

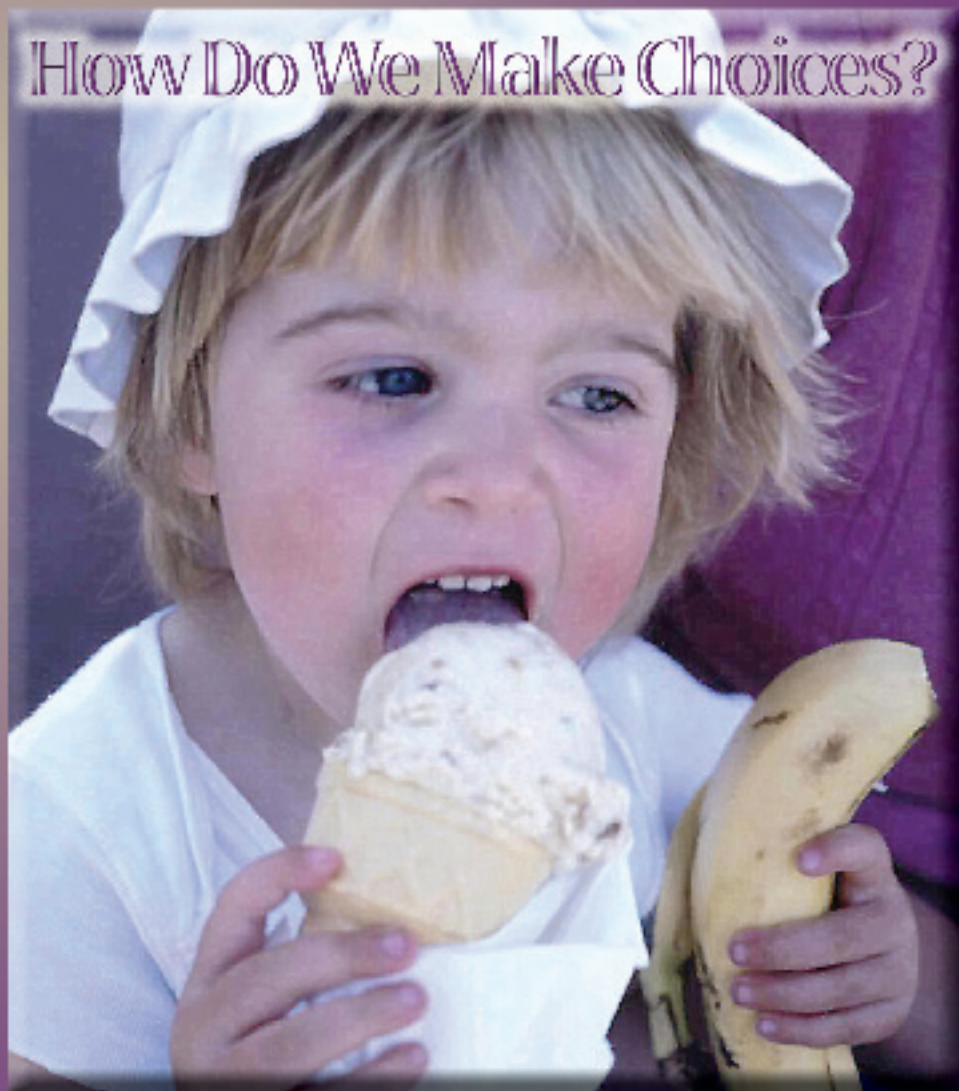
DOES GOD EXIST?

May/June 2007

Volume 34 • Number 3

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

How Do We Make Choices?



Does God Exist? Lectureships

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How Do We Make Choices?

The cover of our magazine for this month gives a picture of something that is all too familiar to many of us. We have a choice between eating a healthy fruit or a delicious ice cream cone. Which will we choose? The little girl has made the same choice that probably a large number of us would make, which explains our waist lines. What does it take to make us eat healthy? What does it take to make us conduct ourselves morally? The two questions are very closely related and in fact share a great deal of common ground.



Atheists contend that the moral argument for the existence of God has no validity because religious people are just as immoral as atheists. That statement is difficult to prove—either way. What atheists do is look at the public failures of religious figures and assume that because the news reports that a religious figure has been found guilty of pedophilic behavior, all kinds of abuse, fraud, or some other kind of criminal behavior, all religious people indulge in such activities. The only way a scientific evaluation could be made of this situation that would be conclusive would be to know where religious people would be if they were not religious, and where they are now. Both of those quantities are unknowable.

The **Does God Exist?** program offers apologetic materials in several languages for all ages. We are designed to serve and help others. Our materials are available on a loan basis or at our cost. If you are not aware of our DVDs or video tapes, CDs or audio tapes, courses, books, teaching materials, materials for the blind, and on-line question/answer services, contact us for a catalog and information sheets.

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For a few of us who have lived a significant number of years as an atheist and also as a Christian, that comparison can be made to our own satisfaction, if not to convince others. What may be more useful is to look at how we can and should make choices as an atheist and as a Christian. The only thing that this writer can speak from is his own experience, and that is what this article is about.

John Clayton as an Atheist. My mother and father did not believe in God, but they were moral people. To my knowledge neither of them was unfaithful to the other, and I certainly never experienced sexual abuse and I do not believe my two brothers did either. My parents did drink, and cocktail hour was a daily tradition in which there was enough drinking to lubricate the conversation. As a child I was taught that stealing, lying, being violent, and being sexually permissive were wrong.

As I got older and demanded justification for these things being wrong, I was given answers that did not make a lot of sense. I was not old enough to drink coffee, smoke, or to get drunk; and that, in my opinion was rather ambiguous at best. I was told that smoking and drinking coffee would stunt my growth—which might have been believed in the 1940s. If these things were age-permissive, then why would not other behavioral issues also be age permissive—like being violent or sexually permissive. When these questions were raised I was told, “I want you to choose who you marry and not *have* to marry someone.” I was never taught about contraceptives, but the pressure was there not to get sexually involved. I gradually began to realize that a great deal of what motivated my parents was peer pressure. My father was a university professor, and my mother was very good at faculty dinners and social affairs. It was extremely important to my mother that we not do anything to embarrass her, and when I did I was chastised more severely than at any other time. One time a friend of mine and I got lost in a cave for six hours totally disrupting a party my mother was giving. My friend’s mother was hysterical as no one knew where we were or why we were late, and when we came into the party covered with mud, the meal was cold and people were upset and some left. My mother was as angry as I had ever seen her, and I was told I was never again to go anywhere or do anything when she had a faculty party going on. My parent’s moral code was at least partially rooted in what their peers believed was right and wrong—what was socially acceptable. There were certain things that you just did not do. Not murdering, not lying, and not stealing were all put in the same frame of reference.

As I became a teenager I began to see that some of these things were abrogated both by my parents and by myself. I saw my mother misrepresent things to enhance her social position in the university community. These were not major things, but I realized that if

someone gave a horrible party, you still had to tell them it was wonderful. I also realized I could lie to my parents about where I went and what I did, and improve my odds of avoiding parental displeasure and punishment. Learning to turn the speedometer backwards on the car was a skill that served me well. If it was OK in the adult community, it was OK for me. I did not have much money as a teenager, but I found ways to get money. Stealing, was one of those ways and even though I got caught by my parents a few times when I stole from them, it was never a deterrent. My morality as a teenager who had no religious beliefs was based upon survival of the fittest. Whatever I could get away with was OK, and how you got to the top did not matter as long as you got to the top and did not in the process disgrace your family socially.

Another thing that shaped my morality as an atheist teenager was the positive moral actions I was never taught. Since we did not go to any kind of worship and did not participate in any service to others, there was no instruction or example of giving or serving others. Every year my parents would complain about the United Way campaign at the university. Faculty members were pressured to give to the university goal, and there was social pressure to participate. My mother wanted no part of not participating and being identified as one who did not give, and so they grudgingly gave the suggested minimum. Similar things happened when there was a special drive for something, but no systematic way of giving or serving was practiced, and the children in the family never had any instruction or involvement in giving. If your mantra was survival of the fittest, then those in need were simply those who were not fit, and you certainly would not jeopardize your own fitness by sacrificially giving. By the same token, my parents did not like to have someone give to them.

My father’s mother had spinal cancer and needed constant bed care. His sister was a dedicated Christian, and cared for their mother for over ten years. It was extremely difficult for my father to deal with this, and in fact it is the only time in my life I ever saw him reduced to tears. Death and catastrophic illness were not something we were taught about or knew how to deal with. When I was dating the girl who would later become my wife, her mother took us to a visitation of a man who was the father of one of my classmates. I was 17 years old and had never been to a funeral or visitation, seen a dead person, or seen what people do when someone dies.



Death was not a subject we ever talked about, and my parents were extremely angry that I had been taken to a place where death was the core of the activity.

As an atheist my methods of making decisions were totally on the basis of assumptions about life that were self-centered. When it came to obeying the law, taking advantage of someone else, sexual conduct, or even things like lying or stealing, the standard was what would be best for me as I perceived it at the time. There was a lot of support for the way I made decisions in the writings of Ayn Rand in *The Virtue of Selfishness* and *Atlas Shrugged*. Even my educational goals and objectives in life were centered on these thought processes. The problem was that I never found my choices to be fulfilling or to bring real happiness. Selfish decisions of the past came back to haunt me, and I gradually came to understand the difference between pleasure and happiness. By the time I entered my twenties, I was a very frustrated and unhappy human being.

John Clayton as a Christian. When science forced me to ultimately reject the atheist assumptions upon which I had based my life, and my study of various religions brought me to center on Christianity, my basis of making decisions in life had to change. That was incredibly hard, and it did not happen overnight. God blessed me with the association of dedicated Christians including a wife who demonstrated decision-making to me based on the Bible, and over a ten-year period I came to understand how to make decisions in a different way. The major event that catalyzed this process occurred when we decided to adopt a child and Tim became our son.



Tim was a normal newborn, but after six months we discovered that he had a number of birth defects that the medical establishment had missed. My wife and I had a decision to make. Were we going to try to raise a child with multiple birth defects or return him to the adoption agency, meaning he would most likely spend his life in foster homes. Our Christian beliefs motivated us to decide we would go ahead and raise this baby to the best of our ability. This was inconsistent with my parents morality. “What will people

think?” was one of the first things my mother said to me when she realized we were even considering continuing with the child. When my parents realized that we were not going to follow their judgment in the matter, they had a local physician who was their family doctor call the adoption agency and try to force them to take the child away from us. The analogy that the doctor used was that when you buy a used car and it has something major wrong with it, the car dealer is

obligated to take the car back. All of this was consistent with the way in which my family made moral decisions.

I share all of this to make the point that the methods of making a moral decision, when you have no absolute frame of reference to make the decision by, is so relative it is dysfunctional. I once asked my father why he did not sleep around on my mother when I knew he could have and he responded that he guessed it was the way he was raised. He was raised by a minister, and even though he lost his father at a young age his childhood biblical teaching was still the basis of much of his morality. This point really came home for both of my parents when they faced death. My father developed leukemia, and his whole attitude changed when he was faced with his eventual mortality. He not only rejected his atheism, but also rejected the lifestyle that had been a part of his career years. My mother lived to 93 years of age, and as she became dependent on others for basic things she too rejected her atheism, and also the university establishment. What hit her the hardest was that when she had a stroke and was placed in the assisted living part of the university retirement center, she was not allowed to attend the faculty social events of the retirement center. The realization that she was now one of the “untouchables” of the university establishment was a blow that angered and depressed her and caused her to want to move out of the university environment to the area where I lived.

As I have observed all of this, and as I have seen the inadequacy of these methods of making moral decisions I have also seen Christians faced with the same decisions and the same problems in life. The three men who were leaders of the Church in South Bend when we moved here in 1959 have all passed from this life. I watched all three of them as they dealt with the last years and days of their lives. When they faced problems among their children, they used biblical principles to deal with what happened. When they dealt with strokes and terminal diseases, their family and friends rallied around them and filled their last years, days, hours, and minutes with love. I saw them give to others and to experience joy in that giving. They taught me the morality of sharing and giving and serving, which they drew from the teachings of Christ.



In addition to what I saw in the lives of Christians I saw my own life blessed by the moral code that the Bible taught. I never realized how deeply and how intimately love for one’s wife could be until I saw the Christian plan for the home in operation. When people I knew in the Church had problems they solved these problems using

biblical principles. It was not that these people or my wife and I had any more strength, wisdom, or knowledge than anyone else—it was that they had a method of making moral decisions that worked and led to joys that were beyond comprehension. That also does not mean that the world of Christians is or was perfect. Ecclesiastes 9:2-9 tells us that problems in life come to all of us as a matter of chance. The writer says, “All things happen alike to all: there is one chance for the righteous and for the wicked; to the good and to the bad, to the clean and to the unclean; to him who sacrifices and to him who does not sacrifice; as is the good man, so is the sinner: and he who swears is as he who fears an oath. This is what is wrong in all that is done here under the sun: that one and the same fate befalls every man” (NEB).

We have had multiple problems in life. My wife has had insulin-dependent diabetes since she was 10, and that has produced a multitude of health and relational problems. Having a child born with multiple birth defects changes your life. The change does not destroy you or your happiness, because the way you make moral decisions leads you to a new way of finding fulfillment and happiness in life. We have built a ministry around helping people dealing with diabetes and its related complications and also with people struggling with birth defects in children. This has led to new friends, new ways of enjoying life, and new opportunities to find joy in serving.

Does all of this mean that I do not make bad moral decisions? Of course not. I am a human being, and I make mistakes. The older I get, and the more wisdom I acquire as I see the consequences of selfish moral decisions, the less likely I am to make bad decisions. I have an absolute standard by which I make decisions, and while my humanness and weakness may cause me to err, I will do it far less frequently than I would if I were still following the method of selfish goals being the driving force behind my decisions. I may even eat the banana instead of the ice cream!



Editor's Note: We would like to remind our readers that we have books on each of the situations written above that can be secured from us on loan or at cost. Write us if you are interested. They are:

Timothy, My Son and Teacher—Multiple birth defects in children
Living Successfully with Diabetes—Diabetes and its complications
A Whiner's Guide to Chemotherapy—Cancer
I'd Offer You My Seat But It's Taken—Catastrophic injury/disease
All He Needs for Heaven—Major human disability
The Empty Crib—Problems of infertility and birth of a stillborn
The God of All Comfort—Encouragement for Christians dealing with suffering
Why I Left Atheism—John Clayton's autobiography

Patience A Mechanism of God

There are many attributes of God which are hard for humans to comprehend. We tend to focus on God's power and might and tend to be amazed at the more spectacular and visible things. We focus on the fall of the walls of Jericho, the slaying of Goliath, the miracles, and the destruction of God's enemies. These are wonderful portrayals of the great power and majesty of God, but equally amazing and significant is the patience of God in the creation.

Many people want to assume that when the earth was created it was an instantaneous event. In a religious framework, the idea is that God thought it or spoke it and there it was. Mankind has had a *zap* mentality in that the earth and all that allows life to function were zapped into existence. There have even been those who have suggested such a process produced fossils, top soil, oil, coal, gases, etc., suggesting that any natural process that produces these things is somehow in opposition to what the Bible says.



There are many problems with such a belief system. The first is that such a view suggests that God has faked history. In 1987 a star in the southern hemisphere sky exploded. Astronomers had expected the star to explode because of our understanding of how stellar processes work. Not only did the star explode, but we have been able to watch the debris expanding outward from the explosion and examine the core of the star left from the process. When we measure the distance to the star,

we find that the light from the star left the star 160,000 years ago. So we are watching an event that took place that long ago.

If you maintain that God created the cosmos with everything in place a relatively short time ago, then He would have had to create the light from this star showing the star exploding when in reality it never happened. This is inconsistent with the nature of God. God does not lie, misrepresent, distort, or in any way mislead man. (We encourage you to read the article by Al Maxey titled “The Great Belly Button Debate” in our September/October 2006 issue.)

The scientific evidence and the biblical evidence show us that God does things much more patiently, logically, and systematically than many of us wish to think. When the earth was being prepared by God, many things were built into the earth that require time. Plants cannot grow without soil. Soil is something prepared over a period of time. The original rocks of the earth were volcanic materials like granite. Granite is made of the minerals orthoclase, hornblende, biotite, and quartz. As granite weathers the orthoclase breaks down quickly producing clay. The last mineral to break down from granite is quartz which produces sand. As plants and animals die, their decayed organic material enriches the clay and quartz producing topsoil.



The above description is simplified, but we see strong evidence that this is how the earth with its vegetation was produced for man. In the Genesis account, there is further support for this concept. When the first life is explained in Genesis 1:11-12, we find God creating plants. There is a sequence to the plants with the first plants being *deshe*, translated grass. The literal meaning of *deshe* is “tender grass,” and the understanding of tender grass would be lichens, mosses, and the like—plants which are easily broken.

The second plant described is *eseb*, translated herb. The normal understanding of this word is a plant that has no edible seed—most likely a gymnosperm—a spore bearing plant like ferns, horsetail, or pine trees. The third plant described is the flowering tree bearing fruit whose seed is within itself. These are the plants we eat—the angiosperms—and would include everything from a grain of wheat to an apple.

These three types of plants are given in a sequence in Genesis 1. It is the same sequence that botanists see in succession. When a forest fire burns an area down to bedrock, this is the order in which the plants return to rebuild the soil base that allows full recovery. It is how God built the basis of life in the beginning and it is how recovery occurs today.

Could God have zapped topsoil into existence instantly? God can do anything. The point is that this is not how God usually functions. Man’s ability to locate resources and control his environment depends on things having been produced by understandable processes. Agriculture, horticulture, agronomy, and animal



husbandry would not be possible had the creation not been done patiently and in an orderly and rational way.

When man sinned and severed his relationship with God, a plan was put into motion to redeem man. Many people struggle with why mankind has gone many thousands of years without that relationship being fully restored. The Bible makes it clear that even those who have obeyed God and have God’s Spirit dwelling in them sin. Why did not God just send Jesus as Adam and Eve were walking out of the garden and be done with it? Why have Moses and the nation of Israel existed at all?

The Bible tells us clearly that God has a special purpose in mankind. While we may not understand it all, we know that there is a war going on between good and evil and that mankind has a major role to play in that war. Ephesians 6:12 says, “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

Ephesians 3:9-11 adds the role of the church to this picture,

And to make all men see what God’s way of working out that hidden purpose which from all ages lay concealed in the mind of God, the Creator of all things. In order that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places should be shown the complex wisdom of God’s plan being worked out through the church according to the eternal purpose which he centered in Christ Jesus our Lord (Weymouth translation).

Job 1 and 2 gives us a picture of God and Satan challenging each other’s system of life, with Job being the major player in the contest. We serve the same purpose as Job in this struggle, and our value to God in the struggle is so enormous “...that God sent His only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16, NASB).

Many of us want to deny this role for ourselves, because it demands we live in a certain way and that we act in a certain way. There are multiple incidences like the one in John 21:21-23 where people jumped to the conclusion that Jesus’ statement to John indicated a quick end to man’s role in the struggle. That process has gone on and on as people have guessed at a quick return of Jesus for the past 2000 years.

For man to be able to function in a spiritual way, mankind had to mature and grow through alternatives to what Jesus taught. God allowed man to stumble and fall over and over as man inched closer



to what God would have man be. When man was given the chance to have a physical kingdom with God as his sole ruler, mankind rebelled and chose to have a human king (Saul) to rule over them. God told them it was a mistake, but He was patient enough to allow Israel to have a series of kings.



God established an ideal relationship between man and woman spelled out in Genesis 2:24 “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.” This ideal relationship

was rejected by man and a chauvinistic system with multiple wives and divorce was substituted for it. Marriage became a political tool and any notion of the oneness that God intended for marriage was lost. Jesus explained this fully in Matthew 19:8 when He said, “because of the hardness of your hearts [God] allowed you to divorce but it was not intended that way at the beginning” (NEB).

As man plods along trying every alternative there is to what God has commanded, he reaps the consequences of not following God’s way. Alternatives to God’s plan for marriage not only leave their participants unfulfilled, but they also bring tragic consequences. The incidence of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases continues to climb. This is not a punishment of God, but is a natural consequence of sexual activity outside of marriage and with multiple partners. The sexual acts of homosexuals make the transmission of STDs a surety.

God’s patience with mankind is astounding. He waited 100 years before the flood occurred, begging the people of that day to turn away from their self-destructive choices. In today’s world, God continues to allow man to make choices and there is a continual wait for man to see that when one chooses to reject God the result is catastrophic. Any premature act on God’s part would allow Satan to claim that his options were never totally explored. The options are all going to have been run when the judgment comes. Peter talks about the patience and slowness and power of God in 2 Peter 3:8-10 when he says,

The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise according to some people’s conception of slowness. He bears patiently with you because it is not his will for any to be lost, but for all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens will vanish with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up (TCNT).

—JNC

Two Generations Closer

PBS film critic and columnist, Michael Medved, has shared this anecdote out of his Jewish heritage:



A few years ago, Rabbi Jacob Karmenetzky made a trip to Israel accompanied by his teenage grandson. Ironically, these two deeply religious people were seated in the airplane next to a prominent Israeli socialist leader and outspoken atheist.

On the flight, the cynical atheist traveler couldn’t help noticing the way the teenage boy attended to the needs of his aged, bearded grandfather. He got up to get the old man a glass of water, helped him remove his shoes and put on some slippers, and otherwise demonstrated that the rabbi’s comfort represented his primary concern.

At one point, as the boy got up for yet another errand on behalf of the old man, the atheist could contain himself no longer. “Tell me something,” he asked the rabbi. “Why does your grandson treat you like some kind of a king? I have a grandson, too, but he wouldn’t give me the time of day.”

“It’s very simple,” the old man replied. “My grandson and I both believe in a God who rules the universe and created all things, including the first man. That means that in the boy’s eyes, I’m two generations closer to the hand of God Himself. But in the eyes of your grandson, you’re just two generations closer to a monkey.”

What you believe about the origin of man really does make a difference, and it will manifest itself in how you act toward others. If we see our origin as a matter of chance from that which is purely physical, then we have no basis on which to assign value to others. On the other hand, if we understand that we were created by a loving God, that gives us all the reason in the world to hold others in high regard, and gives us incentive to treat them with respect.

“Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness, ...’ (Genesis 1:26).

—Alan Smith, Fayetteville, NC, Sept. 8, 2006, “Thought for the Day,” <http://tftd.faithsite.com>



A Diseased Liver and A Rebellious Heart

Who Else but God Can Heal?

by Glenn Goree

EDITOR'S NOTE: The question of miracles is a difficult area of discussion. I have had Christian friends who were strong Christians and died of hepatitis when the medical treatments of interferon did not work. Why would God allow a miraculous cure for one strong Christian and allow another to die? Quite frankly I have no answer to that question, and I doubt any human does. Here is a story that Glenn Goree tells of his personal experience and analysis. He comes to us as a man who was struggling spiritually and suddenly was faced with his own mortality. For our atheist readers, this testimony will probably not be convincing, but there are lessons for all of us here if we will listen.

John Clayton

God gave me a “new life” day, or rebirth day on November 19, 2004 and I cannot keep quiet about what a great and glorious God we have through Jesus Christ! You see I was given a “third chance”—a life altering reprieve from physical death that was confirmed on May 19, 2005.

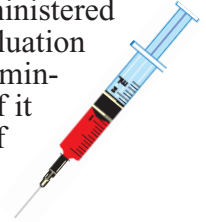


Not many people are given second chances in life and as far as I know I am about the only one in my circle of friends and family who has been given a “third chance.” Let me explain. I was baptized when I was 8 years old (first chance), but my faith grew weak and I fell away from Christ. Then at 19 I renewed my faith (second chance), became a missionary in Africa, but I fell away from Jesus in my mid-thirties and only returned to God about 3 years ago at age 52. This is where the “third chance” comes in, because in November 2003 I was diagnosed with hepatitis C 2 (genotype 2). This virus had been in my liver for 18 to 20 years, possibly longer and I did not even know it. It was discovered through a blood test for a term life insurance policy application.

When I first learned I had hepatitis, denial was a great tool for self deception that the tests were wrong and a mistake had been made. After all, had denial not served me well in the past when I blamed everyone else for my falling away from Christ? However, I could no longer employ denial's disregard for personal accountability to avoid

the truth for both my liver and my soul. The cold hard medical fact was that my liver was diseased and in the last stage of deterioration before cirrhosis. Once reached, cirrhosis would mean a long slow death if not treated. Knowing my soul was lost, shortly after death I would be knocking on heaven's door (probably with no reply from the other side) if the prescribed treatment for the hepatitis did not work.

Just as for cancer treatment there are no guarantees for hepatitis treatment. My particular type required a series of pills taken twice daily, and weekly injections of interferon self administered for nine months. At three months a treatment evaluation is conducted to determine if the viral count has diminished to a certain level indicating it is working and if it is not treatment is terminated. Treatment options if interferon is unsuccessful are usually bleak, painful, long, expensive, and ultimately terminal if a transplant is not forthcoming and even then there are no guarantees.



Now let me tell you what happened step by step during the course of my treatment and if you are not prepared for miracles (however you choose to define them) then I suggest you stop reading here because you will not believe what follows. Truth be known, to this day, I still cannot fully comprehend my great health. I also want to say that a book could be written on each point of God's love revealed in this story but since this is an article, I cannot go into detail and can only give you personal conclusions of why I believe God chose to heal me.

Facing death could have led me in one of two directions. I could have chosen to harden my heart towards God like Pharaoh or I could have chosen to confess my sins and ask for forgiveness from Christ like the thief on the cross. I chose the later because like the thief on his cross, my cross of hepatitis made me confront my life of rebellion. And like the thief, I could no longer steal the truth from my heart, nor hide it from my conscience because eternity was impatiently waiting. As the thief on the cross had both his legs broken to ensure his death, I too had no leg to stand on any longer.

I will never forget the day I fell on the ground flat on my face like Moses did countless times in the Old Testament. There I repented and confessed my sins to God, His Son and the Holy Spirit and have continued to do so. I later met with a close friend who is one of the ministers of the church where I attend and confessed to him my sin and rebellion. And it is interesting how my prayer life has evolved. You might say it has gone through the following six stages:



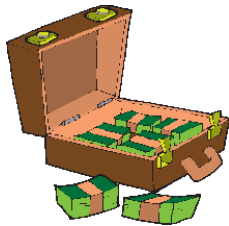
1. God, I beg you, please save me!
2. God, I am not worthy of being saved.
3. God, your will be done.
4. God, WHY did you save me?
5. God, please show me your purpose for saving me.
6. God, please help me fulfill your purpose for saving me.

Now here is the part where the miracles begin. At the three month critical evaluation the virus was completely GONE! In fact the doctor had me do another blood test because he thought I had a false negative. In my interview I asked him if this had happened to him before with a patient and he answered, “NO!” Mind you, this is a liver specialist known in San Antonio, Texas, as being the “best” in the business and had practiced many years and was a careful man of science.

So I asked, “Where do we go from here?” My hope was that we could stop the treatments even though there were six months left because as I will reveal later it was terribly painful. In fact, like Job, I often cursed the day I was born and asked God to let me die. Obviously, God did not take me up on my request. The doctor said that the treatment must continue the full course to insure the virus was gone. There is more I could tell you about this topic, but I will cut to the chase. My liver has tested clean of the virus and in normal function range ever since and this is December of 2006. In fact I have never been in such overall great health.

Now you think it could not get any better than this? Well it does. In 2003/04 my pills cost just over \$1,000 per month for each 30-day supply and four preset syringes of interferon were just over \$1,000 each! So we are talking around five thousand dollars per month, for a grand total of \$45,000 total cost of completing the treatment. At the three-month junction, my financial resources were nearly exhausted.

One day I came home and found the following message left on my answering machine by the nurse in charge of my case. She said, “Mr. Goree, we know you have been having trouble with your insurance and want you to know that we can GIVE you the rest of your treatment from the doctor’s office. The drug reps were by here today and left me with a few complete treatments and I thought of you first. Are you interested?” A significant point of this part of the story is that I never once asked for God to give me the medicine! Did I need it? Yes. Did I know where I would lay my hands on \$35,000 to pay for the next six months to hedge my bets against an insurance company more interested in profits than health care? No. Had I exhausted all



resources I knew to pursue getting the money and come up empty handed? Yes. When I heard her message, I fell flat on my face, wept and thanked God! Another miracle? You be the judge.

I would like to conclude this article with a question. Why? Why would God save a man who is spiritually dysfunctional, hypocritical, inconsistent, hot and cold and at the core utterly selfish? Why would God save a man who was not the spiritual example he should have been for his children and nearly wrecked his marriage, not once but several times? Why would God waste His time waiting thirty years, for him to come to his senses? (I may have been a Christian on the outside by going through all the motions, but not until three years ago was I one on the inside.) Why would God put up with me, tolerate my sinful behavior, and care for me? Had I been in His shoes I would have given me over to Satan decades ago. Why did He patiently wait while I wallowed in my ego and pride like a pig rolls around in a sty? Here are only brief summaries of just five of my conclusions. You might say they are the top five ways a diseased liver and rebellious heart can be a *good* thing!

God is God. As a child my dad would say to me, “do it because I said to, I don’t need to explain!” Why? Because DAD WAS DAD. Today as a father and grandfather, I realize Dad’s actions along with his words made sense and he owed me no explanation. This same principle is true with God. In Exodus 33:19 God said to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.” Why did God save me when there are millions of people with terminal diseases more deserving than I of life over death? God does not owe me an explanation!

God Forgives. In Luke 15:11-32 did the prodigal son’s father stop loving him when he broke his father’s heart by asking prematurely for his inheritance? Did the father stop loving his son when the son ran off and squandered his inheritance? Did the father stop loving the son when he saw him returning home broken hearted, defeated, ashamed, filthy, and dressed in rags? No. Look at verse 20, “But while he was still a long way off his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.” God forgives because there is one thing God cannot do. It is impossible for him to stop loving His creation no matter what they do. This is why David wrote in Psalm 130:3-4, “If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared.”

God Comforts. I have a very close friend who was with me throughout the treatment ordeal. He was with me when I went to the doctor for my first visit confirming my diagnosis and explanation of the virus and how the treatment regimen would be administered. He spent a day at the hospital from 6:00 a.m. to late afternoon sitting by



my bed cheering me up when I had my liver biopsy. When I learned how seriously the virus had injured my liver and had the uncertainty of the prognosis explained to me, I went to his house and wept on his shoulder as he held me in his arms and comforted me. He is a retired nurse and he carefully showed me how to administer the injection in my thigh each week and was there when I injected my first dose of interferon. He went to the doctor's

office the day I learned the virus was gone and rejoiced with my good news. Throughout the entire nine months he patiently stayed by my side no matter what! In Psalm 4:8 David wrote, "I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety." Knowing my friend was there at crucial times comforted my aching body and gave me some peace, but God's comfort healed my broken spirit, bruised heart, and diseased liver.

God Uses Pain. In nine months I lost thirty-four pounds, or nearly four pounds a month. I had aches and pains in places that I did not know I had places. I had itches, irritations, and throbs that only being asleep relieved. My business was going down the tubes, my marriage was under strain and I experienced depression that bordered on suicidal ideation daily (sometimes hourly). About half way through the treatment I developed a cough so intrusive that it only stopped when I was sleeping and it caused a left inguinal hernia and bleeding in my lungs. The damage to my lungs later developed into bronchitis which lasted for a year. I learned that a severe cough is a side effect of the interferon for some patients. I

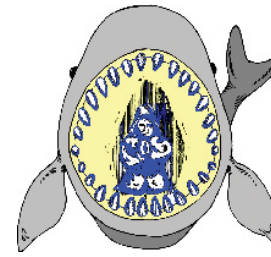


now know what Job felt when he wrote in Chapter 3, "May the day of my birth perish,..." "Why did I not perish at birth and die as I came from the womb?"... "What I feared has come upon me; what I dreaded has happened to me. I have no peace, no quietness; I have no rest, but only turmoil."

We live in a society of immediate gratification and pain avoidance at all costs. You can now purchase Listerine without the alcohol because people complain that it burns their mouths. We have forgotten that pain can be beneficial. It is therapeutic and tutorial. When we seek to avoid pain, we miss God's instruction, because pain makes us ask why. The answer to why is found in Christ. This is Solomon's

point in Proverbs 20:30, "Blows and wounds cleanse away evil, and beatings purge the inmost being." How does pain purge the inmost being? By clearing away denial so we come face to face with the real self. Pain is the only way God can reach our hearts.

God Has a Plan. Let me quote some scriptures here to lay the groundwork for this section. First, Job 14:5, "Man's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed." Second, Psalm 139:16, "Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of



them came to be." Third, Proverbs 16:9, "In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps." There are many passages that illustrate the point—God has a plan for our lives because our lives belong to Him. We can be like Jonah who when he heard of God's plan for him to preach to the city of Nineveh, "ran away" (Jonah 1:3), but ultimately like Jonah we will fulfill God's will.

Conclusions

But wait a minute you say! Hold on! What if God had chosen to let you die, would you be so excited? The answer is yes! "Why?" Because in facing the reality of my death, it woke me up to face the reality of my sin. O.K. you say, "What if the hepatitis returns and kills you?" The answer is still yes! (Though I believe it will not) You see God has taught me I do not belong to myself because I belong to Him so that personal possession in all forms is a delusion. I am His creation and steward of what God has graciously permitted me to use while on this earth. Besides according to the Apostle Paul in Romans 14:7-8, "For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord."

The atheist or agnostic might argue, "Well there must be other patients who have been healed by this treatment and they did not believe in God." Yes, I am sure there have been some patients completely healed like me without believing in God. My answer to this point is found in Romans 9:16-18, "It does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh: 'I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name be proclaimed in all the earth.' Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy and he hardens whom he wants to harden." Personally, I cannot understand how an agnostic or atheist could be healed like I was and NOT rethink

their position, but I have concluded what my job is as a Christian.

It is my job to accept God's grace, love, mercy, and forgiveness and do what the thief on the cross did, give my life to Christ! It is my job to use every minute of every day to put every aspect of my life in God's hands. This means my marriage, my family, my business, my children, my retirement, my home, my cars, my everything. It further means that no matter what the problem when I turn it over to Christ, He resolves it, and time and paper cannot begin to explain how God has blessed my life since. One last word, does this decision mean everything has gone my way since renewing my faith three years ago? No, but the beauty of it is that I have God as my Shield, my Rock, and my Defender. As David wrote in Psalm 147:10-11, "His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor his delight in the legs of a man; the LORD delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love."



Harris: Christians "...believe that dinosaurs lived two by two upon Noah's Ark, that light from distant galaxies was created en route to the earth and that the first members of our species were fashioned out of dirt and divine breath, in a garden with a talking snake..." Harris calls this "embarrassing." This is a classic example of straw horse stereotyping. What you do in straw horse stereotyping is take your opponents views, distort them to make them look absurd, suggest that this is what your opponent believes and then condemn them as being embarrassing.

It is not our purpose here to discuss the proper interpretation of the Genesis account, the serpent, and dinosaurs. Our point here is that what Harris suggests Christians believe is true of a microscopic proportion of the Christian community (Christian being used here as the belief system of all Americans who accept the Bible to any degree). Much of Harris's rage is directed toward President George Bush. Mr. Bush and the denomination to which he belongs would reject nearly everything in Harris's statement. We have pointed out in this journal and in our books and booklets over and over that it is impossible to maintain that God created "light from distant galaxies en route to the earth." We have also pointed out that the dinosaurs were not on the ark. Our arguments have to do with a literal understanding of what the Bible actually says, and what is consistent with the biblical concept of God. Harris's stereotyping is dishonest and totally false, and I suggest it is an embarrassment to the cause of organized atheism.

Harris: Christians "...eagerly anticipate the end of the world. It should be clear that this faith-based nihilism provides its adherents with absolutely no incentive to build a sustainable civilization-economically, environmentally or geopolitically."

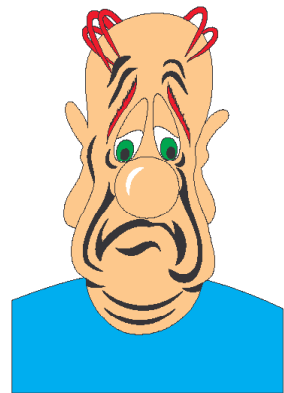
The fact that Christians believe this life is not the best we will ever have does not stop Christians from serving, building, and improving the world. If Harris really looked at what Christians are told to do in the Bible, he would see they are told to serve, to build, to make a quiet life of service their ambition, working with their hands, be of good report by those outside of Christianity. From the very beginning, believers were told to take care of the Garden, dress it and keep it. In contrast to the selfish mentality of survival of the fittest, Christians work toward the improvement of everything Harris talks about, and in fact historically Christian leaders have advanced all of those areas of concern.

Harris: "...what people believe in the name of religion is



"An Atheist Lament"

Newsweek published an article in their November 13, 2006 issue (page 42) by Sam Harris titled "The Case Against Faith" and subtitled "Religion does untold damage to our politics. An atheist lament." Harris is an aggressive atheist and has authored two books that are on the *New York Times* best seller list including "Letter to a Christian Nation" and "The End of Faith." Harris and Richard Dawkins are the heroes of modern-day atheists, and atheist Web sites and materials are quoting from the work of these two writers in increasing amounts. The article in *Newsweek* is full of statements that are typical of atheists—erro-



neous stereotypes, inaccurate descriptions, and misrepresentations of the actual situations. We would like to take this article and point out some of these things, using the article because of its brevity.

intrinsically divisive, unreasonable and incompatible with genuine morality.” Harris goes on to condemn religion that calls gay marriage a moral issue and to then explain that his morality is totally in the area of human suffering. Anything that does not cause suffering is moral and anything that does cause suffering is immoral.

Some of the problem here should be pretty obvious—if suffering is the only criteria for morality, then getting old is immoral. The reality is that what Harris has essentially done is to demonstrate that he has no definition or standard of morality that works. Harris also misses the point that the issue of homosexuality and those who oppose it do so for the most part because of the destructive nature of that lifestyle. The problems of STDs, family disintegration, personal frustration, and abuse are all a part of the Christian view that God has given the best plan for sexual and nuclear family relationships. The question is what is best for man and for society as a whole. Having a fixed proven workable standard of behavior that teaches man to care for one another and put others above self is not unreasonable, divisive, or immoral.

Harris: “...the soul of a little girl with burns over 75 percent of her body...cannot trump the interest of another soul, even if that soul happens to live inside a petri dish.” This is part of a sweeping attack on President Bush, but it maintains that embryonic stem cell research offers solutions to many of man’s problems, and that Christians opposing it are “prolonging the scarcely endurable misery of tens of millions of human beings.”

This statement is totally misrepresenting the Christian concerns about embryonic stem cell research. An atheist may well feel that any medical procedure can be done with no concerns about what moral implications the procedure has. If you have no absolute moral standard to make decisions by, this is easy to understand. The concern about embryonic stem cells is the killing of an unborn baby. This is not necessary to get stem cells because there are other techniques that are better than those using unborn babies/embryos. We have pointed out in this journal that the “tens of millions of human beings” that Harris talks about, cannot be treated with embryonic stem cells from aborted babies, because there are not enough abortions to meet the needs. Finding other ways of getting these cells, and learning how to use adult stem cells to address human suffering, is a vastly more favorable methodology. Harris’s portrayal of why Christians oppose abortion as a means of treating disease is misrepresented. It



is not to stop progress or to block the cures needed to relieve suffering, but to do this in a way that offers real solutions without dubious ethical and moral decisions being involved.

Harris: “Religion is the one area of our discourse in which people are systematically protected from the demand to give good evidence and valid arguments in defense of strongly held beliefs.” If you read the writings of Harris and Dawkins and other atheists who are saturating the web and the media these days, you will see that they are like a lot of us in that they reject anything that they do not believe as not worth their time to consider. There are many valid arguments for what the Bible says, and for the existence of God. What tends to happen is that people argue against the existence of God by citing stupid things Christians do or have done. I am an American. Does that mean that I agree 100 percent with everything this country has done in the last 10 years? Of course not. Yes, religion has done some horrible things—and so has atheism. Atheists seem consumed with the Crusades, the Ku Klux Klan, Jim Jones, Marshall Applewhite, the Branch Davidians, and the like. In doing this they ignore the scientific, moral, ontological, teleological, and philosophical arguments that capable scholars have made for the existence of God. Atheism has its share of leaders who caused the world’s catastrophes—Mao Tse Tung, Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, Nietzsche, etc.—but using a broad brush and accusing all atheists of supporting these tyrants would be dishonest. The question is, “What does the teaching of atheism lead to, as compared with what the Sermon on the Mount leads to?” What the system teaches is the issue, not what someone who claims to be a Christian or an atheist does.

It is important that Christians respond to attacks like the ones that Harris has made. It is not that we will change Harris’s mind, but young people need to be able to look at the arguments and the alternatives and make valid choices based on accurate and correct information. That is getting more and more difficult to do in America today.

—JNC

Nothing is politically right that is morally wrong.

Man isn't a sinner because he sins. Rather, he sins because he is a sinner.

Some people cannot find Jesus for the same reason a thief cannot find a policeman.

Never doubt in the dark what God has shown you in the light.



Science and Christianity: Conflict or Coherence?

by Henry F. Schaefer, The Apollos Trust Publisher,
ISBN 0-9742975-0-X, 2004, \$15.00 paperback, 208 pages.

The media like to give the American public the impression that those who believe in God are uneducated untrained laymen who know nothing about science or the way the world works. There are many brilliant men and women who hold advanced degrees in science, and who are leaders in their field and who also believe in God and in Jesus Christ as His Son. We work hard in this journal to bring these individuals to the attention of our readers and to show those who will listen what a wealth of positive information there is for the existence of God and for the validity of the Christian system.

One of the most brilliant of the individuals I have just described is Dr. Henry Schaefer. A graduate of MIT where he got his BS and Stanford where he got his Ph.D., Dr. Schaefer, who has been nominated for a Nobel prize five times, received the four highest awards of the American Chemical Society, been awarded the Centenary Medal by London's Royal Society of Chemistry, and is a highly sought-after lecturer world-wide. He is a professor at the University of Georgia after a successful career at the University of California at Berkeley.

This book is drawn from a lecture series that Dr. Schaefer has given at Berkeley and dozens of universities throughout the world. These lectures deal with a wide range of subjects, and so does this book. The chapter titles give you a good picture of what the book contains. They are: Scientists and Their Gods; The Nondebate with Steve Weinberg; The Big Bang, Stephen Hawking, and God; Climbing Mount Improbable: Evolutionary Science or Wishful Thinking; Quantum Mechanics and Postmodernism; C.S. Lewis on Science and Scientism; The Ten Questions Intellectuals Ask about Christianity; From Berkeley Professor to Christian; and The Way of Discovery.

This is a very relevant book. It has a very useful index and thus can be used as a reference work. Schaeffer takes on Richard Dawkins,

Stephen Weinberg, and other famous atheists and does a good job of handling their arguments. He is easy to understand, but not simplistic. He follows C.S. Lewis closely and avoids getting into doctrinal issues to any major extent. The book can be given to college students and high school students alike. It is an outstanding work, and we recommend it highly.

God and Evolution

by David L. Wilcox, Judson Press, Valley Forge, PA, 2004,
ISBN 0-8170-1474-8, \$14.00, paperback, 165 pages

Over the years I have had many people ask me to recommend to them a good book on theistic evolution—one that promotes that view openly and clearly. I have always had a problem with that request, because the term has been applied in a derogatory way. This book will be the one I will now recommend to those who make that request, and the positive spirit with which Dr. Wilcox writes will help people see what this position says and why.

David Wilcox is a biology professor with a Ph.D. in population genetics from Penn State. He is also a strong believer in God and in Christ, and has a high respect for the Bible. His basic thesis is that the debate over evolution is “a result of a failure to recognize and honor the respective boundaries of science and theology.” Much of the book deals with the nature of science and with scientific explanations of evolution. Questions like the age of the earth are approached from a historical standpoint. The book focuses mostly on science and scientific approaches and does not really get into biblical questions or hermeneutic and eschatology issues. Evolution is viewed as creation, and the limitations of science and the fact that there are multiple explanations of some evolutionary claims is explained.

This is a pretty academic book, and will be especially interesting to college students and people with expertise in the biological sciences. It is probably too advanced for most high school students or lay readers. Fundamentalists will reject the book out of hand, but there is a wealth of scientific material and an interesting approach for academic people and people attempting to understand the evolution/creation issue in depth.

ADDRESS CHANGE? *To remain on our mailing list, please give us both your old and new addresses with both zip codes at least six to eight weeks before the move, if at all possible. Thanks!*



DANDY DESIGNS

Houses Made of Glass

Material science is an area that has aroused a great deal of interest in recent years, because there is such a need to develop materials that can withstand the demands of modern life and yet are available at low cost in the natural environment. Recently material scientists have discovered a sponge made out of glass that has amazing properties. The sponge named *Euplectella aspergillum* lives in deep water in the western Pacific ocean. It is made up of silica (or glass) and has cells that make up a skeleton about 8" long and about 1" in diameter. It is pure glass but is incredibly strong. You can jump on it and you will not break the structure.



The normal brittleness of glass is avoided by having several levels of design according to researchers. The first is vertical and horizontal beams that form a grid making up the walls. Every second square of that grid has a diagonal beam and every third set of diagonal beams is thick enough to stick out of the grid's plane. This three-dimensional structure prevents crushing of the structure. As an example, if a pop can had ridges along its sides, it would be much stronger than it is.

Each beam consists of thinner cylinders cemented together with more glass, and these parallel cylinders support one another because if one cylinder fails its neighbors take up the slack. In addition, each cylinder consists of concentric rings like the rings of a tree, and these rings are cemented together. The rings are thicker toward the center of the cylinder by a factor of seven. Scientists have found that this sponge's structure is "almost unbreakable." There is a final design feature and that is that the sponge is wired to the floor of the ocean by glass wires which give flexibility, so the sponge can swing freely with whatever force it encounters.



Joanna Aizenberg of Bell Laboratories says the sponge is the strongest glass structure one can imagine. "It was clearly, incredibly beautiful design-wise. In a way, it's a glass house at which you can throw stones." God has brought incredible wisdom into every area of life, and the more we study that design, the more "we can know there is a God through the things he has made" (Romans 1:20).

—Reference: *Science News*, March 25, 2006, page 184-5.

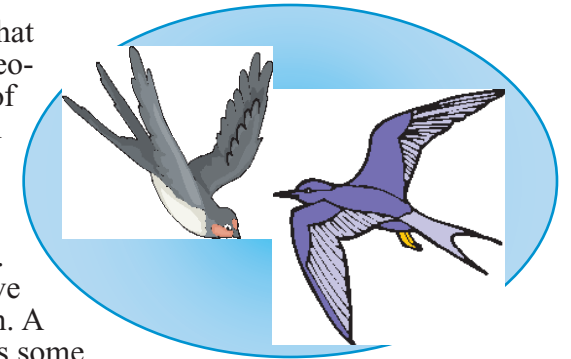
HI-TECH BARN SWALLOWS

One of the points that seems to confuse some people about the uniqueness of man as a being created in the image of God, is the fact that this uniqueness has nothing to do with intelligence or learning.

All living animals have intelligence and can learn. A classic example of this is some Barn Swallows in Maplewood, MN, that have learned how to use motion detectors at a Home Depot to provide a safe place to raise their young. The birds have learned to open the double doors at the entry to the store by flying a tight circle in front of the motion detector which opens the doors and allows them to get in. By nesting inside the store the swallows are protected from predators and have no weather to contend with. They even open the doors for other swallows allowing other birds to get through. When an employee locked the doors the swallows pecked him and harassed him until he unlocked the doors.

Steve Kittelson, a DNR wildlife specialist has studied this learning behavior in the swallows and has concluded that deductive reasoning is being used in triggering the motion detectors. The birds seem to have reasoned how to use the detectors to their advantage. It is interesting that the design of the brains of animals allows such learning and adaptations to modern situations to exist. Keith Stomberg, the Home Depot employee who first noticed what the swallows were doing, made a wonderful concluding statement about the birds when he said "The term 'bird brain' has got to be modified."

—our thanks to Jim McGuire for sending this to us



News and Notes

The Lost Tomb of Jesus. The media continue to campaign against Christianity and the validity of Jesus as the Son of God. A documentary on a 1980 tomb discovery in Talpiot inside modern Jerusalem is now being shown attempting to disprove the notion that Jesus rose from the dead. There are ten stone ossuaries (bone boxes) that have names carved on them identifying the occupants. They are:

- 1) Jesus, son of Joseph, assumed to be Jesus Christ
- 2) Mary (written in Aramaic), assumed to be Jesus' mother.
- 3) Mary, written in Greek as Mariamne, assumed to be Magdalene and to have been Jesus' wife.
- 4) Jose, a rare nickname for Joseph, assumed to be Jesus' father or a brother.
- 5) Matthew, assumed to be related to Jesus—probably a brother.
- 6) Judah, son of Jesus and Mary Magdalene.

There are so many mistakes and assumptions in this newest attack on Christianity, it would take many pages just to list them. Here are a few points:

1) The names given were common names for the time. A catalog of names from that time show that out of 2,625 males, 99 were named Jesus, 218 named Joseph, and 164 Judah; 21 percent of Jewish women at the time were called Mariamne (Mary). Assuming on the basis of names that this is Jesus Christ's earthly family is foolish.

2) Joseph and Mary were not from Jerusalem, and would not have been buried there. Joseph appears to have died earlier and would have been buried in Galilee.

3) There is no record anywhere that Jesus has a brother named Matthew.

4) The Bible indicates that Jesus' brothers on earth were James, Judas, and Simon. None of these are listed in this family plot, and James's ossuary was found elsewhere in the 1970s before this burial site was found.

There are numerous web sites by archeologists and experts on these kinds of matters, but they change daily. You can e-mail us at jncdge@aol.com if you want some of the current sites.

Darwin's Deadly Legacy. One of the favorite arguments by atheists and agnostics against Christianity is to portray the history of Christianity as one full of war and terror. Atheists take things like the Crusades, the Inquisitions, the Ku Klux Klan, and the pedophile problems of Roman Catholicism and portray these things as necessary consequences of Christianity. James Kennedy has produced a DVD titled *Darwin's Deadly Legacy* that has turned the tables on the atheists in this regard. What Kennedy has done is to produce a program in which experts are quoted to show that the logical outcome of the teachings of neo-Darwinism has been slavery, communism, Hitler, Columbine High School's tragedy, genocide, infanticide, and child labor. The program relies heavily on Ann Coulter and Jonathan Wells, but has some useful information. It is an extreme position, but a balance to attempts in the media to vilify Christians and Christianity.

Ozone Hole and Global Warming. Religious and secular newspapers continue to be full of misleading articles and misrepresentations of the situation concerning these two environmental issues. God's design of the cosmos is incredibly complex, and many cyclic processes operate in nature. In October of 2006 the annual report on the ozone hole was made, showing it to be the largest it has ever been—larger than all of North America. Chlorofluorocarbons were restricted in 1987, and yet the problem seems to have gotten worse. The answer seems to be that, in the stratosphere where the ozone hole is, 2006 was abnormally cold. This accelerates the destruction of ozone, and when things warm up scientists are guessing the hole will shrink. The increased warmth of the lower atmosphere is believed to be the cause of the cooling of the stratosphere, so global warming is again said to be the culprit. The earth as a planet heats and cools periodically, and many other processes are linked to this global warming and cooling. This is not to say that man should not do what he can to limit man-made influences on the ozone hole and global warming, but exaggerated prophecies of doom and the picture of these processes as new and different do not agree with the facts. Data from *Discover* magazine, January 2007, pages 60.

Neanderthal Confusion Continues. What was Neanderthal man? Was he an ape-like human and in fact a missing link? Genome studies in recent months have reported that Neanderthal DNA is significantly different than modern human DNA, and that has suggested to some that the Neanderthals were ape-like humans and not true humans. Two recent discoveries suggest that Neanderthal is not the mystery some have claimed. On January 16, 2007 a report of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences revealed that a skull has been found in southwestern Romania that appears to be a mixture of modern and

Neanderthal characteristics. The skull has the same proportions as a modern human, but has frontal flattening, large upper molars, and large bones behind the ear—all typical of the Neanderthals.

A study published in London by the Wellcome Trust reports that their studies of the human genome show that DNA in modern humans can vary as much as ten percent. This flies in the face of claims that human DNA is 99.9 percent identical, and means that there can be huge variations in the genome and yet all be of the same species. Races can look a lot different and yet still be one species, and the Neanderthals were just another descendent of Adam and Eve that had characteristics suitable for the harsh environment in which they lived. They were still humans created in the image of God with all the characteristics spiritually that you and I have today.

Man Out of Near Coma After 20 Years. Terry Wallis was severely injured in a car accident that left him in a “minimally conscious state.” In 2003, 19 years after the accident he responded to his mother by calling her “Mom” and regained his ability to talk. He has since regained some use of his limbs, and scientists studying the brain scans have been amazed that the brain seems to be growing new axons—in essence rewiring itself. We would suggest that the value of human life has to be given a high priority, because the wonderful design of the human body allows things to happen that would never have been thought possible by most people. Source of information: *Discover*, January 2007, page 36.

Ape Rights. Spain’s Socialist government introduced a measure in May 2006 to grant total human rights to gorillas, chimpanzees, orangutans, and bonobos. The debate continues on this law, but one would have to suggest that if this applies to the apes, why does it not also apply to monkeys, lemmings, and perhaps raccoons? No animals should be subjected to abuse or caused to suffer, but when you classify man as just an animal there is no basis for any kind of legal structure to human society that does not bring starvation and poverty to humans. Man is uniquely created in the image of God, and that uniqueness is the foundation of morality and reasonable laws. Source: *The Week*, May 12, 2006, page 8.

Global Warming. The media and some in the scientific community continue to portray global warming as something man has caused that is unique to the time in which we live. The fact is that there have always been periods of warming and cooling on this planet, and while man may be contributing to the rate and extent of global change right now, it has always taken place. In the March 2007 issue of *Natural History* magazine is a useful article titled “Ice Cycles” by

Donald Goldsmith (page 14). The article discusses causes of ice ages and warming in the past, but shows how cyclic our planet’s climate is. In the September 30, 2006, issue of *Science News* (page 213) is a report that the top layers of the ocean have cooled between 2003 and 2005 for reasons that are unknown. There is a lot to learn about global warming, and it is important not to let hysteria drive our response to what is a natural process of our planet.

Man-made Organs. Wonderful progress is being made in producing organs that ultimately will replace our organs when they fail. Liver cells have been produced from umbilical cord blood and a human bladder has been produced using healthy cells from a diseased bladder. None of these advances requires aborting babies to get fetal stem cells, and the potential for relieving human illness is huge. Source: *Popular Science*, December 2006, page 96 and *Discover*, January 2007, page 16.

Creationist Museums. Elaborate creationist museums costing tens of millions of dollars are being opened in Kentucky, Florida, and California. The problem with these museums is that they promote doctrinal material with a minimum of scientific evidence, and much of the doctrine that they promote is in contradiction to what the Bible actually says. This is in spite of the fact that they suggest that all Christians subscribe to their doctrine and interpretation of the Bible. This plus many scientific errors make these museums a source of confusion to many young people. Just because a building wears the name museum, does not mean what is displayed is true.

Textbook Errors. For many years there has been a Christian group called Educational Research Analysts that has analyzed public school textbooks. They have shown errors, bias, and have rated books. The most recent printout that we have of theirs tells of 427 factual errors in five California history texts. Similar types of problems have been reported on science books and other subject areas in the past. If you are interested in their work you can find them at www.textbookreviews.org or PO Box 7518, Longview, TX 75607-7518, phone 903-753-5993. We have found this to be a useful resource.

Clarification. We have had a few readers who felt our article by Fred Barnes in our last issue was too political. Our stated purpose was to point out media problems in getting facts to the public. We do not endorse any political party or position. Had the Democratic party been in power, we feel the same problems would be true. Our concern is the existence of God and the validity of the Christian system. Quite frankly, we do not care much for either political party.—*Editor*

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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