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that God is real
and the Bible
is His Word.***

**2nd Quarter 2018
Volume 45 Number 2**

**WHAT KINGDOM ARE
YOU A PART OF?**

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WHAT KINGDOM ARE YOU A PART OF?

It is difficult to listen to people talk about a religious topic without hearing the phrase “kingdom of God” brought into the discussion. Skeptics are likely to cringe at any mention of the kingdom because it tends to suggest that they must give up control and be subservient to something or someone. Religious people frequently tend to think of the kingdom as a paradise or even as a synonym for heaven. The Bible frequently talks about God as a king, and the kingdom is frequently described as being untimed and all-inclusive. In reality, there are two kingdoms. Understanding the two and the interactions between them can help us comprehend our existence. This understanding can help us answer many of the tough questions in our understanding of our own existence.

The Genesis account is the story of the history of the physical universe. Genesis 1:1 says that God created the heaven. The Hebrew word for heaven is *shamayim* which means “heaved up things” (*Young’s Analytical Concordance*). Other places in the Old Testament describe the cosmos with the Hebrew word *natah*, meaning “stretched out” (see Psalm 104:2; Isaiah 40:22; 44:24; 45:12; 51:13; Jeremiah 10:12). All of these uses are things that are done to a physical universe. We see what is referred to as the “big bang” through our scientific instruments. Those instruments record physical quantities, some going all the way back to the beginning of the physical cosmos.



The other word used in Genesis 1:1 is *erets* which is translated “earth.” It is used 648 times in the Old Testament. Many of those uses involve soil or land material, and some involve the planet itself. In all of these uses, the word describes something physical. The first three chapters of Genesis are all physical in nature. The intention for Israel was to be a perfect physical kingdom. In Exodus 19:5–6 God says, “If you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my prized possession, although the whole earth is mine. You will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”



If you have read the Old Testament, you know that Israel rejected that role. Ultimately God tells them that the physical kingdom will be dissolved. In Isaiah 65:17 God says, “Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create.” Second Peter 3:10–13 gives us more detail: “But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat.” Peter goes on to describe the new kingdom which he says include “a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.”

We tend to create God in our image instead of accepting the fact that the Bible says God created us in his image. If we are in the image of God, that cannot mean a physical image. If it were physical, then we would all look the same physically, and we clearly do not. We are identical spiritually because we are all created in God’s image. That is why Galatians 3:28 tells us, “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” What



Top: © Forplayday; bottom: flippo. Both images from BigStockPhoto.com.

truly defines us is not our physical makeup. Our true nature is not physical, and our future is not physical either. We will dwell in a place that is with God in the new heaven, and the new earth. That is the kingdom of the future—not a new place on earth. Deuteronomy 26:15 refers to God’s holy dwelling place as “heaven.” Nehemiah describes the fact that there is a place in which God dwells which he calls “the multitudes of heaven.” “You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heaven, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You gave life to everything and the multitudes of heaven” (Nehemiah 9:6).

Jesus spent a great deal of time trying to get people to understand that “my kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36). He expressed the fact that the physical was of no help in trying to understand the new kingdom. “The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit and life” (John 6:63). The separation of the physical kingdom and the spiritual kingdom is the subject of many of Jesus’ teachings. Matthew 5:45 and 7:21 refer to “God who is in heaven.” Mark 13:31–32 tells us “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. No one knows about that day or hour. Not even the angels in heaven.” Matthew 3:1–2 and 4:17



teach us that “John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying ‘Repent for the kingdom of heaven has come near.’” Some suggest that the future holds a new kingdom and a new earth that is located in Jerusalem and is established by physical war between humans ending with Jesus returning to David’s throne. They are teaching a future that is physical, and they contradict much of what Jesus taught.

So what is the Kingdom that God is king of? Where is this kingdom and what is our place in it? In Luke 17:20–21 we read, “Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, ‘The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, “Here it is,” or “There it is,” because the kingdom of God is in your midst.’ ” Revelation 1:5–6 tells us, “Jesus Christ ... who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father ... ” You cannot read these statements and come to the conclusion that the kingdom Jesus is talking about and established on Earth is a physical kingdom in Jerusalem or anywhere else. The kingdom of Jesus is a spiritual description that does not have physical limitations or constraints.

Many of the parables and analogies used by Christ were designed to show the properties of this spiritual kingdom we are called to be a part of. In Matthew 13:24 Jesus shows that participation in the kingdom can be contaminated, as physical kingdoms are, by power struggles and human weakness. This is a parable of the sower of good seed, and it shows that evil will be removed when the kingdom is finalized. In Matthew 13:33 there is the comparison of how yeast worked through dough and the fact that our participation in the kingdom works through our lives.



In Matthew 13:45 is a comparison of how valuable the kingdom is, that all the other things we value fade into insignificance when compared to being a part of the kingdom of God. In Matthew 13:47 we have the parable of the good and bad fish with God sorting out those who are corrupt. In the kingdom of God, we will not have all of those who bring tragedy into the physical kingdoms of Earth. Hypocrisy and inconsistency will not be a part of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. In Matthew 18:23 we have the parable of forgiveness as the king forgives a huge debt and condemns those who would not forgive the small debts owed in the physical world. That is emphasized more fully in the Lord's prayer in which we can expect forgiveness only to the extent that we forgive others (see Matthew 6:12–15). In Matthew 22:2 we have the king who prepares a wedding for his son, and people find all kinds of excuses as to why they cannot come. The parallel is that people can find all kinds of excuses as to why they will not be a part of the wedding—the kingdom of God. The king goes out and brings in people he does not even know—people not of the Jewish faith. Even then, however, the participants have to be prepared, so a gentile not prepared for the kingdom is rejected. Those of us who are gentiles still must obey the commands to be admitted to the kingdom. These parables make no sense if you attempt to apply them to the physical world. Many who were following Jesus resisted the spiritual understandings and in John 6:66 many left him because they could not handle the spiritual things he taught.



In 1 Corinthians 15, we see the overall picture of the future of the kingdom. It tells us that physical life will end for us as our physical bodies are consumed by the corruption that is a part of the physical world, and then we will receive a new body. Verse 44 tells us that our

bodies will be “sown a natural body and we will be raised a spiritual body.” Verses 49–50 tell us that just as we have “borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly man. I declare to you, . . . that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” Verses 22–26 tell us that the kingdom Jesus established will be delivered to the Father and that the final thing to be abolished is death (verse 26). In 2 Peter 1:10–12 we learn that “you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

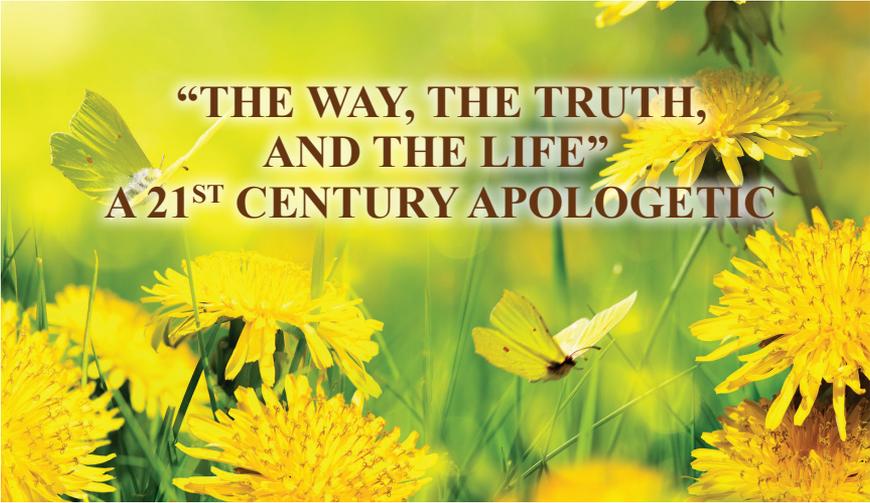
We must not be misled into wrong ideas about the kingdom of God. It is not a physical image of prosperity for those who are in Christ. The prosperity gospel concept is not biblical. Christ will not establish a political kingdom returning, forming an army, and defeating political enemies as many dispensationalists teach. Jesus resisted force (see John 6:15) and stated clearly in John 18:36, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place.” God’s kingdom is not visible (Luke 17:20–21). The kingdom is not entered by force but by obedience. In John 3:3–8 Jesus told Nicodemus plainly that, “no one can see the kingdom of God unless [he is] born again.” Nicodemus could only think physically, and so he replied with wonder, one “cannot enter a second time into [his] mother’s womb to be born!” Jesus answered, “no one can enter the kingdom of God unless [he is] born of water and the Spirit.” In Romans 6 Paul explains this more fully pointing out that being baptized into Christ means dying to the physical world (verses 3–6) and being raised as servants of righteousness (verse 18).

The real question comes down to what kingdom are you a part of? We are all a part of the physical kingdom right now because we exist in a physical form. Is that all there is to us? When death comes, as it will, does everything end? The physical kingdom offers temporary pleasure, but as we age, it becomes increasingly obvious that our physical existence will be destroyed. God has given us the option of hugging that physical existence and milking it for all we can get out of it, but he has warned us that our nature is far greater than the physical. He calls us to choose to enter the eternal spiritual kingdom which he has made available through Jesus Christ. You enter it by obeying God and allowing him to work through you now, with the promise of an eternal membership in the spiritual kingdom.



— John N. Clayton

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**“THE WAY, THE TRUTH,
AND THE LIFE”
A 21ST CENTURY APOLOGETIC**

In John 14:6 Jesus responds to a series of questions from his disciples about where he was going when he left them. He had told them he was going to prepare a place for them and that they already knew the way to the place that he was going (verses 3–4). Thomas disputes this statement by Christ, and says “how can we know the way?” Jesus responds by saying in verse 6, “I am the way the truth and the life: No one comes to the Father except through me.” A careful study of these three words reveals a testable claim to the validity of the Christian system, a test that the original disciples could apply, and we can too.

THE WAY

The Greek word used here is *hodos* referring to a road or a journey. We are all on a journey we call life. The question is: What do we use to make our journey pleasant, positive, and full of meaning? Jeremiah 10:23 makes the declaration, “It is not for them to direct their steps.” In my college training to be a public school teacher, I was required to take numerous courses that, I was told, would enable me to lead students to productive, satisfying, useful lives. In those classes, I had professors who urged me to accept situation ethics, existentialism, biological



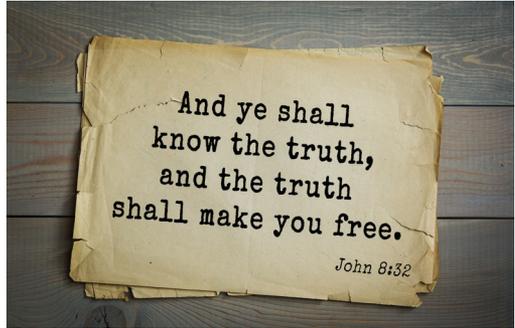
determinism, and a host of other proposals made by men of great intellect and education. In most of those classes full of future teachers and philosophy majors, huge arguments broke out. At the same time, there were people offering advice based on their theology or philosophy. The “Moonies” were on campus, and we heard about Jim Jones and David Koresh and Charles Manson. Proverbs 16:25–30 describes the situation: “There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.” The Proverbs writer goes on to describe how humans will mislead us.

When Jesus tells us he is the Way, he is giving a method of living that makes logical sense and has proven to work whenever people follow it—which is not often. An elder in the church who was trying to get me out of atheism asked me to read the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5–7. Then he said to write down what kind of world it would be if everyone living on the planet followed what Jesus taught. I objected to the history of Catholicism and Mormonism and Protestant denominations because they have promoted destructive things. He pointed out to me that those actions were in contradiction to the things Jesus taught—not in obedience to them. Someone asked Carl Sandburg, the great poet, what he thought about Christianity. His response was, “I don’t know, I’ve never seen it tried.” Even with our limited human intellect, we can see that what Jesus taught works, and when it is not followed the result is always disastrous.

THE TRUTH

The Greek word that is translated “truth” in this passage is *aletheia* meaning “facts to live by.” David said in Psalm 86:11, “Teach me your way, LORD, that I may rely on your [truth];” What do you use to determine what is true and what is not true? Our society is full of claimed factual statements, most of which are false. Nearly everything our young people are told about sex today is a lie. Trial marriages do not work. Sex outside of marriage is not good and it negatively affects sexual pleasure after marriage. We have been lied to so much that most of us ignore claims in advertising. Our politicians accept lying as a method of political manipulation. Romans 1:25 tells us that our society “exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator” That is obvious to even a casual observer. Jeremiah 9:2–6 describes the situation we find ourselves in today: “... they are all adulterers, a crowd of unfaithful people. ‘They make ready their tongues like a bow, to shoot lies; it is not by truth that they triumph in the land. They go from one sin to another; they do not acknowledge me,’ declares the LORD. Beware of your friends; do not trust anyone in your clan. For every one of them is a deceiver, and every friend a slanderer.”

In John 8:32 Jesus tells us: “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” First John 5:6–7 (KJV) says, “it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.” The history of politicians, the history of military leaders, the history of business leaders, and the history of religious leaders all are packed with lies, deceptions, and tricks. The history of Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and of God the Father is a history of fulfilling promises, offering solutions to every problem we face in life, and finding ways to restore what was lost or broken. Jesus tells us we can trust him. Many people through their relationship with Christ have overcome incredible difficulties because Jesus did what he said he would do.



We need to realize that it is only God’s word that can be trusted 100% in everything it calls us to do. When we compare the results of following the teachings of Jesus with the results of following every other religious figure, politician, ruler, educator, or business leader, we see strong evidence that the Bible is not from humans but from God. It is true that we can misunderstand a teaching, but study and scholarship are essential to knowing the Truth.

THE LIFE

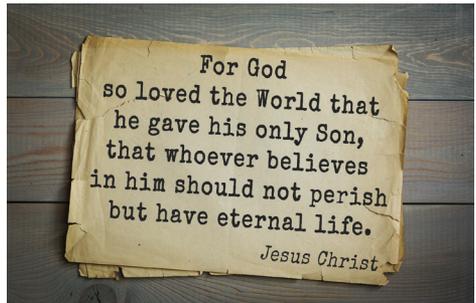
The third evidence Jesus gives and claims it to be the way to the Father is taken from the Greek word *zoe* translated “life.” The word *psuche* also can be translated “life” but actually refers to breath. *Zoe* means “motion or activity” and has to do with how we live, how we deal with the challenges of life, and how we apply the moral guidelines Jesus has given us. Jesus taught his disciples, including us, how to deal with family, sex, illness, depression, loneliness, politics, and death. Christ referred to those who knew what to do and did not do it as goats — lost people (see Matthew 25:31–46). When you look at the qualifications of an elder described in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 what do you see? Look at the list: blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, able and willing to teach, not given to drugs, not ever violent, not greedy, not obsessed with money, not a covenant breaker, patient, managing his own house well, having a good report from outsiders. What are these? They are living skills that come from understanding the teachings of Jesus Christ and applying them. Even a rank atheist would be willing to admit that he

would desire people who affect his life to have these characteristics. When the church began, as described in Acts 2:46–47, what were the properties of those who had become Christians? They “ate together with glad and sincere hearts, . . . enjoying the favor of all the people.” As we read on, we find that their application of the *zoe* gave them the strength to share their belongings with those in need. Many people use their religion for financial gain, to gain power, or to subdue others. The classic example of that is Simon in Acts 8:9–24. He wanted spiritual power to promote his finances and social standing. That attitude is still around today, but it is not seen in mature followers of Jesus.

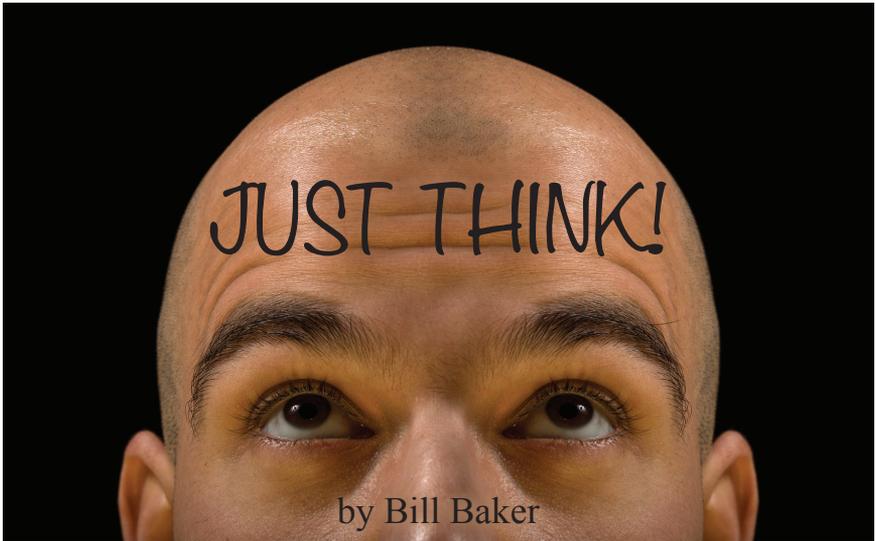
A classic positive example of John 8:32 where we are told that the Truth would make us free is the story of the man of Gadarenes (Gerasenes) recorded in Luke 8:29 and Mark 5 (Clayton paraphrase). “He was bound with chains and in fetters, but he broke the bands and was driven into the woods. Night and day he was in the mountains and in the tombs crying and cutting himself with stones.” Jesus healed the man with a transference to the swine, and the people of the area found him “sitting clothed and in his right mind.” We do not know the story of what led the man to his condition, but what we do know is that Jesus encouraged him to tell his story, and “when he departed he began to publish in the Decapolis what great things Jesus had done for him.” He had his life back through the power of Jesus.

GOOD NEWS

In today’s world, we do not see the same methodology as Christ used, but we do see lives transformed and people being given the capacity to have their lives renewed. The word “gospel” comes from the Greek which means “good news.” Good news about what? Good news that there is something you CAN trust. Good news that there is Truth you CAN understand and believe in. Good News that you CAN have a life full of things that will not fail you and will not involve scams, lies, or distortions. You will see good things happening in your life. When you begin to realize the peace that Jesus promises and the security that peace brings, your faith will be strengthened and grow. We know Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, not just because he said so, but because we see it at work in our lives.



—JNC



I would like you to think about something, and I mean really think about this for a moment. How did I get here! I am not talking about asking yourself what your purpose is, or if you are here for a reason. You will ask yourself that question in time. I am saying just think of where all of this came from—Earth, the life on Earth, and yes, the universe! I mean what is the possibility of this just happening? Here are some things to think about:

- There are approximately 200 billion stars in the Milky Way galaxy.

- There are approximately 100 billion galaxies in the known universe. (It is important to note that we have not found the end of the universe as of yet.)

- If you multiply those two numbers, you come up with 20 sextillion. That is 20,000,000,000,000,000,000 stars.

- Out of those 20 sextillion stars we have yet to identify another planet like ours, but we are still looking.

- There are between 10,000,000 and 30,000,000 species of insects on our planet. They are so numerous that no one really knows, each one different in its own way.

- There are approximately 2,000,000 different marine species on our planet, and inside those species there are subspecies.

- There are approximately 369,000 plant species on our planet, and inside those species there are subspecies.
- There are approximately 9,500 different reptile species on our planet, and inside those species there are subspecies.
- There are approximately 5,500 mammal species on our planet, and inside those species there are subspecies.
- There are approximately 1,000,000 kinds of viruses on our planet.
- There are approximately 10,000,000 different kinds of bacteria on our planet.

Given the incredible diversity of life on Earth, let us consider how it arrived here. All life as we know it has at least one thing in common. We are all made up of proteins. Let us take the established thought that the universe came into existence in an indescribable explosion from a particle smaller than a pinhead. The chances of one protein molecule being created in an unguided process from that beginning are 1 in 10 to the 64th power. That is one followed by 64 zeros. That number is so large that it is actually beyond what science considers a possibility. Now, remember, this is only one protein molecule, not in any way a complete single-celled life form. Many other factors would have to happen to create a single-celled life form. Each of those steps would be in the same realm of possibility as the protein molecule. This is not even considering the chances that one single-celled life form mutated to create all of the diversity of life that we have on this planet. The chances of that happening would be one in a number that stretches to infinity! In other words impossible!

With this information in mind, please consider the other alternative. We were created. We have meaning. We have purpose. We are loved and were created to show love. Please consider Jesus Christ. Please find a Bible and read it. There should be no excuse for not knowing him as our Creator and Savior.

If I am wrong, nothing bad happens. I live a good life and then when I die, I just stop. No other side, no conscious thought, no meeting friends and family, just nothing.

If however, I am right, then heaven is only for baptized believers. You can guess the rest.

DARWIN'S “ABOMINABLE MYSTERY”

by Roland Earnst

In 1879 Charles Darwin wrote a letter to botanist Joseph Dalton Hooker. Darwin was troubled by an “abominable mystery,” and he hoped that Hooker could help solve it. The mystery that so bothered Darwin related to plants—specifically to flowering plants. He wondered why there are so many flowers.

To understand Darwin’s mystery we need a little background. In 1859 Darwin published his famous book *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life*. In the book, Darwin presented his theory that all species of living things evolved from a common ancestor by the process of natural selection over very long periods of time. The diversity of life, Darwin suggested, arose by common descent from that ancestor into a branching tree of evolution. One of those branches eventually resulted in human beings. Over the next two decades, Darwin’s ideas came to be accepted by many scientists.



Darwin’s book became the foundation for evolutionary biology. But there were some things that did not seem to fit with Darwin’s theory, and he was troubled by that. He recognized that the oldest plant fossils are of gymnosperms. The name gymnosperm comes from

two Greek words meaning “naked seeds.” Plants in that classification include plants that do not flower or produce fruit. The seeds are “naked” compared to angiosperms which are flowering plants that enclose their seeds in a fruit.

Examples of modern gymnosperms are pine, spruce, fir, cedar, ginkgo, and tropical plants called cycads. The seeds of gymnosperms are open to the air where they can be pollinated by wind or sometimes by insects. Angiosperms have seeds which are enclosed in a fruit which develops from the ovary of the plant. Pollination of angiosperms is much more complex requiring assistance from living creatures. Examples of angiosperms are all kinds of flowering plants such as violets, roses, and daisies. It also includes grains such as wheat and flax and trees such as maples and oaks. Plants such as tomatoes, peppers, spices, and, of course, all kinds of fruit trees are angiosperms. The planet is full of angiosperms.



Gymnosperms can reproduce with just airborne pollen. Pollination and therefore reproduction of angiosperms involves insects and animals of various kinds. Angiosperm reproduction requires bees, bats, ants, birds, or other creatures. Many angiosperms require specific insects or animals. Without those pollinators, angiosperms could not survive, and without the angiosperms, their pollinators could not survive.



The fossil record indicates that gymnosperms were doing well until a huge number of angiosperms suddenly appeared on the scene and took over the world. That was what mystified Darwin. According to his theory, new species come into existence very slowly over a long time because of natural selection. To add to the problem, angiosperms also require the existence of the insects and animals that pollinate them. The angiosperms cannot reproduce without them. How could those pollinators have arisen so quickly by natural selection with just the right features to pollinate the angiosperms? For Darwin, it was an “abominable mystery.”



Science is still searching for the answer to Darwin’s mystery. Recently the journal *PLOS Biology* published (January 11, 2018) a scientific paper suggesting a possible explanation for the rapid take-over by angiosperms. It was written by the leaders of the study, Kevin Simonin, assistant professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and Adam B. Roddy, a postdoctoral fellow at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. What the authors theorize is that angiosperm supremacy can be explained by genome downsizing. They wrote, “Smaller genomes permit the construction of smaller cells that allow for greater CO₂ uptake and photosynthetic carbon gain.” Angiosperms, they say, developed smaller cell sizes, so they were more efficient in capturing carbon dioxide and water for photosynthesis.



The popular media published the announcement, “Scientists Finally Solve Charles Darwin’s ‘Abominable Mystery’ Where Did All the Flowers Come From?” So the mystery is now solved, and Darwin can rest in peace. Or can he? The authors wrote that “Genome downsizing occurred only among the angiosperms.” The next question to address might be, “Why did downsizing not occur among gymnosperms?”

The report said that smaller cells made it possible for the leaves of the angiosperms to have smaller veins for the movement of xylem, the liquid that flows through the plant carrying water and nutrients. However, making the veins in the plant leaves smaller caused increased restriction to the flow of the fluid. The report says that to overcome the restrictions of the veins “other innovations in xylem anatomy that reduce hydraulic resistance have been hypothesized” So there are still mysteries to solve.





sperms, they needed pollinators suggestion is that the pollinators “co-evolved” to enable the surge of angiosperms.

Obviously, there are still mysteries surrounding the abundance of flowering plants. As we enjoy the beauty of the flowers and the nourishment of their fruits, we contemplate the meaning of it all.

I am not proposing a “God of the gaps” to explain the mysteries that have not yet been solved. I do not believe that they are miracles that cannot be understood. As scientists continue to study plants, they will eventually solve more of the mysteries. Perhaps, someday we will know all of the answers of how God did it.



I am suggesting that the amazing complexity of the whole system shows evidence of wisdom and intelligence. As we look at all of the complex design that is evident in living plants and animals and their mutual dependence on each other, it takes a great leap of faith to believe it all happened by chance. The authors of the study refer to “innovations that reduced minimum cell size.” Innovations require an Innovator.

So two decades after *Origin of Species*, as Darwin’s ideas were be-

It seems to me that, at best, even if we understood all of these changes to the angiosperms we would solve only part of the mystery. Pollinators were needed at the same time the angiosperms came into existence. Also, the pollinators are dependent on the angiosperms for their survival in a symbiotic relationship. In spite of the greater efficiency of the angio-



I am suggesting that the amazing complexity of the whole system



coming widely accepted, Darwin continued to ponder the mystery. “Why are there so many flowering plants?” Perhaps it was because God knew that we would need them and he had a design in mind. We are still trying to understand the mind of God.



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Our first lectureship was in the fall of 1968, and our first Grand Canyon trip was in the winter of 1970.

WE WILL CELEBRATE THOSE EVENTS WITH A CANYONLANDS TRIP: September 9–14, 2018.

- We will visit by air-conditioned bus Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument, Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, Zion, and Petrified Forest (including the Painted Desert) national parks, and Meteor Crater.
- As we travel, Alan Doty and John Clayton will lecture on the things we are seeing and how they support the biblical record.
- This will be a trip for believers. Prayers and singing will be a part of every day's activities.

Trip arrangements are managed by
Story Land and Sea; 12835 E. Arapahoe Road, Tower 1-500;
Centennial, CO 80112; phone: 877-865-6711.

E-mail: Mark@StoryLandSea.com

Website: www.storylandsea.com.

No money is paid to or managed by John Clayton, Alan Doty, or the **Does God Exist?** ministry. The total cost is \$1,100.00, which includes bus travel from Flagstaff, all entry fees, motels Monday through Thursday night, breakfast on Tuesday through Friday. Not included are lunch and dinner meals, gratuities, travel to and from Flagstaff, or Sunday night and Friday night housing.

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 believers in God. We share some of their thoughts with you in this column.

MAX PLANCK

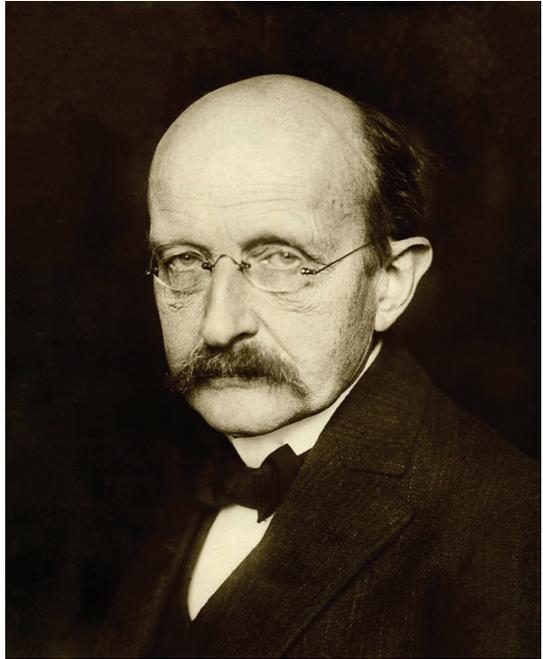
(1858-1947)

German Theoretical Physicist

Founder of Quantum Theory

Winner of Nobel Prize for Physics 1918

“As a man who has devoted his whole life to the most clear headed science, to the study of matter, I can tell you as a result of my research about atoms this much: There is no matter as such. All matter originates and exists only by virtue of a force which brings the particle of an atom to vibration and holds this most minute solar system of the atom together. We must assume behind this force the existence of a conscious and intelligent mind. This mind is the matrix of all matter.”



“There can never be any real conflict between religion and science for the one is the complement of the others.”

Wikipedia contributors, "Max Planck," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Max_Planck&oldid=831469859 (accessed April 4, 2018).

Cynthia's Corner

BEAUTY IN THE KINGDOM



Our attention in this issue is not dealing with scientific evidence primarily as it usually does. For myself as a wife and mother and especially now as a grandmother, the evidence is about what I see in birth and life. My grandchild has been a major part of my life for the past year. I have been able to watch him grow and learn. How can anyone look at a precious newborn and not see God's hand at work? David said in the 139th Psalm, "you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful; ..." (verses 13–14).

As my grandchild has grown, I have seen the love built into his very being. When I look into his eyes, I see the trust that he has for me, and his innocence shines through continuously. In Matthew 18:2–6 Jesus responds to disciples who were arguing about who would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. The Bible tells us that Jesus responded by taking a very small child and having the child stand among those asking who would be greatest. He then tells his disciples that they needed to change "and become like little children" or they would never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Unless you have had a close relationship with a small child, you may not understand what Jesus is saying. Children are beautiful, and their innocence radiates trust and love and humility that can make the hardest adult sinner smile. My grandson runs constantly, and he will come up to me and expect a hug. He cries when he is separated from his parents or me, or if someone says a harsh word to him. When I was crying recently over a death of a loved one, he brought me his favorite toy and held it out to me to take to make me feel better. The dog in our family does not do things like that. My grandchild is created in the image of God, and his whole existence speaks of that nature.

Jesus ends this idea by referring to those who would pollute a small child by condemning them and saying they would be better to be drowned in the sea. I pray for my grandson constantly and am fearful that Satan's workers on Earth will try to harm him and will work to take away his innocence. My grandson is at risk because he will have the choice in the future to reject those things that made him special as a small child and immerse himself in the destructive things that Jesus refers to. Thanks be to God there is a plan of salvation that can bring my grandson back to God and to the wonderful things God wants for him to have. My grandson is beautiful, and with God's Spirit guiding him, he can stay beautiful eternally.

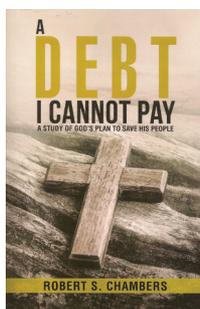
—Cynthia Clayton



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.

A Debt I Cannot Pay

by Robert S. Chambers, Westbow Press, © 2017,
130 pages, \$13.95 (paperback), ISBN-13: 978-1-5127-8825-9



Robert Chambers holds a Ph.D. in engineering mechanics. After retiring from Sandia National Laboratories in 2015, he began a ministry at www.TheTruthTransforms.com. His ministry and this book show his professional training.



In the first chapter, he gives a summary of the evidence of cosmology and how human history fits into the creation. He explains that time is a created entity, that the creation had a beginning, that the beginning was caused, and that the cause was an entity we call God. He follows with a discussion of the characteristics of God—eternal, omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient. Chambers does a remarkable job of explaining these characteristics clearly. Students of apologetics will find this first chapter alone worth the price of the book.

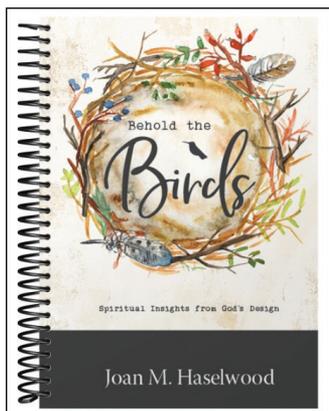
In chapter two, Chambers moves to a discussion of Jesus Christ as the source of all spiritual truth and the connection of Jesus to God and the Holy Spirit. In Chapter three, he gives a historical overview of the Bible leading up to the role of Christ coming to Earth. Chapters 4–9 provide a rational explanation of the problem of sin and how God answered the sin problem. This explanation is logical and well written and similar in approach to our book *The Rational God*. Chambers explains the plan of salvation in logical terms and discusses why the plan works. The book concludes with a chapter on living as a disciple of Jesus.

We highly recommend this book for a well-educated person who has not grown up in an environment of religious instruction. This book fills a gap in that area that no other book does.

Behold the Birds

by Joan M. Haselwood, Gospel Advocate Co., © 2017,
133 pages, \$13.99 (paperback), ISBN-13: 978-0892257003

We have just come in contact with a wonderful new book written by Joan Haselwood titled *Behold the Birds* and subtitled *Spiritual Insights from God's Design*. We have known Mrs. Haselwood for many



years and are thrilled that she has taken our “Dandy Designs” material, added to it, expanded it, and even written her own poems to support it. Teachers will find this book very useful for Bible classes, devotionals, and for their own edification and study. It is a great book to have on a bed stand or in the magazine rack in your bathroom.

The book explains the scientific information known about different birds. Mrs. Haselwood then gives a series of questions for discussion or thought and a poem either from herself or some other author. There are 12 birds covered in the book, all of which are common birds we all know—sparrows, warblers, hummingbirds, pigeons, eagles, chickens, etc.

From the back cover of the book:

“*Behold the Birds* by Joan M. Haselwood is a fresh and unique women’s study guide investigating birds of the Bible. Ladies’ Bible classes will love this book. *Behold the Birds* has everything needed for personal and group or class study—even providing applicable song suggestions for every lesson. The structure is easy to navigate for individuals and groups. God’s creatures will be viewed in a new light following this study.”

Behold the Birds was published by *Gospel Advocate* and can be purchase from them. You can use the QR code to go to the webpage where it is available.



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DANDY DESIGNS

Star-nosed Mole: Star of the Mole World



There is a unique member of the mole family that has scientists scratching their heads at the complexity and remarkable design of a mole known as the star-nosed mole.

This six-inch-long animal lives in wet lowland areas of the northeastern United States and southeastern Canada. A star-nosed mole possesses 22 fleshy appendages called rays that surround its snout. In addition to using thick claws to dig like all moles, the star-nosed mole can swim which other moles cannot do. This species of mole can blow between five and ten air bubbles per second, and these bubbles are aimed at fish or crustaceans. After the bubbles contact a possible target, the moles suck them back into their snouts to test the scent in the bubbles for possible prey. This is the first time scientists have observed a mammal capable of using olfactory skills under water.

The complexity of this animal has caused scientists to call it “a neurological wonder.” The 22 appendages of the snout have 100,000 nerve endings crammed into an area roughly the size of a human fingertip. By comparison, your entire hand contains about 17,000 nerve endings. The rays can touch as many as ten different objects in a single second. The animal can identify individual prey in less than two-tenths of a second and in eight milliseconds determine whether or not it is edible. Researchers say the star-nosed mole eats faster than any other mammal on Earth.

When we find an animal with such highly specialized equipment, we are left with some hard choices in trying to explain its origin. Evolutionary scenarios stretch credibility to the limit. Dr. Ken Catania who has been studying star moles for some 30 years says that the star-nosed mole is a poster child for extreme evolutionary adaptations. We suggest that an intelligence was involved in the creation of this incredible animal. The star-nosed mole speaks loudly to the biblical statement that we can know there is a God through the things he has made (Romans 1:20). Source: *National Wildlife*, February/March 2018.

Fox Squirrels and My Wife



My wife likes to organize things. Items in our pantry are grouped together based on what is in the box or can. All of the spaghetti is on the same shelf as the spaghetti sauce. All of the soups are together on their own shelf. All the cereal is together on its own shelf. When I put something in the wrong place, she expresses amazement at my male inability to understand the importance of organization. I recently learned that fox squirrels do the same thing. I have often wondered why the large female squirrel outside my office window is chattering at the smaller male squirrel who is dashing around seemingly looking for something.

A recent experiment may give an answer. Squirrels sort their nuts by a process called “chunking.” Researchers at UC-Berkeley used GPS devices to track 45 male and female fox squirrels for two years. They gave the squirrels different kinds of nuts—almonds, pecans, hazelnuts, and walnuts. The squirrels buried the nuts in unique spots with each nut having its own location.

The researchers made the nuts available one at a time, at different times of the year, and in different locations. The researchers concluded that “the squirrels use a surprisingly flexible and sophisticated memorizing strategy to cache their nuts.” I have noticed that our grey squirrels here in Michigan do the same thing. I recently found a cache of sunflower seeds that came from my bird feeders, and later found a cache of acorns. There were no sunflower seeds with the acorns and no acorns with the sunflower seeds.

Fox squirrels gather between 3,000 and 10,000 nuts a year. By using the chunking method, they know where to find each nut type. That simplifies locating food sources. Like my wife, the squirrels know where to find each unique meal item.

There is a design feature built into the squirrels’ DNA that assures them of a more efficient way to find their stored food. Programming requires intelligence, and DNA has to be programmed to work. God has programmed all kinds of instructions into the DNA of his creatures, and this is one more example of how well the process works.

Source: The original study was by Dr. Mikel Delgado and was contained in the journal *Royal Society Open Science*. It was referenced and summarized in *National Wildlife*, February/March 2018.

News and Notes

STAY UP-TO-DATE ON NEWS AND NOTES. The stories in News and Notes are condensed from articles previously published on our website www.DoesGodExist.today. You can use the QR codes with each of these article to see the original posts for more details and references. There are also many other interesting and informative articles on that website each day. We encourage you to follow us daily on “Does God Exist? Today.” On that website you can also subscribe to our free weekly e-mail update. We call it “The Best of the Week from DOES GOD EXIST?” It contains links to the most popular of our posts on DGE? Today and our Facebook page ([Facebook.com/evidence4god](https://www.facebook.com/evidence4god)).

CLONED MONKEYS—HUMANS NEXT? The Chinese Academy of Sciences has solved the technical problems of cloning higher life forms. Mu-ming Poo announced that two long-tailed macaques named Hua Hua and Zhong Zhong were produced using somatic cell nuclear transfer in which transferred DNA was taken from fetal monkey cells and put into cells from which they had removed the DNA. By stimulating these eggs, they developed into embryos which were implanted in female surrogates and two live births of cloned monkeys resulted.

The question remains whether scientists will clone humans. Since scientists at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland cloned “Dolly” the sheep in 1996, others have cloned 22 mammal species including cows, dogs, horses, and rabbits. Now the Chinese researchers have broken the primate barrier with cloned monkeys.

In cloning the macaques, 127 eggs resulted in 79 embryos which led to only six pregnancies and two live births. The ethics of such an inefficient process with humans raises a whole new set of abortion questions and Frankenstein-type scientific, moral issues. Scientists will address the physical issues with future improvements in techniques, but someone must address the moral issues before they attempt human cloning. Source: *Science News*, January 24, 2018.



Visit: doesgodexist.today

VOODOO IN MASSACHUSETTS? In the newspapers on February 4, 2018, there was a story from East Bridgewater, Massachusetts, about a five-year-old girl who was permanently disfigured by a voodoo ritual. Two sisters tied her down and engaged in a ritual intended to rid her of a demon. The sisters say that they perform “cleansing baths” for family and friends and the children sometimes get burned as spirits leave their bodies. Voodoo rituals like that are practiced in Haiti, the home country of the sisters.

The Bible makes it clear that God forbids anything associated with witchcraft, voodoo, evil spirits, or sorcery. The Old Testament law said that a person who performed this type of activity should be put to death (Exodus 22:18). Any activity of that type was forbidden (Deuteronomy 18:10; 2 Kings 9:22; Micah 5:12). We might think that is extreme, but these things can and do result in human sacrifice. That is serious.

We should never underestimate the power of evil, but God has given us tools far superior to anything evil can produce. James tells us, “Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).



SUPERMASSIVE BLACK HOLES. At one time many scientists thought black holes were a joke. I had a physics professor back in my undergraduate days who taught us the basic principles behind the formation of a black hole. Then he proceeded to ridicule the idea as pure fantasy.

It certainly seemed like fantasy in the middle of the twentieth century. The basic idea was that there are two forces at work in stars. One was the electrical force that repels charged matter pushing it away from the stellar center. A second force is gravity.

The question is what would happen if you had a star that was so massive that the gravitational force exceeded the electrical force? The answer was, of course, that the star would collapse. The amount of mass needed to do that would be astronomical, but it is possible. Einstein showed that huge masses could actually warp space. If a huge mass warped space, it might create a situation where even light could not escape. The result would be a black hole—a point in space where matter collapsed upon itself. That hole would continue to absorb anything that came near it, so it would just continue to grow in mass.



Astronomers have now observed black holes in many places in space. It might be more accurate to say that they have seen the holes

produced by black holes. We now know that most if not all galaxies have black holes at their cores. We have seen black holes collide, and the resulting shock waves allowed scientists to detect gravity waves. Now scientists are concerned about new finds of supermassive black holes. Apparently, these new black holes were formed at the beginning of the creation perhaps by the collapse of huge clouds of gas and dust that were not a part of a galaxy. These strange supermassive black holes are around 1,000 times bigger than normal black holes and may be remnants of the creation of the cosmos itself. This is a new area of study, but it should be supported by observations from a new telescope scheduled to go into orbit in 2019. Source: *Scientific American*, February 2018, page 26.



GENE EDITING AND BETTER BABIES. A major debate is in the works as scientists experiment with gene editing using CRISPR/Cas9 to fix mutations that cause heart and blood disorders. CRISPR/Cas9 acts as molecular scissors to alter human DNA. The technology is advancing so rapidly that scientists and ethicists are holding conferences to discuss how the technology should be used.



The Hastings Center, which is a bioethics research institute, is sponsoring discussions among experts attempting to give some guidelines for the proper use of gene editing. A panel of ethicists convened by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine has said that gene editing should be used to correct diseases, but not to create characteristics that do not have to do with health.

The Center for Genetics and Society has pointed out that people who are taller and fair-skinned tend to make more money than the general population. The question of whether parents should edit the genes of their children to give those characteristics is an extreme example of how gene editing might be misused.

The moral conviction of the people making these decisions becomes the critical factor. Rather than decry advances in science, we need to join the search to find answers to disease and suffering. Since gene editing is the future, let us encourage the best minds in the Christian community to use their God-given talents and abilities to find solutions and direct the use of our knowledge and technology. Source: *Science News*, January 20, 2018, page 4.



Visit: [Facebook.com/evidence4god](https://www.facebook.com/evidence4god)

LIFE ADAPTS TO A SEALED, POISON CAVE. In south-eastern Romania near the Black Sea scientists discovered a cave that had been cut off from the outside world throughout history. Yet, even in a sealed, poison cave, life adapts.

Scientists estimate that the cave was sealed off 5.5 million years ago, and its air is low in oxygen (10%) and high in carbon dioxide (3%). That is almost one-third the amount of oxygen and 100 times more carbon dioxide as the air we breathe. The air and water in the cave also contain high levels of hydrogen sulfide and ammonia. The cave is named Movile Cave, and it is full of life. Biologists have identified 48 species, and 33 of them are found nowhere else.

The food chain in the cave is based on chemosynthesis using sulfur instead of photosynthesis which requires sunlight. Bacteria which oxidize sulfur and methane release nutrients used by other bacteria and fungi. They, in turn, create microbial mats on the cave wall. Those mats are grazed by herbivorous creatures which are consumed by carnivorous creatures such as spiders, leeches, and water scorpions. Contrary to what the media has reported, life did not start in the cave. Instead, life has adapted to the cave environment.

Scientists have found life around thermal vents deep in the ocean and under the Arctic ice. We find it amazing that life adapts to hostile environments. We also believe this is a demonstration of the wisdom involved in life's design. And in spite of what the media have reported, this is not necessarily an argument in favor of life under the crust oceans of Europa and Ganymede, the moons of Jupiter.



Source: <http://www.bbc.com/earth/story/20150904-the-bizarre-beasts-living-in-romania-s-poison-cave>.

ANTHROPOMORPHISM EXTREME. According to Wikipedia anthropomorphism is, “the attribution of human traits, emotions, or intentions to non-human entities. It is considered to be an innate tendency of human psychology.” When your dog cowers after you scold it for doing something, is the dog indicating guilt or remorse? It may look that way, but it may be that the dog has learned that by showing that behavior it will receive less scolding.

There has been an upsurge of scientific material suggesting that humans are not unique in their expressions of grief, guilt, patriotism, devotion, love, hate, etc. Several books have been written promoting the view that no human emotion is



missing from members of the animal kingdom. *How Animals Grieve* by Barbara King and *Beyond Words: What Animals Think and Feel* by Carl Safina are two examples. There have also been numerous articles in scientific journals promoting anthropomorphism. A recent magazine has pictures and discussions of giraffes, whales, dolphins, elephants, gorillas, baboons, chimps, and zebras seeming to grieve at the death of an offspring or a mate for periods of days. Source: *National Wildlife* magazine, February/March 2018, page 30.

The question is whether this is an evolutionary trait of all life and humans are just more highly evolved, or whether we are anthropomorphizing the behavior we see. The biblical definition of humans is that we are the life-form created in the image of God. We see that image reflected in the things that humans do that are not physical in nature. We worship. We create art and music and express our emotions in art and music. We feel sympathy and experience guilt. We have an agape type of love that is unrelated to reproduction or survival. We can be taught to think. These properties are made possible by our spiritual nature. We can debate whether all of these characteristics are really unique to humans or whether they have survival value, but our uniqueness as a species is not a function of our intelligence or any physical characteristic.

There is no question that animals think and that they have emotions, but we should avoid excessive anthropomorphism. Animal emotions are tied into their instinctive drives—not to political or religious values. We suggest that those instincts are part of the design of these animals which provides them with the greatest probability of survival.

When Jesus taught us to love our enemy and to do good to those who do evil to us, he was calling us to express that which makes us human—our spiritual nature created in the image of God.



EARTH'S ATMOSPHERIC SHIELD. In 2013 an asteroid 60 feet (20 m) in diameter and weighing 10,000 tons entered the Earth's atmospheric shield and exploded over Chelyabinsk, Russia. The explosion occurred 18 miles (29 km) above the earth emitting a shock wave equivalent to 10 Hiroshima atomic bombs.

A team led by Dr. Jay Melosh of Purdue University has extensively studied what controls how much damage a rock from space can cause. Dr. Melosh's research was funded by NASA's Office of Planetary Defense, and some interesting facts have come from the research. According to the



study, Hollywood disaster movies are not even close to being realistic. Dr. Melosh says “Realistic stuff doesn’t make a good story. Hollywood usually manages to get it wrong.”

Meteoroids are hunks of rock that come in all shapes and sizes and with different amounts of porousness. As a rock enters the atmosphere, air pressure builds up in front of it, and a vacuum develops behind it. For most porous rocks, the air will rush into the rock and blow off pieces, like an air hose blowing in a bucket of sand. The design of the earth’s atmosphere is what causes the breakup of the meteoroids. It is only if they are too big to blow apart that they hit the earth leaving a crater such as Meteor Crater in Arizona.



The article about Dr. Melosh’s work in the *Herald Bulletin* (Anderson, Indiana, January 6, 2018) says that Earth’s atmospheric shield is better than we thought. Modern astronomy continues to find design features of the universe and the earth that allow life to exist on this planet. This is another example of a design feature that makes it so that we do not have to walk around looking up to dodge an incoming celestial missile.

EARTH’S MAGNETIC REVERSALS. Archaeologist Dr. Erez Ben-Yosef of Tel Aviv University has led studies of the history of magnetic changes on the earth. Ancient pottery has tiny magnetic minerals that were aligned with the earth’s magnetic field when the pottery was fired in the kiln. The stronger the magnetic field, the greater the alignment of the magnetic particles. From the late eighth to the second century B.C., ceramic jars bearing the impressions of royal stamps were manufactured in and around Jerusalem. Scientists have studied handles from 67 pieces of pottery, and they have found that the magnetic field of the earth has gone through periodic rises and falls throughout history. The mapping of the magnetic fields gives a record of history, with small changes producing a pattern that improves dating techniques by a huge factor.



What causes the earth’s magnetic field is still not completely understood, and the magnetic reversals are even more of a mystery. By measuring the magnetic particles in the pottery, scientists can date the pottery very accurately. This dating method can answer many questions about ancient kings and kingdoms including the major figures in the history of Israel.



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 bi-monthly journal, the Does God Exist? program offers DVDs, CDs, 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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