Ukraine at Chernobyl has had a lasting effect on everything in the area. Plants are mangled and warped without central stems. Barn swallows have malformed beaks and deformed feathers. The brains of 48 species of birds around Chernobyl have been found to be 5% smaller due to radiation-caused oxidative stress. Twenty-nine percent of reindeer meat in Sweden’s Sami lands downwind from Chernobyl had over 1500 becquerels of radiation and was deemed unsafe and was destroyed. It is easy to blame God for things that bring pain and death to living organisms, but humans are one of the leading causes of these tragedies because of selfishness, stupidity, and greed. Source: *Discover* magazine, March 2015, page 74.



THE “PUBLISH OR PERISH” PROBLEM OF SCIENCE. Those of us who have gotten grants to do research, or have applied for a position at a college or university have run into the “publish or perish” mentality. College jobs and the awarding of grants have become intertwined with getting something published. A Chinese company has advertised that they will get you a published article on cancer for \$14,800. If you get a grant, you need to show positive results, or you will lose the grant. To do that there have been scientists who fabricated data, and significant efforts are being made to root out fraudulent scientific papers. *Time* magazine (August 31, 2015, page 19) had an interesting article reporting that in 2011 there were 400 papers withdrawn from acceptance because of irregularities in the report review process. There is a website RetractionWatch.com,

which reports this. With 1.8 million papers published each year it is easy for bad information to get to the media, so we need to be careful about accepting any report we see in the media. It would be good if a scam-detecting process like this could be a part of the handling of religious and biblical claims. The bottom line is, be careful not to accept claims of a scientific or religious nature until they are verified.

THE GREAT ELK MURDER CONSPIRACY SOLVED. The tabloids continue to give the impression that unexplainable events are happening with regularity on earth, and they attribute these events to aliens, Satanists, animal mutilations, vampires, and even fracking. In 1776 German philosopher Adam Weishaupt founded a group called Illuminati claiming that God gave them special knowledge and powers. A modern-day cult calling themselves the Illuminati has claimed responsibility for elk deaths. Another group called Earth Justice has claimed that fracking chemicals caused elk deaths. The event referred to is a great elk “murder” that took place on August 27, 2013, near Las Vegas, New Mexico. A hunter found over 100 elk lying on the ground with no damage to their bodies. Tissue from the dead elk has been analyzed by several laboratories, and the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish has released the findings of the analysis. The conclusion is that the elk were poisoned by a neurotoxin that is produced by a naturally occurring blue-green algae called *Anabaena*. Cattle are sometimes killed when *Anabaena* gets into their water tanks. It has been said that when people do not believe in something, they will believe anything. Suggesting that aliens would kill 100 elk and leave their bodies lying in a group, or that somehow fracking could kill animals in a group on the surface of the earth is believing anything. Be careful not to give credence to this type of claim or to the magazines that promote claims like this. God has told us to look at his creation and learn from it. That means it cannot be a creation full of anomalies that have no explanation (see Romans 1:18–23). Source: *Skeptical Briefs*, Winter 2015/16, page 1.



This journal is a part of a program of service titled **Does God Exist?** The purpose of the program is to provide thinking, seeking people with scientific evidence that God does exist and that the Bible is His Word. It is our conviction that all men can logically and rationally believe in God. In addition to this bimonthly journal, the **Does God Exist?** program offers DVDs and video tapes, CDs and audio tapes, courses, books, and other materials. These materials are offered on a loan basis or at our cost. We also are more than willing to correspond with you and answer any specific question(s) you might have. If you would like further information on borrowing or purchasing these materials, we would be glad to send it to you. Check the boxes below to describe what you would like and mail it to us. We will get it right out to you.

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