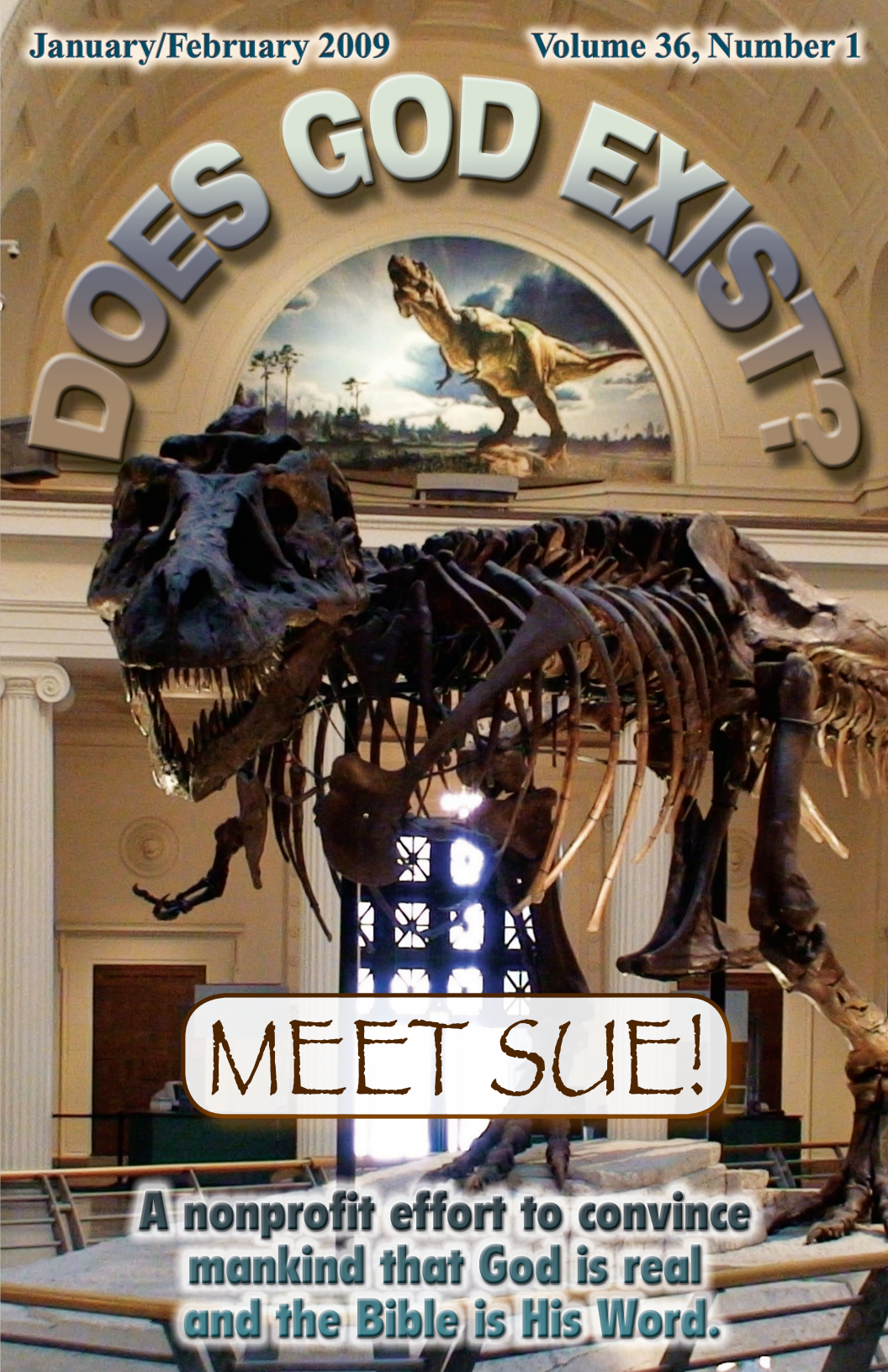


January/February 2009

Volume 36, Number 1

DOES GOD EXIST?

A large Tyrannosaurus Rex skeleton is the central focus, displayed in a museum setting. Above the skeleton, in a large arched window, is a painting of a living T-Rex in a natural, outdoor environment. The text "DOES GOD EXIST?" is written in large, 3D-style letters across the top of the image, arching over the window.

MEET SUE!

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

Does God Exist? Lectureships

- Mar. 22–25 Grand Junction, CO
970-245-4210
- Apr. 3–5 Covington, IN
765-793-7277
- Apr. 26–28 Burleson, TX
817-295-2233
- May 10–12 Sundridge, ON
705-384-0597
- Aug. 10–14 Does God Exist?
 Retreat, Niles, MI
- Sept. 13–18 2009 Canyonlands
 Tour

*Call to confirm before going
to any of these programs*

* * * * *

You can check on our Web
site for an updated list of
lectures. Go to:

www.doesgodexist.org

Articles in this Issue:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------|----|
| Meet Sue! | 3 |
| Maligning God in Ignorance | 7 |
| What Kind of Pain Is There
in Hell? | 14 |
| The Immunological Paradox
of Pregnancy | 18 |

Special Features:

Guest Articles

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------|----|
| Death and Dying Verses
Life and Living | 12 |
|-------------------------------------------|----|

Nobel Scientists and God 17

Book Reviews:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| The Shack | 21 |
| Evolution: The Grand
Experiment | 22 |

Dandy Designs

- | | |
|----------------------------|----|
| Water: Stranger & Stranger | 23 |
| Sixth Sense | 26 |

News and Notes 27

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------|----|
| Does God Exist? Retreat and
Tours | 30 |
|---------------------------------------------|----|

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 or visit www.doesgodexist.tv.

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

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

Home Page: <http://www.doesgodexist.org>

Other sites: dandydesigns.org, whypain.org, and doesgodexist.tv

Send subscription requests, orders, or address changes to

Does God Exist?, PO Box 2704, South Bend, IN 46680-2704

Phone: 574-299-0145

DOES GOD EXIST? (USPS 011-010) is published bimonthly in January/February, March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October, and November/December by Does God Exist?, 814 S. Main St., South Bend, IN 46601-3008. Subscription is free upon request. Periodicals postage paid at South Bend, IN. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: DOES GOD EXIST?, PO Box 2704, South Bend, IN 46680-2704.

MEET SUE!

The cover of our journal for this issue has a picture of perhaps the most famous dinosaur in the world. The name of the dinosaur is Sue—named after Sue Hendrickson, the fossil digger who found the specimen in South Dakota on August 12, 1990. The sex of the dinosaur is unknown, but it is the largest, most complete, and best preserved *Tyrannosaurus rex* ever found. There are only seven skeletons of *T. rex* in museums with 50 percent or more of the bones present. Over 200 bones of Sue have been found and are in good condition. The Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago paid nearly \$8.4 million for Sue, the most money ever paid for a fossil. The money came from a variety of sources so that the public could see this specimen and so that scientists from a variety of fields could study it.

Our reason for discussing Sue is that dinosaurs capture the imagination of children and adults alike. Enormous numbers of questions come to us about dinosaurs, and religionists have made many false claims about dinosaurs. As more and more data on Sue is published, more questions are answered—and new ones are also generated. One of the themes we constantly promote in this journal is that science and the Bible are friends, not enemies. The more we know of the creation, the closer we get to the Creator. The Bible repeatedly tells us that we can know there is a God through the creation around us, and that God’s wisdom can be seen in the heavens and on the earth (see Romans 1:19–22, Psalm 19, etc.). Man-made theories and human creeds will suffer in the face of new facts, but God’s wisdom and design shines brighter and brighter as we learn the history of the cosmos. Truth is not only stranger than fiction, but it is stranger and more amazing than we can imagine.

One of the amazing things about some dinosaurs is their size. Sue is 42 feet long, 13 feet tall at the hips, and has teeth 7½ to 12 inches long. She would have weighed somewhere around seven tons when she was alive. The skull is five feet long and would have weighed 600 pounds—in fact the head on the picture on our cover is a plastic replica. The real skull is



Sue's Real Skull
Field Museum, Chicago

also on display at the Field Museum. The problem was that if they put the skull on the skeleton with the steel rods that hold the rest of Sue together the rods could not have held the skull. If steel cannot handle the weight of the skull, imagine the design required of bones and muscle to do so. Sue's brain was just over 1,000 cc—or roughly a quart. A human brain will be half again as large. This animal was a machine, operating on instinct, not logical thinking. Brain size does not always indicate intelligence, but a small brain does put limitations on what an animal can do.

Because of the high quality of preservation of Sue, it has been



Coprolite

possible to learn a great deal about how she lived. All studies of coprolite (fossilized excrement) from *T. rex* specimens indicate that they were meat eaters. The coprolite contains teeth of many dinosaurs, pieces of bone, skin, and other remains of animals that were eaten. Many of us have done the popular biology lab in which owl pellets are studied to see what the owls ate. With the dinosaurs there is no doubt that the *T. rex* was a 100 percent meat eater. This does not necessarily mean that *T. rex* was

a hunter because scavengers also eat meat.

When bones are preserved in good condition it is possible to see where muscles were attached. Looking at hip bones and hind limbs, we can see the muscle placement. A basic rule of muscle physiology is that the strength of a muscle increases by about two thirds as the mass of the animal is doubled. For a dinosaur to run as portrayed in movies like *Jurassic Park*, 86 percent of the body mass would have to be in the leg muscles alone. Scientists have calculated that the maximum speed a *T. rex* could run was about 11 mph. Sue walked with straight knees and mostly ate carrion—dead animals. The huge plant-eating dinosaurs that were on the earth at the time of the *T. rex* created major waste problems. God has always built ecosystems with animals that process waste, and *T. rex* would serve that role admirably.

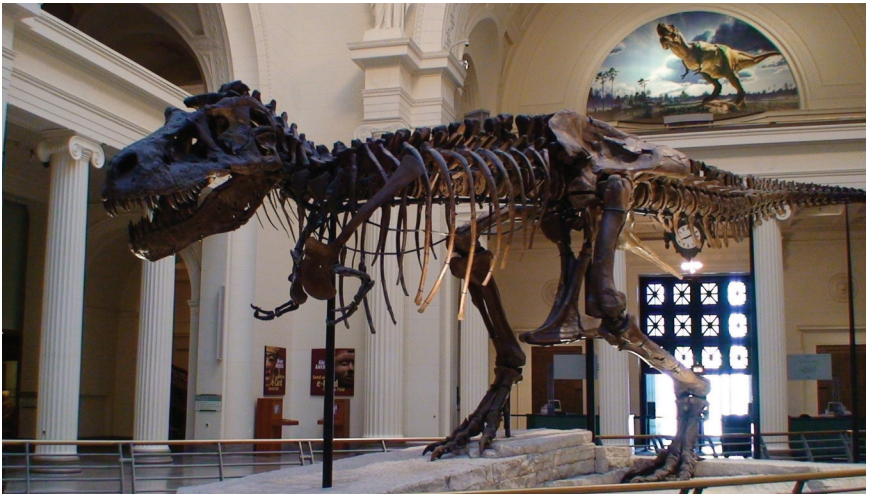
One of the lessons that Sue and her contemporaries can teach us is that denominational theologies of death are not correct. Many denominations have taught that there was no such thing as death until Adam and Eve sinned. Statements in the Bible such as 1 Corinthians 15:21–22 which tell us that death entered through Adam are viewed as physical statements applying to all of life. One of the first problems that arises in this theology is that nothing can eat anything without death taking place. When you eat a plant or the fruit of a plant, things die.

To produce the humus in soil, things must die. Those who promote the idea that nothing died until Adam and Eve sinned will usually say that animal death is what entered the world—not plant death. Cells in our bodies die regularly. In fact, outside of your brain, every cell in your body dies and is replaced roughly every seven years. What kind of animals would this include? Microscopic animals? How about worms? What about insects?

The problem here is that the subject of sin and Adam and Eve is a spiritual message, not a physical one. God had told Adam and Eve that “In the day you eat of it, you shall surely die” (Genesis 2:17). Did they drop dead physically when they ate of the forbidden fruit? Obviously not. Did they drop dead spiritually when they ate of the forbidden fruit? Absolutely! Jesus came to restore that spiritual life. Attempting to make the fall a physical thing with physical consequences creates a myriad of problems and contradictions because of a refusal to recognize the spiritual nature of man’s separation from God.

Sue shows us clearly that animals were being eaten and animals were designed to eat those animals. Without that process, nature would have been out of balance very quickly. The result would have been catastrophic. X-rays of Sue show that she had two broken ribs, probably from confrontations with other dinosaurs. CT scans show clearly that Sue was designed for a carnivorous diet. The teeth were designed to cut meat and would not have worked to grind up grains. Her forelimbs had a serrated claw to cut meat into bite-size chunks.

Another interesting find connected to Sue has fanned the question of whether the dinosaurs are related to birds. For the first time a wishbone (or furcula) was found intact in Sue. While this does not prove dinosaurs were birds, it is a find that might support that view. This raises a good demonstration of the credibility of the biblical ac-



count. In the Bible, the taxonomic classifications are very general. The Hebrew word *min* is used for kind, and its use is very consistent in Genesis 1 and Genesis 6 in the flood account. In all of these cases and in 1 Corinthians 15:39, four kinds of flesh are identified—the flesh of fish, the flesh of birds, the flesh of beasts, and the flesh of man. The flesh of fish would include fish, amphibians, and reptiles—all of whom are cold blooded, have scales, and very similar anatomical structure. The flesh of birds is very different, but would include all kinds of birds including some, like Darwin’s finches, who have developed in recent times. As scientists debate whether dinosaurs are birds or reptiles, or fall into a grouping of their own, we have to be reminded of the incredible wisdom and accuracy of the Bible whose four groups of flesh will accommodate dinosaurs no matter what scientists decide. This is an interesting question, and we will all be fascinated to see how it turns out. Sue shows us that design and planning has preceded us on this planet. Its incredible complexity serves to impress us with the Designer who planned it all long before man was on the scene.



Sue's Model Skull
Field Museum, Chicago

Let our children enjoy dinosaurs and be enthralled with how they lived, how big they were, and what their role was in preparing the earth for man. Let us not create tabloid-mentality images of babies riding on the back of a *T. rex* as it happily munches grass. Sue and her contemporaries were not playmates of man and did not exist when Adam and Eve were on the earth. The animals of Job 38–41 were not dinosaurs, but they too served man and were a part of his history. That story will be taken up in another discussion.

—John N. Clayton

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!*



MALIGNING GOD IN IGNORANCE



God is arguably the most unpleasant character in all of fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control freak; a vindictive bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.

—Richard Dawkins

Atheists continue to flood the media and the Web with abusive and vitriolic attacks on God, the Bible, and believers—especially those of us who have chosen to produce materials available to the public supporting belief in God. The above quote from one of the heroes of modern atheism, Richard Dawkins, is typical. What is interesting is the flood of belligerent e-mails I receive from atheists simply repeating Dawkins' phrases and using whole paragraphs from his books and articles without even giving him credit. They also repeat his errors, of which the public is generally unaware.

Richard Dawkins is a brilliant biologist, and in his own field has contributed much to man's knowledge of biology. However, the ignorance he radiates when he attacks the Bible is astounding. There have even been other leading atheists who have been disturbed by some of his diatribes. In Alister McGrath's book *The Dawkins Delusion* Michael Ruse is quoted as saying that Dawkins "makes him embarrassed to be an atheist."

The quote at the top of this page provides a good opportunity to sample the misconceptions that not only Dawkins, but the general public have about the God revealed to us through the Bible. Let us examine why these words are not accurate descriptions of what the Bible portrays as the nature of God.

JEALOUS AND PROUD OF IT: There is no question that God declares himself in the Bible to be a jealous God. Passages like Exodus 20:5; 34:14; Deuteronomy 32:16, 21; 1 Kings 14:22; Psalm 78:58; 79:5; etc., make no bones about God's jealous nature. What Dawkins and most atheists fail to comprehend is the love relationship that God wants to have with those who are uniquely created in His image. In the New Testament the Bible makes a comparison between

marriage and that relationship (see Matthew 25:1–13; Revelation 19:7–8; 21:2,9). God wants humans to be faithful to Him, just as we want our mate to be faithful to us in our own marriages. When God expresses jealousy it is the same kind of pain and hurt that we have or would have with an unfaithful mate. If your husband or wife left you and began a new intimate relationship with someone else, would you be jealous? Of course you would, in a very hurt and angry way. Such jealousy is not vindictive or petty as a child's jealousy might be. This is also why Israel's infatuation with other gods and pagan systems was described in the Bible as adultery (see Jeremiah 3; Ezekiel 16:15–16; Hosea 1).



ETHNIC CLEANSER: In modern times we have witnessed the horrors of ethnic cleansing in which one group of people tried to murder every person in another ethnic group due to race, language, or religious differences. Such arbitrary brutality and abuse is repulsive to civilized human beings. In an attempt to vilify God, atheists try to equate the history of the Old Testament to the tribal wars of Africa and the Middle East of our day. To see the problem in this, we need to examine the time period of the biblical events and the lifestyle problems and their consequences.

The biblical event most commonly and accurately cited by atheists is the total annihilation of the Amalekites in 1 Samuel 15 by Saul and Samuel under the orders of God. The Israelites were told to kill and burn every living thing including the women, children, and animals. This is far more than ethnic cleansing—this is pure sterilization. When Saul saves the King and the best of the animals supposedly to sacrifice to God, he is chastised and condemned by God and the complete destruction is carried out by Samuel (1 Samuel 15:20–33).

Let us examine this incident more closely. The Israelites had incredibly strict moral and hygienic laws that they were to follow fastidiously. The charges of bloodthirsty, unforgiving, and the like by Dawkins are references to these strict laws. No one with even a



marginal understanding of medicine should question these laws. Not drinking blood, quarantine, washings, and the avoiding of raw meat is not just being vindictive or being a bully—it is a wise set of hygienic laws, at a time when medical knowledge was very primitive. Those of us who have children know that they sometimes consider our rules for hygiene to be petty, but we know there are good reasons for those rules.

The Amalekites were a war-like tribe of people who practiced barbaric acts. Reading Exodus 17:8 we see that when the Israelites came out of Egypt the Amalekites denied permission for them to pass peacefully through their land. In fact they attacked an innocent and poorly defended group of people. In addition to this, the moral and hygienic practices of the Amalekites were atrocious. There were no dietary restrictions and eating blood, cannibalism, and every conceivable sexual practice including bestiality and pedophilia were commonplace. The natural product of such behavior is always an epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases and other food and blood carried maladies. These diseases would not have been confined to the adult male population, and would have even been proliferated in the animals. In today's world we are seeing a very similar situation with the HIV virus in Africa. HIV infects animals, and in fact there is considerable evidence that the virus came to man from monkeys.



The sterilization of the Amalekites and their animals was the only way to stop the lifestyle diseases that they had caused to run rampant. Modern medicine is struggling to find answers to the situation in Africa, and once again lifestyle choices make the job incredibly difficult. Imagine what it must have been like thousands of years ago with a primitive people in a harsh world.

MISOGYNISTIC: To claim that God is a woman-hater on the basis of the Bible is to ignore both the history of mankind as revealed in the Bible and the effect that the teachings of Jesus have had on modern culture. Who are the most consistently strong and morally uncompromising characters of the Old Testament? The records of Ruth, Deborah, and Hannah stand out as consistent and positive examples of what we should all be. Heroes like David are fraught with mistakes in character, morals, and judgment, but are tolerated by God because of their good hearts.

In the New Testament we see Jesus having a special but non-sexual relationship with Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus. We see Him having a unique relationship with His mother and with Mary Magdalene. Our culture is so twisted that people have tried to suggest Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene and some religious folks have tried to worship the mother of Jesus as a more compassionate route to God. Attempting to portray God as a woman-hater when Jesus elevated women and ignoring biblical passages that declare “there is neither bond nor free, male nor female” (Galatians 3:28) are shallow and uninformed positions. It is Christianity that has broken through the heavy bias against women, and the attempts to portray women as

possessions instead of persons. Women's rights and the importance of women have been elevated by the teachings of the Bible more than any other single influence on this planet. We encourage our readers to look at two books we have reviewed in recent years that explore this area—*Under the Influence* by Alvin Schmidt and *What Has Christianity Ever Done for Us* by Jonathan Hill.

HOMOPHOBIC: The Bible does plainly teach that there are those things which God does not want us to do. Some of these are pretty non-controversial such as murder, lying, stealing, etc. In the New Testament there is an emphasis on avoiding the abuse of man's body which is portrayed as the dwelling place of the Spirit (see 1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 6:15–20). This includes a variety of things where judgment is involved, and sometimes bumps into the pleasure issues of sex, alcohol, and drugs. There are those in the religious world who have tried to twist the Bible to condone homosexuality. Even most atheists do not buy their approach which we would agree is not consistent with passages like Romans 1:24–28.



The question is whether this rejection of homosexuality constitutes homophobia, or fear of homosexuality. The same concept that we tried to develop on ethnic cleansing applies here. Homosexuality is a destructive lifestyle. As an example, consider anal sex which is a common homosexual act. The cells of the rectal area are not designed for the kind of abrasion that occurs in anal sex. In contrast, the vaginal area is lined with squamous cells which are designed for abrasion and are not likely to be torn or ripped by abrasive activity. The probability of transmitting a sexually transmitted disease in anal sex is astronomically higher as a result of this, and all statistics on HIV show higher rates among the gay population.



The use of alcohol, recreational drugs, and a variety of other practices are in the very same category. We have had numerous articles over the years opposing the use of alcohol. If we express opposition to drinking does this cause us to be classified as alcoholophobics? Is opposing recreational drugs a valid reason to charge that we are drugophobics? God's commands in the Bible are for our well being, and trying to insinuate some sinister motive or character weakness on the part of God because of these wise restrictions is immature and misdirected.

Christians are told to love their enemies, to turn the other cheek, to go the second mile, and to live at peace with all men (Matthew 5). Pointing out the destructive nature of human choices is not abusive

if it is done in the way God tells us to do it. Physically attacking or hurting someone is outside the realm of how Christians are to conduct themselves. No phobias of any kind can be laid at the door of what Jesus taught. “Perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:18).

SADOMASOCHISTIC: Dawkins’ allegation that God is sadomasochistic is also a mistake. The notion of getting sexual pleasure by hurting someone else is the exact opposite of the “one flesh” concept of the Bible. Genesis 2 concludes in verse 24 with the point, “Therefore shall a man leave his mother and father and cleave unto his wife and they shall become one flesh.” When 1 Corinthians 7:1–5 refers to husbands and wives finding sexual pleasure, the woman’s needs are presented as being equal to the man’s. The foundation principle of Christianity is serving others and doing to them what you would have them do to you, and that is as applicable to sexual relationships as it is to any other aspect of our lives.

We do need to point out here that there are situations described historically in the Bible that tell of horrible things that people did. These descriptions are probably what Dawkins and his friends are referring to. These are cases such as one in which a gang rape occurs to the point of killing a woman (Judges 19:25–20:7). The reporting of a historic event does not mean an endorsement of that event. Humans do incredibly stupid, hurtful, violent, abusive things, and the Bible reports some of them, but that does not mean God endorses those actions. God is never portrayed in the Bible as having a sexual relationship. In fact, that violates the whole notion of what God’s nature is. A person who rejects God and the way God has called us to live may practice the tragic and selfish abuse of another human being, but should we blame God for that?

The real questions that we need to ask are: “Does God really do the things Dawkins is charging Him with?” and, “Why does God tolerate things He disapproves of?” Dawkins interprets things that are done for man’s benefit as bullying, being controlling, and vindictive. We would suggest that these things are to allow man to have the best in life in sexuality, in relationships, and in every other way. God has been tolerant to a fault with man, even allowing things like polygamy that were in total violation of everything God wanted man to have (see Mark 10:6–8).

When man acted against God’s plan, there were consequences. The Bible tells us those consequences so that we can learn from them. Rather than learn, turn, and follow the way God has called us to, some have chosen to stand and scream abuse at God. This offers no solution to the problems of man, and reflects a lack of understanding about why we exist and how we can make this world a better place to live.

—JNC

DEATH AND DYING

Versus

LIFE AND LIVING

by

Stephen D. Eckstein, Jr.

Over the past few years, a number of colleges and universities have taught credit classes and conducted seminars and workshops on Death and Dying. Different kinds of approaches have been followed as most are from a secular viewpoint. They are designed to help people have the so-called “positive attitude” toward death and assist members of the family for the time when a loved one passes on.

THE WORLDLY VIEW

For the world, this is a procedure in futility. It makes no difference how much you try to get ready for death, the ugly shock is always there. Funeral parlors and cemeteries are places of sorrow and tears. The subsequent feeling of hopelessness pervades the living. I even helped at one funeral where as I stood by the casket, a person passed by and remarked, “What a beautiful tie; he looks so nice.” Death is not nice and no human effort can make it different from what it really is—the end of a human life.

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW

The Christian has a whole different outlook. He is the only one who can view death properly. Why is that so? Because of all the founders of religions in the world, only one, Jesus Christ, has conquered death. All others are in their tombs, some of which are extant. Millions have flocked to Mecca over the centuries to the tomb of Muhammad. But only the tomb of Jesus is EMPTY.

Jesus came to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies about Himself. He first referred to His coming death and resurrection in John 2:19–22. Throughout His ministry, He kept telling His disciples He would die and rise the third day (Matthew 12:40–41; 16:21; 17:23; 20:18–19).

About 1000 B.C., David wrote about it in Psalm 16:9–10. Peter and the eleven referred to it on Pentecost (Acts 2:27–34). David’s tomb was still in Jerusalem. It could only apply to Jesus.

The Bible has a lot to say about death and dying. Death came into the world through sin; sin and death spread to all men because all men sinned (Romans 5:12). The Bible clearly teaches that since all men have sinned, all men must die and after this the judgment

(Hebrews 9:27). Death is the wage paid by sin to every human being (Romans 6:23). The Bible also speaks about the second death which happens to all who die physically and are NOT IN CHRIST (Revelation 20:14). I doubt if the second death is ever mentioned in these classes or seminars. Why? The world does not accept such. Physical death to most is the end. Reincarnation fantasies and “nirvana” dreams are without any evidence whatsoever.

LIFE AND LIVING

Jesus suffered death but triumphed over it gloriously. Forty days after His resurrection, He ascended to the right hand of God where He is our High Priest and has been for nearly 2,000 years. Paul said it well to Timothy, “Our Savior Jesus Christ abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2 Timothy 1:10). His triumphant revelation to John on the isle of Patmos still encourages every saint: “Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last and the living one; and I was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and Hades” (Revelation 1:17–18).

Because of this fact and reality, the sinner who becomes a saint by his obedience to the gospel goes from a spiritual state of death to one of LIFE in Christ and begins to LIVE in the NEWNESS OF LIFE (Romans 6:1–5). He begins in this physical life a SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE which daily changes him into the likeness of His Savior (2 Corinthians 3:18). Paul understood this in a marvelous way. In writing to the Philippian saints, he stated, “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21). Death no longer held that horrible chain around his neck; he was free from sin which brings death and knew that in Christ he would be the recipient by His grace of eternal life—God’s free gift (Romans 6:23). Thus, the truth of Ecclesiastes 7:1 became real in his life: “The day of a man’s death is better than the day of his birth; it is better to go to the house of mourning than to a house of feasting.” Why? Because the Christian does not go to a funeral but to a VICTORY SERVICE. The saint has gone on to be with his Lord and his death is GAIN IN CHRIST.

Death is a momentary sting as Paul put it in 1 Corinthians 15:56. But the joy and bliss beyond death are eternal. The apostle looked forward to that crown of righteousness which the Lord Jesus would award him on that day. But it was not to Paul only. IT IS TO ALL WHO LOVE HIS APPEARING (2 Timothy 4:7–8)—who look expectantly for it, who live the new life, who walk by the Spirit.

Let us as Christians LIVE in the freshness, the newness, the Joy of LIFE IN OUR LORD in a world that is dying and full of people dead in sin. Let us hold out the hope of Jesus amid hopelessness, the happiness of Christ amid sorrow. Let us be like our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen!

WHAT KIND OF PAIN IS THERE IN HELL?

One of the favorite methods of atheists and skeptics is making the Bible look ridiculous. There are now a number of blaspheme Web sites in which people are invited to curse God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, and show their freedom and independence. What is most depressing about these sites is the level of ignorance that is displayed on them. It is one thing to curse at something you understand and have fairly and logically considered. It is another thing to violate something and/or someone you do not understand and in fact have never really investigated.

The subject of hell comes up frequently in these blaspheme web sites, and the level of misunderstanding displayed is incredible. In the May/June 2006 issue of this journal we had an article titled "What Is Hell?" It was a discussion of an e-mail we received from a reader. His opening shot was, "I didn't ask to be born, and I won't spend my life worshipping an evil, abusive God who rejoices in bringing pain to everything he touches." (Note: this article can be read on our Web site doesgodexist.org.) We pointed out in that article that worship is for our benefit, not God's, and that the writer's concept of what God is and what God does were traditional and not biblical. Our mail and what we see on the Web indicates that this subject needs a lot more attention.



HELL IS NOT A VIDEO GAME. I suspect that the famous book Dante's *Inferno* has affected most of our thinking in what we visualize hell to be. If you view hell as a physical place with people receiving punishment of a physical nature that is commensurate with the things they did in their life, the picture is pretty bizarre. Our culture saturates us with cartoons, jokes, and articles that portray people suffering in hell in ways that reflect physical conditions. There are even notions in the atheist Web sites about hell being desirable because there are no religious people there, and pleasure is the goal of everyone who is present. There have also been suggestions about a revolt in hell that allows people to take over the place and replace God and Satan with more benevolent rulers. These are sad, childish conceptualizations of what hell is and of what our nature will be after we die.

THE AFTERLIFE. It seems that mainstream denominations and atheists alike have not gotten the message that after we die we

no longer exist as physical beings. Many denominations have taken the symbolic pictures of the Book of Revelation and forced physical understandings on them as a portrayal of heaven. From the very beginning God told man his body would return to dust. “For dust you are and to dust you will return” (Genesis 3:19, NIV). In Matthew 22:30 Jesus said that we will be “like the angels in heaven.” In 1 Corinthians 15:35–44 Paul discusses this concept and points out that the body we have now is perishable but we will be changed to something that is imperishable (verse 42). We are told that our bodies will be “sown (buried) a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body” (verse 44). The Greek word for natural is *psuchikos*, meaning animal. Man is created in God’s image in a spiritual way, but we have a temporary dwelling in an animal body. When we die, the animal body returns to the elements from which it was made, and whatever existence we have beyond that is completely different. Pain-based nerves and brain tissue will not exist in this new body, and neither will death. These are things that happen to physical, animal beings, not to spiritual beings. Those who use apocalyptic literature like Revelation to paint life after death as a return to a world with physical pain and problems do violence to the rest of the Bible. Jesus made it clear, “My kingdom is not of this world . . . my Kingdom is from another place” (John 18:36, NIV).



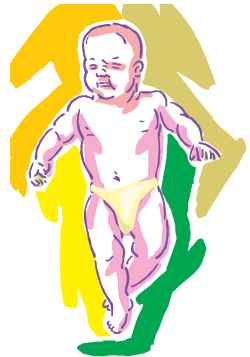
SO WHAT KIND OF PAIN IS THERE IN HELL? Since our bodies, brains, and nerve endings are back in the dust of the earth, how can we experience the pain of hell? Jesus made it clear that there is pain, but the language also makes it clear that He is not talking about the kind of pain we experience in this life. When Jesus talks about the pain of hell He uses contrasting images. In Matthew 8:12 those in hell are described as being “thrown into the outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” In passages like Revelation 21:8 the term brimstone is used which is from the Greek *theion* referring to divine fire. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16 the rich man is described as being “in agony in this fire” (verse 24). Both of these terms—darkness and fire—have multiple meanings in the original language. Matthew 3:11 talks about being baptized with fire from heaven, and Acts 2:3 describes the Holy Spirit in those terms. Romans 12:20 uses fire in a totally symbolic way as does Hebrews 1:7. First John 1:6 talks about walking in darkness. Many biblical passages identify darkness as the descriptive term of what ignorance, lostness, confusion, and evil are about.

The pain of hell is real, but it is not a video game nor is it something like what we experience in life. Perhaps the closest we come to it is

when we have our heart broken by a lost love. This is a good parallel because God is love. Being separated from God is to be separated from love. The pain of that process is hard to describe, and it is real. God is light, and being separated from light forever is a horrible thought, no matter what you understand that light to be. God is good, and to be separated from good for all of eternity means to be separated from all that brings us smiles and joy in life. What is most likely to bring us tears in this life is not a headache or a backache, but the loss of a love, no matter what brings about that loss.

WHAT ABOUT THE JOYS OF HEAVEN? A likely response to this discussion of hell is to ask if all the time-dependent good things we have in life will be absent in heaven. What about sexual pleasure, laughter, warmth, satisfied hunger, and the like? Obviously these sensual things which are based on the physical will no longer be a part of our existence. However, they will be replaced by something so much better and so complete that we will scarcely remember our previous sensual experiences.

Years ago a writer compared heaven to being born. When we were inside our mothers, we had a utopian world. It was always at 98.6°, we had a constant supply of food, nothing ever brought us pain, and we were protected from every negative influence of the natural world. (Ideally, at least.) When we were forced into the world outside our mother's body, we did not want to go. We screamed and cried at the fearful prospect of this new condition. Gradually we began to find this new existence was far better than our previous existence. We had new pleasures, new sensations, new freedom, and the wonderful light that we had never seen. We moved from a world of darkness and muted sounds to a world of incredible beauty, color, and wonderful rich sounds. None of us could ever imagine wanting to go back into the womb again, because our existence is so much better, and we have such greater freedom now.



Moving into our next existence is very similar. We cannot envision what it will be like any more than we can describe light to an unborn baby. It will offer greater freedom, greater beauty, and greater pleasure. The main beauty is that it will be free of all the negatives—no more pain, no more death, no more evil, no more temptation, no more politics, and no more sin. There will be nothing but complete unity with God and all that belongs to God—love, peace, joy. Atheists will not be there, but they did not want to be there anyway. They will just get what they always wanted—a place totally free of God and all those who believe in Him.

—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 on <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.

William Phillips—Nobel Laureate in Physics

“I believe in God. In fact, I believe in a personal God who acts in and interacts with the creation. I believe that the observations about the orderliness of the physical universe, and the apparently exceptional fine-tuning of the universe for the development of life suggest that an intelligent creator is responsible. I believe in God because of a personal faith, a faith that is consistent with what I know about science.”

“Many scientists are also people with quite conventional religious faith. I, a physicist, am one example. I believe in God as both creator and friend. That is, I believe that God is personal and interacts with us.”

“I believe that science and religion deal with different kinds of questions using different (but not completely different) methods. Science addresses questions about how things work, the history of development of the universe, and the like. Religion addresses questions about ultimate meaning, about what ought to be the relationship among people, and between people and God. I do not mean to say that there is no relationship between science and religion. There are areas where religious/moral decisions need to be informed by scientific facts. I also believe that God is revealed in part through observations we make on the creation.”

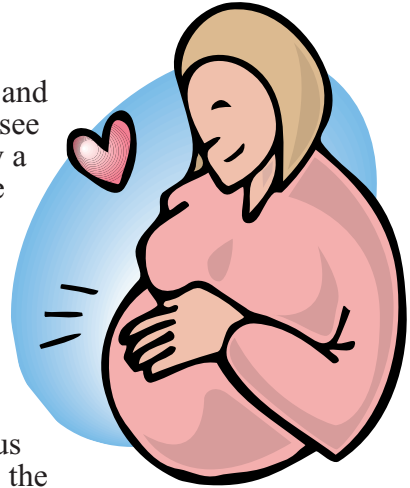
“I’m strongly of the conviction that God is personal, and this is the foundation of my faith.”

“Being an ordinary scientist and an ordinary Christian seems perfectly natural to me. It is also perfectly natural for the many scientists I know who are also people of deep religious faith.”

“There are probably more Nobel Laureates who are people of faith than is generally believed. Most people in most professions don’t make a special point to make their religious views known, since these are very personal.”

THE IMMUNOLOGICAL PARADOX OF PREGNANCY

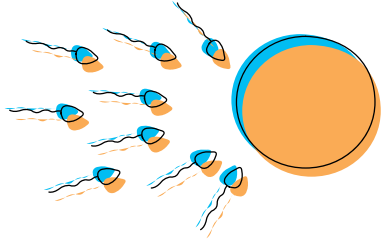
The conception, development, and birth of a child is a natural thing. We see it in one way or another on virtually a daily basis. We may recognize that the whole process is incredibly complex, but the number of babies born every day in the world makes us recognize that the system works pretty well, even though we are made painfully aware that things can go wrong.



The fact is that a baby has genetic material from both parents and thus is an entity of its own. Contrary to the thinking of abortionists, the baby is not an extension of its mother's body. That means that the immune system of the mother will treat the baby like any other foreign body and will attempt to destroy it. Why did not your mother's immune system destroy you? Immunologists have struggled with this question for more than fifty years. In our age of organ transplants this question has resurfaced with great interest since rejection is the single biggest threat in organ transplants. Dr. Peter Medawar has been the leading authority on this question having posed what is now called the "immunological paradox of pregnancy."

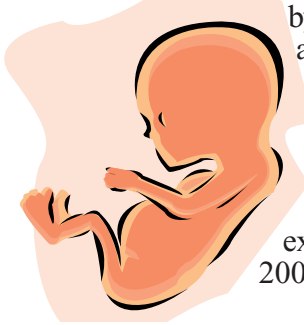
When the sperm fertilizes the egg it rapidly divides to form the blastocyst, a hollow ball of cells with an inner cell mass and an outer layer. The inner cell mass gives rise to the embryo, which develops into a fetus about eight weeks after conception. By this time all of the organs of the baby are recognizable. The outer layer of the blastocyst becomes the trophoblast. The trophoblast invades the lining of the uterus beginning the process of implantation. The trophoblast transforms into the fetal part of the placenta that brings nutrients and oxygen from the mother to the baby. During this process some of the mother's cells form a part of the mature placenta. The mystery that science still has not resolved is why the mother's immune system tolerates all of this, especially the trophoblast cells.

Our immune system eliminates invaders in two ways. The first is called “innate immune response” in which the body neutralizes invaders before they can cause harm. When you cut yourself, white blood cells called macrophages engulf the bacterial invaders and eliminate them through a complex system. The second method called “acquired immunity” relies on antibodies and specialized white blood cells called *B* cells and *T* cells. These cells target particular foreign material to which the body has already been exposed. This system “remembers” encounters with specific invaders and reacts quickly and vigorously to further exposure. The fetus is certainly an invader, and the mother’s body does respond with an innate immune response during the first twelve weeks of pregnancy resulting in “morning sickness.” So why does this not continue and destroy the baby?



Every proposal that has been given by scientists over the years has failed. One proposal was that the trophoblast forms a mechanical barrier that stops the immune system. Studies have shown that no such barrier exists. In fact, fetal cells are found in the mother’s body decades after pregnancy. In 2002 researchers at Tufts University demonstrated that fetal cells help the mother in repairing her damaged tissues. In one case a woman who had hepatitis regenerated liver cells when her body could not. It turned out that the new liver cells came from fetal cells. The baby had repaid the mother for her dedication to the baby. Clearly there is no barrier. Some have proposed that the mother’s immune system is suppressed during pregnancy. But if that were the case pregnant women would be prone to every illness in the book—especially women with HIV who would quickly die of AIDS.

The most recent understanding of this complex question is that the trophoblast and the mother’s immune system join forces to fight common enemies. Apparently the mother’s immune system recognizes her own offspring so that when the trophoblast cells have an attack



by infectious microorganisms they send out a chemical signal that activates the mother’s immune system and they work together to protect the baby. We have simplified this explanation a great deal. Those interested in a more complete treatment of the mechanics of this process can read Gil Mor’s excellent explanation in *Natural History* magazine, May 2007, page 36.

The importance of understanding this complex system should be obvious from a medical standpoint. Birth defects, problems that occur during pregnancy, ways of using the immune system to more effectively treat disease, and a variety of other conception issues can be benefited when we understand more fully how this system works. There are many other important issues that can be better understood when we comprehend how exquisitely designed and synchronized this system is.

Attempting to maintain that this is a chance-produced mechanism takes a high level of imagination. Reproduction is a vital part of life, and in higher forms of life the reproductive system is so incredibly complex that the best minds of science are still grappling with it. It should also be obvious that abortion flies in the face of this design. How can we in good conscience do violence to this system? It is clear that the baby is not an extension of the mother's body, and that the design of the system is to protect the baby in a highly sophisticated way. No body system can block an external intelligence coming in with sharp instruments and cutting the fetus into small pieces and flushing it out of the womb, but imagine the chaos that must result in the immune system when such a brutal act is done. Abortion needs to be reclassified as infanticide, and put into the brutal acts of history as an example of what happens when selfishness and brutality rule a civilization.

That having been said, it is important to understand that unwanted pregnancies force the mother to have her immune system engaged in accepting something she does not want. It is vital that the behaviors that lead to unwanted pregnancy be addressed in a better way. It is also vital that babies who are unwanted by the biological mother be given a chance to be adopted by a mother who desperately wants to raise that child and love it in the most complete way. We are not mindless robots driven by chemicals and passion. God gives us the ability to choose what we will do, and to seek kind and loving solutions when problems do arise.

People say it is a matter of "choice." Really it is about whether we will make destructive choices that do violence to the design built into us by the Creator or whether we will make choices that bless others and provide kind and loving solutions even for difficult situations.

—JNC

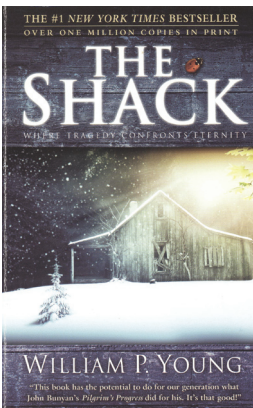




BOOK REVIEWS

The Shack

by William P. Young, Windblown Media, Newbury Park, Calif.,
2007, 256 pages, \$14.99 (paperback), ISBN-13: 978-0964729230.



This is a very unusual “book of the month.” My oldest daughter, Cathy, gave me this book for the Father’s Day right after my wife died on May 9, 2008. The book is a novel, and I was not sure why she gave it to me at the time. After reading it, I understand. I think this is only the third time we have reviewed a novel in the 40 years that this journal has been in print. Like the other two, this is a book that will have use and appeal to a certain type of reader.

The story line is that the hero of the book, named Mack, has a child abducted and killed. Four years later God intervenes in Mack’s sadness by meeting with Mack in the shack where his daughter was murdered. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are also involved, and Mack’s struggles with life and with Christianity are explored.

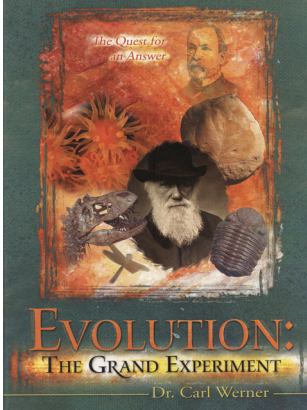
The beauty of this book is that Mack’s misunderstandings of life and of God are those of most people in the world today. Organized religion and its errors, man’s tendency to blame and judge God for tragedy and problems, and the reason for pain and suffering are explored. Passages like Romans 8:28 are never quoted, but they are explored beautifully.

The problem with the book is that many religious readers may misunderstand the portrayal of God, of Jesus and, of the Holy Spirit, and assume it is blasphemous. God is several things including an African-American woman who cooks and does dishes; Jesus is a friendly carpenter; and the Holy Spirit is a constantly changing being of different colors. This may sound strange; however, I believe the Godhead is portrayed in a positive way and with great sensitivity.

This is a wonderful novel, but it needs to be read as a novel that stimulates your thinking, not as a serious theological work. If you can handle that kind of literary process you will find the book sensitive, informative, and spiritually stimulating. We recommend it to that kind of reader.

Evolution: The Grand Experiment

by Dr. Carl Werner, New Leaf Press, Green Forest, Ark., 2007, 262 pages, \$29.99 (hardcover), ISBN-13: 978-0892216819.



One sad fact about creationism is that the materials printed have generally been very poorly done. They not only contain scientific error and a lack of understanding of the issues, but they have been poorly documented, they have used creationist sources that do not have training in the fields they are writing about, and they have used misleading and poorly done illustrations. There are exceptions of course, and our book of the month is one of those exceptions. This 262-page book is a quality production, with coated paper, massive photographs from museums all over the world, and interviews with experts in their own field. It is pricey because of the quality (\$29.99), and also has a Teacher’s Manual that would make it extremely useful for homeschoolers. (The manual is \$16.99 and its ISBN-13: 978-0892216840.)

The back cover of this book has a statement that reads “A Book that Challenges Your Views and Demands a Verdict.” In the front the dedication says, “Dedicated to those who have the courage to question.” The book has 22 chapters, three appendices, a glossary, and a bibliography. It starts with “The Origin of Life: Two Opposing Views.” The next five chapters deal with the mechanisms of evolution—spontaneous generation, acquired characteristics, natural selection and mutations, similarities as a proof of evolution and Darwin’s predictions, and the fossil record. The next ten chapters deal with the fossil record of invertebrates, fish, bats, pinnipeds, flying reptiles, dinosaurs, whales, birds, feathered dinosaurs, and flowering plants. The next three chapters deal with the molecular basis of evolution—DNA, proteins, and amino acids. Chapter 20 and the appendices compare the two views of evolution and creation, discuss the number of fossils, and present a dinosaur and fish evolution chart.

This book must have around 1,000 four-color pictures in it. The pictures are wonderful and the organization is clear. Points are made

by quoting experts in the field—not creationists who are out of their field. Duane Gish is about the only American creationist quoted extensively, and most of the other quotes are from evolutionists. The quotes are designed to show the lack of evidence. Skeptics will be quick to claim the statements are taken out of context and do not show the views of those quoted, but in most cases the researchers quoted state their belief that the gaps in evidence will be filled. The fact is that the gaps in evidence are clearly shown and well documented.

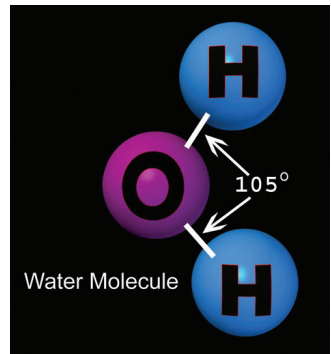
The teacher’s manual has tests, class discussion questions, and objectives. There is a DVD series that goes with the material. It is this reviewer’s view that this material could be used for eighth grade through college age very effectively. It is the best teaching material on creationism we have seen. It is based on evidence, it challenges the student to think, and the quality of the material is superb. While atheistic evolutionary arguments are not presented in detail, the faith aspects of evolutionary theory are clearly shown. We recommend this material highly. It is well worth its high cost.

DANDY DESIGNS

WATER— STRANGER AND STRANGER

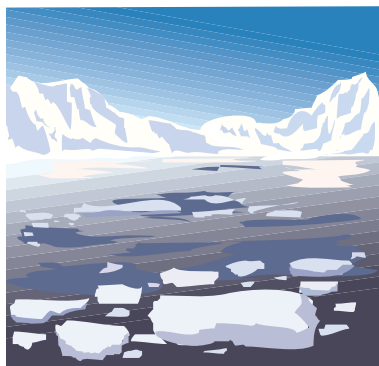
Over the years we have had a number of articles about water. Most of these articles have been in our “Dandy Designs” feature in which we talk about how God’s design can be seen in the natural world that surrounds us. Because water has so many interesting and strange properties, we keep coming back to it.

The unique property of the water molecule is its shape. It consists of one oxygen atom and two hydrogen atoms. You would normally think that the water molecule would have an oxygen atom in the middle with the hydrogen atoms on opposite sides. Because of the design of the oxygen atom, that is not the way the molecule is arranged. The oxygen atom only allows bonding to hydrogen in positions that are 90 degrees away from each



other, so the hydrogen atoms end up being close enough to one another to repel each other making the angle between them 105 degrees. This configuration gives the water molecule a polarity, with the hydrogen side being positively charged and the opposite side being negatively charged. Adjacent water molecules can be attracted to these charged areas, giving water its unusual properties.

In *Science News* (January 26, 2008, page 58) researchers report new studies on what happens to water as it continues to cool and is put



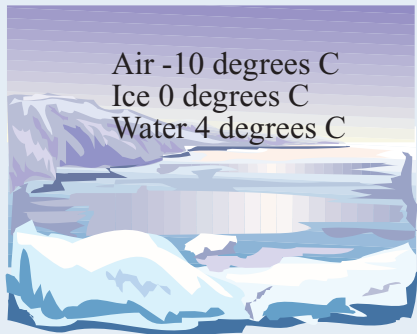
under pressure. The title of the article is “Supercool, and Strange.” The subtitle is “Scientists are finding clues about why water is so utterly weird.” In the article is a reference to a Web site where water’s anomalies are listed. It is <http://www.lsbu.ac.uk/water/anomalies.html>. The site has numerous references and explanations, many of which are quite technical. Here is a portion that is not too technical and that will give you an idea of the strange properties of water.

Although it is an apparently simple molecule, (H₂O), it has a highly complex and anomalous character. As a gas, water is one of lightest known, as a liquid it is much denser than expected and as a solid it is much lighter than expected when compared with its liquid form.

As liquid water is so common-place in our everyday lives, it is often regarded as a “typical” liquid. In reality, water is most atypical as a liquid, behaving as a quite different material at low temperatures to that when it is hot. It has often been stated ... that life depends on these anomalous properties of water. In particular, the high cohesion between molecules gives it a high freezing and melting point, such that we and our planet are bathed in liquid water. The large heat capacity, high thermal conductivity and high water content in organisms contribute to thermal regulation and prevent local temperature fluctuations, thus allowing us to more easily control our body temperature. The high latent heat of evaporation gives resistance to dehydration and considerable evaporative cooling. Water is an excellent solvent due to its polarity, high dielectric constant and small size, particularly for polar and ionic compounds and salts. It has unique hydration properties towards biological macromolecules (particularly proteins and nucleic acids) that determine their three-dimensional structures, and hence their functions, in solution. This hydration forms gels

that can reversibly undergo the gel-sol phase transitions that underlie many cellular mechanisms. Water ionizes and allows easy proton exchange between molecules, so contributing to the richness of the ionic interactions in biology.

At 4°C water expands on heating or cooling. This density maximum together with the low ice density results in (i) the necessity that all of a body of fresh water (not just its surface) is close to 4°C before any freezing can occur, (ii) the freezing of rivers, lakes and oceans is from the top down, so permitting survival of the bottom ecology, insulating the water from further freezing, reflecting back sunlight into space and allowing rapid thawing, and (iii) density driven thermal convection causing seasonal mixing in deeper temperate waters carrying life-providing oxygen into the depths. The large heat capacity of the oceans and seas allows them to act as heat reservoirs such that sea temperatures vary only a third as much as land temperatures and so moderate our climate (for example, the Gulf stream carries tropical warmth to northwestern Europe). The compressibility of water reduces the sea level by about 40m giving us 5% more land. Water's high surface tension plus its expansion on freezing encourages the erosion of rocks to give soil for our agriculture.



Notable amongst the anomalies of water are the opposite properties of hot and cold water, with the anomalous behavior more accentuated at low temperatures where the properties of supercooled water often diverge from those of hexagonal ice. As (supercooled) cold liquid water is heated it shrinks, it becomes less easy to compress, its refractive index increases, the speed of sound within it increases, gases become less soluble and it is easier to heat and conducts heat better. In contrast as hot liquid water is heated it expands, it becomes easier to compress, its refractive index reduces, the speed of sound within it decreases, gases become more soluble and it is harder to heat and a poorer conductor of heat. With increasing pressure, cold water molecules move faster but hot water molecules move slower. Hot water freezes faster than cold water and ice melts when compressed except at high pressures when liquid water freezes when compressed. No other material is commonly found as solid, liquid and gas.

(from "Water Structure and Science" by Martin Chaplin)

The author then lists 64 unique properties of water. This is a technical discussion aimed at people with a background in science, and we encourage readers with science backgrounds to read through this incredibly interesting material.

The unique design of the water molecule that allows all of this strange behavior is vital to our own physical existence. This is a powerful demonstration of the fact that things as simple as water are not as simple as they first appear. It speaks eloquently of the intelligence that created the cosmos in which we live.

THE SIXTH SENSE

Science textbooks tell us that we and other forms of life have five senses—smell, taste, touch, hearing, and sight. Research has now shown that some animals have a sixth sense—the electric field sense. The sensing organ in this case is called the ampullae of Lorenzini. Lorenzini was an Italian anatomist who in 1678 noted pores around the mouths of sharks and rays that led deep into the head of the animal. The material connecting the pores to the brain of the animal was filled with a crystalline gel. The word ampullae refers to a bulbous pouch which actually contained a tiny hair similar to those of the human inner ear. It was not until the 1990s that scientists finally had the technology to understand what this structure was about, and how it actually is a sixth sense.

When animal muscles contract and expand they give off a small electric field. This happens because nerves are involved in making the muscles work, and nerves carry electrical energy. The field is incredibly small, but modern equipment has given scientists the means to detect it. The shark or ray has a sensitivity in the ampullae of Lorenzini that is so good it can pick up a millionth of a volt generated in an electric field. If you take a normal AA battery and connect it to the ground between Long Island Sound and Jacksonville, Florida, the field would be a millionth of a volt and the shark could detect it. It has taken centuries for man to develop equipment that can detect such a weak field.

The shark uses the electric field to map the vicinity and detect what animals are nearby and what they are doing. An injured or dying fish will send out strong electric field impulses and the shark can find it whether it is giving off blood or not. Sharks are important to the balance of life in the sea, and they have incredible equipment designs to allow them to do this. Studies are ongoing to see what other species have ampullae of Lorenzini. This sixth sense is one more testimony to the design and intelligence built into the world in which we live. Reference: *Scientific American*, August 2007, page 75.

News and Notes

Supercollider Nonsense. The media and the kooks are having a field day with bizarre descriptions of what will be learned from the supercollider in Europe and what it might do to the earth. Let me give you a very simple parallel to help you understand what is going on in this new experimental device. When I was a kid living in Bloomington, Indiana, we used to find geodes in the creek beds and washes all over Monroe County—the area surrounding Bloomington. These are concretions of quartz that frequently surround something in the center that is of great interest—crystals of other materials, fossils, or gem-quality quartz crystals of things like amethyst or jasper. The problem was that these geodes were incredibly hard and the hammers we had would not break them in any reasonable time. Our solution was to throw one geode against another as hard as we could. That usually did the trick.

The proton is like a geode. It is too hard to break apart by any normal means, so smashing one proton into another to see what it is made of is what the supercollider is designed to do. Contrary to what you may have read, this is *not* the big bang, and it will *not* make a black hole that will swallow the earth. What is hoped is that the fundamental particles of charge and gravity may become better understood, and hopefully we will gain one more step in understanding some of the methods God has used in creating the heaven and the earth.

Better to Give Than to Receive. A study in the journal *Science* (March 21, 2008) by researchers at Harvard and the University of British Columbia reports that how people spent their money made a huge difference in happiness and satisfaction. In fact, it was more important than how much money they made. The idea that “survival of the fittest” rules all that happens in the world is not supported by the evidence when it comes to happiness in humans.

More Trouble for Pot Users. The big push for legalization of marijuana took another hit in recent studies on the damaging effects of marijuana on the gums. Studies have shown that people between the ages of 18 and 32 who used marijuana once a week were three to

five times as likely to have periodontitis in which the inner layer of gums and bone pull away from the teeth. Adding this to the proven lung damage that pot causes, makes recreational and medical use of marijuana very unwise. Source: *Science News*, February 9, 2008, page 85.

Moon's Importance. The reason for the earth having a large moon and having it at the distance it is from earth is becoming better understood. It turns out that the size of the moon is critical to having life on earth and to the stability of the earth. The moon orbits the earth at an average distance of 238,600 miles, but every year it gets 1.6 inches farther away. The reason this happens instead of the moon being pulled closer to the earth is because of tides. The high and low tides, combined with earth's rapid rotation on its axis, adds energy to the moon's orbit pushing it slowly away from us instead of pulling it into us. The size of the moon also keeps our days at the length they are. If the moon were less massive our days might be as short as 15 hours. Perhaps the major effect is the stability of our planet. Mars wobbles dramatically on its axis producing wild swings in climates because it has no significant moon (only two very small ones). The rotational stability of our planet is produced by the moon's gravitational lock on the planet. For more on this read: *What if the Moon Didn't Exist? Voyages to Earths That Might Have Been* by Neil F. Comins. HarperCollins, 1993, ISBN: 0-060168641; also in *Scientific American*, October 2008, page 104.

Women's Role in the Church. The number of female preachers in American churches in the past 20 years has nearly tripled. *US News and World Report* (September 10, 2007, page 32) reports that every religion that allows female clergy "has seen membership plummet and every major religious group that doesn't, such as Roman Catholics, has seen a rise." The article goes on to say that liberalizing trends are unpopular among the religious. Christianity has been the one major positive influence through the centuries on women's rights, but it is true that God in the Bible has identified roles for the sexes. We have suggested that the mental health and psychological well being of men and women is an issue that is related to these roles. The data seems to support the fact that this is a significant issue for people as they look at their own religious beliefs and practices and that "liberalized religions are shrinking" to use the words of the article.

"Explaining Religion" Project. A three-year study involving 14 universities and a large number of scientists funded by a \$3.1 million budget has been announced to "give a biological explanation for religion." The idea is to do neurological and brain studies to explain

how religion came into existence on a purely biological level. This study involves everything from evolutionary explanations of morality to chemical causes of “religious states of mind.” There has been a fair amount of attention given to the idea that belief in God and religious tendencies is due to certain types of activity in certain parts of the brain. If the intent of the studies is to discount and destroy religious belief, it is doomed to failure because of the number of assumptions that are involved. If the intent is to suggest that we are designed to be religious, it will be a big problem for atheists because historically belief in God has been a liability in biological survival. Source: *The Economist*, March 22nd, 2008, page 89.

Biblical Illiteracy. One of the things that we notice in the e-mails that come to us is that there is a growing problem with the general population’s Bible knowledge. This is confirmed in a study by The Barna Group. George Barna chose three different groups—nondenominational Christian churches, Baptists, and mainline Protestants which included Methodists, Lutherans, and Episcopalians. Here are some interesting understandings of these three groups:

Doctrine	Percent that agree		
	Mainline	Baptists	Nondenominational
Christ was sinless	35	55	70
Bible is totally accurate	34	66	77
You cannot earn heaven	27	43	64
Satan is real	20	34	56

It would seem that religious groups are arguing about theological issues that become irrelevant to the understandings of most members of their groups. Basic education seems to be a huge need among America’s churches. Source: *Restoration Herald*, September 2008, page 3.

Neanderthal Debate Continues. It has been our position throughout the forty years of this journal that there are many different races of men today and in the past. We also maintain that racial variations explain the fossil differences for which many scientists have devised extreme theories about sub-humans and pre-humans in the past. One argument used by those who claim these theories has been that there was no evidence that Neanderthals could talk. A recent scientific study of the genome of the Neanderthals shows they possessed the same gene for speech that is seen in modern humans. When this is put together with continued evidence that the Neanderthal and Cro-Magnon groups interbred, the racial argument for these ancient forms of man continues to gain strength. Source: *Science Illustrated*, September/October 2008, page 22.

Announcing: Does God Exist? 2009 Retreat & Field Programs

DOES GOD EXIST? WEEK LONG RETREAT

will be on August 10–14 at Michiana Christian Service Camp, Niles, Michigan. There will be all-day sessions on faith and science with John Clayton, which include lessons, classes, lab exercises, and devotionals. The retreat is designed for non-science people—anyone who wants to learn about science and faith. It is open to all ages and there will be recreational facilities for all ages. For more information e-mail jncdgc@aol.com, or call 269-687-9426, or write John Clayton, 1555 Echo Valley Dr., Niles, MI 49120.

FIELD TRIPS

For many years **Does God Exist?** has offered summer programs in the field designed to help Christians train to be more effective in using apologetics to build faith and answer questions. This year we are offering three exciting trips:



Beautiful Bryce Canyon



Zion Canyon View

CANYONLANDS

is an all-ages trip to Grand Canyon, Bryce, Zion, Painted Desert, and Petrified Forest national parks, Meteor Crater, Lowell Observatory and more on September 13–18. Cost will be \$779 for double

occupancy from Flagstaff. For more information contact us or Mark Story, Mark@QLTours.com or phone 1-877-865-6711.

YOUTH TREK

is a college-preparation in-field trip to Colorado and Canyonlands region with Grand Canyon hiking on July 13–18. The cost will be \$759 for double occupancy from Denver.



Grand Canyon Hiking

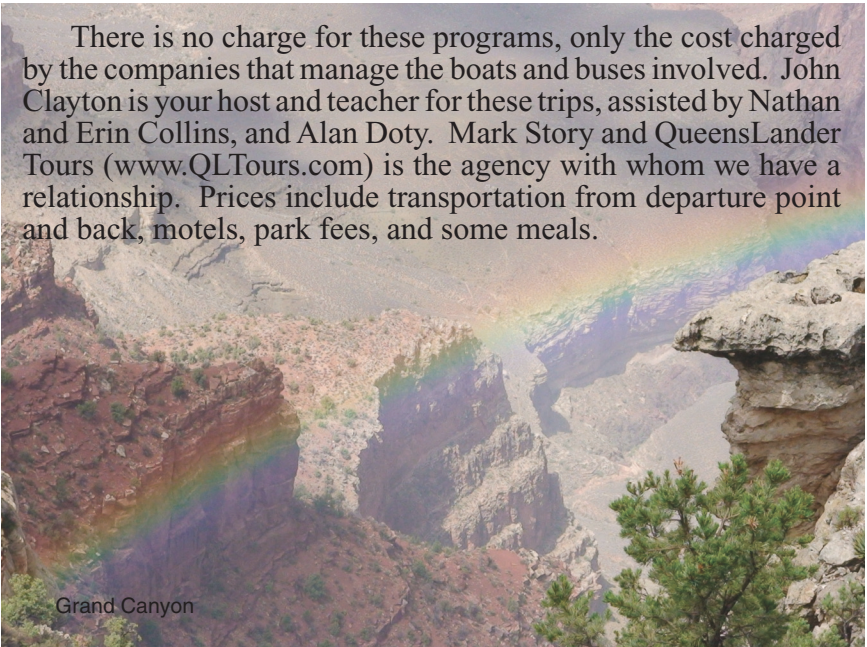
GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

are a group of islands off the coast of Ecuador with interesting geological features and plant and animal life. Our trip will be on June 8–19. The cost will be \$3,879 from Quito, Ecuador. This does not include airfare to Quito. QueensLander Tours will arrange this—call 1-877-865-6711 or go to www.QLTours.com



Submerged volcanic crater, Isla Bartolome, Galapagos Islands

There is no charge for these programs, only the cost charged by the companies that manage the boats and buses involved. John Clayton is your host and teacher for these trips, assisted by Nathan and Erin Collins, and Alan Doty. Mark Story and QueensLander Tours (www.QLTours.com) is the agency with whom we have a relationship. Prices include transportation from departure point and back, motels, park fees, and some meals.



Grand Canyon

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.

Send request to:
 Does God Exist?
 PO Box 2704
 South Bend, IN 46680-2704

*It's scientists vs. preachers,
 not science vs. the Bible.*

Please put me on your mailing list for your free bimonthly publication.

Please enroll me in your free basic correspondence course

Please enroll me in your free intermediate correspondence course

Please send me a catalog of other opportunities available through the **Does God Exist?** program

Name _____

Street or PO Box _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____