

November/December 2008

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DOES GOD EXIST?

The Flaming Sky

**A nonprofit effort to convince
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The picture on the cover of our journal for this month is a painting by the famous Alaskan artist Norman Lowell. Norman has lived in Alaska most of his adult life, and his studio in Anchor Point is filled with incredible paintings of the natural beauty of this unique state. (For more information on Norman Lowell, contact Lowell Studios & Galleries, P.O. Box 167, Anchor Point, AK 99556, phone 907-235-7344.)

We have been to Alaska many times, and have on occasion been able to watch the northern lights. In our home city of Niles, Michigan, we occasionally see the auroras—but nothing like what we have seen in Alaska. The northern lights can be ropes of color twisting through the skies, or waterfalls of moving and changing colors. On a few special occasions there has even been a sound that seemed to be coming from the sky—a hissing crackling sound somewhat like we hear with static electricity. The most common auroras, however, are like curtains hanging for hours near the horizon. Throughout the centuries these light shows have been badly misunderstood. Ancient peoples thought the earth was hollow and that the auroras were flames escaping from the depths of hell. Roman armies marched through a whole night to go toward what their leaders thought was a forest fire. UFO and alien promoters have used localized auroras to justify their claims of alien visitation to the earth.

We know a great deal about the auroras now thanks to research and study. We also have learned some interesting things about the sun and outer space as we have studied the northern lights. You can produce auroras in your home by just turning on a fluorescent light. When gas molecules are exposed to energy, their electrons are caused to change the orbital positions and usually light is emitted when such a change takes place. Different gases will give off different colors because they have different electron levels and different electrons changing their orbital position within those levels. A low energy change in an electron will emit red light. A high energy electron change in position will be blue or violet—a higher form of radiation. A red sign in a business establishment will be neon gas which emits low energy light rays when electron changes are made in it. A blue fluorescent light will have a high energy electron transfer taking place. In fluorescent lights, the energy which triggers these changes comes from a transformer that generates large electrical voltages.

In auroras the energy that causes the electrons to give off light comes primarily from the sun, but also from cosmic rays generated in outer space from other stars, galaxies, and nebulae. In the early days of research it was not clear why such energetic sources were in space, but we now know it is due to the nature of the sun and stars. Our sun is not just a big hot ball in the sky. We know that the sun has some major requirements in order for it to be able to sustain life on earth. Not only must the sun be hot enough to allow water to exist in the liquid state but it must be cold enough not to vaporize everything. In order for plants to have the right kinds of light to be able to carry on photosynthesis, the sun has to have certain energies of light which it emits. There are chemical reactions in the atmosphere of the earth that depend on solar radiation to make them work. In the process of satisfying all of these needs, the nuclear processes of the sun generate particles that would be harmful to life on earth.

These particles are deflected away from the earth by the earth's magnetic field. When they get low enough in our atmosphere they ionize gases within our atmosphere making the glow, and these glowing curtains of atoms are the auroras we see. Our studies of the sun have shown us it is a truly remarkable furnace made of its own fuel that has functioned for a very long time, and could go for another billion years without significant depletion of its hydrogen fuel. As we have studied the auroras, we have seen that God has designed several shields which protect us from these negative by-products of the solar reactions. We not only have a magnetic field which protects us, but we have an atmosphere made of various layers and each layer has a specific role which makes life on this planet possible.

The northern and southern lights remind us of how special our planet is, and how unique the star is that our planet orbits. Our studies

of extra-solar planetary systems (planets orbiting stars other than our sun) have reinforced the unique nature of our planetary system. The psalmist's statement, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the earth shows his handiwork," takes on new meaning as we improve our ability to understand just how complex and highly designed the system is.

—John N. Clayton



Why The World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind

In May 2004 leading atheistic philosopher Antony Flew spoke at a symposium at New York University where he was supposed to be debating believers. He shocked his audience by announcing that he now believed there is a God. He explained to the audience why he changed his mind.

What I think the DNA material has done is that it has shown, by the almost unbelievable complexity of the arrangements which are needed to produce (life), that intelligence must have been involved in getting these extraordinarily diverse elements to work together. It's the enormous complexity of the number of elements and the enormous subtlety of the ways they work together. The meeting of these two parts at the right time by chance is simply minute. It is all a matter of the enormous complexity by which the results were achieved, which looked to me like the work of intelligence.

Antony Flew, *There Is A God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind*, HarperCollins Publishers, 2007.

Einstein Conceptions & Misconceptions

Albert Einstein has become a folk hero in today's world. You see his image on T-shirts and hear him quoted by virtually every special interest group around—from environmentalists to politicians to religionists. Much of what is attributed to Einstein is myth, and many claims about him that you hear are stories with no factual base. Recently a book titled *Einstein* was released by Walter Isaacson (Simon & Schuster, © 2007, ISBN-13: 978-0-7432-6473-0). Isaacson is known for biographical works on Benjamin Franklin, Kissinger, and other works where his accuracy has been praised. Since atheists and religionists alike claim Einstein, and since many erroneous stories circulate about him we feel our readers would be benefited by noting a few things about Einstein revealed in this book.



EINSTEIN'S IRRELIGIOUS CHILDHOOD

Einstein was born into a Jewish family, but his parents and most of his near family were totally irreligious. His father referred to Jewish rituals as “ancient superstitions.” Because his parents had no faith in Judaism, they sent their son to a Catholic school in the neighborhood. Einstein experienced some anti-Semitism, and as he grew older he became deeply religious, obeying all of the Jewish ordinances including dietary restrictions. He even composed hymns for the glorification of God which he sang to himself as he walked home from school.

When he was twelve years old, Einstein was exposed to David Hume's atheistic philosophy, and to a view of science that opposed religion and taught that the state and the Church intentionally deceive young people through lies. This caused Einstein to avoid religious rituals and to have an aversion to Jewish dogma and authority. He said that he had a profound reverence for the harmony and beauty of what he called the mind of God as it was expressed in the creation

of the universe and its laws, but he rejected all forms of dogma and authority.

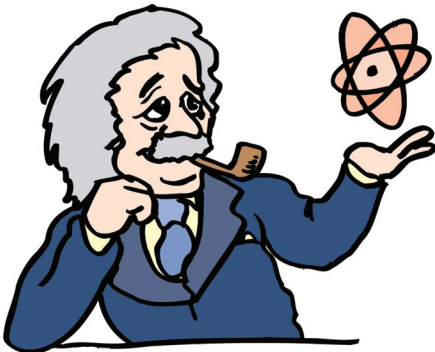
EINSTEIN DID NOT FLUNK MATH

A prevailing myth repeated even by “Ripley’s Believe it or Not” is that Einstein failed math as a child. This is simply not true. Before Einstein was 15 he had mastered differential and integral calculus. Einstein’s grades were always at the top of his class. As a twelve-year-old, Einstein was deriving geometric theorems on his own including a previously unknown proof of the Pythagorean theorem. Those of us who attempt to justify poor showing in mathematics on the basis of Einstein, are picking a bad choice to justify our struggles.

EINSTEIN WAS NOT AN ATHEIST

Shortly after his 50th birthday, Einstein was interviewed by George Sylvester Viereck. Viereck asked Einstein if he was an atheist to which Einstein said “I’m not an atheist. The problem involved is too vast for our limited minds. We are in the position of a little child entering a huge library filled with books in many languages. The child knows someone must have written those books. It does not know how. It does not understand the languages in which they are written. The child dimly suspects a mysterious order in the arrangement of the books but doesn’t know what it is. That, it seems to me, is the attitude of even the most intelligent human being toward God. We see the universe marvelously arranged and obeying certain laws but only dimly understand these laws.”

One of the most interesting answers Einstein gave to Viereck was his response to how Christianity had influenced him. Einstein said “I am enthralled by the luminous figure of the Nazarene. I accept the historical Jesus. No one can read the Gospels without feeling the actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates in every word. No myth is filled with such life.”



EINSTEIN DID NOT BELIEVE IN A PERSONAL GOD.

In spite of his strong statement about Christ, Einstein said he “could not conceive of a personal God who would

directly influence the actions of individuals or would sit in judgment on creatures of his own creation.” He went on to say that he believed “in Spinoza’s God, who reveals himself in the lawful harmony of all that exists, but not in a God who concerns himself with the fate and the doings of mankind.”

Atheists and believers are equally wrong in attempting to claim Einstein as a supporter of their position. Einstein was not a moral person, and his opinions on many issues are shaded by his immorality. His family history is not a good one, and there are many undesirable things that happened in his life. It is interesting that his great intellect led him to have great understandings of the way the universe is constructed, and to see the hand of God in that construction. It is also a concern that he did not see the destructive nature of his choices in life and how they affected others. Those who have an interest in the specifics of Einstein’s life will find Isaacson’s book to be easy to read and informative. Our position is that while he was a man of great intellectual ability in one area of man’s studies, he is not a role model and in fact demonstrates the futility of trying to do things your own way in defiance of God’s system of living.

—JNC

The Top Ten Predictions for 2009

- 1. The Bible will still have all the answers.*
- 2. Prayer will still work.*
- 3. The Holy Spirit will still move.*
- 4. God will still inhabit the praises of His people.*
- 5. There will still be God-anointed preaching.*
- 6. There will still be singing of praise to God.*
- 7. God will still pour out blessings upon His people.*
- 8. There will still be room at the Cross.*
- 9. Jesus will still love you.*
- 10. Jesus will still save the lost.*

The Birth of Christ and Christmas

by Joel Stephen Williams

Some years ago I was doing a series of sermons on the life of Christ. The third lesson was on the birth of Christ. It was during the summer months, but we sang songs like “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” and “Joy to the World.” The parents of one of our families were not members of the church and were visiting that Sunday. They were of the opinion that “the Churches of Christ do not believe in the birth of Jesus.” They were in absolute shock when we started singing those songs. When the sermon discussed the birth of Christ, they were even more dumbfounded. At lunch they declared to their family: “So you really do believe in the birth of Jesus after all!”



If the only thing we do at Christmas time is either say absolutely nothing about the birth of Christ, or we constantly lecture people that we do not know when Jesus was born, we end up teaching a negative message about Christmas. The impression some people get is: “They do not believe in the birth of Jesus.” While reminding people that we are not commanded to set aside a special day to honor the birth of Jesus, although there is nothing wrong with remembering his birth at any time (Romans 14:4–6), the

message some people hear is that we are opposed to the birth of Jesus in some manner. Our intentions may be good, but what we achieve, at times, is counterproductive.

Is there anything wrong with setting aside a special time to center our thoughts on the birth of Jesus? Granted, we are not specifically commanded to do this. However, is it wrong to think about, sing about, and teach about Jesus' birth at any time of the year? Must we only do it in July because others tend to do it in December? One veteran gospel preacher used to respond to this sort of thinking with a touch of sarcasm. He would say, "The Episcopalians down the street use their front door to go in and out of their church building. I guess we need to use the windows."

A useful parallel to our situation is found in the celebration of two festivals by the Jewish people, festivals which were not commanded by God anywhere in the Old Testament. One is the Feast of Purim which celebrated the deliverance of the Jewish people as recounted in the book of Esther. The second is the Feast of Dedication, or Hanuk-

Purim

פּוּרִים



מג אורים שמח

HAPPY HANUKKAH



kah, at which Jesus was present (John 10:22), which originated during the days between the Old Testament and the New Testament and celebrated the cleansing of their

temple. As Daniel Rouse suggests: "If God's people chose to spontaneously celebrate the cleansing of their temple and their deliverance as a people, could not God's people today similarly celebrate the birth of the Savior and his resurrection from the dead?"

While we do not know when the Nativity happened, late December is a good time to draw attention to the birth of Jesus. Others around us are doing the same, so our teaching emphasis will provide good reinforcement for the precious truth of God's incarnation.

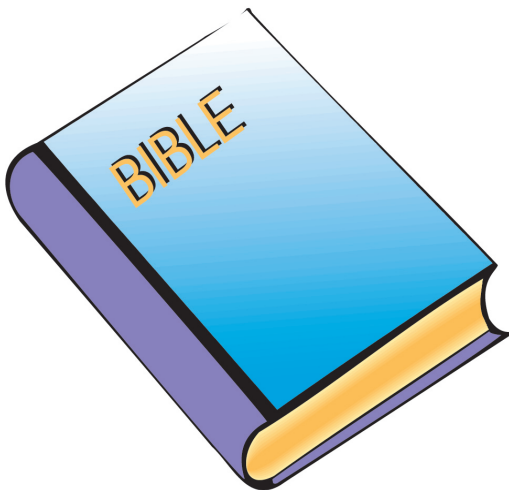
DESTRUCTIVE DISPENSATIONALISM

We make a conscious effort in this journal, to try to confine our content to matters related to apologetics—to questions that have to do with how we know there is a God, which God it is that we should believe in, and how science and faith are compatible. Necessarily we sometimes have to get into areas that involve science and apologetics in indirect ways, and thus we have explored UFOs, ancient astronaut theories, the occult, pseudoscience, and cults. These areas of study overlap science and faith in many ways, and the misuse of science and the Bible in these areas has always been a major focus of the material we have printed.

There is probably no religious belief that has caused more problems in modern times than dispensationalism. Ronald L. Numbers in his book *The Creationists* has shown that a vast percentage of fundamental creationists have based their beliefs on dispensationalism. Christian Zionism, in which churches are actively involved in promoting the Nation of Israel, is rooted in this belief system. Over half of Protestant denominations hold to dispensationalism in one form or another, and virtually all “televangelists” promote it including John Hagee, Jerry Falwell, Jim Bakker, Paul Crouch, Pat Robertson, Jimmy Swaggart, and Billy Graham. Other well known dispensationalists include Tim LaHaye, Hal Lindsey, Charles Ryrie, John Walvoord, and Eric

Sauer. Several well-known Christian organizations also promote it including Moody Bible Institute and Dallas Theological Seminary.

John Nelson Darby, Cyrus Scofield, and D. L. Moody were the architects of dispensationalism early in the twentieth century. The basic claim was that in 2 Timothy 2:15 when Paul told Timothy to “rightly divide the word of truth” that he was to divide it into



seven discrete dispensations. Various dispensationalists had different views of how the seven dispensations were to be identified including Scofield’s version which is built into the famous Scofield Study Bible. While different early dispensational preachers had different understandings and views, their basic belief system was constant. They all viewed the seven dispensations to be leading to the reestablishment of Israel as a world power with Jerusalem as the capital of the world and Jesus the supreme King of the world.

Most dispensational systems broke their seven dispensations into something like this:

Innocence	Genesis 1:3–3:6
Conscience	Genesis 3:7–8:14
Civil Government	Genesis 8:15–11:9
Patriarchal Rule	Genesis 11:10–Exodus 18:27
Mosaic Law	Exodus 19:1–John 14:30
Grace	Acts 1:1–Revelation 19:21
Millennium	Revelation 20:1–15

In dispensational tradition there is a permanent distinction made between Israel, the Gentiles, and the Church. Lewis Chafer, the founder of Dallas Theological Seminary put it this way: “The dispensationalist believes that throughout the ages God is pursuing two distinct purposes: one related to the earth with earthly people and earthly objectives involved which is Judaism; while the other is related to heavenly people and heavenly objectives involved, which is Christianity. Israel is an eternal nation, heir to an eternal land, and with an eternal kingdom, on which David rules from an eternal throne.” Dispensationalists go on to say that the promises made to Abraham and through him to the Jews are eternal, unconditional, and await future realization so that the land promised to Abraham and his descendants from the Nile to the Euphrates will be literally instituted and that Jesus Christ will return to a Jewish kingdom centered on a rebuilt temple in Jerusalem.

Many dispensationalists believe that when the Jewish nation



was reestablished in Palestine in 1948 that it was an indication that this was the generation when all of this was to take place. Very shortly then, in this belief, there will be a rapture in which Christ appears in the heavens and resurrects all dead Christians and together with all living believers takes them into heaven for seven years. During this seven years God is said to anoint 144,000 Jews to be missionaries for Christ. The Roman empire is revived as the European Common Market. The “Antichrist” solves the world’s problems and becomes the world dictator in Rome. A second “Antichrist” arises to govern Israel in collaboration with the Roman ruler. Israel rebuilds the temple and reestablishes Jewish worship including animal sacrifices. Arab countries, Russia, and Red China get involved and Christ returns with resurrected Christians to end the war and rules on David’s throne for 1,000 years. Later there is a final judgment for all of the wicked of all ages.

There are many variations of this scenario, and there are many detailed studies of the claims which show biblically why it is an incorrect theological view. If you cannot find studies in your local bookstore or church library, contact us and we will be glad to give you some addresses for materials to examine this in depth. That is not our purpose here. What we want to do here is to point out some major misunderstandings that impact people’s belief in the Bible as the Word of God, and major consequences that comes from this belief system.

DISPENSATIONALISTS DO NOT TAKE THE BIBLE LITERALLY.

Scofield maintained that dispensationalists are the only ones who take the Bible literally. One of his statements is “Not one instance exists of a ‘spiritual’ or figurative fulfillment of prophecy ... Jerusalem is always Jerusalem, Israel is always Israel, Zion is always Zion ... Prophecies may never be spiritualized, but are always literal.” We have stated over and over in this journal that to take the Bible literally means to look at who wrote it, who they wrote it to, and why they wrote it. If you do not do that, you end up with multiple contradictions and massive incompleteness in understanding scripture—Matthew’s genealogy from Abraham to Jesus (42 generations in Matthew 1) verses Luke’s 57 generations in Luke 3 being just one simple example.

It is interesting that the literalness that dispensationalists claim is never applied to statements that contradict their view. God’s promises are always conditional, and in passages like Deuteronomy 8:19–20; 30:15–20; and Joshua 23:15–16 the Jews were told that if they did not obey what God had given them, they would not inherit the prom-

ised land. In fact in Joshua 23:14 as Joshua gets ready to leave the Israelites he tells them that all of the promises that God had made to Abraham had been fulfilled.

DISPENSATIONALISTS HAVE A RACIAL, ETHNIC COMPREHENSION OF GOD AND THE CHURCH.

It does not matter which proponent of dispensationalism you read, they all have a common theme that political physical Israel is favored by God above all other people on earth. The founder of dispensationalism, John Nelson Darby, stated “The Jewish nation is never to enter the Church.” This notion of special earthly significance to one group of people flies in the face of all Jesus and the Apostles taught. In Acts 10 when Peter is given a special revelation about Cornelius he summarizes his new revelation by saying “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right” (verses 34–36).



Ephesians 2:11–22 Paul gives a beautiful picture of the fact that God has broken down all barriers, all walls, and made one body out of all of the division (verse 14). He tells the Ephesians there are no longer any foreigners, no aliens, but that we are all fellow citizens (verse 19). Galatians 3:26–29

beautifully shows that there are no special ethnic or racial groups in God’s sight. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” In Acts 15 the first century Christians dealt with attempts to promote Jewish tradition in the Church and rejected it. Jesus had a hard time getting his followers to understand that His “kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36), and that same concept is misunderstood by many people today.

DISPENSATIONALIST IDEAS SPILL OVER INTO POLITICAL AND SCIENTIFIC AREAS CREATING NEGATIVE IMPLICATIONS.

In 1980 a foundation called “The International Christian Embassy, Jerusalem” was set up to aid Israel—with a staff of 50 workers in

80 countries and an identity with the Likud party in Israel. Raising money for Israel and giving major support to Israel in its conflicts with its neighbors also takes place in some denominations in the United States, and there is a great deal of work done in lobbying and pressing political figures in our government to aid Israel. We have had several presidents in recent times who have been proponents of dispensationalism. Jesus was very clear that we are to “render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s and unto God what is God’s” (Matthew 22:21). Religious pressure for Israel based on dispensational beliefs is misguided and misapplied.

As we mentioned earlier, most fundamental creationists are dispensationalists. If you take the view that the first dispensation was one of innocence, and that nothing ever happened to man or beast that was anything other than innocent, then man was essentially in heaven when he started. Nothing died, nothing bad ever happened, no pain existed, and nature was always pleasant, positive and, ideal. Not only is this view unrealistic, it violates the description given in Genesis. In Genesis 2:15 we are told that man was put “in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.” Man was not a spirit creature already in heaven, he had to work—weeding, pruning, caring for the garden. When man ate something, it died. You cannot eat a banana without murdering massive numbers of seeds. When the curse was given to Eve she was told her pain would increase (Genesis 3:16) indicating she had been in pain before.

Another complication in dispensational teaching is that it puts time constraints on everything. Many dispensationalists take the reference to 1000 in passages like Revelation 20:2–3 to mean that the dispensations were all roughly that long. That makes the earth about 6,000 years old, and puts certain events in man’s history in the very recent past. Even such cities as Beijing, China, with city records going back far longer than 6,000 years have to be changed to fit this theology. Evidence continues to pile up from all areas of man’s studies in geology, astronomy, archeology, history, and genetics that this simply is not the case.

Dispensationalism is a man-made theology that is in conflict with the evidence, the Bible, and common sense. We must not borrow from its teachings in science, history, or politics because when we do we not only are misled ourselves, but we make God’s Word look foolish.

Quotations are from “Orchestrating the End” by Stephen Sizer, *SCP Journal*, Volume 31:4 & 32:1, 2008, page 52.

—JNC

Nobel Scientists and God

Editor's Note: One of the things that has come out of the battle between extremists in the evolution/creation controversy has been a flow of literature from atheists claiming that good scientists and intelligent, educated people do not believe in God. This is simply not true. Tihomir Dimitrov has compiled an e-book at <http://nobelists.net> of quotations of Nobel Prize winning scientists. In each issue of this journal we hope to quote statements from some of these.

*Arthur Schawlow—Nobel Laureate in Physics,
Co-founder of Laser Science*

“Religion is founded on faith. It seems to me that when confronted with the marvels of life and the universe, one must ask why and not just how. The only possible answers are religious. For me that means Protestant Christianity, to which I was introduced as a child and which has withstood the tests of a lifetime.”

“But the context of religion is a great background for doing science. In the words of Psalm 19, ‘The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament shouted his handiwork.’ Thus scientific research is a worshipful act, in that it reveals more of the wonders of God’s creation.”

“We are fortunate to have the Bible, especially the New Testament, which tells us so much about God in widely accessible human terms.”

“The world is so wonderful that I can’t imagine it just having come by pure chance.”

“You can’t expect a peasant and a philosopher to have the same picture of God. I think God is big enough to cover them all, even for science writers—they can have their picture of God.”

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Ancient Mountains on a Young Earth?

by Al Cornell

It has been over 30 years, and it was my struggle. I was taught that the earth is young, and I thought that Sacred Text required that viewpoint. Having a degree and a keen interest in natural science, I sought out the evidence to support that concept.

As a member of the Creation Research Society, I devoured all the material presented in their journal and eventually contributed a few book reviews and a short article to that publication. During the 1970s, I contributed articles to the *Firm Foundation*. Most of them dealt with God and nature, and five contended specifically for the young earth concept.

Yet, my devotion to that concept failed to sustain faith in it. Toward the end of the 1970s, I became convinced that something was woefully wrong with the flood geology belief system. I went silent on the subject of earth age. This is the first that I have written on it in over 30 years. Now that I perceive Genesis 1 differently, I am content to let God speak, and I do not feel compelled to defend an interpretation. Though I am bothered that some young-earth advocates are dogmatic, I am not motivated to exhibit the contention that was evident in my earlier writings. That is why I could remain silent on the subject for so long and now write with trepidation.



I do not perceive earth-age as an issue we need to be contentious about, yet I understand the contention as one who used to promote it. I used to think that all believers thought the earth was young until nineteenth century geology set off the conflict. However, nearly all Christian writers from the second and third centuries who mention the subject present an interpretation on Genesis 1 that promotes a longer

time frame than six days. It is worth noting that this topic was never an issue causing dissension in the early church.

I live near the edge of the glaciated and non-glaciated landscapes. My undergraduate study of soils had left me with a perplexing question of why both land forms and soil formation appeared so vastly different between the two areas. The non-glaciated soils and land forms seemed to be many times older than those of the glaciated areas. Eventually I decided they look that way because they are indeed many times older, and neither could possibly fit my earlier concept of flood geology.

The main technique for aging the earth is by the measurement of radioactive decay. Several different isotopes converge by indicating an age of a little over four billion years. They constitute convincing proof that the earth has not always been here. For anyone who is interested, the decay of Rubidium 87 to Strontium 87 is fascinating. While measuring radioactive decay constitutes a science that is used substantially throughout the earth, the only objection brought against it is to search through the literature for examples where it obviously did not work because of contamination or some error. The technique is way too accomplished to be discredited by some mistakes that have arisen while using it.



In the heavens, supernova from over 100,000 light-years away have led to some young-earth advocates proposing that light used to travel many times faster than it does today. In contrast, physicists have been discovering many things about the universe

that are extremely fine tuned and that appear to demand a Creator. There is evidence that, in order to have the kind of universe that exists, the speed of light could not vary.

My last three paragraphs have introduced a few things that do not harmonize with either flood geology or a young earth. A more detailed study of these and a number of other phenomena of the universe caused me to take another look at the Sacred Text. I know some throw up a red flag at this statement proclaiming, "That's letting science dictate your interpretation of Scripture." However, if we believe God is Maker of the cosmos and Author of the Word, our search unifies into an expectation of harmony. My young-earth concept left me with no hope of finding that harmony.

Modern science was born out of a community that placed great emphasis on its interpretation of the Bible. While Galileo personally did not struggle with his concept of science and religion, others brought pressure to bear against his scientific discoveries.



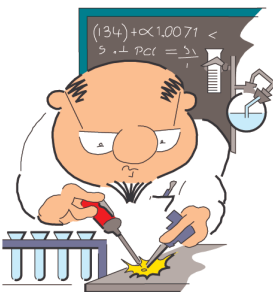
Copernicus' work related to the relationship of earth to the sun earned for him the following remark attributed to Martin Luther, "This fool Copernicus wishes to reverse the entire science of astronomy; but sacred Scripture tells us that Joshua commanded the sun to stand still and not the earth." We have gone past Luther's problem with the text of Joshua 10:12–13 and realize how foolish it would be to insist

that the sun revolves around the earth. Yet, by looking at the text, it is easy to understand how being devoted to a literal interpretation prompted Luther's remark.

Science undermined some other concepts that people held to be religious truth. Flat-earth defenders had a hard time letting go of the "four corners of the earth." Also Revelation speaks of a third of the stars falling to earth. A third of a few thousand little light specks in the sky does not sound like much. However, a third of a billion trillion massive stars helps us to concentrate on the meaning of the figurative text rather than to expect the Big Bear to come tumbling down along with assorted galaxies.

Now, when we consider Genesis 1, we are dealing with events that occurred at some time in the past. That makes it easier to confuse the issue and to not concede that science has located another error in our interpretation of the Bible. As a consequence, many, who are compelled to accept the science related to the phenomena discussed in the previous paragraphs, dig in their heels and attempt to explain away the science of an old earth. Some folks have produced movies that persuade entire congregations that the old-earth concept is an evolutionary conspiracy to undermine the Word of God. As a consequence, this present conflict of religion versus science, primarily in America, does not appear to be going away any time soon.

To the extent that the scientific community understands Christianity to be a young-earth religion, it perceives Christianity to be built on myths that contradict science. This errant view of Christianity, caused by a particular interpretation of Genesis 1, creates a major difficulty for young Christians entering scientific fields. As they progress in their study of science, most encounter a significant problem. Some lose faith. Some come to the realization that their faith is in no way dependent on the young-earth view. A few persist with a personal conflict by accepting old-earth science and young-earth Christianity.





An awesome portion of the Word, Genesis 1 combines dynamic with concise. It strikes at the root of any religion or science that blurs the distinctions between God, man, other living things, and the inanimate. God is referenced 38 times, setting Him apart as Creator of all. It conflicts sharply with ideas contained in naturalism, paganism, polytheism, New Ageism, and Eastern religions. It emphasizes earth and man because it focuses on questions of human existence and purpose.

It blends a poetic essence into a prose substance in the eight acts of creation beginning at day one, each with, “And [or ‘Then’] God said.” Check out how the first four acts line up chronologically with the last four. They contain a parallelism that in any other section of Scripture would lead to the allowance of some poetic license.

We appreciate the morning stars singing together while the earth’s foundation was being laid in Job 38:4–7, though we know inanimate objects do not sing and young-earth folks would believe they had not been created yet. That same God who spoke to Job could incorporate some figurative language when revealing the great mystery of creation in Genesis 1. Most of us are persuaded that those commentating on Scripture can cause us undo confusion by pretending to have a complete understanding of all things. Some also force a totally literal interpretation on the beginning text. This pretense of complete knowledge of such great mysteries leads to self-promotion and religious dissension.

A problem arises because most people do not have a lot of time to devote to this subject. As a consequence, they are vulnerable to accepting the first or most persistent view they are exposed to. There is no easy answer here, and I would encourage people to expose themselves to some natural science as well as to read some material from the young-earth folks. In addition to **Does God Exist?** materials, read some from the Intelligent Design movement and throw in some Hugh Ross, Gerald Schroeder, Frances Collins, or others. Unfortunately, all of these viewpoints can be persuasively represented, creating initial confusion as to who is right. Yet, in time, one begins to see through some of the weaknesses. In the meantime, it is easier to take a more humble attitude toward Genesis 1 and other creation passages.

From the beginning of modern science, Christians made the mistake of expecting science to be the ultimate confirmation of their theology. In reality, science proved some of the theology to be in error. It also proved to be totally incapable of finding and turning over a rock beneath which God abides or finding ultimate answers



to what had once appeared to be a rather simple cosmos. We still walk by faith. God will keep it that way till the end. Because of the magnificence of His handiwork, many of us are influenced to praise His glory; however, we accept that science will never penetrate the shadow of James Russell Lowell's poem, "... And behind the dim unknown standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own."

In Genesis 49:26 Jacob refers to the ancient mountains and the age-old hills. Some people maintain that those hills and mountains formed during the flood and were a mere 6,000 years old. I think this text presents them as being considerably older.



Selected Thoughts on Friendship

(from *Pulpit Helps*)

Blessed are they who have the gift of making friends, for it is one of God's best gifts. It involves many things, but above all, the power of going out of one's self and appreciating whatever is noble and loving in another. —Thomas Hughes

Friendship is a horizon which expands whenever we approach it. —E. R. Hazelip

A true friend is someone who is there for you when he'd rather be somewhere else. —Len Wein

A friend is a push when you're stopped; a word when you're lonely; a guide when you're searching for something; a smile when you're sad; a song when you're glad. —Charlie "T" Jones



Traipsing Into Evolution

by David Dewolf, John West, Casey Luskin, and Jonathan Witt.
Discovery Institute Press, Seattle, Wash., 2006,
ISBN 0-9638654-9-8

At the end of 2005 a trial was held in Dover, Pennsylvania, which is known as *Kitzmiller v. Dover*. Atheists hold this trial up as proof that no one claiming that there is design in the creation can be a good scientist or have a scientifically credible position academically. Atheists have tried to paint all believers in God with the same brush and have used this lawsuit as the basis of this approach. We continue to see references to this trial in scientific and popular literature, and very little publicity has been given to the facts about the trial. The Discovery Institute is an organization made up of scientists with advanced degrees who support the efforts of the organization to do research on designed features in the cosmos. In the back of the book are over 80 scientists from all over the world who are listed as *Amici Curiae*. This strong scientific backing has caused some vicious attacks on the Discovery Institute from the media and from leading atheists and evolutionists.

This book is an analysis of the trial from the perspective of the Discovery Institute. On page 14 of the book there is a wonderful summary of the book and the challenges it makes to the validity of the trial which you will find helpful:

1) Kitzmiller's Partisan History of Intelligent Design. The presiding judge in the case Judge John E. Jones purports to offer a definitive history on intelligent design as an offshoot of "creationism," but the historical narrative he presents is shallow, one sided, and suppresses many facts.

2) Kitzmiller's Unpersuasive Case Against the Scientific Status of Intelligent Design. The centerpiece of Judge Jones's opinion is his assertion that intelligent design "is an interesting theological argument, but that is not science." Not only does this assertion go well beyond the judge's legitimate authority, it flatly contradicts both logic and the evidence presented in the court record.

3) **Kitsmiller's Failure to Treat Religion in a Neutral Manner.**

Judges are required by the constitution to treat religious questions neutrally, but Judge Jones applies different standards when examining the religious implications of intelligent design and Darwinian evolution. He even attempts to decide which theological view of evolution is correct.

4) **Kitsmiller's Limited Value as a Precedent.** Judge Jones purports to answer once and for all the question of whether it is lawful to include intelligent design in public school science curricula, but in fact his opinion on this question has almost no value in establishing a precedent for other judges.

The book takes these four points and does a good job of defending them and explaining what took place in Dover that makes this court decision almost meaningless. We have stated in this journal that intelligent design is a wonderful apologetic, but it is not a method of solving scientific problems like avian bird flu. Those interested in this trial and in the question of intelligent design will want to read this book. It is obvious that major errors in the court case in Kitsmiller make it pretty much useless in the evolution-creation debate. This discussion is far from over.

God's Way

by Wayne Leeper, available from Wayne Leeper Ministries,
PO Box 2524, Lebanon, TN 37088, wayne_leeper@excite.com.

One of our resource persons over the years that this ministry has been in existence has been Wayne Leeper. Early in our work Wayne allowed us to distribute his work *Prelude to Glory* which explained the alleged contradictions in the Bible about the time between Jesus' death and His resurrection. Later we added his book *Star of Jacob* which dealt with what the Star of Bethlehem was and what it was not. We still carry those two books in our loan and at cost materials. Wayne is a serious student of the Bible, and a relentless searcher for answers to the challenges that come to faith in God.

In recent years Wayne has been involved in helping people who are struggling with emotional pain. We reviewed Ron Wilkins' excellent book, *Removing Emotional Pain*, in our March/April 2007 issue of this journal, and Wayne has built on Ron's material and is doing work in prisons and congregations on the biblical approach to emotional pain and how to deal with it. This book is a product of this work and provides a good basis for group study of this complex and very prevalent problem.

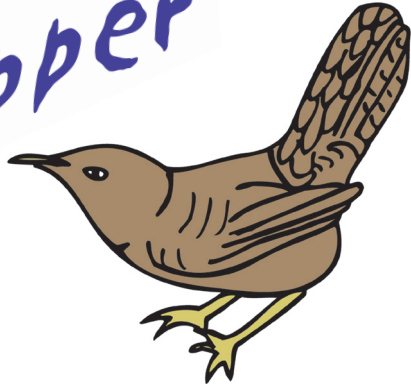
The book is divided into two parts and has four appendices. The first part is an eight-chapter discussion of the nature and effects of emotional pain. The second part is a six-chapter discussion of how to

learn to process and remove emotional pain. The chapters all have a useful exercise for people to engage in and ten questions for the reader to consider. There are worksheets and charts to assist the reader, and strong suggestions on how to deal with various situations.

The material is from a biblical perspective, and shows clearly the wisdom of what God has given us to help us be mature stable functional adults. It will be a great small groups tool and could be used in a Bible class with great success. We recommend it highly to Christians looking for solutions to painful memories and situations that have happened in their lives.

DANDY DESIGNS

The Dipper



I remember fishing in a trout stream in the western part of the United States years ago and seeing a bird I thought was a wren sitting on a rock near the edge of the water. The bird was singing with typical wren-like trills and flute sounds. It was an odd looking wren mainly because it was bobbing up and down at an incredible rate—making a bob by bending its knees nearly every second. It was a pretty plain dark colored bird in appearance and seemed incredibly tame. As I got closer to it expecting it to fly any second I wondered why, if it had come here to drink, it let me get so close. Suddenly the bird dove into the water and “flew” to the bottom of the pool where I lost sight of it.

This bird is known as the water ouzel. It is related to the wrens, but has been equipped to live in a very different way than its cousins. Nicknamed the “dipper” because of its bobbing habit, this bird feeds

on insect larvae, fish eggs, and other small creatures at the bottom of streams in the western United States. They can dive as deep as twenty feet and spend a large percentage of their daytime under water. They will swim in rapids and have no fear of white water.

Wrens are generally not associated with water, but this bird is wonderfully adapted to its lifestyle. Under their outer feathers they have a thick layer of downy feathers which keep them insulated against the cold of the mountain streams they usually inhabit. They have a gland near their tail that is full of oil, and while all birds have glands that help them maintain their feathers, the water ouzel has ten times more of this water-repelling oil than other birds. They rub this oil on their outer feathers and are essentially waterproof as they dive and swim after their food. The feet of the water ouzel are not webbed, and their swimming is done by their wings. The feet are used for hanging on to rocks as they nest under waterfalls, and scratching along the bottom of the streams for imbedded foods. Webbed feet would actually be a liability for these vital functions. They build their nests with moss and ferns, usually under the lip of a waterfall where the nest is very safe.

Evolutionary scenarios for the development of the equipment of the water ouzel will suggest a gradual adaptation to a water environment. It is clear that there is an elaborate design of a variety of physical features that allows the dipper to live as it does. Design features that involve chemistry and specialized physical features suggest an intelligence is behind the features we see. Chance explanations and gradualism stretch credibility very thin in cases like this. God has special designs for special creatures and the water ouzel is one of those. Data from: Jack Elrod, "Mark Trail" comic strip, February 3, 2008.



Drinking with Its Foot

One of the most interesting fields of science in today's world is the field of biomimetics. This is the study of how to mimic or copy a design in nature and produce something that benefits mankind. Most of us know that Velcro was designed in 1948 by George de Mestral by looking at cockleburs and how they clung to his dog's coat. Numerous studies are ongoing because great success has been achieved in a variety of fields by studying and mimicking things in nature.



One of the most interesting studies that is going on is the study of the thorny devil lizard of Australia. This lizard lives in the outback of Australia in incredibly dry conditions. Dr. Andrew Parker has been studying how this lizard gets water in such an arid, hostile environment. It turns out that the animal actually gets its water through its feet.

Using a micro-CT scanner, Parker has discovered that there are tiny capillaries between the scales of the lizard that wick the water to the animal's mouth by way of channels between its feet and its mouth. If you stick the lizard's hind foot in a dish of water, very quickly its back will become covered with water, and shortly after that the lizard will be drinking the water that comes into its mouth. The system is eloquently designed to allow the lizard to get water from moist sand and channel it into his mouth.

Parker is an evolutionary biologist and his comment on this design is “Why not learn from what evolution has wrought.” We would suggest that chance is a difficult model to use to try to explain this characteristic. Design of this complexity and magnitude suggest an intelligence planned the system.



The applications of this system for man are huge. We may be able to design systems to recover water from mud, dirt, and sand so that water supplies in dry areas can be preserved and industrial dehydration techniques can be improved. The thorny devil lizard may offer a remarkable solution to some of man’s greatest water problems.

Data from *National Geographic*, April 2008, page 68.

 A collage of various animals and plants on a blue background. The items include: a snake, a duck, a cardinal, a green tree frog, a mole, a bee, a crab, a squirrel, a shark, a sunflower, a butterfly, a tortoise, a hummingbird, a camel, a crocodile, a chipmunk, and a young girl with red hair.

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News and Notes

Flip-Flop Textbook Errors. We have mentioned from time to time the fact that the Mel Gabler Institute in Texas has reviewed and found massive errors and bias in high school books, many of them promoting atheistic views. Now a government book titled *American Government Institutions and Policies*, 10th Edition, published by Houghton Mifflin Company has stirred up complaints among skeptics and atheists because of its inaccuracies and pro-fundamentalist views. The book claims that global warming evidence is unreliable, that prayer in a public school is illegal, and that colonists wrote the constitution as they did because of their belief in original sin. Skeptics are complaining about what they view as fundamentalist bias on the part of the authors, who by the way are a Pepperdine professor and a former director of the Bush administrations faith-based initiative. It is hard to write a textbook that will please everyone, but it is interesting to see atheists and skeptics being the ones who have the complaint this time. By the way, prayer in the public school is legal it just cannot be compulsory or led by a teacher. Source: *Skeptical Inquirer*, July/August 2008, page 7.

Phoenix Lights—Another UFO Scam. The number of UFO claims seems to be dropping rapidly, and one of the most recent claims will contribute to a continuance of that trend. On April 21, 2008, hundreds of residents in Phoenix reported four or five bright red lights hovering over the city. Many stories developed about the lights, but it has now been confirmed that a local huckster tied road flares to helium balloons and released them at one minute intervals. A neighbor of the man has confirmed the incident and what caused it. We need to remember that UFO means unidentified flying objects, meaning we do not know what it is. UFO does not mean that little green men are flying around manipulating us and using us for some bizarre plot they are hatching. Source: *The Business Journal of Phoenix*, April 22, 2008. Available at <http://phoenix.bizjournals.com/phoenix/stories/2008/04/21/daily23.html> with a follow-up story at <http://phoenix.bizjournals.com/phoenix/stories/2008/05/05/story9.html>.

Gene complexity and Humanness. Why are humans so different than every other life form on this planet? What gives us our creativity, our inventiveness, our communication skills, etc. That question has been batted around for a long time, and as the human genome was mapped out in recent years many people felt the unique complexity of the human genome would answer these questions. It turns out that humans do not have more genes than other forms of life. In fact, humans have fewer than 25,000 genes, roughly the same as a fruit fly or a roundworm. What *IS* different about humans is the interactions that take place among proteins. Human genes interact in roughly 650,000 different ways which is ten times more than a fruit fly and three times that of a roundworm. These interactions allow for the massive diversity and complexity seen in the human species. These interactions also involve RNA and other parts of the gene machinery. Michael Stumpf summarized the complexity of the system by saying “It’s much, much more than just the organization of protein interactions. There’s so much we don’t know.” When you have such enormous complexity in something as basic as the gene pool that controls heredity, it is obvious that trying to explain its creation on a chance basis also becomes something that we know very little about, and in fact is probably an inadequate explanation of how life came to be on this planet. Source: *Science News*, June 7, 2008, page 10.

Enceladus Comet Like. One of the moons of Saturn named Enceladus has been studied by the Cassini spacecraft as it flew within 120 miles of the surface of this unusual moon. As it did so it found Enceladus was jetting plumes of gas in the same way comets do. The plume contained water vapor, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, and organic material—some twenty times denser than scientists had expected. There may be a connection between the debris found in the distant parts of the solar system and the moons orbiting our Jovian planets. Astronomical sources of organic material have great interest to scientists and may have some interesting connections to the geologic history of the earth. Source: *Astronomy*, July 2008, page 26.

Hippies Are Not Growing Out of It. Those of us who lived through the 1960s used to say of the bizarre things that were being done by us and our peers that we would all grow out of it. Some of us matured to the point of becoming responsible self-supporting adults. However, a recent study reported in *Scientific American* (May 2008, page 22) indicates that drug indulgences have continued for many baby boomers. Emergency room treatment for cocaine abuse has risen from 1400 in 1995 to almost 5000 in 2002, an increase of 240 percent. Heroin use rose 160 percent, marijuana use rose 467 percent, and amphetamine rose 700 percent in the same period. Admissions

to illicit drug use in the past 12 months rose from 2.7 percent in 2002 to 4.4 percent in 2005. The same study reports that the physical effects of alcohol and these drugs have “devastating consequences.” All attempts to justify the use of drugs of all kinds including alcohol fly in the face of the evidence.

EPA Scientists Have Political Interference. A questionnaire distributed to 5,500 EPA scientists received 1,586 responses in which 60 percent of them said they had experienced political interference during the past five years. Rep. Henry Waxman said that there was a pattern of ignoring and manipulating science to affect risk assessment and the crafting of regulations. Source: From an AP release which can be viewed at http://www.cnn.com/2008/TECH/04/23/epa.scientists.ap/index.html?eref=rss_topstories.

Another Ghost Busted. In our obsession with wacky news today, any claim of a ghost gets front page attention, but when it is explained away it rarely gets in the paper at all. In June 2006 a surveillance camera on the Sante Fe courthouse revealed a glowing spot drifting in front of a patrol car. When it was put on YouTube it generate 132,000 hits with a general consensus that it was a ghost. Benjamin Radford an investigator specializing in bizarre claims has shown that the ghost was lady bugs crawling across the lens of the camera. It was glowing because of the morning sun hitting the lens at a low angle. It is blurry because of how close it was to the camera. Like bigfoot, crop circles, psychic claims, the Loch Ness monster, and UFOs we have a case of when people do not believe in something they will believe anything.

ANNOUNCING THE DOES GOD EXIST? 2009 CANYON-LANDS TRIP. WHAT: A bus tour of the Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, Petrified Forest, and Zion national parks, Lowell Observatory, and Meteor Crater with John Clayton, Alan Doty, and Mark Story. A Christian experience of instruction and devotionals in one of America’s great natural areas. WHEN: September 13–18, 2009. HOW MUCH: From \$549 (three or four in a room) to \$898 for single occupancy. The cost covers the bus trip, all motels, breakfasts, instructional materials, park fees, IMAX presentation, and the final dinner. The cost does not include lunch and dinner, tips, spending money. No money is given to John Clayton or **Does God Exist?** WHO: Anyone over the age of eight. The ability to walk is not an issue. Hiking is available, but not compulsory. For more information and an itinerary contact John Clayton at jncdge@aol.com, 1555 Echo Valley Drive, Niles MI 49120, or 269-687-9426. Or contact Queenslander Tours at qltours.com or 877-865-6711.

As we gather to thank God for the blessings of 2008, we also thank you for your support

As the world remembers the coming of Christ, we are reminded that many people still need to know He loves them.

As we look forward to 2009, we pray that God will bless you and your family.

*John Clayton
Roland Earnst
Linda Glover
Karl Marcussen*

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Signed—Karl H. Marcussen, Managing Editor, Sept. 23, 2008

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, 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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