

DOES GOD EXIST?

A hiker with a backpack is seen from behind, looking out over a vast, rugged mountain landscape. In the foreground, there are rocky, snow-dusted slopes. In the middle ground, a large, dark, rocky mountain slope descends towards a valley. In the background, a massive, snow-capped mountain range rises against a blue sky with scattered clouds. A large glacier is visible on the right side of the mountain range.

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

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**THE ROLE OF
PURPOSE IN LIFE**

Does God Exist? Lectureships

Apr. 10–14 Toledo, OH

Apr. 25–28 Boise, ID

*Check our website for an updated list of lectures and contact numbers for the lectureships listed above.
www.doesgodexist.org*

In the beginning God created
the heavens and the earth.
Genesis 1:1

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THE ROLE OF PURPOSE IN LIFE

Have you ever asked yourself or someone else, “Why do I exist?” If you have not, I would suggest you need to do so. It is important that we consider this question because there are so many things in life that are affected by how we answer it. Perhaps the reason many of us have not attempted to deal with the question is because naturalism and evolution do not have good answers for it. If you believe that everything is the result of “blind, pitiless indifference” as stated by atheist Richard Dawkins (*River Out of Eden*), then your existence is totally mechanical in nature. Atheist Julian Huxley gave us this comment on purpose in life, “We are as much a product of blind forces as is the falling of a stone to Earth or the ebb and flow of the tides. We have just happened, and man was made flesh by a long series of singularly beneficial accidents” (Quoted by Anthony Smith in *The Human Pedigree*). What purpose do we have if we are totally the product of chance and our life is the result of “blind, pitiless indifference”? Sociobiologists have suggested that our purpose is to perpetuate our genes — another demonstration of meaningless indifference to personal purpose.



When I was a child being raised by atheistic parents everything was put on the level of survival of the fittest. The guiding principle of our family was, “You get ahead in the biological struggle for survival by being the most fit.” You go to college to be the most fit. You choose a profession that enables you to have the best chance at being in control of others. I remember vividly going to Audubon Society presentations on nature and having my mother review with me the fact that one animal survived by doing what it took to master the competition. Deception was an acceptable method of fulfilling purpose — of surviving. It worked well for me. I went to college with a major in pre-med because it looked like doctors had control of others. I did not drink because I found I could do things to intoxicated fraternity brothers and their friends that I could not have done had they been sober. As long as you are fit, these atheistic guidelines work — at least on a superficial level.

Richard Dawkins, *River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life*, (New York: BasicBooks, 1995), 133.

Anthony Smith, *The Human Pedigree*, (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippencott Co., 1975), 103.

As I got older and experienced the reality of life, things I could not control began to happen to me. Being in the military put me into situations I could not control. In war, the individually “fit” do not always win, or even survive. After military duty, sickness, and having a child born with multiple birth defects made me realize that you could not always be perfect or the best in any sense. My atheistic world view could not handle reality. One of my heroes at that time was Ayn Rand, and when her husband died I saw that her atheistic views did not have good answers for the death of a loved one. As an atheist I had always ridiculed religion for believing that the imperfections in my existence could have been caused by a supposedly perfect God. Religious people did not seem to have an answer for all of this, but my atheist views did not either. Neither atheists nor religionists seem to comprehend how important it is to have a known purpose for your existence. Major issues in life cannot be answered unless that question is answered. Let us look at a few of these issues.



Meaningful answers about death can only come if we have a purpose in life that transcends time. To an atheist, death is an end. It is not only an end to life, but can also be an end to suffering. I can remember as a child hearing a discussion among my parents as they dealt with the pain my grandmother was having as she battled spinal cancer. My mother had just had her dog put down, and she asked, “If we can mercifully stop a dog’s suffering by euthanizing it, why can’t we do the same for your grandmother?” It is interesting that her statement made in the 1940s has seen fruition in the twenty-first century as euthanasia is now legal in many places and the discussions of involuntary euthanasia initiated by Peter Singer are now heard on many talk shows. Singer is the Ira W. DeCamp Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University. In his view, mentally disadvantaged, physically handicapped, and mentally ill people should be put to death so they do not drain the resources of those who are fit. Death in Singer’s view, is a means of promoting the fit and eliminating the unfit.” (See *Christianity Today*, August 2010, page 44, or News and Notes in our November/December 2010 issue.)

The contrast to the negative view of atheists is the committed believers who feel they have had a purpose in life, and that their purpose has been fulfilled. Paul expresses it well in 2 Timothy 4:6–8. “... The time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all

who have longed for his appearing.” In Philippians 3:14 Paul tells us that he “press[es] on toward the goal to win the prize” Death is a means of getting the objective of our lives — the purpose of our lives. Over the years I have had some situations where an atheist offered to come and aid me in my departure to something better. I am sure they felt that my refusal of the offer belies a weakness in my desire to be with the Lord. That view shows a failure to understand the purpose of our existence. Paul addresses this in Philippians 1:21–26, “For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body.” He goes on to talk about how he intends to help them with their faith so that their “joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.”

Look at the contrast between the atheist view of death and what Paul states. Death is not the ultimate tragedy in the view of the Christian. We have built into us a resistance to death, but intellectually and spiritually we know that death is not an end, but an entrance to a wonderful new beginning.

Personal tragedy can only make sense if we know why we exist. The Bible makes it clear that there is a struggle going on between good and evil. Richard Dawkins in the quote mentioned earlier says that “The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at the bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good.” The only atheist response to evil seems to be to deny its existence. The Hebrew word for Satan literally means “the hater” (*Young’s Analytical Concordance*). God is love (1 John 4:8) and Satan is the absence of love — or the hater. Ephesians 6:12 tells us that “our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against . . . the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” In the book of Job, we see a personal struggle between these two forces. Job tells us in Job 42:5 that the result of all that happened to him enabled him to see why he existed, and that now he could see God and God’s purpose for his life.

I have often said that you can take Job’s name out of the book of Job and write your name in place of it, because you are Job (or Jobette). God does not cause the problems we have any more than he caused the problems Job had. My child with multiple handicaps was not victimized by God. My wife did not die because God murdered her as some of my atheist friends have suggested. God takes the terrible things that come to us in life and makes good things come out of them. Romans 8:28 tells us that “God works for the good of those who love him.” I cannot tell you that I am glad that I endured my son’s afflictions for 50 years (so far), nor am I glad that I lost my wife of 49 years. On the other hand, both experiences have provided me a way

of having a ministry to reach out to others. What I have experienced in this world is the worst I will ever experience if my understandings and beliefs as a Christian are correct.

The contrast between the denial of atheism and the positive perspective of Christianity is huge. Ephesians 3:7–12 tells us the role of the church in all of this. Paul writes that God’s “intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.” The church is a key player in the battle between good and evil. The church is people (1 Corinthians 3:16) who through God’s spirit find the strength not only to endure the problems of life, but to encourage and help others as they face the challenges. Sometimes we have to be years away from a tragic event, but ultimately we can see good in everything that we had to endure. We also can see that God provided ways of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13) when the going got too rough for us—another meaningful promise that comes only to Christians.

True tolerance and equality can only happen if we have a view that all human beings are of equal value and have a common purpose. Over and over in the New Testament reference is made to the fact that all humans are equal. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:28–29). (See also 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 6:8; and Colossians 3:11.) Peter said it well in Acts 10:34, “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right.” The whole premise of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5–7 is predicated on that understanding. We love our enemy, we turn the other cheek, we go the second mile, and we live at peace with all men because all men are of equal value. Human life is sacred and special. Being created in the image of God and being created for a reason is centered around believing that we are all one and need to care for each other with no one excluded because of his circumstances.

If our belief system is that everything is rooted in survival of the fittest, and if Singer’s views mentioned earlier are what guide us, we will not only euthanize the physically and mentally unfit, but also the human populations we deem as unfit. The struggle for survival we see in the natural world spreads to humans if God is thrown out of the picture. If I am more fit than you, we are clearly not equal. Why should I tolerate you if your presence threatens my supremacy. We are like the alpha male wolf or elk who drives off or destroys the opposition. Most atheists would be repulsed by this concept, but it is inescapable if naturalism is the basis of all morality.

Real motivation to sacrificially give to others only comes when we know what our purpose is. Why is it that a massive percentage of charitable work in the United States is done by churches or people with religious reasons for doing it? Who runs the homeless shelters or works in them? Who leads in disaster relief? Who runs the food pantries? What are the names of the major benevolent organizations in your community? If I am a Christian then I know that



God has called me to share what I have with the less fortunate. James (James 2:15–16) talks about any belief system that does not serve our fellow man, “Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, ‘Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?” When Jesus pictures the judgment scene in Matthew 25:31–46 the basis he gives is what was done to serve our fellow man. Jesus says in those verses that how we address the hunger, thirst, housing, clothing needs, and imprisonment of others has a role in whether we go to heaven or suffer eternal punishment.

Atheist publishing houses have been releasing books attacking and ridiculing people like Mother Teresa. A favorite atheist theme is that all religious people do is beg for money. When some misguided minister misuses money it makes the front pages of the newspaper. Atheists like to stereotype Christians as selfish, gluttonous abusers of people and resources. There is no question that these things have happened, but when they do happen it is a contradiction to the teachings of Christ and in violation of what the Bible tells us we should do.

If I am an atheist who believes in survival of the fittest, and believes that the struggle for survival depends upon being superior to everyone else in survival skills, why would I do anything that endangers me or helps the competition? If this life is all I have, then I will only give to others if there is social pressure or if it is to my advantage to divest myself of something. Sacrificial giving is at odds with survival of the fittest. The Christian believes that God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7) and that it really is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35). Learning to give is not only a key to benevolence, but it is a key to happy marriages, good families and friends, the best of sex, and joy in our dealing with others.

I do not believe it is possible to provide a meaningful answer to what happens in life or how I should live my life if I have not developed a reasonable understanding of why I exist. The Bible even gives a practical answer to the question of why God created an ugly, bald headed, struggling old man like me.

— John N. Clayton

WHY DID GOD KILL UZZAH?

When Richard Dawkins released his now famous atheist rant against God, he opened the door for many arm-chair atheists on the web to jump on his charges that God is violent, angry, unreasonable, and cruel. One of the most frequently used examples of these charges against God is taken from 2 Samuel 6:1–8. In this account David has rescued the ark of the covenant from the Philistines who had captured



it earlier. As David and his entourage return the ark to Jerusalem, they put the ark on a “new cart” and with 30,000 men start a joyous return. While the celebrating is going on, the sons of Abinadab named Ahio and Uzzah are working with a team of oxen who are pulling the cart with the ark on it. Verse 6 tells us, “When they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark of God, because the oxen stumbled. The Lord’s anger burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act; therefore God struck him down and he died there beside the ark of God.” Atheists have ranted about this incident saying it is just one more example of how unfair, vindictive, petty, angry, and violent this God of the Bible is. Are Dawkins and his many plagiarizers justified in this claim?

The first point that needs to be made in a study of this incident is that the “ark of the covenant of the LORD,” as it is called in Numbers 10:33, was a major factor in Israel’s relationship to God. Deuteronomy 10:1–5 tells us that it contained a copy of the Ten Commandments given by God to Moses. It represented God’s presence in the affairs of Israel described in Exodus 25:22; Leviticus 16:2; and 1 Samuel 4:4. There was nothing that should have been more important to the ancient nation of Israel than the ark of the covenant of the LORD

Exodus 25:10–15 tells us of the construction of the ark, and involved in that construction was a set of attached carrying rings and

poles to insert through the rings so that the ark could be carried as a litter. Numbers 7:9 tells us that the Kohathites were “to carry on their shoulders the holy things for which they were responsible” and in Numbers 4:15 these carriers were told “when the camp is ready to move, the Kohathites are to come to do the carrying. But they must not touch the holy things or they will die.” In ancient times royalty was honored by being carried in litters (a wheel-less carriage) on the shoulders of chosen men. Song of Solomon 3:7, 9 tells us of Solomon making a litter for himself carried by 60 warriors.

In modern times we have had a similar situation in the carrying of plutonium. Like the ark, plutonium is inherently dangerous to transport. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has detailed instructions given to all agencies associated with plutonium, because those carrying the plutonium would be the first affected if the material was carried incorrectly.

The ark of the covenant of the LORD had always been carried correctly up until this time (see Deuteronomy 31:9, 25; Joshua 3:3, 15, 17; 4:9–10, 18; 6:6; 8:33; and 1 Samuel 4:4). It was always carried correctly after this incident (see 2 Samuel 6:13; 15:29; 1 Kings 2:26; 8:3).

In 1 Chronicles 15:13 it is spelled out that “the LORD our God broke out in anger against us. We did not inquire of him about how to do it in the prescribed way.”

The atheist response to all of this would be to suggest it is still petty arrogance that is being justified here when such senseless anger and violence is involved. The problem however is that how you carried something reflected the value of what you were carrying. Carts and wagons were for baggage. In Numbers 7:3–9 Moses divides carts among the construction crews on the basis of what they needed to do their job. Verse 9 tells us that the Kohathites did not get any carts because they were carrying royalty on their shoulders. Amos 2:13 gives us a similar picture of the use of carts. Carrying what should have been the most important object of Israel’s relationship to God

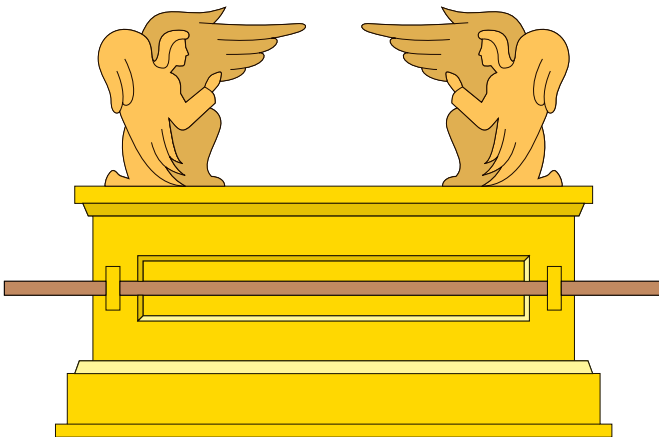


on a cart made it baggage, of little importance to the nation of Israel. Suppose I buy a fancy car and call my wife and say, “ I am going to pick you up in my fancy new car.” When I get there I am in the new car but I am pulling an old manure wagon attached to the car and I say to my wife, “Get in the wagon and I will take you for a ride.” I will not repeat my wife’s likely response, but suffice it to say she would be insulted, angry, and hurt.

The entire nation of Israel is involved in this incident—30,000 men. Israel had been instructed, warned, and taught about the importance of the ark of the covenant of the LORD and the consequences of mishandling the ark. This is not an angry, petty, temper-tantrum on the part of God. This is a logical response to blatant mishandling of an important artifact.

The analogy to the handling of plutonium is a good one, but more important is how we ourselves view God. Is God baggage for us? Do we handle our relationship with God in a way that honors God and treats him with respect, or do we treat God like baggage that we tow along to use if we need him? Jesus told us in Matthew 22:37 that we should “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” Our faith is hollow unless we are physically, spiritually, and mentally committed to it. In Revelation 3:15–18 Jesus condemned lukewarmness. We need to treasure the covenant we have with God as stated in Acts 2:38. We need to obey God just as Israel needed to obey the commands God had given them. We have a great promise of being given the gift of the Holy Spirit just as Israel was promised great blessings if they would live as God called them to live. Obedience is not an option. It is a requirement if we want all that God has promised us.

—JNC



WHY DOESN'T SATAN JUST REPENT AND BE RESTORED?

“You believe that there is one God; you do well: the devils also believe, and tremble.” James 2:19

Searching minds come up with questions that never occur to people in the pews. Most of the time these questions are rooted in misconceptions, but those same misconceptions are held by churchgoers in very large numbers. The difference seems to be that atheists and skeptics will ask these questions, and many times people who attend church and claim they believe just sit on the questions and never express them. This failure to get answers eventually manifests itself in people either leaving the church, or becoming so apathetic about the issues facing Christianity today that they simply attend church but never get involved in doing what Christ has called us to do.

It is a fundamental principle of the gospel of Christ that we as humans can at any time turn away from the sin and neglect that is in our lives and turn to God and begin a new life in accordance with God's word. Why can Satan not do the same thing? If the “devils tremble,” why do they not just confess that Christ is Lord, turn away from their destructive course in repentance, and be baptized for the remission of their sins? Why is there even a place “prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matthew 25:41) if they can come back to God and be saved?

The difficulty in this question is a misunderstanding of what angels are. We have all seen works of art showing angels as beings like ourselves who have the same properties and characteristics that we have except they are actively involved as agents of God. The fact is that angels are not physical beings. They do not have wings, human features, human needs, and human weaknesses. Not all of them are agents of God as indicated in Matthew 25:41. Angels do not exist in the same physical dimensions that we do. They do not die, are not limited by time, and do not have sexual needs or involvement. Mankind has had a hard time with that concept, because it is so different from our own existence. In Matthew 22:30 Jesus was given the hypothetical situation in which a woman is married to seven brothers, one at a time, who all died. The question when she died was whose wife would she be? Jesus said, “... in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.”

Angels seem to have been created before the world was created and were active in the process and in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:24 and Ephesians 6:12). Angels do not die and are outside of time and unlimited in space. They have had the capacity to sin (2 Peter 2:4, Jude 6). Having that capacity means that they also have the capacity to love. Love is only possible when sentient beings have the ability to choose between good and evil and since angels can sin they also can choose to love God or hate God. The difference between us as humans and angels is that angels do not have a period in which they can respond to their sin or to God's commands. When angels choose to reject God they do so for eternity. We as humans on the other hand, have the capacity to choose and eventually turn away from those choices that would put us at odds with God.

Before time was created by God and before sentient beings like ourselves who can function within time were created, angels existed. They had either a love for God and a desire to serve him or antagonism to God and a decision not to serve him. God gave freedom of choice, but



once that choice was made it was in eternity. The purpose of man's existence was to allow a plan to be enacted which would show that when man's way failed and bad consequences of that failure existed, God's superior way of love and conformity to God's word would be shown to all beings in the creation.

There are many messages here, but one of them is that when we die we will "become as angels," meaning that we no longer have a choice as to whether we will serve or not. We will be like angels in that our choice will have been made. We will have chosen to either love and serve God and do his will or we will have chosen to reject God and live in a way that contains none of God's blessings and promises. There will be no turning back — no opportunity for a change of heart and repentance. Like Satan we will live in "a place prepared for the devil and his angels" in a timeless, eternal existence. In 2 Peter 3:10–14 we learn that the physical world will eventually be dissolved — including time itself. We should look "forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless, and at peace with him."

—JNC

INTIMACY WITH GOD WHILE SEEING DIMLY NOW

by John Billington



Living a Christian life involves being in an intimate and loving relationship with God while at the same time only “seeing him dimly now” (1 Corinthians 13:12). It embodies an emotional closeness while paradoxically involving a lack of sense perception. This paradox causes tension in our walk with a loving heavenly Father. However, with some thought to the words “believe” and “faith” as well as an examination of personhood, the paradox is not impenetrable.

CONVOLUTED WORDS

Even in Greek the words “believe” and “faith” have closely related and nuanced meanings, often being used interchangeably. However, the context often renders the nuanced meaning distinguishable. The specific meanings we are interested in are belief and faith as a function of knowledge and belief and faith as a function of the heart. As a function of knowledge, belief and faith work as components of reason and truth. As a function of the heart, belief and faith work as components of trust in a person. In addition to these two scriptural meanings, faith is also used by scripture to convey the notion of a spiritual sense. As the physical senses are the agency through which we relate to this world and other people, faith is the agency through which we relate to God and the spiritual world.

BODIES VERSUS PERSONHOOD

Atheists believe we are fundamentally a cloud of atoms — nothing more. Few if any atheists live consistently with this notion. Further, most people seem to intuitively reject this notion. But how do we know this? How do I know my wife is more than the physical matter that her body is made of? How do I know I am relating to a personality that exists and has value beyond the physical?

The historicity of the resurrection is evidence. Many modern scholars who are experts in the historical case for the bodily resurrection of Christ conclude the historical evidence for the resurrection is extremely compelling. These scholars often remark as Dr. William Lane Craig does in this quote, “There are probably few events in the gospels for which the historical evidence is more compelling than for the resurrection of Jesus.”¹ Thus we have a compelling argument from factual evidence supporting the idea that we are more than our physical bodies.

But other, deeply personal lines of reason also support this intuition. If my wife is fundamentally a cloud of atoms, the inescapable conclusion is that the cloud of atoms that constitute her is no more or less valuable than the cloud of atoms that constitute the rocks in my driveway. Such a state is neither intellectually or emotionally satisfying. Intuition alone leads most people to reject such a notion. As C. S. Lewis said after the death of his beloved wife, “If H. ‘is not,’ then she never was. I mistook a cloud of atoms for a person. There aren’t and never were, any people.”² Most people acknowledge that their need for personal value is real. They fear the nothingness that the atheistic view of death leads to.

It follows that the knowledge that we are more than our physical body is not gained primarily through our physical senses. Healthy human beings simply act consistently with the notion of an innate knowledge that we are real and valuable persons that exist as more than our bodies. Other lines of reason indicate that this knowledge is true.



PERSONHOOD, RELATIONSHIPS, AND SENSES

However, in our everyday lives we do not separate the person from the physical apparatuses involved in seeing, touching, and hearing them. Thus, in practice, we unwittingly infer the existence of persons because we see, touch, and hear them. It is this error of inferring persons from our physical senses that causes much of the tension in our relationship with God.

Dallas Willard said, “The biggest hindrance to faith is the overwhelming presence of the physical world.”³ This is an eloquent way of stating that our slavish reliance to our physical senses is deceiving. By directly inferring personhood from the experience of relating to them through our physical senses, we skip the intuition that we know by our physical sense that physical bodies exist, but it is not by our

Dallas Willard said, “The biggest hindrance to faith is the overwhelming presence of the physical world.”³

physical senses that we know persons are more than their physical bodies. We miss the belief that a person exists as more than the physical stuff that makes them up is a function of intuitional knowledge. If we continue to infer personhood through our physical senses, belief in God will always be strained simply because our physical senses cannot perceive spirit and God. Belief that God exists is a function of intuitional knowledge—the same form of knowledge that informs us that people are more than their physical bodies.

Intuition is a form of knowledge. Good intuition engages reason and validates its knowledge. Intuition seems to predicate belief. Thus belief in this context is a function of reason. The belief that God exists is grounded in the reasoned intuition that there is design in the cosmos, that we react to beauty, that persons are of value, and many other aspects of creation that are best explained by the existence of God. This is the same process of reasoned intuition that leads to believing people are more than their physical bodies. It is the same form of knowledge Paul refers to in Romans 1:20.

If knowledge of personhood is not gained by the physical senses, what is their purpose where personhood and relating to other persons is concerned? Clarence Larkin had an incredible insight about the body and church when he said, “As the human body is for the manifestation of a personality, so the church, the ‘Body of Christ’ is for the purpose of manifesting ‘His Personality’ to the world.”⁴ If the body is the vehicle through which our personality is manifested, it is the vehicle through which we relate to other persons. Specifically, the act of relating to other persons is achieved through the agency of our physical body’s senses.

PENETRATING THE PARADOX

I experience times of worshiping in which my mind seeks for an image—something to which to direct my worship. Apparently Jesus’ disciples, at least Philip, experienced the same problem.

Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” Jesus replied, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don’t know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you?” (John 14:8–9, NLT).

I recall Paul’s words in Colossians 1:15, “He is the image of the invisible God, . . .” What did Paul want the Colossian Christians to understand by such a comment? Had any of the Colossians personally met Jesus? Paul was, of course, referring to knowing Jesus through his life, teachings, death, and resurrection. Peter is more direct about trusting Christ without seeing him in 1 Peter 1:8, “You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy.” Jesus’ words echo through both Paul’s and Peter’s teaching.

But Paul also said in 1 Corinthians 13:12 (NLT), “Now we see things imperfectly as in a cloudy mirror . . .”

A color-blind person surely knows the beauty of a flower or a sunset shooting rays of light that dance on the clouds. We try to convey the brilliance and glory that the world of color adds to beauty by way of analogy and metaphor. But we find that sharing the sensation of experiencing color for one’s self is simply beyond our ability. For now, we know God imperfectly as, I imagine, a person who is color blind knows beauty and color. Yet, surely the color blind person does know beauty. We know God is good. He is love, beauty, justice, and mercy. Sometimes we know him through his touch on our very person through a form of relating that circumvents our physical senses. These times may be only vaguely understood and describable but they are nonetheless real and vibrant. Believing this is the act of relating to God through the “sense” of faith. With time we come to see that our relationship with God is known to us in the same way as any of our



relationships are known. Just as we believe from reasoned intuition that persons exist as more than their physical bodies, we believe God exists from reasoned intuition that he is the answer for the creation we observe. Just as we recognize relationships with other persons through the personally-felt mental and emotional touch they cause on our persons, we recognize our relationship with God through the same felt emotional experiences, impressions, and intuitions any relationship causes on our person; even though he acts upon our person directly.

Paul also said, We walk by faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7). Faith is the “sense” we employ to see, hear, and touch God. The prevailing worldview presents us with a false dichotomy. It asks which is easier to believe in—this world that we see, touch, and hear or the spiritual world that we simply must believe is real. God beckons us to reject this false either/or view and see both worlds in unity—a unity that confirms our natural sense that the world I see, touch, and hear is not a complete world. There is more to it. This world is complete only with the spiritual world undergirding and permeating everything associated with it. In adopting this mind-set, we begin to trust our spiritual “sense” more than our physical sense of sight.

Intimacy with God is found when we understand “faith” is also “trust in a person.” I have faith in the person of my wife. I believe and trust her for the promises she made to me. Intimacy with God is gained in the same way, by having trust in the person of God.

In the Bible we find the word “faith” used to convey both the notion of a sense and the notion of trust in the person of God. By understanding the meanings of faith, and understanding belief (for the context of this article) as a function of reason we can have intimacy with God while we learn to see him clearly.

Notes.

1. William Lane Craig, “The Bodily Resurrection of Jesus: Compelling Evidence,” powertochange.com/discover/faith/jesusresurrection1/.
2. C. S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed*. New York: HarperCollins, 1996.
3. Dallas Willard, *Hearing God*, page 217.
4. Clarence Larkin, *Dispensational Truth*, page 46.

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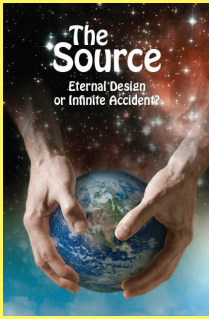
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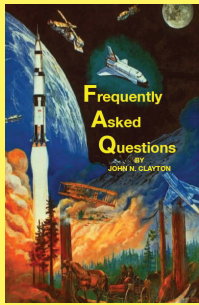
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SCIENTISTS AND GOD

Editor's Note: Our thanks to Tihomir Dimitrov on the nobelists.net website for quotations from many of the founders of modern science who were also fundamental believers in the God of the Bible. As we share these quotations we are reminded that being a good scientist is not at odds with belief in God.



Blaise Pascal 1623–1662
Founder of Hydrostatics,
Hydrodynamics, and
the Theory of Probabilities

“Jesus Christ is a God whom we approach without pride and before whom we humble ourselves without despair.” “Jesus Christ did nothing but teach men that they loved themselves, that they were slaves, blind, sick, wretched and sinners; that He must deliver them, enlighten them, bless, and heal them; that this would be effected by hating self, and by following Him through suffering and death on the cross.” “Without Jesus Christ man must be in vice and misery; with Jesus Christ man is free from vice and misery; in Him is all our virtue and all our happiness. Apart from Him there is but vice, misery, darkness, dearth, despair.”

“Christianity is strange. It bids man recognize that he is vile, even abominable, and bids him desire to be like God. Without such a counterpoise, this dignity would make him horribly vain, or this humiliation would make him terribly abject.” “The knowledge of God without that of man’s misery causes pride. The knowledge of man’s misery without that of God causes despair. The knowledge of Jesus Christ constitutes the middle course, because in Him we find both God and our misery.”

“We know God only by Jesus Christ. Without this mediator, all communion with God is taken away; through Jesus Christ we know God. All those who have claimed to know God, and to prove Him without Jesus Christ, have had only weak proofs. But in proof of Jesus Christ we have the prophecies, which are solid and palpable proofs. And these prophecies, being accomplished and proved true by the event, mark the certainty of those truths and, therefore the divinity of Christ. In Him then, and through Him, we know God.” “There are two ways of proving the truths of our religion; one by the power of reason, the other by the authority of him who speaks.”

Cynthia's Corner



As I write this John and I have just returned from one of my favorite trips—the Canyonlands Tour. A group of Christians traveled by bus to Sunset Crater, the Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, Zion National Park, Lake Powell, Meteor Crater, Painted Desert, and Petrified Forest. Not only are these spectacular wonders to see, but they tell a story about the history of the earth. John, along with Alan Doty, a professional geologist, taught us daily on the bus about the geologic significance and importance of these structures to our understanding of how God created the world and how that fits with what God reveals in his Word.

Before knowing John, I had no understanding of, or appreciation for, geology. These teaching trips in the Canyonlands have opened my eyes and mind to the processes and methods that God most likely used when he designed, created, and prepared the earth for man to live on. I no longer see God as a magician who zapped everything we see today into existence. I see him as an architect and engineer who set processes in motion over time to give us a habitable earth—rich in natural resources that we can find and use. We are able to find these resources because of the way God made them. The geologic history of the earth reveals a God who designed and created our universe and earth with purpose and wisdom (Proverbs 3:19 and 8:22–31). God's power and divine nature are clearly seen in the beauty, design, and complexity of all he has made (Romans 1:20).

The encouragement of being with fellow Christians all week, singing and praying and studying God's Word, has strengthened my faith. I have a better understanding of how God's Word and the things we observe in nature are in harmony with one another. Science, after all, is man discovering how God did what he did. In the beginning God created everything. How he did it, how long it took, and the methods he used can be seen in what he has made. It is important for people's faith, especially young people, to be able to reconcile scientific facts and history with the Bible. They should not have to choose between them. Because the Bible is the inerrant Word of God, there cannot be conflict between it and what we observe to be true in the things which God has made. I am thankful to be a part of this ministry which attempts to show people that they do not have to make that choice.

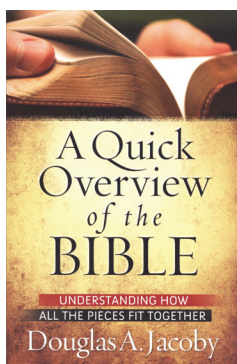
—Cynthia Clayton



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.

A Quick Overview of the Bible

by Douglas A. Jacoby, Harvest House Publishers, ©2012
264 pages, \$12.99 (paperback), ISBN-13: 978-0-7369-4424-3



We have recommended several books by Dr. Jacoby in the past, and have had considerable amounts of mail indicating that people appreciated the practical, academically solid approach that he makes to apologetics and the Bible. This book is a “tool book,” meaning a book that can help in our own personal attempts to understand God and the Bible as his word. We hear religious people talking about how hard the Bible is to understand, and we hear atheists talk about how the God of the Old Testament is a different God than the God of the New Testament. Both of

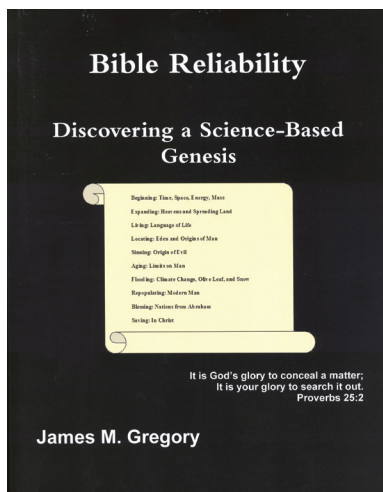
these erroneous statements are rooted in a failure to understand the background of what we are reading. The publisher gives the analogy of doing a jigsaw puzzle. If you do not see the picture on the cover of the box, the puzzle is much harder to solve than if you do see it. This book is designed to do the same thing the cover of the jigsaw puzzle box is designed to do. We feel it does that job well.

The book is divided into three sections. The first 32 pages deal with the mechanics of the Bible — translations, the canon, the overall theme, and the cultural setting of the Bible. The second section deals with the Old Testament starting with the history, purpose, demographics, authorship, and writings of the Old Testament. The third section deals with the New Testament and does the same thing, including extra-biblical sources, the Apocalypse, and claimed discrepancies.

Dr. Jacoby knows his field and has advanced degrees from Duke University, Harvard Divinity School, and Drew University. He writes well and has a very readable style. We recommend this book to all readers including Bible teachers and ministers. There are many charts and direct answers to skeptics that make it useful for everyone.

Bible Reliability: Discovering a Science-Based Genesis

by Dr. James M. Gregory, Lulu Press, Inc., at Lulu.com, ©2012
257 pages, \$28.95 (paperback) ISBN-13: 978-1-105-64394-1



Dr. Gregory is a professor of engineering and has taught at the University of Missouri and Texas Tech University for over 30 years. This book is a collection of studies Dr. Gregory has been involved in throughout his academic career. Being trained in science and engineering, the author has extensive use of graphs and mathematical equations in his writing. This makes the book a great source of graphics for teachers and lecturers in apologetics, because many times a chart, line graph, or histogram is used instead of a verbal description of the point being made.

The last 54 pages of the book are appendices with the major one being a comparison of Bible statements, the author's comments, and scientific or historic information.

The book is divided into 14 chapters dealing with a wide range of subjects. Some are very scientific, such as, "The Origin and Language of Life." Others are very theological, such as, "Attitude, Anger, and Association with God." Some are quite debatable, such as chapter seven which attempts to show that the long ages of people like Methuselah are within the realm of possibility. Much of this type of discussion is showing possibilities and the spirit of the writing is not dogmatic or legalistic. The material is not young earth or fundamentalist in nature. There is considerable information concerning the flood of Noah. You probably will not agree with Dr. Gregory on everything, but he will make you think and bring you some fresh ideas on a variety of subjects.

We recommend this book to college students and people working in apologetics. It will challenge you, and give you a wide cross-section of views. Much of the material is dated, with some references going back into the early and mid twentieth century; but most of the material is referenced to the early twenty-first century. The book is well written and brings some interesting speculation on the credibility of the biblical account from a scientific viewpoint. It is a good reference source, but not an organized apologetic, and we recommend it for reference purposes.

DANDY DESIGNS

REINDEER AND UV RADIATION



Ultraviolet (UV) radiation is usually seen as destructive to life. It causes skin cancer, gives cataracts to healthy eyes, and causes sunburns. We are generally protected from ultraviolet radiation by the ozone layer in our upper atmosphere. However, there is a latitude effect with higher levels of ultraviolet radiation reach-

ing the upper latitudes, primarily because of the thinning of the ozone layer. Reindeer live in these upper latitudes, and researchers have been studying how they handle this increased ultraviolet exposure. In the process of this study it has been shown that reindeer actually use the ultraviolet to enhance their survival. Researchers have discovered that the reindeer eye is actually designed with photoreceptors that can sense and process ultraviolet radiation.

The reindeer's ability to see ultraviolet light allows them to avoid predators and find food. The reindeer's main predator is the wolf and wolf fur absorbs ultraviolet light. In a snowy environment where the ultraviolet rays are reflected, the reindeer can see the wolf clearly.

In addition to avoiding predators the reindeer is assisted in finding food. Lichen is the primary winter food of the reindeer, and it also absorbs ultraviolet radiation so the reindeer can find it in the snow.

Still a mystery to scientists is how the reindeer avoids eye damage from the UV rays. Light exposure causes humans to lose 20 to 30 percent of their central photoreceptors in the course of life. If we could discover how the reindeer avoid damage to their eyes in the UV-reflective environment we might be able to avoid age-related macular degeneration.

We are told in the Bible that “we can know there is a God through the things he has made” (Romans 1:19–22). The reindeer is a great example of design aimed at aiding survival in a harsh environment. Source: *Scientific American*, August 2011.

THE INCREDIBLE COMPLEXITY OF HIBERNATION

On February 2, 2012 Punxsutawney Phil was roused from hibernation to predict six more weeks of winter. Everyone laughs about this great American fairy tale, but few recognize that what Phil does in hibernation is an incredible process that has to be very carefully designed.

In June of 2011 I suffered an attack of pancreatitis and was confined to complete bed rest for 15 days. I was then not allowed to have significant activity for a month because of the risks associated with being in bed for 15 days. I had a sister-in-law who was confined to bed rest during a difficult pregnancy for a matter of months, and that stay was incredibly difficult.



One of the problems associated with long term bed rest in humans is the likelihood of blood clots. The entire circulatory system in humans is in serious trouble when bed rest is extended for a period of months. In a period of six months heart failure is a real risk. Oxidative and energetic stress is a major issue in long term bed rest. Blood vessels fail in this long time and vessel dysfunction is a major problem. Punxsutawney Phil hibernates for six months with none of these ill effects.

In humans there is a 90% reduction in muscle mass in six months of bed rest while Punxsutawney Phil has no measurable muscle loss. Disuse osteoporosis is a major problem in long term bed rest in humans making the breaking of bones an issue. There is no osteoporosis at all in Punxsutawney Phil. The metabolism of carbohydrate, protein, and fat breaks down in humans in extended bed rest, and in Punxsutawney Phil primary fat breakdown providing energy for survival occurs, but no other loss has been measured. After 15 days of being in bed I had bed sores, and people who have had bed rest for months report that bed sores are a major issue. No bed sores have been detected in bears, groundhogs, or any other hibernating animals.

Trying to explain how all of these adaptations can occur on a chance basis is difficult by any standard, but if you claim that there are close biological relationships between hibernating animals and those that do not hibernate, these adaptations become increasingly difficult to attribute to mindless chance. God's design for hibernation is not only practical in terms of the survival of the animals and the efficient use of resources, but it also speaks to us of the wisdom of God. Source: *Science News*, February 25, 2012, page 26.

News and Notes

MARRIAGE ISSUE CONTINUES TO BE DEBATED. In the May/June 2012 issue of this journal we discussed the issue of marriage, comparing the biblical concept with the alternatives suggested by special interest groups in our culture. In the August 6, 2012, issue of *Time* magazine (page 42) there is a story of a Mormon polygamist, his three wives, and his 23 children. Those who promote alternatives to God's plan need to look at what an ideal polygamous household in America is like. We come back to the point that all alternatives to God's one husband/one wife for life plan involve destructive lifestyles. Whether you look at gay marriage, group marriages, polyandrous marriages, or polygamy the evidence is clear that on a practical level God's plan works the best.

ANOTHER STUDY ON GAY PARENTING. One natural spin-off of the marriage issue is how the type of marriage affects the children. Increasing numbers of homosexuals are adopting children or conceiving children using laboratory conception methods. A new study of 15,000 adults ages 18 to 39 at the University of Texas has shown that people with one or more gay parents have a higher rate of depression, drug use, unemployment, infidelity, and ill health. There is debate about what other parameters might be involved, but the data supports other studies in the same subject area. Source: *The Week*, June 29, 2012, page 21.

BY THEIR FRUITS. Jesus and the apostles made it clear that those who are really followers of Christ will be easy to identify by the product of their lives (see Matthew 7:16–20; Galatians 5:22; Ephesians 5:9; Philippians 4:17; and James 3:17–18). If “looking after number 1” is the goal of your life, or if “survival of the fittest” is a summary of your moral code, then you will not be serving others in a self-sacrificial way. The recession has given Christians and atheist groups an opportunity to bring relief to others in a sacrificial way. The Christian response has been huge while organized atheism has been deafeningly quiet in any altruistic activity. *Time* magazine (June 23, 2012, page 32) has an interesting article about churches

and faith-based programs and what they have been doing to meet the needs of the working poor in the recession. While the article gets into significant political rhetoric, the admission of Christian values is hard to miss.

THE UNIVERSE FROM NOTHING (AGAIN). Lawrence Krauss, a theoretical physicist, has released a new book titled *A Universe From Nothing* (Free Press) in which he claims to have proven that the laws of physics could have created the universe from nothing. What Krauss is doing is repeating the theory that there are virtual particles that appear for a very short time and then disappear in what is called “a quantum fluctuation.” By a very short time we are talking a billionth of a second or less. Stephen Hawking said it well “... in quantum theory, particles can be created out of energy in the form of particle/antiparticle pairs. All of the energy of these particle/antiparticle pairs add up to zero, the total energy of the universe.” (*A Brief History of Time*, page 133). There are so many problems with these proposals that it would take many pages to explain them all. The Heisenberg uncertainty principle demands that the greater the energy of the fluctuation the shorter time it may last, so if there is infinite energy in the cosmos, the time would be zero. For a particle to appear in space it would require that space and the laws that govern it already have to exist—to have been created. The list of assumptions made by Krauss goes on and on, but the bottom line is that this is simply speculation—not science. Perhaps this can best be seen in his statement, “‘Nothing’—in this case no space, no time, no anything!—is unstable.” Source: *Scientific American*, May 2012, page 86.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND BLASPHEMY. In 1989 the late Ayatollah Khomeini declared it was the duty of every Muslim to kill Salman Rushdie because his novel, *The Satanic Verses*, was blasphemous. Rushdie has survived by going into hiding, but the book’s Norwegian publisher was shot, its Turkish publisher and 35 of his guests were burned to death at a hotel, its Italian translator was stabbed, and its Japanese translator was assassinated. In Austria Elisabeth Sabba-ditsch-Wolf has been convicted of “denigrating religious beliefs” for her comments about Mohammed during a seminar on radical Islam. In Holland Geert Wilders has been prosecuted for comments about Islam in political speeches as has Jussi Hallaaho in Finland. Random House made a last minute rejection of a historical novel titled *Jewel of Medina* by Sherry Jones because they wanted “to protect the safety of the author, employees of Random House, booksellers ...” All of this is just a small sampling of the cases of repression of free speech. For a more complete listing we would suggest you get a copy of *Im-primis*, Volume 41 Number 2, February 2012 from Hillsdale College,

33 East College Street, Hillsdale, Michigan, 49242, or at hillsdale.edu/news/imprimus. While many Muslims would not endorse all of this intimidation, the Muslim community is deafeningly quiet in its response to it, and the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation which was formed to respond to it has been dysfunctional.

THE GOD PARTICLE. The apparent discovery of the Higgs boson in July has resulted in some wild claims in the media and on atheist websites, including one claiming that the last reason to need the existence of God has been eradicated. We have talked about the subject area of quantum mechanics in our DVDs and in a number of articles in this journal. There are no apologetic issues involved in this discovery, because what the Higgs boson would be (if confirmed) is a designed control system which when combined with energy produces electric charge, gravity (and thus mass). The creation of the energy and the Higgs boson is not what is being addressed—only their existence. What is going on is a leap forward in our understanding of how God created all of these things. Finding the tool does not explain the origin of the tool or the intelligence to know how to use it.



FREE-WILL AND GENETICS. One of the major issues of social science is the existence of morality and a sense of right and wrong. There have been several articles in various science journals (e.g., Michael Shirmer’s “Skeptic” column in *Scientific American*, August 2012, page 86) suggesting there is a section of the brain that has evolved conscience to control morality for survival purposes. Those of us that have been converted out of an immoral lifestyle in the world can testify that conscience is trained—not genetically programed. First Corinthians 8:7–12 and Romans 12:2 make this pretty clear, but the experience of those of us who have been changed by Jesus Christ is perhaps the best argument against evolutionary explanations of conscience and morality.

DROUGHT AND GOD’S DESIGN. Our hearts go out to those of you who have been radically affected by the extreme drought that has afflicted many parts of the United States in 2012. We have had some interesting questions about God’s design and the drought. Actually drought is more the norm than the exception on most of the earth. Passages in the Old Testament like Genesis 31:40; Jeremiah 50:38; Haggai 1:11; Psalm 32:4; Job 24:19; and Jeremiah 2:6 all mention drought in various situations, and much of the Middle East is vastly drier than most of the United States. The normal motion of air masses

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called the Hadley Cell, brings very dry conditions around 30 degrees latitude north and south. Thirty-degrees north falls along the Gulf Coast of the United States. In this country hurricanes and storage of ground water have mitigated the effect of this normal water shortage. However, the stored ground water is being used up and man-made influences coming from land-use have made the situation worse. God told man to subdue the earth and to take care of it (Genesis 1:28 and 2:15). Managing water properly is critical to our survival on this planet. The resources are there, but we must manage them wisely.

GLOBAL WARMING AND THE DROUGHT. Right in line with drought is the issue of global warming. What we have seen in the summer of 2012 is not global warming or a direct symptom of it. The term “global warming” refers to the average temperature of the whole planet—not to a certain geographic extreme. Some areas of the earth in 2012 had cooler temperatures than normal. The weather and climate systems come and go. We have had global warming and cooling in the past, and it will continue. Normal hot and cold spells are not a part of global warming. Human production of greenhouse gases may affect the climate and even sometimes local conditions, but that is not the sole cause. Again, it is up to us to take care of our home planet, and managing our wastes is a part of that.

FIFTH MOON FOR PLUTO. In July 2012 astronomers discovered a fifth moon orbiting the “solar object” Pluto. Pluto is no longer called a planet by astronomers because of its unusual orbit. (It has a tilted orbit that actually cuts inside Neptune’s orbit). Our picture of the solar system continues to change as we realize that there is a significant amount of debris outside of the eight planets we can see from earth. The method of producing planets and the implications of that for finding resources and protecting ourselves from the dangers of outer space are important. God’s methodology of “creating the heaven and the earth” gives us information useful in understanding everything from creation to how God works in our lives.

MORE FEATHERED DINOSAURS. Another Chinese dinosaur has been found that seems to have had feathers. The dinosaur is named *Yutyrannus huali* and is about 30 feet long and weighed 3,000 pounds. *Yu* is the Mandarin word for feather and *huali* means beautiful. The feathers are small (six to eight inches) and would have been a fuzzy covering giving insulation and perhaps camouflage. The diversity of life today and in the past is amazing, and this is one more demonstration of how diverse the dinosaurs were. Source: *Nature*, April 5, 2012 and *Science News* May 5, 2012, page 9.

MILKY WAY AND ANDROMEDA TO COLLIDE. Do not pack your bags, but there is a huge galactic collision about to take place. The media likes to generate alarming headlines, and recently a story written by Amina Khan in the *Los Angeles Times* (May 31, 2012) was picked up by papers all over the country. The facts are that it is POSSIBLE the two galaxies are moving toward each other, but the instruments to measure the movement of Andromeda are so crude and the distances are so huge that no sure movement can be measured. The two galaxies are 2.5 million light years apart, and while the speed of galactic movement is large at 250,000 miles per hour, we still have roughly 4 billion years before the collision. The distances are so huge that even if the collision did occur, the earth's movement around the sun would be unaffected. The incredible size of the cosmos makes astronomical catastrophes highly unlikely, and all this hype simply demonstrates how big the system actually is.

NEW DATES ON MAN'S EARLIEST ART. We have pointed out repeatedly in this journal, that the Bible cannot be used to establish when the creation occurred or when man was created on the earth. All attempts to do so are based on assumptions that are invalid, and usually have denominational creeds that are being defended. We have also pointed out that man's artistic ability is not something that evolved, but was present when man first appeared on the earth. All data supports these claims, and in *Science News* (July 29, 2012, page 15) are two articles on new studies of the earliest cave art which is dated at 40,800 years ago; and the earliest pottery which is dated at 20,000 years ago. When God created Adam, he placed within Adam a spiritual make-up which allowed artistic creation and we keep finding evidence of that in all of ancient man's work.

GETTING OLD IS GOOD. Those of us who are up in years tend to complain about aches and pains, but *Smithsonian* magazine (July/August 2012, page 12) has an article titled "Wise Up," saying that people over 50 are happier than at any other time in their lives. Anger and stress drop off and sadness and fear become less pronounced. The article quotes many people in the study as saying, "I wish I'd learned to enjoy life on a daily basis and enjoy the moment when I was in my 30s instead of in my 60s." We would suggest that faith has a big role in that, which the article does not mention. If "survival of the fittest" is what you live by, it is hard to be happy when you know you are less fit than the world around you.



*Thank you for your support during 2012.
May the Lord bless you and your family in 2013.*

*John and Cynthia Clayton
Roland Earnst
Linda Glover
Karl Marcussen*



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