

# DOES GOD EXIST?

March / April 2010  
Volume 37, Number 2

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

## MISREADING THE MESSAGE

## Does God Exist? Lectureships

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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.



# MISREADING THE MESSAGE

It seems to be universally agreed, that faith in God and in the Bible is under heavy attack in today's world. Atheist Web sites dominate much of the Web and are increasingly aggressive in their outreach to young people. Much of the information on these sites is false. The falsehood comes not only from the misunderstandings that atheists have of Christianity and the Bible, but also because they can find ample material produced by believers that can easily be shown to be incorrect. The primary purpose of this journal is education. For 42 years we have been producing factual material on science, faith, and the Bible that comes from people who are schooled in these areas. That does not mean we never misunderstand or make a mistake, but if we do, we try to correct it. Religious people and atheists alike misread messages—both the messages in the Bible and the messages in God's creation—the natural world that surrounds us.

## MISREADING CREATION

The cover of this issue of our journal and the pictures on these pages show one of the areas that we visit in our "Canyonlands Seminar." (See page 26 for information on this year's seminar.) Bryce Canyon in Utah is not only a beautiful place to see, but there are many things in the area that are related to questions about the fossil record and the age of the earth. The spires you see in the pictures are called hoodoos. They are places where a hard cap rock has protected the softer layers below from erosion creating these interesting spires. This is a common feature of eroded areas that have layers of hard rock above softer

rock, and can be seen in many places in the world, but nowhere more clearly than in Bryce Canyon.

One of the things that can be seen in creationist literature and museums is what creationists call "polystrate fossils." The term poly means many, and strate refers to layers

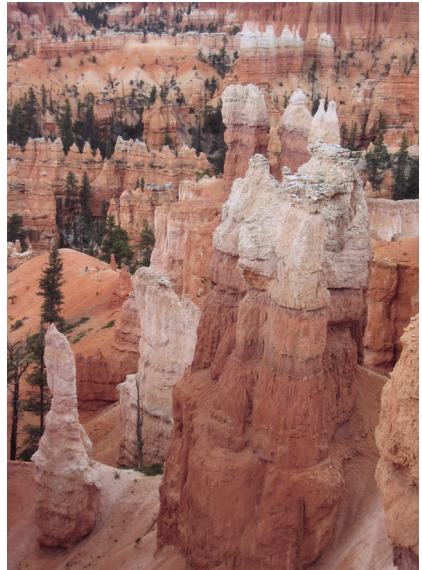


Cover photo and this photo: Cynthia Clayton.

or strata of rock. Sometimes trees will be seen cutting up through many layers of rock. The trees are vertical, and the claim is that the rock layers could not have been laid down over a long period of time. The argument is that the tree could not have existed over the long periods of time the geologists claim were required for the rock layers to be deposited. Some creationists have even suggested that the rock layers had to be flood deposits burying the trees instantly or the formation with the trees cutting through it could not exist.

The picture on the cover shows an interesting place on the main trail going through the hoodoos in Bryce Canyon National Park. There are less known areas of the park where similar trees grow in a place where the canyon walls touch the tree. If sediment were to be deposited in this area, the tree and all of the rock layers would be preserved. Then if it were later exposed after many years it would be called a polystrate fossil.

The point here is that creationists are misreading the message. There are many clues that should help avoid such an error. The rocks deposited around a tree growing up through rock layers should tell you what took place. Flood layers are always clastic rocks—rocks deposited by running water like shale (mud), sandstone (sand), conglomerate (gravel), or breccia (landslide gravel). Limestone, dolomite, gypsum, halite, and geodes are chemically precipitated rocks—rocks crystalized out of quiet pools of water and never



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produced by a flood. Basalt, rhyolite, scoria, pumice, andesite, and porphyries are volcanic rocks and are also not produced by a flood. Every polystrate fossil I have seen was surrounded by rocks that were not flood deposits. When creationists make this kind of claim they are misreading the message of the rocks. The problem is that any young person who has had a course in earth science has studied petrology (the study of rocks), and knows that most claims about polystrate fossils are not true. This can produce a faith crisis in a thinking young person who wants to know what is true and sees the Church as misinformed.

Another example of misreading the message is the subject of uniformitarianism. This belief is the cornerstone of evolution and much of geology. What it says is that the only processes that have ever happened on the earth are the processes going on today. When scientists



study rock layers they assume that erosion, volcanoes, weathering, glaciers, earthquakes, sedimentation, etc., are what produced the layers because that is what is producing the layers today. To be facetious, if an alien brought a dump truck space ship to the earth and dumped a bunch of their garbage, uniformitarianism methods would fail to be able to explain it. This is avoided by assuming no such thing has ever taken place. In the case of alien dump trucks, this is probably a good assumption. The fact is, however, that we now know that comets and asteroids have struck the earth in the past, and the effects they would have on the earth are debated because that process is not happening today.

Many times you will see creationists and atheists alike talking about catastrophes that have affected the earth. The claim is made that uniformitarianism is disproved by evidence of massive volcanoes erupting in the American Northwest, or by tsunamis. These events may be catastrophes to humans, but they do not violate uniformitarianism, because we see them happening today and we know what the results of such things are. We are misreading the message when we talk about a catastrophe that affects the earth and assume it poses some problems for evolutionists and/or geologists.

## MISREADING THE BIBLE

Similar problems take place in misreading the Bible. One claim of almost all atheists from Richard Dawkins to most of the atheist Web sites is that God is an unpleasant person. Richard Dawkins wrote in his book, *The God Delusion*, that 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.”

The point here is that Dawkins and his followers misread the message. God is not a human with human weakness and failings! So why is God referred to in the male gender in the Bible (Him, He, Father, etc.)? There is no neuter in the Hebrew language, so if a gender identity were to be given to God of any kind it would have to be done contextually. For that reason when war, power, strength, punishment, and provision are being emphasized a male identity is given. Throughout scriptures however, there are female attributes and identities given to God when themes like love, compassion, nurturing, etc., are present. Consider Matthew 23:37 (NIV) “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.” Even the most severe critics of the Bible have to admit this is not a male image. When people attribute



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gender inequities to the Bible they are misreading the message.

Many of the misunderstandings of the Genesis account are also due to misreading the message, combined with a failure to take the Bible literally—and this is true of fundamentalists and atheists alike. When did creation occur? What does

the Bible actually say? Is the “creation week” really a creation week? We are not asking whether the days were seven 24-hour days (they probably were), we are asking, “What does the Bible actually say and are we misreading the creation account because of our denominational traditions?”

In the minds of the ancient Hebrews, God functions in two ways. He acts miraculously, but He also acts naturally—by manipulating natural processes. Jesus was conceived miraculously, but His birth and early childhood were accomplished naturally. Jesus was not zapped into existence as a 29-year-old mature male. He was born naturally and lived normally and naturally like any other young Jewish male. Luke 2:41–52 makes it clear that the early life of Jesus was that of a normal child.

The *creation* verse of the Genesis account is verse 1. The Hebrew word that emphasizes this is the word *bara*, which is only used in Hebrew in reference to something God does—never in reference to a natural process or to something a human does. The entire process of creation from absolutely nothing to the matter of which we are made and the planet on which we live is in verse 1. This includes the sun, moon, stars, and all interstellar matter. “In the beginning” in Hebrew is *reshith* and refers to the physical earth on which we live. There are many other Hebrew words that refer to the start of something that has a natural source. *Techillah* means “to commence.” *Rosh* refers to “the head” of something. *Rishon* refers to “the former” of something. The word *reshith* means “the first, the absolute start” of something. But the word *bara* refers to something supernatural which only God can do.

The method God used to create time, space, and energy is not stated in verse 1. In modern science we have quantum mechanics with a completely new set of scientific laws that help explain how quarks, electrons, protons, and ultimately hydrogen came into exist-

tence. Quantum mechanics does not violate the science of the past. It expands our understanding of how things that are a part of other dimensions can ultimately cause the building blocks of matter to come into existence. Contrary to what some atheists claim, quantum mechanics does not prove that something can come from nothing. What it tells us is that there are dimensions beyond the X, Y, and Z dimensions we know, and that creation came from laws which govern these other dimensions. Genesis starts with what ancient man could understand—the physical cosmos that we observe with our senses.

## READING THE MESSAGE CORRECTLY

The ultimate message to those who take the Bible seriously is that God created a functional earth in verse 1. The Hebrew word for earth here is *erets*, which refers to a working, functional earth. If a blob of gunk was what God wanted us to understand He would have used *tselem*, meaning an image or shadow, or *tsurah*, meaning an outline. In verse 2 of Genesis we read that a natural change occurred in the earth—it became or was “without form, and void.” The Hebrew for “without form” is *tohu*, meaning “vacant” or “ruined.” There is compelling evidence of astronomical catastrophes early in the earth’s history, one of which wiped out the dinosaurs. In the creation week we see continued natural change. This change is directed by God, but the Hebrew word used in these verses is *asah*, meaning “to make or naturally form”—not to miraculously create. In verses 14–19 a natural change allows the sun, moon, and stars to be seen and used to establish “signs to mark seasons and days and years” (verse 14). It is not until verse 21 that *bara* is used, and then again in verse 27. Verse 21 refers to complex life in the sea and verse 27 refers to man’s soul. Everything else is done by natural process if we take the Bible literally. In chapter 2, verse 3, the distinction in God’s methods are clearly laid out, “he rested from all his work which God created (*bara*) and made (*asah*)”. God did both.

When there is a conflict between the message we read in the natural world that we can observe—that which science studies—and what we read in the biblical account, we know we have either misread the natural world or we have misread the Bible. The lesson of history is that we have misread both in the past—and we need to work harder not to do so in the future.

—John N. Clayton



Roland Earnst



# BEWARE OF ALARMIST WARNINGS!

Warning, you may be in danger of being duped by fake warnings! Fear seems to be everywhere these days, but “perfect love drives out fear” (1 John 4:18). If there is one bit of advice worth taking to heart it is to be careful about signing petitions or joining causes unless you know the facts. Do not let alarmism carry you away. Some people who are afraid of anything try to scare everyone else. Some people just try to take advantage of other people’s fears.

A high school student made up a petition and got thousands of people to sign it demanding the government stop all use of the chemical dihydrogen monoxide.

The petition is totally correct in stating all the terrible things this chemical can do:

- \*It can cause excessive sweating and vomiting.**
- \*It is a major component of acid rain.**
- \*In its gaseous state, it can cause terrible burns.**
- \*Accidental inhalation of it can kill you.**
- \*It contributes to erosion.**
- \*It decreases effectiveness of automobile brakes.**
- \*It has been found in the tumors of terminal cancer patients.**

The student found that 86 percent of the people he asked to sign the petition were willing to do so. Only one person recognized this terrible chemical was water.

Pull that one on your friends and have a good laugh when they find out what it is. Oh, and be careful what you sign.



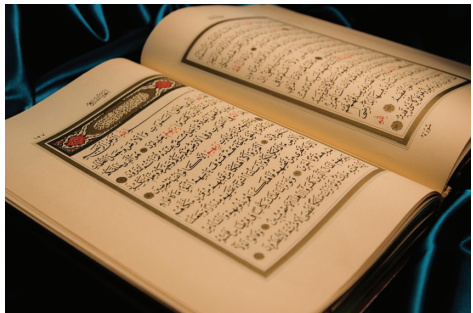
# WHY BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY?

We live in an age of relativism. It is popular in our culture to suggest that no one religious system is the answer to man's problems and that all religious teachings have something good to say. Attacks on Christianity and the Bible are increasingly acrimonious, especially on those of us who attempt to follow what the Bible says and who maintain that it is the one and only true path to God.

Jesus Christ is an easy target for those who follow relativism. John 1:1–14 makes it abundantly clear that Jesus is God and that He came to earth and dwelt among mankind. Verse 14 says very clearly, “The Word [Jesus] was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” In John 14:6 Jesus tells us clearly that He is the only path to God, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father but by me.” In 2 Timothy 3:16–17 the Bible is portrayed as all a person needs for instruction in living: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God ... that the man [or woman] of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

Atheists, agnostics, skeptics, and anti-Christian activists view such statements as arrogant, empty claims of superiority. They would have us believe that all religious systems are equal and all contain some elements of truth and wisdom. They claim that all religious systems, including the Bible, also contain massive amounts of error.

It is not difficult to see why relativism has been accepted by so many people. All of the major religions such as Islam, Hinduism, and many forms of Buddhism claim to be the only true path to God, or at least to perfection. Only the Bahá'í and some modern cult systems view all religious systems as equally valid. It is also a fact that many religious teachings made in the name of Christianity both now and in the past have been false. (Who can forget the Branch Davidians, Jim Jones, and Marshall Applewhite?)



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It is also of interest that all religious systems have some positive things that they teach that are beneficial. The Hindu Vedas certainly have some wonderful concepts of man's responsibility to take care of the environment in which he lives. The *Koran* has a marvelous sense of controlling the environment in which one lives so that immorality does not occur. Buddha understood how to reduce conflict between one another and

live at peace. Seeing elements of truth and wisdom in the writings of a religious system may lead someone to feel that everything taught by that religion must have similar credibility. That is simply not true.

Another misunderstanding prevalent among those who promote relativism is that the actions of members of a religion demonstrate the truth or error of that religious system. I have frequently seen Americans in other countries conducting themselves in rude, abusive, and even illegal ways. It has always disturbed me to see the local people in a situation like that, condemning the United States and all Americans on the basis of what they saw some Americans do. There have been people who claim to be Christians who have had attitudes and have practiced things that are opposed to everything Jesus Christ taught. This includes those supposed Christians involved in the Crusades, the Ku Klux Klan, various cults, and even dishonest politics. I am sure there are people in every religious system who are honest, kind, peaceful, and giving. It is wrong to condemn all Muslims because of the heinous acts of Al-Qaeda or to condemn all Germans because of what Adolph Hitler did. Humans are full of arrogance, ignorance, and selfishness. The only way to fairly evaluate a system is by looking into its written credo—the beliefs and commanded practices that the founders of the religious system taught. How the religious system has affected the standard of living in the cultures where it has been dominant can be of some use, but even that process is prone to error because of

the number of variables involved.

In view of all of this, what evidence do we have that validates the Christian system and the claim that it is the one true path to God? How can we know that the Bible is the inspired message from God telling us how we should live? There are some



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areas we would like to offer that support the view that Christianity is the one true path that all men should follow that will bring them to God.

## INTERNAL EVIDENCE

We have already pointed out that trying to tie a religion to the acts of individuals who might claim to be a part of that religion is inconsistent. Looking at what the sacred writings of the religious system teaches however, is a way of avoiding the inconsistencies of humans



and allows us to make equitable comparisons. One can begin by looking at internal characteristics involved in the manuscripts themselves. We can look for such things as clarity, brevity, whitewashing, and sanitizing as indicators of the credibility of the message, without even looking at what the document teaches. This is something the reader can easily do, especially in this day of computers and evaluation tools.

## CLARITY

This is a term used to tell how clearly the ideas have been expressed by an author. When you read something, you should stop and ask yourself “How clear is what was just said?” (Not “do I believe that?”) To assist us in making unprejudiced judgments in this area, there are a number of educational software programs that school teachers use to get a picture of what a student has written before they read the student’s paper. Over 5,000 students took my physics, chemistry, earth science, and math classes during the 41 years I taught in the public schools in South Bend, Indiana. If you ask virtually any of them, they would tell you that spelling, grammar, and punctuation were not my long suits. Still, I would frequently give students a list of misspelled words when I returned a paper I had graded. The words were carefully printed out by the computer I used which scanned the student’s paper and compiled the list. The same computer program would tell me how many words the student had used, the reading level of the paper, and something called a “fog index” which told me how clearly the students had expressed their ideas. The fog index scale ran from 1 for something perfectly clear, to 14 for something absolutely obscure. On that scale the comic strips would run 1 or 2, the front page of the newspaper 2 to 4, Shakespeare 3 to 6 and the 1040 Income Tax Instructions for the long form 13 to 14. (I actually ran that one year and most of it was over 12 and some of it was over 13.)

Many years ago I had a wonderful group of physics students who were in the habit of not doing their homework. When they bombed one of my tests as a group I gave them my “You’re not trying etc., etc.,” lecture. The next morning I found a letter from the class in my box signed by all 36 kids. They had run a fog index on my test and it was 11.6. “You can’t count a test with a fog index of 11.6,” they said, “We want another test that is at least under 8!!” After that I ran a fog index on my tests before I gave them to the students.

I would encourage the reader to scan the New Testament and compare it to the *Koran*, the Vedas, *The Urantia Book*, and the writings of Bahá’u’lláh, Buddha, and Zoroaster. Look at the reading level and the fog index, and try to compare writings that are similar—history with history, poetry with poetry, commands with commands, etc. All of these works have similar problems. They are all ancient in their

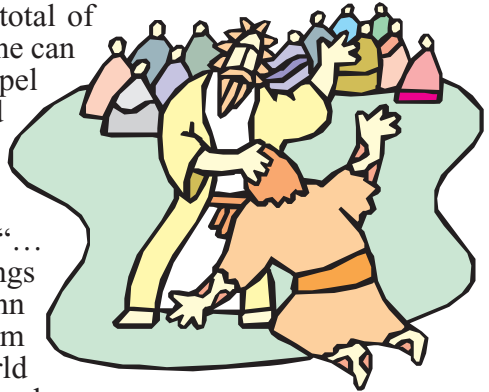
authorship, and they have all been translated into English. Muslims are fond of suggesting that the *Koran* can only be understood if one has fluency in Arabic, but all of these books came from an ancient tongue foreign to English, and thus face similar problems. In many cases such as Arabic, computer software is available in that language, so even that problem is not difficult to handle if one is well informed and able to read all languages fluently.

The contrast in the data on fog index is striking. The book of Acts, the Gospels and the letters of the New Testament have very low scores on the fog index—most well under 4. (Remember the lower the number, the clearer the writing is.) The apocalyptic works of the Bible such as Revelation are high—over 7—typical of that literature style. The Vedas, by comparison, are consistently over 10 and large sections are over 12. Just reading the Vedas will leave you with very little doubt that they are radically different than the biblical manuscripts. The *Koran*, *The Urantia Book*, and the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, Buddha, and Zoroaster consistently run higher than the Bible in every kind of literature where the style and intent of the writing is comparable. It is an interesting comparison and useful in making evaluations.

## BREVITY

All one has to do is to think about the most recent political campaign in the United States to realize that humans do not tend to be brief. Again, the comparisons between the Bible and other manuscripts are most interesting. Of the 12,000 days that Jesus Christ lived upon the earth, and of the 1200 days which made up His ministry, if you added up every day of His life accounted for in the New

Testament you would get a total of something around 34 days. One can see the frustration of the gospel writers as they are restrained from doing what their normal human impulse would have them do. John concluded his gospel account by writing “... there are also many other things which Jesus did, ...” and John was not allowed to record them all because “... even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written” (John 21:25).



Just look at the volume of pages in the Vedas and *The Urantia Book* and you will see there is no brevity. Any reading of the *Koran* will amaze careful readers at how much repetition and irrelevant material

it contains compared to the primary message being presented. The Bible's brevity is incredible.

## WHITEWASH AND SANITIZING

Atheists and skeptics are fond of making references to the “dirty stories” of the Bible. There is no question that the Bible has the dirty laundry of its heroes as well as the stories of their successes. David's sordid affair with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11), Abraham's willingness to let his wife be another man's wife (Genesis 12:10–20), Paul's murderous background (Philippians 3:4–6), and the affair of a member of the Corinthian church with his stepmother (1 Corinthians 5) are all there for us to see. American politics has taught us all that cover-up is a way of life for many people in power. It is pretty easy to control the press and slant history if you have the power of total control. One of the amazing things about the Bible is that the bad is shown along with the good—something humans who are in power do not do.

Most religious books have been whitewashed and sanitized. If you go to your local bookstore you can buy a copy of the *Koran* which is translated by N. J. Dawood and published by Penguin Classics (ISBN-10: 0140449205). This is the translation of the same words as the *Koran* that Bin Laden and his followers are reading. You can also get a copy of *The Essential Koran: The Heart of Islam* published by HarperSanFrancisco and translated by Thomas Cleary (ISBN-10: 0062501984). This version of the *Koran* has had some of the material objectionable to Westerners softened or removed altogether. If one reads external accounts of contemporaries of Muhammad, one will find something about Muhammad's history, lifestyle, and methods. There is total consistency in Muhammad's life with the un-whitewashed version of the Penguin Classics material.

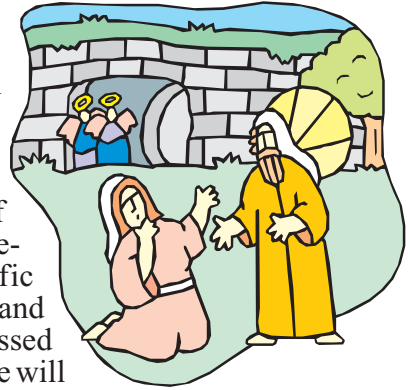
## CHECKABILITY

One can easily check the accuracy and understandings of the authors of various religious manuscripts. This can be done from just about every discipline that is available—mathematics, geography, science, history, psychology, literature, and medicine. In this journal we have had numerous articles over the years talking about the scientific integrity of the Bible. It is difficult to read Leviticus 17 and not be impressed with the biblical understanding of the importance of blood. Genesis 1, when taken literally, has amazing concordance with what science now knows to be true of the sequence with which life appeared on earth. There are vast numbers of scientific statements in the Bible which predate the discovery of these truths by modern science. When apparent errors are seen in biblical writings, a careful examination of the original language removes the error in virtually all cases.



In contrast to the great accuracy of the Bible in a variety of disciplines, other religious writings show considerable error. The *Koran* contains a number of scientific errors and the *Book of Mormon* has many scientific and historical inaccuracies. (Contact us for lists of these errors.)

It is important to note in this discussion that the subject of miracles is not a part of examining the Bible for accuracy. If the Bible presents something as a miracle, then it is recognized that this is not a natural scientific event. Explaining the resurrection is not a valid enterprise, because it is not presented as a natural event. If it were explained by a natural process that would invalidate the biblical claim that it was a miracle. The same would be true of claims of any other book—and in some cases things that are claimed to be miraculous have been shown to be natural events. It would take a large book to explore this subject adequately, but our purpose here is simply to identify some methods of validating the religious systems being considered. (For a list of scientific statements in the Bible, the *Koran*, and the *Book of Mormon* send an addressed envelope with a 44-cent stamp and we will mail it to you.)



## EXTERNAL EVIDENCE—SYSTEM DESIGN

Many years ago on a flight from Dallas to Chicago I had a seat-mate who was a very successful businessman. As he was telling me how he made all of his money he explained that when something worked he always applied that system 100 percent to everything else he had. The fact that it worked showed that the system must have intelligence and good design behind it. I responded that his logic was exactly the reason why I have used the Bible as a guide for my life. When I decided I could no longer be an atheist because of the scientific evidence I saw for the existence of God, I started reading every religious document I could find. I was looking especially for the reasonableness of what the system taught and what the logical result would be of following that system. This is perhaps the most compelling evidence for the validity of Christianity. A few simple examples might be the best way to demonstrate this.

The relationship between man and woman is one area where the contrast in systems is striking. Many religious systems like the *Koran* and the *Book of Mormon* teach polygamy—the notion that a man can have many wives. It should be obvious to any thinking

person that polygamy is an unworkable system. Males and females are born in roughly equal numbers. If one man like Bin Laden has 15 wives, then there are 14 other men out there who do not have a wife at all. The best they can hope for is a harem of their own when this life is over, making them prime candidates for suicide bombings. In addition to the obvious imbalance in wives, polygamy has a denigrating effect on women. I remember one Mormon wife who was interviewed on TV when the modern issue of polygamy came up in Mormon groups saying “When my husband decided to marry another woman I found myself asking, ‘Why am I not enough?’ I finally realized it was to produce more children.” It is difficult to comprehend how a woman can have security and a positive self-image free of competition in a polygamous system.



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Polygamy totally misses what God intended for marriage to be. When Jesus was asked about the whole question in Matthew 19:3–6 He referred His questioners to Genesis 2:24. “‘Haven’t you read,’ he replied, ‘that at the beginning the Creator “made them male and female,” and said, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh?”’”

The issue of system design is very broad and applies in many ways. Read Matthew 5–7, and ask yourself what the world would be like if every person on the planet followed just the words of the Sermon on the Mount. What would happen if everyone returned good for evil, if everyone strove to love those called their enemies, if everyone went the second mile in all relationships, if everyone really did strive to be at peace with all men? (Matthew 5:38–46). The contrast to this teaching are the sharp military commands of Muhammad: “Anyone who attacketh you, attack him in like manner as he attacked you.” (Qur’an 2:194).

It is important to understand that not all Muslims interpret Muhammad’s commands as being physical, but he practiced war, was a military leader, and certainly established his Islamic empire by military methods—a huge contrast to Jesus hanging on the cross saying “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

The final point about system design is the fruit test. Jesus said, “Ye shall know them by their fruits” (Matthew 7:16a). When Christianity is practiced as Jesus taught it (not as some humans have practiced distorted versions of it), what has been the result? Take your local phone book and look at the names of the hospitals in the city where you live or a large nearby city. How many hospitals contain a name that lets you know that the hospital is connected in some way to a group

that is expressing their faith in Jesus Christ by ministering to the sick? How many Muslim, Buddhist, Bahá'í, or atheist hospitals are there—even in places where those religious systems dominate?



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In this journal we have reviewed several books in the last few years that have explored the results of Christianity. *Under the Influence* by Alvin Schmidt, reviewed March/April 2003, gives a clear picture of how women, medicine, care facilities, treatment centers, and schools have been positively impacted by Christianity.

*The God that Did Not Fail* by Robert Royal, reviewed in July/August 2007, showed the effect of Christianity on Western culture and the positive impact it has had.

Take a look at the 12-step programs sponsored in your community. Look at the nursing homes and child care facilities in your area. Check out the HIV treatment centers. Look at the homeless shelters and women's shelters in your area. Go on the Web and do the same thing in areas where Christianity is not dominant and see what is happening there. Even in Europe where the press touts the advantages of the "post-Christian era" Christianity changes lives, provides for the needy, and promotes the care of women and children. I might not agree with

the theology of Mother Teresa or Danny Thomas or the local homeless shelter director, but I admire their lifestyles and the selfless dedication that they made to doing what Jesus said to do for those who were in need. "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger



and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. . . . I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:35, 36, 40b).

My life has been changed for the better by my association with biblical Christianity. I can truly say that it has been a good life and I have been blessed by serving Jesus Christ. Know why you believe what you believe, and do not buy into relativism and the apathy and indifference that it breeds. Let your light shine for Jesus.

—JNC

# SO YOU BELIEVE IN GOD ... BUT WHAT IS GOD? (THE ESSENCE OR NATURE OF GOD)

by Jerry Blount

Have you ever contemplated this question? It is a legitimate question. “Who is He?” is often interspersed with, “What is He?” For example, “God is love” (1 John 4:8). Is this an attempt to answer “Who?” or “What?” I guess I would almost have to respond by saying, “Both.”

“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24, *NASB*). What He is, obviously affects who He is. Who and what He is, also obviously affects what He wants from us. I wish to approach this from an evidences standpoint—and look a little deeper into what the Bible actually reveals to us about “what” God is. I also wish to compare this insight with the laws that drive the universe. What the Bible reveals about God is exactly what the universe demands for God to be in order for God to be its Creator.

Let us begin by allowing the Bible to introduce a summary statement concerning the nature of God.

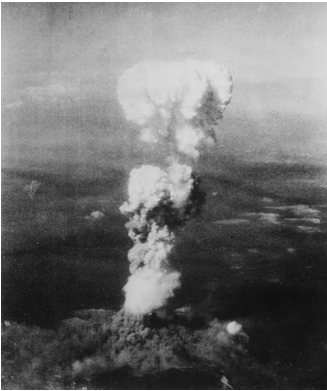
For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For, even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools (Romans 1:18–22).

Notice that Paul declares in no uncertain terms that God has made some things evident. Two things in particular stand out:

1. Eternal power
2. Divine nature (a vast, incredible mind—intelligence)

Paul obviously postulates what today is called “intelligent design.” Knowing who God is requires a Bible. What He is has been clearly revealed in creation. So, can a nuclear physicist believe in God? Let us consider Albert Einstein. We know him for his famous equation  $E=mc^2$ , presented in 1905. This eventually led to a nuclear bomb. Note that for the first time in human history, there really was no doubt

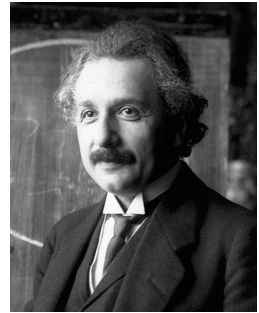




Atomic Cloud — Hiroshima  
1945

National Archives & Records Administration

that energy was absolutely related to the material world. Energy directly correlates with matter. If you can rip the material world apart you will release incredible quantities of energy. Can we put it another way?



Albert Einstein in 1921  
Photo by Ferdinand Schmutzer,  
Wikimedia Commons

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up (2 Peter 3:10).

If you “destroy” the elements what are you going to get? Well, 2,000 years ago Peter said it would come with a roar and intense heat (release of energy). Did he formulate the exact correlation  $E=mc^2$ ? Obviously not. But did Peter get it right? Yes, he did! As a side-note, in virtually the same breath Peter also accurately described the mindset so common today.

Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, and saying, “Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.” For when they maintain this, it escapes their notice that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water (2 Peter 3:3–5).

Are things as they have always been? No, they are not. The universe is decaying as we march ever closer to our end. This concept, which is today formulated in different ways, is exactly as Peter had also said it would be. Frankly this accuracy should help us to believe that what he says will be (through the Holy Spirit) is what really will be.

But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men (2 Peter 3:7).

Consider Paul’s application of this same knowledge.

Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:28–29).

Really? Is God a consuming fire? Well, He is a creating, powerful intelligence that also says He will consume the elements with an intense heat and a roar. That fits well with what we now know from consuming small amounts of those same elements!

As I write this they have recently fired up the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) built on the Swiss and French border. Twenty years in the making it is a giant circular



LHC Quadrupole Magnets  
Made by Fermilab  
Wikimedia Commons/gamsiz

tunnel 17 miles around built 300 feet under ground. It is designed to accelerate two different streams of energy/particles to near the speed of light going in opposite directions and then smash them into each other. What's the point? To see if they can create what scientists have nicknamed the "God particle." Do not misunderstand the term "God particle." It is a pejorative term, not a respectful one. They are searching for yet another "missing link" in the fundamentals of our universe. It is an attempt to create what they believe to be one of the original, fundamental pieces of the universe. Mankind has succeeded in tearing matter apart but has not been able to reverse the process. Interestingly the Bible gives the missing link in physics accurately as well.

The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek Him. All his thoughts are, "There is no God" (Psalm 10:4).

These scientists are looking for the God particle when they should be looking for God. They are trying desperately to solve the riddle of mass. Energy has no mass. So how can incredible quantities of energy take on properties of mass? They have correctly theorized that there must be a way that such can be done. Their answer is that there must be a particle they are missing. So they are trying to re-create creation itself in order to find it.

So can something be created from nothing? Well, as a matter of fact it has been done before.

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. For by it the men of old gained approval. By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the

word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible (Hebrews 11:1–3).

For 2,000 years Christians have “understood” that all things visible were not made out of visible things. What these scientists are searching for, we Christians have known to exist for a long time. These men in their pursuit of knowledge may well demonstrate the truth of Hebrews 11:3 before all the world. They may be the first ones in history to really “make” matter rather than just changing it around a bit. It is not too difficult with our level of technology to bang around hydrogen and helium for example, but to actually create mass is going to be interesting. What does it take to do that? Incredible amounts of energy. Ripping matter apart is not nearly as difficult as putting it together. They are trying to put Humpty Dumpty back together without tearing him apart in the first place. Now consider this and remember that it does not come from an article in today’s *National Geographic*, it was written 2,000 years ago. Since He is the Creator, where must God come from? Paul gave Timothy a straight up answer to that very question.

... until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which He will bring about at the proper time—He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen (1 Timothy 6:14–16).

The creator of heaven and earth dwells in unapproachable light (energy!).  $E=mc^2$ ? To create mass God must have, (or be) an incredible source of energy. He did not need to work for 20 years and spend \$10 billion to bang two streams of particles together.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light. God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day (Genesis 1:1–5).

The issue of light and darkness, energy and matter, life from non-life, and the boundary lines of each are wrapped up in the Genesis account. God created the world and the Bible is the Word of God. God is exactly what both His Creation and His Bible reveal Him to be.

# 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.

## Joseph Murray Nobel Laureate in Medicine and Physiology

“One truth is revealed truth, the other is scientific truth. If you really believe that creation is good, there can be no harm in studying science. The more we learn about creation—the way it emerged—it just adds to the glory of God. Personally, I’ve never seen a conflict.”

“We’re just working with the tools God gave us. There is no reason that science and religion have to operate in an adversarial relationship. Both come from the same source, the only source of truth—the Creator.”

“I think the important thing to realize is how little we know about anything—how flowers unfold, how butterflies migrate. We have to avoid the arrogance of persons on either side of the science-religion divide who feel that they have all the answers. We have to try to use our intellect with humility.”

“Work is a prayer, and I start off every morning dedicating it to our Creator. Every day is a prayer—I feel that, and I feel that very strongly.”

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!





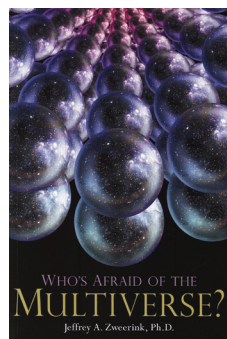


The books that are reviewed in the Book Review section are not available through us, but can be obtained from a local bookstore or through many online bookstores.

### **Who's Afraid of the Multiverse?**

by Jeffrey A. Zweerink, *Reasons to Believe* ([www.reasons.org](http://www.reasons.org)), 2008, 66 pages, \$6.67 (paperback), ISBN-13: 978-1-886653-46-1

One of the challenges that atheists bring to those who believe in God is the challenge of multiverses. In simple terms, the multiverse concept suggests that our universe is only one of many universes. Why multiple universes? Everyone realizes that the odds of such a complex universe as ours coming into existence by chance are extremely small. Adding unknown multiple universes increases the opportunities for chance to work. There are many versions of multiverse theory, but the basic idea is that our universe is just one of many, and that we exist because the conditions here allow water-based, carbon-based life to exist. Many other universes failed to achieve that success.



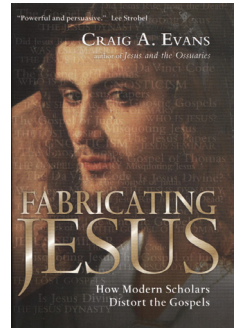
Jeff Zweerink has a Ph.D. from Iowa State in astrophysics. He has authored this booklet to help people understand what multiverse theory is about, and why it poses no threat to arguments for the existence of God. This short booklet does a very good job of explaining this subject field. After a brief explanation of what universes are, Zweerink explains four levels of multiverse theory and then assesses how multiverse impacts cosmological and design arguments. He then discusses scientific and philosophical difficulties with multiverse theory and points out the failures of the theory to meet the criteria for being serious science.

This is an excellent source for this subject. Suggestions are made about how to deal with multiverse theory and why the theory is not a threat to any apologetic argument for God's existence or the validity of the Christian system.

## Fabricating Jesus

by Craig Evans, InterVarsity Press ([www.ivpress.com](http://www.ivpress.com)), 2006, 290 pages, \$24.00 (hardcover), ISBN-13: 0-8308-3318-8

The subtitle of this book is *How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels*. In the past twenty-five years there has been a constant stream of television programs, books, and magazine articles claiming that the Bible is inaccurate, incomplete, and full of contradictions. Most of us have heard about the Judas gospel, the *Da Vinci Code*, *The Pagan Christ*, James Tabor, Bart Ehrman, and the Jesus Seminar. We have had a number of articles in this journal dealing with those claims, but our discussions have been fairly superficial. What Evans does is to address all of the claims challenging the belief in the New Testament as the Word of God. The subjects range from whether Jesus existed to a detailed treatment of Gnostic and apocryphal Gospels and why they should not be in the Bible and should not be taken as a valid teaching on faith and doctrine.



This is a book of factual information. There are charts and lists showing facts such as the dates of these manuscripts, the inconsistent standards used to discredit the Bible and support alternative gospels, quotes of experts in the field, and why accusations made against Jesus do not make logical sense. In addition to the chapters where data is presented, there is a glossary, an author index, a subject index, and exhaustive notes on each subject area.

This is an excellent book to have as a resource when unbelievers challenge the credibility of the Bible. We recommend it highly for all readers. It is very scholarly, highly documented, but easy to read and clear in its message.

Admire God's  
Dandy Designs on the web.  
[www.DandyDesigns.org](http://www.DandyDesigns.org)

# DANDY DESIGNS

## THE ELECTRIC PLATYPUS



Platypus

Wikimedia Commons,  
Peter Scheunis

The platypus has mystified scientists from its discovery at the end of the eighteenth century. Here is a warm-blooded animal with a soft furry body, a capacity to lay eggs and yet nurse the young without nipples (the milk is secreted through the skin), and with a poisonous gland in the leg of the male. Some researchers considered the most puzzling aspect of the animal to be its “bill.” This duck-like bill is soft, unlike the bill of a bird, and it is critical to the animal finding its food of worms, insect larvae, small crustaceans, molluscs, and freshwater shrimp. The animal feeds at night, frequently in very muddy rivers. Researchers found that the animal closes its eyes, ears, and nostrils to feed and yet eats up to half its body weight in food each day.

One of the early researchers of the platypus was Harry Burrell who proposed in 1927 that the platypus was finding its food not by touch but by some sensory technique unknown to science. Scientists have learned that this sensory technique is electric fields. Electric fields are areas of electric force around an electric charge. Thunderstorms generate strong electric fields, but as a river flows over its bed, weak electric fields form where the water and the riverbed meet. Even local variations in the chemical makeup of water can generate an electric field. Animals give off an electric field when a muscle contracts. In 1986 researchers discovered that when a live battery was placed in a platypus enclosure the animals would come to them, but a dead battery stimulated no interest. Transparent obstacles with an electric field would be avoided, but without the electric field the platypus would bump into them.

Studies of the platypus bill have shown there are nearly a million individual nerve cells running from the bill to the brain. (A human finger tip has about 1,000). These nerve cells are connected to receptors that can react to electric fields as weak as .0002 volts per centimeter. If the field oscillated at 100 hertz the receptors were especially sensitive, and that is the frequency generated by the flick of a shrimp tail, an earthworm, or an insect larva. The incredible design of the bill and its hardware is so complex we are still trying to understand all that is involved, but it is another testimony to the design and wisdom of God in creating this incredible animal.

Source: *Natural History* magazine, May 1991, page 31.

# PLANTS ACTING LIKE ANIMALS



Venus Flytrap Wikimedia Commons, Noah Elhardt

In 1873 a biologist detected electrical impulses in a Venus flytrap which were the same kind of electrical waves seen in the nerve impulses in animals. Subsequent studies have shown that there are no nerve cells in the plants, but that waves of charged ions from sensory hairs cause some of the plant cells to expand rapidly closing the “mouth” of the flytrap. The system is slower than

the thousandths of a second reaction in animals, but it is very similar.

Recent studies of plants have shown that when they are eaten, a chemical reaction surges through the plant that is almost identical to the neurohormonal reactions that regulate pain and injury repair in animals. When leaves get nibbled, they release a hormone resembling endorphins made by animals after an injury. In animals these hormones help to convert a chemical called arachidonic acid into prostaglandins which cause inflammation and pain, encouraging the animal to get help or treat the injury. In plants, the hormone helps convert linolenic acid into jasmonic acid, a chemical cousin of prostaglandins. Interestingly, the reaction is so similar to animals that aspirin or ibuprofen will stop it.

Jasmonic acid causes leaves to make enzymes called protease inhibitors which cause indigestion in leaf eating insects. The leaves also make cholecystokinin (CCK) which causes insects and animals to have a feeling of having eaten enough, which is making it a subject of study for diet pills. Jasmonic acid is also released into the air which causes nearby plants to turn on their defense mechanisms when leaf eating insects are around.

The similarity of plant mechanisms to animal mechanisms strongly suggest that they have been designed by the same engineer, who used the same principles to develop both of them. The complexity of the chemistry makes attributing this to chance a very dubious choice. God has designed life to exist even when there are dangers and predators around that could wipe it out. Having a balance that allows this to happen is very difficult to achieve, and when man upsets that balance the consequences can be catastrophic. As we learn more about plants we find more amazing facts that speak of God’s wisdom and design. Truly we can know there is a God through the things He has made. (Romans 1:20).

Source: *National Wildlife*, December/January 1995, page 18.



# News and Notes

## ANNOUNCING: DOES GOD EXIST? 2010 SUMMER SEMINAR IN THE CANYONLANDS



A Grand Canyon view

Both photos: Cynthia Clayton

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 is an all-ages trip to Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, Zion Canyon, Painted Desert, and Petrified Forest national parks plus Meteor Crater

and Sunset Crater. The dates will be September 19–24.

There is no charge for the programs, only the cost charged by the companies that manage the tours. John Clayton is your host and teacher for these trips, assisted by Nathan and Erin Collins and Alan Doty. For more information contact Mark Story at QueensLander Tours ([www.qltours.com](http://www.qltours.com)) or phone 1-877-865-6711.



Alan Doty, our guide through Bryce Canyon

**DOES GOD EXIST? SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABLE.** Over the past 42 years the **Does God Exist?** ministry has given \$1,000 scholarships to aspiring students to be applied towards college or technical school tuition. To be eligible students must have a high school diploma or GED equivalent and be attending an accredited post high school educational institution in the fall of 2010. Selection will be based on a competitive essay on the subject “Science and Faith are Not Enemies.” Registration forms are available from John Clayton, 1555 Echo Valley Drive, Niles, MI 49120 or [jncdge@aol.com](mailto:jncdge@aol.com). The deadline date for submission of essays and registration forms is June 1, 2010.

**YEAR END REPORT AVAILABLE.** A detailed report of this ministry for 2009 is available. The work done and the financial data are included. If you are a financial supporter of this program, you should have received a copy. Otherwise just let us know and we will mail one to you.

**REMINDER OF NEW MATERIALS FROM DOES GOD EXIST?** In 2009 a number of new materials were developed by our ministry. There are four new programs in the DVD series, bringing it to 28 programs on seven discs. We also have a new course written at the freshman college level for high school and undergraduate student use. This course has a teacher’s guide for class use or can be taken by mail free of charge. We also have a new children’s book titled *Frogs and Toads: God’s Bug Snatchers* available—our fifteenth children’s book. Let us know if you have an interest in any of these materials or visit our Web sites [www.doesgodexist.org](http://www.doesgodexist.org) and [www.doesgodexist.tv](http://www.doesgodexist.tv).

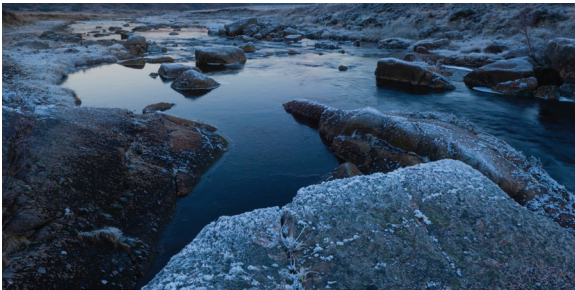
**HIV ORIGINS.** There has been a multiplicity of explanations of how the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) got into the human population. Recent studies of preserved tissues shows that the most widespread HIV strain (known as group M) came into existence around 1908 and has been in chimpanzees since the time of Columbus. Cases have now been traced to 1959 in the Congo and in Haiti by 1966 and in the U.S. by 1969. Human activity has caused the spread to be so dramatic including the eating of bush meat and sexual activity. Source: *Scientific American*, September 2009, page 91.

**EXTRASOLAR PLANET NUMBER PASSES 400.** *Science News* (November 21, 2009, page 14) announced that 32 new planets had been discovered and carried an announcement that the number of known planets orbiting stars other than our sun has now passed 400. Scott Gaudi of Ohio State writes in *Astronomy* magazine (February 2010, page 50) that only one planet has been found that has a mass

less than 10 times that of Earth, that one being 4.8 times Earth's mass. The planet has been labeled CoRoT-7b and is 1.7 times larger in size than Earth. Planets are a natural consequence of star formation, and finding so many is not a surprise. The uniqueness of Earth continues to astound many researchers as these planets have highly elliptical orbits and unique chemical make-ups.

**POLLUTION AND HOMOSEXUALITY.** Recent studies have shown that in some U.S. rivers 91 percent of the male large-mouth bass were affected with a phenomenon which causes male bass to become an "intersex." What that means is that the male sex organs are producing immature female eggs. Pollution is suspected as being the cause of these males becoming females, but a more significant question for humans is whether this same pollution is connected to homosexuality. Dr. Jo Ellen Hinck found intersex male bass at 34 of 111 sites in the Columbia, Colorado, and Mississippi rivers. In a related story *Science News* reports (December 19, 2009, page 10) that a family of industrial chemicals known as phthalates used in plastics causes a reduction in testosterone in children. This results in changes in the children's choices of toys. Diethylhexyl phthalate seemed to be especially involved in this. Women who had high phthalates during mid-pregnancy had an unusually high percentage of boys who wanted to play with dolls, dress

up in girl's clothing, and reject playing with toy cars. If pollution is doing this and humans drink the same water as the fish, could there be chemical causes of homosexuality? Time will tell, but we do want to emphasize



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that a tendency does not mean there is no choice. However, the issue of whether someone is born gay may have more complicated variables than anyone imagined. Source: *Popular Science*, December 2009, page 17.

**GORE FILM SUED IN BRITAIN.** A British citizen has filed suit against his government for forcing children to watch *An Inconvenient Truth*, the environmental documentary by Al Gore. The plaintiff claims the film is roughly half scientific material, 30 percent pure politics, and 20 percent sentimental mush. The judge agreed that the film promoted a partisan political view and should be voluntary. Source: *Pollution Engineering*, November 2007, page 19.

**MEGAFLOOD IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.** *Science News* (January 2, 2010, page 5) reports that new studies have shown the Mediterranean Sea was at one time like a giant bathtub, and a breach of the area between Morocco and Spain through the Strait of Gibraltar caused the Atlantic Ocean to flood the area. We have pointed out in the past that the Glomar Challenger has shown a fault and water fall gouge in the area, but new data shows stratigraphic evidence to expand the Challenger's data. The timing is difficult to ascertain. The article puts the event well before man, but the methods of dating are not very good because of the geology of the area. What it does show is that flooding is very much a part of the story of the area where the Bible account takes place, and as more data becomes available a picture of what contributed to the flood of Noah may become more clear.

**DEAD SEA SCROLL AUTHORSHIP AGAIN.** The Dead Sea Scrolls have been a topic of huge interest to apologetics. Not only do the scrolls support much of the Old Testament, but they give a much more accurate history than most other finds and documents. The question of whether they were written by a sect of Jews called the Essenes, or someone else, has been an area of great debate. In the *Smithsonian* magazine (January 2010, page 40) is a good article that talks about authorship and what some of the evidence is for the scrolls' authors and their impact on Christianity. New archeological data is coming at an increasing rate, and much of it is very supportive of the Bible and the credibility of Christianity. The *Biblical Archeology Review* (January/February 2010) has a number of new finds in this area to report including a painting of Paul and an underground hall with many Christian symbols. As more data becomes available we will let our readers know about it.

**CREATIONIST MUSEUMS AND MONEY.** There is a growing number of creationist museums popping up all over the country. Atheists constantly maintain that all religious activity is designed to make money for the people promoting the religion. In the *Reports of the National Center for Science Education* (September/October 2009, page 17), an atheist journal with heavy funding of its own, there is a report on the incomes of creationists as revealed by the IRS. Some of the numbers given include Answers in Genesis (AIG) with twenty million dollars in assets in 2006 and paying Ken Ham \$188,655. Four other AIG employees were getting over \$100,000 a year. When the museum opened it was valued at 27 million dollars and has been collecting \$20 a person admission fees with some 714,000 visitors. Kent Hovind who ran Dinosaur Adventure Land made bank deposits of over a million dollars yearly before being jailed for tax fraud. Even The Creation Evidence Museum in Glen Rose, Texas reports \$400,000 in



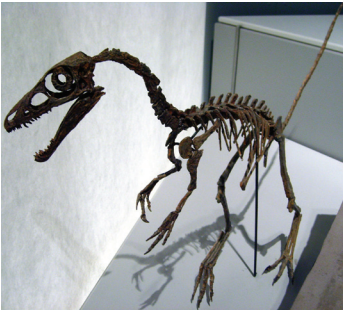
revenues, although Carl Baugh, the director, draws a salary of \$71,730, and John Morris of the Institute for Creation Research made \$89,049 in 2007, which the journal considers modest.

One problem with these museums is that they promote doctrinal views inconsistent with the teachings of the Bible. Many times their science is also bad. We should not try to compete with the secular world in flashy entertainment functions, and need to use our finances for constructive avenues of service. We would urge caution in visiting museums of this type.

### **FRANCIS COLLINS FORMS BIOLOGOS FOUNDATION.**

We have mentioned Francis Collins in this periodical several times in recent years. He was the director of the Human Genome Project, and has been involved as a believer in a number of debates with leading atheists. Collins has started a foundation to promote a positive view of the relationship between science and faith. Collins has some wonderful material. We reviewed his book *The Language of God* several issues ago, and his debate with Richard Dawkins was very well done. Collins is a theistic evolutionist, and believes that evolution is how God created life. We have pointed out that as evolution changes, his view will have to change, and we differ with him on that approach. However, his new Web site at [www.biologos.org](http://www.biologos.org) has some useful material and will be helpful.

**FEATHERED DINOSAUR ISSUE CONTINUES.** A dinosaur named *Sinosauropteryx* was claimed by experts to be a turkey-size dinosaur that had “protofeathers” to keep it warm and was a link to the birds. Experts now say that the marks thought to be protofeathers are collagen fibers and not related to feathers at all. The debate goes on, but remember that this has no biblical implications. The Bible talks about the flesh of birds, fish, mammals, and humans (1 Corinthians 15:39) and whether the dinosaurs are birds or scaled like fish is not a biblical issue. Source: *Science Illustrated*, March/April 2008, page 23.



*Sinosauropteryx* skeleton  
Zoological Museum, Copenhagen  
Wikimedia Commons

**MORE ABORTION PROBLEMS.** There is a variety of social and health issues involved with abortion, but the mental and emotional problems of women who have had abortions are not made public by the media very often. A study in New Zealand showed that women who have had abortions have twice the rate of major depression as

women who were never pregnant and 35 percent higher than women who had chosen to continue the pregnancy. A California study showed that women who had given birth and later had an abortion were 929 percent more likely to use marijuana and 460 percent more likely to use other illicit drugs. A University of Minnesota study showed a tenfold increase in suicides for teens who had aborted during the previous six months. The emotional costs of abortion seem to be an unreported complication of this destructive process. Source: *Family News in Focus* from Dr. James Dobson, January 2008, page 4.

**BATTLE OVER MISS USA REMARK ON HOMOSEXUALITY.** We do not endorse beauty pageants in any way, but last year's Miss USA competition in Las Vegas had an incident which brings up a number of issues and has precipitated a great deal of controversy. Miss California was Carrie Prejean who attends San Diego Christian College. Ms. Prejean was asked before a national television audience to voice her perspective on same-sex marriage. Her response was "I do believe that marriage should be between a man and a woman; no offense to anybody out there. But that's how I was raised and I believe that it should be between a man and a woman." The question was asked by a homosexual activist who calls himself Perez Hilton who then proceeded to use the incident to promote his views on the subject and bring a great deal of negative attention to Ms. Prejean. Why a gay activist was allowed to use the pageant as a means of promoting his views is not clear. Is believing that marriage should be between a man and a woman a position that cannot be voiced in public? Do personal views of public figures have to conform to the media interpretation on every social issue that is out there? It seems we have entered a very scary time and this incident is just a small indicator of how far our culture has swung into complete rejection of any biblical standard.

**FAITH AND HEALTH.** An article in *Time* magazine (February 12, 2009, page 62) continued the debate about prayer and belief in God and their relation to health. It was a fairly balanced article, but still fell into the trap of making assumptions that cannot be justified. Whenever you compare a "prayed for" group with a "not prayed for" group, you have problems. There is no way for anyone to know what silent prayers are going on, and assuming that an organized prayer is more effective than a personalized one, is a very dubious assumption to make. The article was interesting reading.



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