

DOES GOD EXIST?

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

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Does God Exist? Lectureships

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

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

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

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

Send subscription requests, orders, or address changes to

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DOES SANTA = GOD?



Over the years we have had numerous debates and public discussions with atheists and atheist spokespersons. One of my favorite discussions was a radio debate I had with Jon Garth Murray, Madalyn Murray O'Hair's oldest son. Jon and I had known each other for a long time, and we knew what would probably develop in the course of the evening. We were both somewhat frustrated by the lady who was the emcee who had her own agenda and really would not allow

us to develop our own format. Early in the discussion Jon made the statement that he did not believe in God for the same reason he did not believe in Santa Claus. This is an old argument that atheists have used for many years, but I thought I might shake things up a little by posing a question about evidence.

"Suppose scientific evidence was uncovered that proves conclusively that Santa Claus does exist," I suggested. "Would you be willing to look at that evidence or not?" Jon stated categorically that the proposition was so absurd that he would not consider it. "Of course there is no Santa Claus," he said, "and no amount of evidence could ever convince me otherwise." "So what you are saying," I suggested, "is that there is no room in your mind-set for something you have already discarded, no matter how strong the evidence might be. You also have formulated your own concept of what Santa Claus is, and you have discarded the myth without considering whether there is a better understanding that a rational person could believe in and accept." The fact is that Murray and many others have done the same thing with the existence of God!

There was a famous editorial in a New York newspaper in 1897 that included the well-known line, "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus." Francis Church, who wrote the editorial in response to an eight-year-old girl's question, pointed out that belief in Santa Claus involves more than childhood fantasies. We have Christmas carols that talk about the wonder of Christmas and ask why we cannot have the Christmas spirit all year. The image on the cover of this issue of our journal is just fun, but the notion of a personality that embodies the spirit of the holiday season is real.

Let us be very clear, God and Santa Claus are not the same thing. Certainly the existence of God is supported by a different kind of evidence and brings a need for a different response from us as responsible humans. The point being made is that many people in our culture have created their own concept of God and have discarded it because the image is unworkable. They want a God who holds up puppies, smiles all the time, gives wonderful gifts, makes no demands, and has no expectations. They want a God who is only there when they want Him to be there and can be ignored in our daily walk of life. The notion that we serve Him instead of Him giving to us is not considered. The idea that we have a purpose in our existence is discarded. The belief that our purpose involves the real world with all of life's pain and loss is rejected, because it demands commitment and a particular way of living life.

No, God is not equal to Santa Claus, He is so superior to the man in the red suit that the two notions should not be entertained together, but how people approach the two is revealing and has lessons for all of us.

—John N. Clayton



THE SANTA DELUSION?

This is how Alister McGrath responded to the charge by Richard Dawkins that believing in God is like believing in Santa Claus or the Tooth Fairy.

Like many of Dawkins's analogies, this has been constructed with a specific agenda in mind—in this case, the ridiculing of religion. Yet the analogy is obviously flawed. How many people do you know who began to believe in Santa Claus in adulthood? Or who found belief in the Tooth Fairy consoling in old age? I believed in Santa Claus until I was about five (though, not unaware of the benefits it brought, I allowed my parents to think I took it seriously until rather later). I did not believe in God until I started going to university. Those who use this infantile argument have to explain why so many people discover God in later life and certainly do not regard this as representing any kind of regression, perversion or degeneration. A good recent example is provided by Antony Flew (born 1923), the noted atheist philosopher who started to believe in God in his eighties.

Alister McGrath in *The Dawkins Delusion?* page 20.

GOD'S ROLE IN RELATIONSHIPS



FOREWORD: This is another discussion from the trenches—a life lesson based on experience and application of biblical principles. As we announced last issue, John and Cynthia Clayton were married on June 27, 2009. There has been a lot of mail about this “quick marriage” and a number of questions. We decided that telling our story might be helpful to people who are single again. We are telling both of our sides in how we both believe God brought us together. We pray it will be useful to some and interesting to all.

FROM JOHN CLAYTON:

Longtime readers of this journal know that your editor, John Clayton, was married to his childhood sweetheart, Phyllis, for 49 years before she succumbed to type 1 diabetic complications in May 2008. Many of you wrote me and encouraged me, and I am profoundly grateful for your support. It did not take long for me to realize a whole new meaning to God’s statement “It is not good for man to be alone” (Genesis 2:18). In the months after Phyllis’ death my family, friends, and church family rallied around me and supported me, but ultimately I found myself coming back to a house full of memories and reminders of what I had lost. The house was no longer a home, and I desperately needed what I felt I could never have again—a home with someone to love me and share my life.

My mind and my mirror told me that it would be impossible for someone to love me. Who could possibly fall in love with an arthritic old man coming off a 49-year marriage? How could anyone accept a ministry that requires massive amounts of time, energy, and resources? Who would want a man who had nothing physical to offer—no looks, no money, and no charisma? In a world where a premium is placed on physical appearance and material things, it was impossible to believe that any woman could love me. I found myself telling God that the only possible solution to my pain was to be allowed to join Phyllis in death.



Three photos by Patty Gibson

In the past five years as I became more and more aware that it was likely that Phyllis was going to leave this world shortly, I found widows and widowers sharing their own stories. What was interesting to me was that there were two groups of Christian widows and widowers. One was a group who basically said you have to learn to live alone and you will never be as you were before you lost your mate. The other group were Christians who had found another Christian to love. They talked about how thankful they were to have found someone else to share their lives with. They talked about how much they had prayed to God for that person. They talked about how perfect this person was for them. In many cases they said that they personally believed that God had led them to a new relationship and blessed them with a real solution to their isolation and loneliness. Passages like Ephesians 3:20, Romans 8:28, and Philippians 4:19 were frequently mentioned as helpful verses.

The notion that praying for a new person to love would solve my problem rang pretty hollow with me. Call it lack of faith, call it lack of trust, call it hypocrisy—whatever accusation you might want to throw at me—I did not believe that God would bring me someone else or in any way impact my relationships. In the past when we had been faced with major problems in life praying never seemed to help. When our baby Tim was born with congenital problems we prayed and our friends prayed that he would not be blind, but he is blind. We accepted that and prayed that he would not be mentally challenged, but he is severely mentally challenged. We then prayed to help us accept the blindness and the retardation but that there be no other problems. We then found he had a form of muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy, and schizophrenia. I battled my way through all of that maintaining my faith in God, but becoming rather cynical about God answering specific prayers for specific needs. In my wife's many struggles with the complications of juvenile diabetes we prayed fervently that the problems would go away, but they never did. In all of these cases what I prayed for never happened directly, but in all of these cases I found an answer that allowed me to cope with the problem and move on. The meaning of 1 Corinthians 10:13 became a part of my thinking—that God gives a way of escape that can prevent breaking if we choose to accept it, but that He does not always take away or provide direct solutions to the problem we are facing (2 Corinthians 12:8–9; 2 Corinthians 1:3–6, 9).

In the February following Phyllis's death, I hit rock bottom. I had tried to be active and positive about life, but no matter what I did, I always came back to an empty house of memories and loneliness. I never became suicidal, although I can understand why some seniors do, but I did sit in a lawn chair in the middle of a Michigan blizzard and prayed fervently to God for what I thought was the best answer,

“Let me leave this world and follow my wife in death.” As a codicil to that prayer I said, “If you aren’t done with me here yet, please send me something or someone who can fill this horrible emptiness.” In my own mind that might have involved a dog or a move to where grandchildren were or someone with whom I could have a special friendship. The notion that a woman could love someone as unattractive and as complex as I was with all my baggage (the 49-year marriage, consuming ministry, and being 71 years old, etc.), could not be a possible option in my view. Was that lack of faith, or acceptance of the need to adjust to being alone that stopped me from believing I could ever be loved again? Little did I know that God was already preparing an answer for me.

On the other side of the world in Hong Kong was a lady named Cynthia Gift who had been widowed. She too was praying, but for the strength to live the rest of her life alone. She had been encouraged to come back to the United States and help care for her mother who had dementia. So she moved to Grand Junction, Colorado in July of 2008.

The Church of Christ in Grand Junction had been planning a **Does God Exist?** lectureship for several years, but had been forced to cancel it twice because of circumstances—once in 2008 before Cynthia had arrived. They finally scheduled the program for March 22–25, 2009. Looking back, I see God’s providential hand in the scheduling. I did the lectureship and Cynthia



came to the program and even asked a few questions. The personal nature of some of her questions made me realize that she might need some additional help, so I got her e-mail address and wrote her some encouraging words—something I do many times every day. To my surprise she wrote back, and we began to discuss spiritual matters and issues of faith. Within a few weeks it was becoming obvious that we shared a lot of views and concerns and I was deeply impressed with her heart and her spiritual level. For the very first time my feelings about ministry and life began to tumble out to someone who was a perfect stranger. I prayed for her and thanked God for a new friend; but I still believed she would be a sister, not a wife, even though she started expressing her desire for a Christian marriage and ministry. As the discussions deepened and prayer became the topic of discussion, we both wondered out loud if God was doing something for the two of us that neither of us had ever thought possible. I found I was chastising myself and saying “John, you idiot! You’re setting yourself up to get burned big time. God isn’t going to give you a new wife. He isn’t going to solve all of the problems you bring to a relationship.” Inside I was saying, “That’s too much for God to handle!”

FROM CYNTHIA CLAYTON:

As John has said, I was praying in 2009 for the grace and strength to live the rest of my life in service to God as a single. To live in undivided devotion to God was my prayer (1 Corinthians 7:35). Because God knew the sincerity of my heart, He not only answered my prayer, but gave me what I did not ask for (1 Kings 3:13a). He not only gave me a ministry I could be a part of, but He gave me the deepest desire of my heart, something I had NOT asked for because I did not think it was God's will—a loving, spiritually mature husband. When God put John in my life, I was not thinking of marriage. I had resigned myself to being single, but as we got to know each other it became obvious to us that we were well suited spiritually and emotionally, and in so many other ways. As mature Christians, we both prayed and I also fasted to know God's will for us.



When we met for the first time after the lecturership and spent time together, we were both convinced God had put us together and was blessing us. After two months of marriage, that belief has become our solid foundation and has been a blessing and a force in our life. God is our life and the foundation of our marriage. He has helped us in every aspect of our relationship. God most definitely answered John's February plea, and He also answered the unspoken deep desires of my heart.

FROM JOHN CLAYTON:

We finally decided that we needed to get together and actually be in each other's presence. It was obvious we cared deeply about each other on a spiritual, emotional, and psychological level. I wondered if it could be more than that. I kept telling myself there was no way we could be any more than friends, that no woman could overcome all my baggage and move into a house built and designed by a previous wife, attend a mission Church made up of strangers to her, and be put into a ministry that is all-consuming and demanding. She could not put up with my being eleven years older than her, my unattractive physical appearance, and my battle scars from 40 years in a public ministry. When I met her in the airport for the first time and I saw how attractive she was, all of those fears were amplified massively. This was a woman who would have a whole pack of widowers chasing her. Why would she enter into a relationship with me? Over and

over I kept saying that to her, and over and over she kept saying that God had led us to each other and she had grown to love me for who I was, not for my looks or my “baggage.” She finally asked me if I believed that God COULD and WOULD answer my prayer or if my God was too small to bring us together. That stopped me cold.

We were married on June 27—less than a month after she came to South Bend for the first time. I am writing this two months after we were married in my back yard with family, friends, and members of the Church as witnesses.

I am finally convinced that God did in fact answer a desperate prayer in a positive way without my having to cope with or adjust to something different from what I asked for. In the past God’s refusal to answer my prayers in the way I thought He should always forced me to grow and to mature and be more complete in my service to Him. I did not like the answers He gave me many times, but I know that my effectiveness as a worker for the Lord was greatly increased by what He led me through. Sometimes God gives us ways to cope with difficulties He does not take away. Other times He surprises us with great blessings and joys.

We have had to make adjustments and will continue to adjust to each other, but I have found a woman who loves me and who has brought great joy and peace into my life. I have found peace and contentment and love I thought would never happen again. I humbly thank God for that! Learning to trust in God is hard, but when God steps in and does what is way beyond improbable (Ephesians 3:20) we just need to stop and thank Him, accept the gift and the answer, and live gratefully in service to Him.

Does God have a role in relationships? Most definitely—when our prayers and our trust go with God’s will in our lives. Whether God allows trials or takes them away, we must humbly trust Him and obey and submit to His will in all circumstances (Job 1:20–22; 40:3–5; 42:1–6; Hebrews 5:7–8; Philippians 2:5–8). I urge readers who are alone and unhappy with being alone not to give up, not to stop praying, and not to stop looking. Seek the love and relationship you desire, making sure it is a Christian you seek who shares your love for God and your desire to serve Him. Putting God first in relationships (and all things) brings great blessings (Matthew 6:33).

—JNC & CAC



THE ROLE OF CHANCE IN CREATION



In the 40 years that this journal has been in existence, we have had many articles dealing with the evidence that

chance is not the cause of what we see in the natural world. Our use of the word “chance” in these articles has not always been clear, and some of our critics have justifiably complained about the use of the word. My response has always been that it means the process is without direction or purpose. The issue has been whether we can statistically and rationally believe that all we see around us in the natural world came to be spontaneously with no direction or intelligence involved in the process. The philosopher Peter van Inwagen said it this way: “The event of the state of affairs is without purpose or significance; it is not a part of anyone’s plan; it serves no one’s end; and it might very well not have been.” (*ASA Journal*, March 2009, page 3).



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The role of chance can actually be quite complex, and in discussions of natural selection there are many different opinions about how chance operates. A brown animal has a white offspring in an area that becomes covered with snow. The brown animal is eaten by a predator because he is easily seen, but the white animal escapes because he is well camouflaged. What is the role of chance in this situation? Did God miraculously cause the white animal to

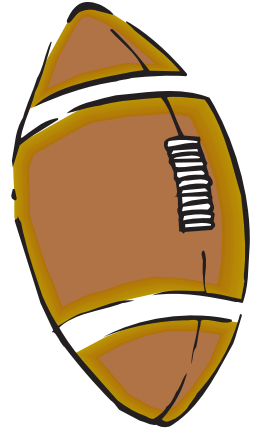
be born white because God had a plan for that particular animal, or is this whole situation a matter of chance? On a broader plain, does God micromanage everything in nature, or is there another way He functions that incorporates chance?

To get you thinking about this, let us assume we are watching a football game between two teams with identical talent at all positions. One team punts the football and the kick sends it forty yards down field. The ball lands on its pointed end and bounces backwards towards the punter hitting a player who is blocking for the receiving team in the back and caus-



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ing the ball to bounce high in the air. When it comes down it lands in the hands of a defensive player covering the kick who catches it and allowing the punting team to eventually score a touchdown. No fan of football would suggest that the punter did this based on his skill. We have the word “luck” to describe the bounce of the ball, but the fact is that how the ball lands to cause it to bounce in a most unusual way is both a designed and a chance-driven situation. The scenario just described has in fact happened in a variety of different ways in football games. One of the reasons people like to watch football games is the unpredictable nature of the game.



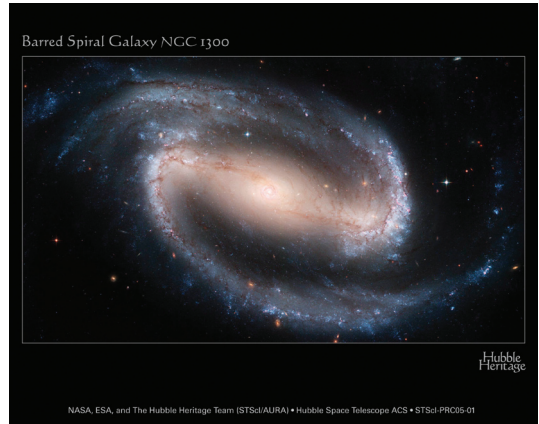
The point of this example is that there are things intelligently built into the game of football that allow chance to function within certain limits. The shape of the football was critical to the example in the last paragraph. If the ball was a soccer ball then such a backwards bounce could not happen in the same way. The fact that a team will punt is designed into the rules of the game to make that part of the game interesting. The rule that says if any player on the receiving team touches the ball in any way it becomes a free ball also was intelligently drawn up to allow such a scenario to exist. The shape of the football field and the rules for blocking, are also involved in this example. What happened had a lot of chance involved in it, the actual way the game comes out is not controlled by the people participating and watching, and that is why we play the game. The game and the equipment are designed to allow chance to operate. There are countless other examples of this principle that could be given. The entire gambling industry is based on the fact that the system is designed so that the players in gambling lose and the owner of the gambling system wins. However, each individual game is a matter of chance functioning within a prescribed set of rules to ultimately make the house win and the player lose—even if they win a few games along the way.

To what extent does God use chance in His processes? In the example at the start of this article with the brown and white animals, does God set up a system which allows life to survive when the climate changes the environment, or does God personally strike each animal He wants to survive with a change that allows survival when the environment changes? Why are there billions of galaxies, each having billions of stars with massive numbers of planets orbiting those stars? Why do we have comets, asteroids, meteoroids, and Oort cloud objects orbiting the Sun which appear to be leftovers from the process of the creation of the solar system?

It appears that God created a system in very much the same way that we set up a football game. In the football game the ultimate result could be said to be a winning team. A physical system (the field) is created and designed. A set of rules for the conduct of the game is put in place. The clock is started and the teams play within the constraints of the designed system in which they find themselves. Ultimately, a winning team is produced. A set of experts could have selected a winning team without the game being played by looking at the physical characteristics of all of the players involved, but the beauty of the game of football is that sometimes the best team physically is not the winning team.

In the cosmological example, God has created space and time—the playing field. He has taken energy and in a bewildering process has placed it in the space/time field with a set of carefully designed rules. We have come to understand that those rules operate at two levels—one set of rules for the very small (the quantum mechanics world) and a different set of rules for the physical world in which we exist. The Bible summarizes all of this in the simple statement “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” The actual start of the creation process does not involve chance. The system that is ultimately produced (the heavens and the earth) is accomplished because of a designed system within which chance operates leading to God’s intended result. Some theologians may object to this suggestion. They want God to micromanage the creation process so that the one result (the heavens and the earth) are produced by continuous miraculous activity with no wasted matter or energy and nothing that does not participate in man’s environment.

The problem with such a suggestion is that the evidence does not support it. Within our own solar system we are seeing that there is a massive amount of matter outside the orbit of Pluto circling the Sun. We now have over 300 planets orbiting other stars with more observations taking place daily as our instruments get better. We have 100 billion stars in our galaxy and literally billions of galaxies that we can see and measure strewn across galactic space. The cosmos is far bigger and far grander than we imagined even 10 years ago, and our concept of God and His actions and processes should grow as



well. It is not that God has changed, but our information and ability to understand has grown.

The more we understand about the genomes of living things, the more we see pattern and design in what controls the physical characteristics of an organism. This design feature allows life to survive on a changing earth, but it is clear that some forms of life have become extinct when environmental conditions exceeded the limits of the characteristics of the individual. A current possible example is that the warming of the earth may cause the polar bear to become extinct. Forms of life do become extinct on a regular basis, and that is a part of the plan, driven by chance, not because God individually kills off every bear.

Even the conception of a child can be viewed by this approach. A woman has many eggs and the one that is fertilized has to be at the right place at the right time for conception to occur. Large numbers of sperm, each carrying different DNA, try to penetrate the egg to fertilize it, but only one does. Does God select the one sperm and the one egg that ultimately becomes a child? If your answer is “yes” then what do you tell a couple that has a baby born with massive, genetically caused birth defects? What do you say when those defects take the baby’s life a few moments after birth, or send it through a life of pain and disability while financially ruining the family? These are difficult questions, but perhaps we create our own theological problems by placing God in the position of direct control that He in fact does not exert.

If we understand this methodology of God, it may not only help us in understanding why there are multiple stars, galaxies, debris in space, and forms of life that come and go; but we may also be better equipped to understand some historical and spiritual matters as well. Why has God allowed everything from the Crusades to slavery to Hitler to the Ku Klux Klan? Why did He not just strike the errant leaders dead and eliminate the misery that they cause? Why allow chance to produce all kinds of leaders who in turn drive politics. The consequences of not following God’s way of doing things cannot be denied when you look at the lessons of history.

Unity among believers is a basic theme of the whole New Testament. Jesus and the apostles prayed and pleaded for our unity over and over (see John 13:22–35; 15:12–17; 1 John 4:7–12; 2 John 5). The fact is that in modern times especially, those who claim to be followers of Jesus are anything but united. God



has given us a method of being united and a number of things that can help us achieve that unity. All acts of worship are designed to help us become united. Singing and praying together moves us toward unity. God does not force unity upon us, but as we see the results of not following God's plan and continue to introduce human substitutes for what God has commanded, we continue to drift into increasing disunity. His ultimate will that we all be one as Jesus is one with God (John 17:22) will happen, but many hard lessons seem to be necessary before we are willing to do what God has called us to do. God's method of leading us when we err is not to pound us into submission but to allow us by trial and error to see the wisdom of what God calls us to and to see that our own methods do not work.

It would be logical at this point to ask if God ever acts or has acted directly and instantly in affecting His will. Certainly Jesus acted directly when He accomplished miracles. In reality there are miracles in the Old Testament in which God acted directly. God did not "zap" the Israelites into the promised land. However, when He needed to get their attention in a matter or affect a solution to an immediate crisis He did act directly, such as the plagues in Egypt, Sodom and Gomorrah, and the deadly serpents in the wilderness. In today's world we still seem to expect God to function by zapping solutions into our lives, when in reality He usually functions by allowing us the freedom to reject Him and choose what by chance comes our way. We can reduce the effects of chance in our lives by following God's will in the choices we make. We know we will die and God has promised us that, but how we will die is not dictated by God. Human violence, diseases caused by man-made chemicals, foolish choices made by us are not directly caused by God.

We can pray for God to act directly in our lives, and in spiritual matters God has promised that He will grant our requests (see Matthew 7:7–8; Luke 11:9–10; John 11:22; 14:13–14; 15:7, 16.) The answers do not always come the way we expect, but God does answer. We do not have the knowledge or the wisdom to always make good choices about options that come our way, and chance may put us in some difficult situations. The beauty of the relationship we have with Jesus is that He understands and that ultimately we will be in heaven. Chance and its consequences will not exist when we get there. We can know for sure that the most important thing in our lives is guaranteed.

—JNC



INFORMATION AND FUNCTION IN A BIOLOGICAL SYSTEM

by Al Cornell

A friend at church told me that in spite of being taught cellular biology by an outspoken critic of faith, that course had inspired her to establish a deeper, personal relationship with God. A course in cell biology can overwhelm a student as the intricate and animated biochemical world is presented. Many who are devoted to a purely naturalistic explanation struggle to account for the existence and function of the coded information in all life. Others just brush aside the whole problem with a swift stroke of the pen. I am persuaded that a faith response, like that of my friend, should be a normal consequence of a person being exposed to the awesome machinery of life.

THE CODED INFORMATION OF LIFE

The existence of information in code form demands the arrival of that code. Generally, we would think of it as a significant invention. Morse code, any language, and the computer binary system are examples of intelligent code systems that we have used to distribute information. DNA stands out as an efficient, four-character code system. Suppositions concerning its origin arise from the fact that it exists. One might imagine that its existence would demand either an origin by chance or by intentional design. However, many who deny any purpose in life carefully attempt to rid themselves of dependence on chance.

They claim that something else is at work that explains not only the existence of the DNA code but also its extensive complexity in the entire biosphere. The statistical probability against the origin



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of meaningful coded information demonstrates that chance does not explain our suddenly small universe. In other words, there simply is not enough material in the universe to give chance processes a reasonable shot at happening to produce even a quite small code.

Literature from those who posture in favor of cre-

ation abounds with examples of the tremendous odds against chance producing a meaningful code. For instance, the estimated number of elementary particles in the universe is 10^{80} . The most rapid events occur at an amazing 10^{45} per second. Thirty billion years contains only 10^{18} seconds. By totaling those, we find that the maximum elementary particle events in 30 billion years could only be 10^{143} . Yet, the simplest known free-living organism, *Mycoplasma genitalium*, has 470 genes that code for 470 proteins that average 347 amino acids in length. The odds against just one specified protein of that length are $1:10^{451}$.

Even comments from naturalistic scientists demonstrate the uselessness of chance. French zoologist, Pierre Grasse wrote, "The probability of dust carried by wind reproducing Durer's *Melancholia* (a detailed copper engraving by the German artist) is less infinitesimal than the probability of copy errors in the DNA molecule leading to the formation of the eye . . ." Astrophysicist, Fred Hoyle made a quite famous statement about the probability of a whirlwind assembling a 747. Robert Shapiro, in a 2007 *Scientific American*, wrote, "The analogy that comes to mind is that of a golfer, who having played a golf ball through an 18-hole course, then assumed the ball could also play itself around the course in his absence." In this analogy, Shapiro pointed out that even if scientists in their lab demonstrated the possibility of an event, it might not be reasonable to expect it to happen in nature.

So, with chance out, one might expect that the atheistic explanation is refuted and God is in. But, whoever relinquished his paradigm just because it seemed illogical? Stephan Jay Gould wrote, "... life, arising as soon as it could, was chemically destined to be, and not the chancy result of accumulated improbabilities." Origin of life researcher, Sydney Fox wrote, "... many scientists view natural phenomena as deterministic, not chancy." So, if chance cannot accomplish it and you do not accept the creation alternative, deterministic matter saves the paradigm. Well, some still linger in the chance camp, but others have abandoned it guessing that all life must have been destined in matter.

During the Winstar Symposium of 1966 some biologists and mathematicians clarified the chance problem with no solution in sight. In 1969, Dean Kenyon and Gary Steinman coauthored *Biochemical Predestination*. They coined that phrase and opened a new door for the atheistic concept of the origin of life. However, after a few years, Dean Kenyon became discouraged with the lack of evidence for their brain-child and denounced the concept. A review of their book by creationist A. E. Wilder-Smith helped him see its fallacy. He soon became a leader in the Intelligent Design movement. Ironically, many

other biologists latched onto his former concept to save face when chance failed them.

Chemical predestination of life's origin and development has no scientific support. Fred Hoyle and Chandra Wickramasinghe wrote, "If there were a basic principle of matter that somehow drove organic systems toward life, its existence should easily be demonstrated in the laboratory." Marcel-Paul Schützenberger said, "Some biologists speak of predestination of the genome. Can anyone actually recover predestination, supposing it actually existed? ... Confronted with such questions, the Darwinian paradigm is conceptually bankrupt." William Dembski commented, "There's no sense in which human beings or even multi-celled organisms are latent in single-celled organisms, much less in non-living chemicals." We have the right to question the justification for such a concept being taught as if it were science.

READING THE CODE

I have in front of me a magazine in which a photo I took was published. I can read the photo caption, "Foto Al Cornell." However, that is all I can read because the magazine is written in German. I can get a little information on the content of the magazine from the pictures contained in it, but I cannot decipher the coded information. Every biological organism known to man is equipped to read the information contained in its DNA. If that information could not be read, it would be entirely useless. If chance could produce coded information, meaningful for life, that information would be totally useless if there were no system in place to read the code.

During war, nations develop codes to relay information that the enemy cannot decipher. During World War II, the United States used Navajo Indians to transfer confidential information in their native language. While the enemy went to great pains to try to decipher that code, they were never able to. Even those of us who know only one language have invested a significant amount of learning to that end.



©iStockphoto.com/dra_schwartz

The deciphering mechanism for biologically contained information is amazing. A tightly controlled system is in place to open strands of

DNA at the right place, to produce a transfer RNA copy, and to stop the production at the necessary spot. The guard holes of the nucleus membrane open to let the RNA out into the cytoplasm of the cell. The RNA is joined to a very large molecule called a ribosome. Ribosomes are present in all living organisms and are necessary to read all information that is sent out from the DNA.

UTILIZING THE INFORMATION

Again, biological information would hit a dead end, even after being read, if there were no system in place to utilize the deciphered information. The ribosome initiates the utilization process by using the RNA strand that it has read in order to form a specified amino acid chain for a specific protein.

Formation of the designated protein is just the beginning of the utilization process. Among the thousands of things constructed from the DNA information are chambers into which the newly formed amino acid chains are taken so that each one can properly fold into its necessary shape for its biological purpose in the organism. Next the protein is transported to the site where it is needed, and it performs or helps perform its specified duty among thousands of activities taking place in the organism.

If you pick up a newspaper and read it, you are getting mostly general information. The paper is designed to keep you informed. Primarily it contains news of events that have happened. You may learn who won yesterday's games, who received an award for what, why Main Street was closed, about births and death, and about upcoming events. There may be something that causes you to change a plan or get involved, but most of it is just general information that you can read and understand.



In contrast, while perhaps only 1½ percent of the DNA in an organism is coded information, every bit of that information is instructional. It not only has to be read by the organism, but it must be utilized for the proper structure and functioning of that organism.

“How To” and recipe books give us instructional information. I recently tried to make a cake. I did not know about the need to keep even a small amount of yolk out of the egg whites when you beat them. My cake ended up somewhat flat and heavy. In the world of biological information, “misunderstanding” can result in serious malfunctions or premature death.

How can we truly grasp the complexity in a biological system? In *Shadows of the Mind: A Search for the Missing Science of Consciousness*, Roger Penrose wrote, “Biological systems indeed tend to have a subtlety of organization that far outstrips even the most sophisticated of our (often very sophisticated) physical creations.” Having a basic concept of this extraordinarily complex system should boost our confidence that that system needed intellectual input to get started.

However, that extreme biological organization does not deter the naturalistic mindset from continuing in its belief system. In *Intelligent Design Creationism and Its Critics*, Robert Pennock wrote, “Genetic engineering may one day allow humans to create life, but so far we do not have a single case of intelligent creation of life; rather our universal experience to date is that only unintelligent material processes do so.” I have a hard time following the logic that if over 1,000 man-years of origin of life research cannot create life then that means only unintelligent processes are able to do it. Pennock’s statement is permeated with bias.

One need not read far into the biological literature to find the inception of life glossed over. Andrew Parker in his book, *In the Blink of an Eye*, states, “But once the first protein molecule had assembled, a self-replicating system would have come into play, which would then develop by natural selection.” My advice to a baseball coach is do not send a third baseman in to play before he has undergone conception, birth, and some development. Of course, my point is that the self-replicating system would have needed highly sophisticated development before it could have worked at all. If it were possible for natural selection to work on a system that had not yet reached the point of having any functional purpose, it would always work toward eliminating that useless baggage.

The evidence from biological systems lends powerful support to the viewpoint that there is a God. However, we must walk by faith, and God leaves some wiggle-room for the unbeliever. This is shown by the irony of what did and did not prompt faith in God by two former atheists who came to believe in Him.

In his book, *There is a God: How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind*, Antony Flew wrote, “It is paradoxical indeed that my first published argument for atheism was originally presented at a forum presided over by the greatest Christian apologist of the last century—the Socratic Club chaired by C. S. Lewis.” He also addresses how the enormous complexity of DNA and its resulting functions demand creative Intelligence. So while Flew felt he had satisfactorily answered Lewis, biological organization was part of the reason for his acknowledging God’s existence.

In contrast, Francis Collins, who headed the human genome project, perceives the weight of evidence for faith balanced more away from

DNA and toward C. S. Lewis' apologetic writings. In *The Language of God*, he acknowledges a relationship between God and DNA. He also understands the inability of modern science to fill the origin of life gap with a naturalistic explanation, but he thinks that gap may one day be filled and that it is "not the place for a thoughtful person to wager his faith." However, *Mere Christianity* by Lewis played a major part in Collins' path from atheism to faith.

While it seems ironic that the DNA person builds faith from Lewis and the person from a Lewis background finds faith through DNA, I do not want to leave the impression that they are polarized over an issue. Each has made a significant contribution to apologetic literature, and, in fact, only Collins' endorsement of Flew's book appears on the front cover of its dust jacket.



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However, I do disagree with Collins' view of some biological gaps. I think that some gaps, including the one at the origin of life, have become progressively more defined by research and will ever be a challenge to the atheistic paradigm.

The agnostic anthropologist, Loren Eiseley, wrote in his book, *The Star Thrower*, "Only in writing can the cry from the great cross of Golgotha still be heard in the minds of men." Eiseley was influenced by the character and love of Jesus, but while the New Testament had some instructional influence on Eiseley's life, he did not perceive it as a message directing him to eternal salvation in Jesus Christ by the grace of God. In contrast, the believer has decided that the New Testament contains significant instructional information for his life that needs to be understood and utilized.

Pierre Grasse's 1977 book, *Evolution of Living Organisms*, attacked mainstream evolutionary thinking; however, what disturbed traditional evolutionists the most was his final words, "Perhaps in this area biology can go no further: the rest is metaphysics." Somewhere there is that "beyond the physical realm." Only faith will take you there. Ultimately, Christian faith comes to rest, not on biologically coded information, but on the written information of a cross on Golgotha and of an empty tomb.

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 simply is 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.

Nevill Mott: Nobel Laureate in Physics in Semiconductors

“I believe in God, who can respond to prayers, to whom we can give trust and without whom life on this earth would be without meaning. I believe that God has revealed Himself to us in many ways and through many men and women, and that for us here in the West the clearest revelation is through Jesus and those that have followed him.”

“The miracles of human history are those in which God has spoken to men. The supreme miracle for Christians is the Resurrection.”

“God can speak to us and show us how we have to live.”

“We can and must ask God which way we ought to go, what we ought to do, and how we ought to behave.”

“Science can have a purifying effect on religion, freeing it from beliefs from a pre-scientific age and helping us to a truer conception of God. At the same time, I am far from believing that science will ever give us the answers to all our questions.”

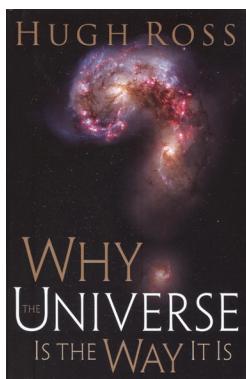
“Neither physical science nor psychology can ever ‘explain’ human consciousness. To me then, human consciousness lies outside science, and it is here that I seek the relationship between God and man.”

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



Why the Universe Is the Way It Is

by Hugh Ross

Baker Books, 2008, 240 pages, \$17.99
(hardback), ISBN-13: 978-0-8010-1304-1

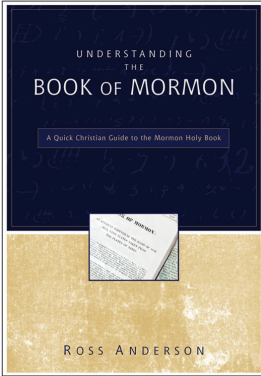
Long before the intelligent design movement reached its current prominence, astronomer Hugh Ross was cataloging evidences in astronomy and physics pointing to God of the Bible. Explaining science in a way that is understandable, yet still scientific, has been Ross' strength.

In this book Ross takes on the tough “why” questions of Christians and skeptics. “Why such a vast universe?” “Why a decaying universe?” “Why not a perfect universe?” He uses the latest finds in astronomy and shows how we can answer these questions, while keeping the science as simple as possible, without losing its force. (Some of the science topics are detailed in more depth in his other books such as *Creation as Science* and *Beyond the Cosmos*.)

Many readers will appreciate the “question and answer” format. This book is timely in light of the current onslaught of atheist attacks. While many atheists often ask “tough” questions, they usually do not stop to listen for the answers. Ross presents the scriptural and scientific answers to these issues. The answers are not always complete in every detail, for human knowledge is incomplete. Open-minded seekers will find in this book a strong argument that science is clearly the mortal enemy of atheism.

The focus on the distinct purposes behind the attributes of the universe makes this a valued addition to the field of science apologetics. Whether or not science is your field of study, this book can help you understand why the universe is the way it is. The purposes described are enough to answer—and silence—the best atheism has to offer. Reviewed by Darrick Dean.

MORMONISM continues to be a challenge to many families. Two new books have come out which will be helpful to people having questions about Mormonism and what it teaches. Both books are by ex-Mormons who have good knowledge of the Mormon religion and its cultish qualities. Since this ministry deals with cults and beliefs that destroy faith, we bring these two books to your attention.



Understanding the Book of Mormon

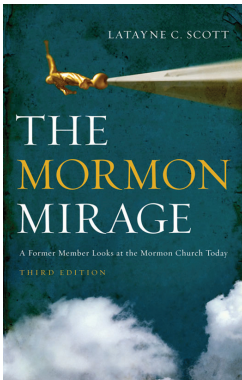
by Ross Anderson

Zondervan, 2009, 116 pages, \$14.99
(paperback), ISBN 978-0-310-28321-8

This book is billed as a guide for Christians to the Mormon Holy Book. It explains the origin of the Mormon writings and books considered to be sacred and explains how to talk with Mormons about their faith and their scriptures. The author goes out of his way to be fair and kind, but since he has a background in the LDS church, his treatment is an exposé of

what he has rejected. In this reviewer's opinion Anderson is accurate and does a good job of giving a reasonable treatment.

The book has discussion questions and an index. It is 5 x 7 inches in size, 116 pages, and yet sells for \$14.99 for a paperback, so it is a little overpriced, but if you need concise information about the Book of Mormon, it is very useful. Reviewed by JNC.



The Mormon Mirage

by Latayne C. Scott

Zondervan, 2009, 364 pages, \$16.99
(paperback), ISBN 978-0-310-29153-4

This is the third edition of this book, and we did review the first edition many years ago. Latayne Scott is a Christian woman who left the Mormon Church for a variety of biblical, philosophical, and theological reasons which part one of this book restates. False prophecies, suppressed history, and changes in doctrine are discussed and explained. Her story is amazing and revealing and well worth reading. The second part of the book is new and details new challenges and issues which the LDS church currently faces as well as a personal challenge from the author about the dangers and biblical problems with Mormonism. New historical and archeological challenges are discussed. There are exhaustive notes on each chapter with

good documentation, a topical index, and both a Book of Mormon index and a biblical index.

This book is a bargain at \$16.99. If you want a strong challenge to Mormonism, we recommend this book highly. Reviewed by JNC.

DANDY DESIGNS

MUTUALISM: WHEN ANIMAL ENEMIES UNITE



One of the most interesting situations in nature is that in which two enemies tolerate each other, bringing benefits to both of them. In *National Wildlife* magazine (April/May 2008, page 18) is a story about two enemies “that seem to have an agreement” not to damage each other. This is an example of what is called a mutualism relationship, a situation where two animals benefit each other and protect each other.

The two animals are a tarantula and narrow-mouthed toad. Normally tarantulas eat toads, but in this case the toad will move into the tarantula’s humid burrow which is ideal for the toad. Any animal that would eat the toad will not invade the burrow, because the tarantula will attack it. What the toad does for the tarantula is to eat the ants and other pests that will eat the tarantula’s eggs. When researchers offered other species of toads to the tarantulas, they ate them. In the middle of such offerings, when a narrow mouth toad was offered it was spared.

Another example in fresh water lakes is the relationship between a minnow called a golden shiner and a bowfin or dogfish. The bowfin feeds on this minnow normally, but during the spawning season the minnows seem to have immunity from bowfin attacks. The bowfin builds a nest and the minnows dart in and out of the nest, providing oxygen and keeping bacteria out. The minnows lay their own eggs in the nests of the bowfin and not only do not have to go to the trouble of building the nest, but have a built-in protector to keep the eggs from

being eaten by predators. There are as many as 35 minnow species that have similar associations with their predators.

The question is how such mutualism develops. It seems as though the animals involved think through what will be to their advantage and avoid normal food patterns, but no one believes that to be the case. Instead there seems to be a genetically programmed response that is highly sophisticated so that it works at certain times of the year with certain species. We would suggest that an Intelligence has created a beautifully designed system of mutualism which promotes the development and diversification of life. That Intelligence is God.

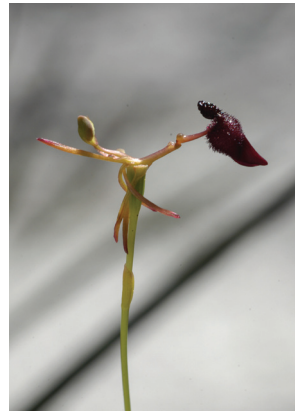
THE HAMMER ORCHID AND THE DUMMY

by David Hobby

This is the story of the relationship between the Thynnid wasp and the hammer orchid of Australia. The female wasp has no wings and lives underground all of its life until it is time to mate. It then climbs a plant and releases its pheromone (a chemical that attracts male wasps) while it waits for a male wasp to come and carry it away as they mate.

The hammer orchid (*Drakaea*) produces a dummy female wasp on a stem attached to a hinge that will only bend one way — the only way that will allow the orchid to be pollinated. At just the right time the orchid releases the pheromone of the female wasp. Many times the male wasp is fooled by the dummy female on the orchid and tries to carry it away. In the process the male wasp is thrown backwards into the pollen of the orchid and pollen sticks to its back. When the wasp gives up and flies away the process is repeated at another orchid but this time when the wasp is thrown backward the pollen on its back pollinates that orchid. This apparently is the only way the hammer orchid can be pollinated. If this process does not work the hammer orchid will become extinct.

Look at all of the things that must be right. The hinge must not be too weak or too stiff. It must bend only one way. The stem from the hinge to the dummy female must be exactly the right length. The orchid must produce exactly the right complex chemical at exactly the right time. All of this is complicated and not something that a plant or a wasp could have intentionally developed. Could this have just happened by chance? Not a chance!



en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drakaea

News and Notes

DOES GOD EXIST? SUSTAINS ANOTHER LOSS

Those of you familiar with this ministry know that for many years Ruth Sullivan has been one of our workers. She and Ward, her husband, were major supporters of our work when it was just starting in 1968. On several occasions they loaned us money to do projects that we all felt needed to be done. In those early days Ruth was our printer and did all of the early bulletins and courses before we were able to go to color printing. She also helped with many of the mechanical processes of making up lessons and processing materials. Ruth passed away on August 29,



2009 at the age of 92. She was one of the kindest, gentlest, humblest, most spiritual, and most positive persons I have ever known, and her contributions to this ministry were huge. Ward Sullivan was an elder in the Church when I first moved to South Bend and he and Ruth were major factors in my development as a Christian and my decision to make this ministry my life long work. We will miss Ruth a great deal, but we rejoice with her family and friends that she is with the Lord she served so faithfully for so many years.

NEW DATA ON ICE AGES IMPACTS GLOBAL WARMING. There is no question but that global warming is going on here in the twenty-first century, but debate over the causes and man's impact on the process continues to be an area of concern. A new study at Oregon State University has shown that the ice levels in the past reached their peak during a time of reduced solar levels and not due to changes in carbon dioxide or ocean temperatures. Dr. Peter Clark says, "Solar radiation was the trigger that started the ice melting, ... changes in atmospheric carbon dioxide levels and ocean circulation ... happened later and amplified a process that had already begun."

Predictable changes in the earth's rotation and axis cause periodic changes in world-wide average temperatures, and while man may speed up or slow down these processes, man is not the sole cause of what is happening. The paper was released August 7, 2009, in the journal *Science*, page 710.

AIDS PICTURE GETS MORE COMPLICATED. There are over 40 different simian immunodeficiency viruses (SIV), and there is very little doubt that the AIDS epidemic started with the virus being transmitted from apes to humans. In *Time* magazine (August 17, 2009, page 12) is an article about a 62-year-old Cameroonian woman who has a variant of the HIV virus which apparently came to her from gorillas. In the August 15, 2009, issue of *Science News* is a report of SIV starting to cause deaths among chimps (page 5). It has previously been believed that the apes did not get ill from these viruses, but that is apparently not the case. These studies show that the viruses involved are becoming very diversified and are having a significant effect on humans and apes. The viruses get to humans in a variety of ways—eating apes, aberrant sexual practices, and communal living. Once in humans the virus spreads rapidly, especially when God's instructions for sexual conduct are not followed.

ACTIVE INFIDELITY BLOSSOMS ON THE WEB. You can find anything you want online, but the availability of open immorality on the web has gotten to be a huge business. Craigslist has a plain-Jane listing, but a new site [name omitted].com is designed to facilitate extramarital affairs. The company says that in just the month of June 679,000 men and women used the site and 92 percent of the males were married. The CEO of this site said, "Humans aren't meant to be monogamous," but admits he would be devastated if his wife used the site. The notion that multiple partners brings sexual satisfaction is a cruel deception based on an ignorant understanding of sex. Humans ARE meant to be monogamous, and the best of sex is not found in uncommitted, unstable relationships. Source: *Time*, August 17, 2009, page 59.

MEDIA EXAGGERATIONS SURFACE AGAIN. On May 19, 2009, the claim of a major find that was the missing link between humans and more primitive primates was made by the media. The specimen was called *Darwinius masillae* and nick named "Ida." A Web site, a book, and a documentary on the History Channel were all timed to coincide with the announcement. News reports were made that called the specimen "the eighth wonder of the world," "the Holy Grail," and "a Rosetta Stone."

Experts in the field are now saying that all of this hype was blown way out of proportion. The earliest claimed human ancestors by any scientific study is seven million years old. *Darwinius masillae* is 47 million years old, so there is no possible connection to modern humans. Experts studying the fossil say that the specimen is more closely related to the group of animals that includes lemurs, bush babies, and lorises—not the group that includes monkeys, apes, and man. This is another case of media-driven hype that has no scientific validity and is designed around commercial purposes, not an attempt to ascertain truth. Source: *Scientific American*, August 2009, page 24.

ATHEISTS INSTITUTE “DE-BAPTISM” TO RENOUNCE FAITH. A major new approach by atheists world wide is to de-baptize people and give them a de-baptismal certificate. The National Secular Society says they have distributed over 100,000 of these certificates in Britain and over 1,000 in Italy. Most of the de-baptisms make fun of religion with a spoof on communion (crackers with peanut butter) and theatrical satires. Source: *USA Today* Web site, July 21, 2009.

TEACHER RIDICULE OF FAITH BRINGS SUIT. Chad Farnan found himself being ridiculed by his history teacher at Capistrano Valley High School. When the teacher referred to creationism as “religious, superstitious nonsense” the teacher found himself in court. On May 1, 2009, US District Court Judge James Selna found that the teacher had violated Farnan’s rights. The teacher also said, “When you put on your Jesus glasses, you can’t see the truth,” and, “When you pray for divine intervention, you’re hoping that the spaghetti monster will help you get what you want.” Many young people put up with that kind of harassment daily, and many accept the premise that their faith is wrong. Perhaps this case will help some kids realize they are living in America and their beliefs should be respected. Source: *Newsletter of the American Scientific Affiliation*, July/August 2009, page 3.

CIRCUMCISION AGAIN. We have mentioned several times in this journal that the act of circumcision which is so heavily ridiculed by opponents of the Bible has strong scientific evidence to back up its validity. An article in *Science News* (April 25, 2009, page 10) offers a considerable amount of new data. Genital herpes, the human papillomavirus, and HIV, all of which are currently incurable, can be prevented by circumcision. Dr. Anthony Fauci of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases in Bethesda, Maryland, says “Circumcision not only prevents HIV outright, but also prevents genital herpes.” The risk of HIV is lessened by up to 60 percent by circumcision. Thomas Quinn of NIAID says “the medical evidence of long term benefits is now overwhelming.” God’s laws have offered

many benefits to man, but science is now showing the circumcision law was far more beneficial than anyone imagined.

ASTRONOMICAL DATA INTERESTING. One of the strong evidences for the existence of God is in the field of cosmology. As we look at the cosmos and learn from what we see, there is more and more reason to believe in God as the Creator. In the April 25, 2009, issue of *Science News* (page 5) is a news article about galaxy formation and how complex the system seems to be. The mechanisms of creation are becoming better understood, and as that happens the intelligence behind the system becomes all that more astounding. Also of interest is the fact that in July, 2009, a comet slammed into Jupiter. In 1994 the Levy Shoemaker Comet had an encounter with Jupiter, and many of us saw 17 pieces of the comet slam into Jupiter creating fireballs nearly as large as the earth itself. As astronomers look at the data and model what took place, it becomes increasingly obvious that our major planets Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune do a special service for us. They protect us from incoming debris from outer space that otherwise could hit our planet and do massive damage here. God has installed comet sweepers to protect us, and this is just one more design feature of the solar system in which we live.

GENETIC PROGRAMMING FOR MIGRATION. One of the things we have discussed extensively in this journal is the evidence of design in animals that migrate from one place to another. We have tried to show that all evolutionary explanations of migratory behavior fail in rather obvious ways to explain what we see. One of the animals where that is especially clear is the monarch butterfly. The monarch flies to a nesting area in Mexico and then returns to the Midwest, battling wind, storms, hurricanes, and the fact is that their life expectancy is too short to make the journey. They have to reproduce along the way and their offspring actually do the final part of the journey. Steven Reppert at University of Massachusetts Medical School has been doing a genetic analysis of the monarchs. He and his team have analyzed over 9,000 of the monarch's genes. The migration itself involves some 40 of the genes which govern when to start, directions, chemicals needed, and defense mechanisms. We have maintained that such intricate genetic programming can never be the product of chance, and this new discovery seems to back that position. Source: *Science News*, April 25, 2009, page 14.

Speaking of migration—a recent study of the bar-tailed godwit showed that one bird flew 11,680 kilometers nonstop from Alaska to New Zealand. The journey took more than eight days without food, water, or rest. Source: *Science News*, November 22, 2008, page 14.



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

*It's scientists vs. preachers,
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