

DOES GOD EXIST?

January/February 2016

Volume 43 Number 1

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

*Taking Genesis
Literally*

Does God Exist? Lectureships

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Articles in this Issue:

Taking Genesis Literally 3

Guest Articles:

- Clayton Museum of Ancient
History 8
- Anticipated Answers to
Disputed Questions 16

Special Features:

- Great Scientists and God 20
- Cynthia's Corner 21
- Book Reviews:
Is There a God? 22
Fool's Talk 23
- Dandy Designs:
Yucca, Yucca 24
Amazing Frogs 25
News and Notes 26

**TO TAKE THE BIBLE LITERALLY ONE MUST LOOK
AT WHO WROTE IT, TO WHOM, WHEN, WHY THEY
WROTE IT, AND HOW THE PEOPLE WOULD HAVE
UNDERSTOOD IT AT THE TIME IT WAS WRITTEN.**

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

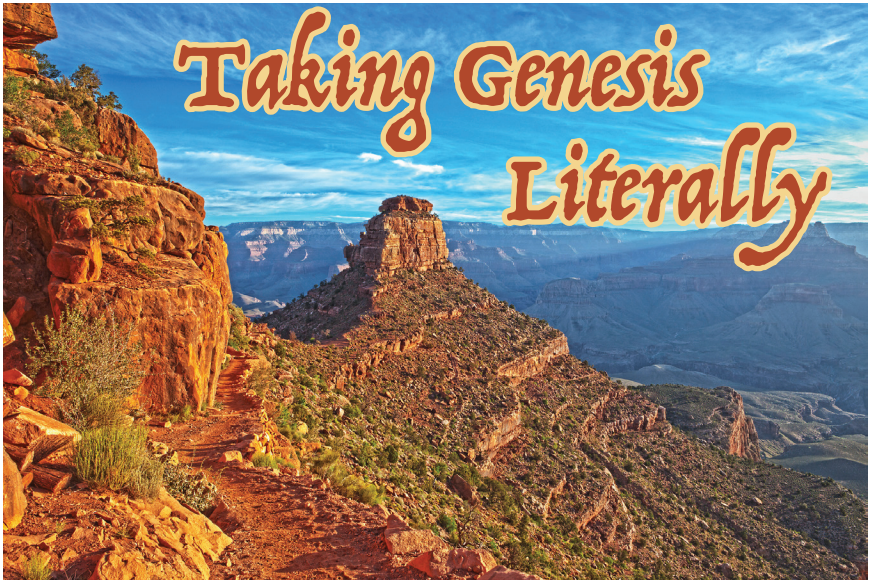
Home phone: 269-687-9426 FAX: 269-687-9431

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Send subscription requests, orders, or address changes to:

Does God Exist?, PO Box 2704, South Bend, IN 46680-2704
Phone: 574-514-1400 or by e-mail: marcusen@michiana.org

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.



A major weakness of many Christians who want to take the Bible literally is that they have an incorrect idea of what taking the Bible literally means. To take the Bible literally one must look at who wrote it, to whom, when, why they wrote it, and how the people would have understood it at the time it was written. That usually means looking carefully at the words the author chose in the language in which the passage was written.

Many Christians ignore the real meaning of the words in Genesis because the version they are reading did not translate literally. We have discussed many examples of that in past issues of this journal. Genesis 6:1–4, for example, has been misinterpreted by many people because they have not taken the words literally. This particular passage was translated in the King James Version from the Vulgate, the Latin version of Genesis. In the Vulgate the Hebrew word *nephilim* was translated *gigantus* in Latin. When the King James translators came to this word they did not know what to do with it, and they simply brought it across as “giant.” The people of Moses’ day and even today would translate *nephilim* as “fallen ones.” Concordances and dictionaries will render it in this way, but some still want *nephilim* to refer to giants, aliens, spirit creatures, angels, or demons. This is the flood chapter of Genesis, and people of Moses’ day would have understood it to refer to people who rejected God, resorted to violence, and precipitated the flood.

Not taking the Bible literally has produced similar difficulties when one attempts to understand the creation account in Genesis 1–3. It is important to understand that the Genesis account was not

written for scientifically oriented academics living in the twenty-first century. It was written for all people no matter where they lived, when they lived, what their nationality was, or how much education they might have. The language of Genesis uses an economy of words because Hebrew, unlike Greek, is not very specific in what it says.

A good example of this is the word “heaven” in Genesis 1:1. The Hebrew word *shamayim* is used in this verse. The problem is that this word can refer to three different things. It can refer to the atmosphere, it can refer to outer space, or it can refer to the place we can go to when we die. Which of these meanings should we accept as being what Genesis 1:1 is talking about? It is always helpful to look at the context of a passage, and see what other words are used in conjunction with the word in question. In this case the word “earth” is used coming from the Hebrew word *erets*. Once again, this word can have more than one meaning. It can refer to soil, or to rocks, or to the planet on which we live.

How did the people who spoke the language in the time of Moses understand these words? We can go to extra-biblical sources, but a further clue comes

from the word for God chosen in Genesis 1:1. The Hebrews had different words for God depending on God’s role in their lives. If God’s promises were being described, the word *Yahweh* was used. If God’s ruling nature was involved, the word *Adonai* was used. When God’s power



and creative ability was involved, the name used was *Elohim*, and that name is used exclusively in Genesis 1. In Genesis 2, when the purpose of the passage is to highlight the promise to man of being one with his wife, *Yahweh* is used. One final word in Genesis 1:1 is the word translated “create” which comes from the Hebrew word *bara*, a word that is only used by the Hebrew-speaking people in reference to God’s creative action. It is never used in relation to something humans can do. When you put all of this together, the meaning seems to be obvious — God created everything! My men-

tally challenged son with a very low I.Q. could have told us this a long time ago, as could the ancient shepherd in the hills of Judea. The meaning is clear in all cultures, all ages, all languages, and all educational understandings. Where problems arise is when modern readers of Genesis restrict the meaning of this first verse. Genesis 1:1 is not written as a summary of the Genesis account. It is written as a historical event. The next several verses also describe events — not summaries of what was taking place. The first four verses of Genesis 1 are undated and untimed. The “creation week” is not the beginning of creation. If we take Genesis 1 literally, the creation takes place in verse 1. There God “created” (*bara*) the heavens and the earth. The Hebrew *bara* is not used again in Genesis until verse 20 in reference to animal life, and then again in verse 27 in reference to human’s spiritual makeup.

IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH.

GENESIS 1:1, NIV

One of the fundamental messages of the Bible is that the creation shows us much about God, and that there is a prehistory to the creation. Proverbs 8:22–31 tells us through the eyes of wisdom that wisdom was expressed “from the beginning, before the world began” (verse 23). Psalm 19:1 tells us God’s glory can be seen in space. So do Colossians 1:15–17 and Romans 1:19–20. The Bible has many passages that deal with things that were brought into being before time began.

Creating a world that can support life of all kinds, and meet the needs of humans is incredibly difficult. When scientists tried to create a habitat, known as Biosphere 2, that could support humans for



a period of years with no outside help or introduction of resources, it failed. As our knowledge of astronomy, cosmology, and geology improve, we find more and more parameters that have to be carefully met in order for a stable earth to exist.

God is an incredible engineer. He is not a magician or illusionist. He planted a garden (Genesis 2:8). He did not pull a garden out of a magic pouch. He formed man's body of the dust of the earth (Genesis 2:7). He did not transport man's body as they did in "Star Trek." The Hebrew word used in this verse (*yatshir*) is normally used in reference to something a sculptor would do. Psalm 139:13–15 uses the vocabulary of a weaver in describing the formation of our bodies.

At the end of what is described in Genesis 1:1 there was a universe and an earth. Space was there with everything that makes up



space—stars, exoplanets, galaxies, nebulae, planets, asteroids, comets, Oort clouds, meteoroids, black holes, etc. As you looked around you would have seen an earth prepared for human existence. It already contained all kinds of rocks and minerals necessary to plant a garden, coal

seams, petroleum reserves, uranium, etc. During the creation week God prepared the earth and populated it with the plants and animals humans would need.

When Genesis 1 is taken this literally, all of the claimed conflicts with science and history disappear. The geologic history that we see in the rock record which enables us to locate oil, gas, coal, and radioactive sources are a part of God's preparation of the earth (*erets*) in Genesis 1:1. Wisdom was present to do this (Proverbs 8:22–31) as God prepared a wonderful place for his created beings. The primary message is that God created man and woman specially in his image giving us the capacity to know good and evil, to create, and to love in a way that was not biologically dependent.

Why is this literal understanding of the Genesis account so hard to accept? The primary cause is that humans want to make it more mystical and political than it is. We tend to turn Genesis 1 into a



video game, with magical events leading to dispensations that end up with Jesus ruling the world in a political way for a limited period of time. As young people try to make sense of all of this, they are turned away by the mystical tone of what is presented to them. They see the physical evidence of science and the facts do not fit with what they are told the Bible says. Taking Genesis literally is vitally important, but that does not mean forcing the creation account into human denominational creeds and traditions.

— John N. Clayton





STORY AND PHOTOS BY ROLAND EARNST

Last September the Clayton Museum of Ancient History opened at York College in York, Nebraska. The museum has rare artifacts from the biblical times of both the Old and New Testaments — with an emphasis on the Roman soldier. We want to take you on a mini-tour of the museum, but first we ask the question, “How did a

museum of ancient history get named in honor of John N. Clayton and how did it come to be located in York, Nebraska?”

It all started in the 1980s when John Clayton gave a lecture series at the University of Colorado in Boulder. There was a young student named Foster Stanback who, like John, had grown up in an unbelieving family. Foster considered himself an atheist/agnostic, but he was, “In a searching mode looking for God and with a lot of questions.” He saw some signs on the campus saying “Does God Exist? Come hear a former atheist talk about God.” Foster thought that sounded interesting and considered going to hear the lecture instead of going to a beer party that night. Foster found the auditorium and was amazed at John’s presentation as he spoke about science and faith. Even more impressive to Foster was the follow-up question-and-answer session. He was impressed with the way John handled questions from skeptical University of Colorado professors. Foster said, “I never knew that there were real reasons why you could believe.” That night he came to understand that science can point us toward God because there is so much evidence of design that “indicates there is some kind of an Engineer behind all this.”

That evening was a turning point in Foster’s life and he began to study the Bible and became a Christian. Foster went on to become successful in business and made an income that allowed him to put together an impressive collection of rare artifacts from biblical times. His desire was to do what John was doing in making presentations to people showing the historical and scientific evidence for God. Foster Stanback founded the Apologetics Research Society.

Over time the artifacts ended up sitting in a garage and Foster decided that they needed to be properly cared for and made available for the public to see. Through a series of events Foster reached an agreement with York College to establish a world-class museum to house and display the artifacts so people could enjoy and learn from



them. He even donated the money needed to renovate the ground level of the Mackey Center on campus to house the museum.

That is how the museum came to be, but then there was a need to give the museum a name. Foster wanted to name it in honor of his mentor, John Clayton. John did not

want the museum to be named after him, but insisted that it should be named in honor of Foster Stanback who made it possible. Foster said, "None of this would have happened without you, John." Foster believes that it is important for him to honor the man who brought him to new birth in Christ and who has been his mentor. Finally John humbly agreed to the use of his name. John was convinced that our spiritual birthday should be emphasized since it is for eternity and therefore it is good to honor those who lead us to Christ.

We recommend going to York College, Nebraska, to visit the Clayton Museum. However, we would like to give you a mini-tour in pictures.



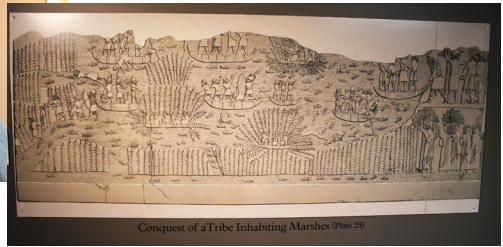
On the opening weekend the Legion VI Victrix, Roman legion re-creators from California, were there to enhance the occasion. These people are experts in the life of ancient Roman soldiers and they were very impressed with the Stanback collection and the museum's professional quality presentation.

When you enter the museum you will see a time-line of ancient Mesopotamia. Also you will see a very realistic figure of an ancient





Assyrian archer along with reproductions of Assyrian murals depicting the warfare of the time.



Next you will enter a section devoted to the Roman Monarchy followed by the Roman Republic.

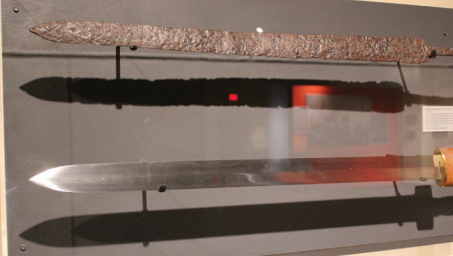


A section on the Roman Empire displays actual tools, nails, household items, oil lamps, coins, gaming dice, signet rings, and Coliseum admittance tokens.





There are also actual items of weapons and armor such as, swords, spear heads, sling bullets, helmets, and greaves.



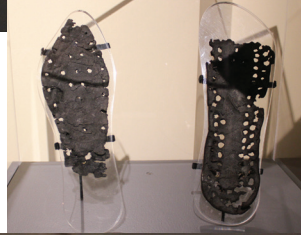
On a large screen is projected an animated overview of the growth and decline of the Roman Empire.



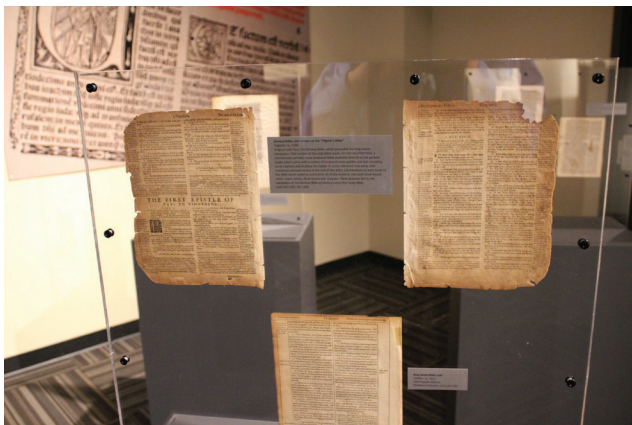
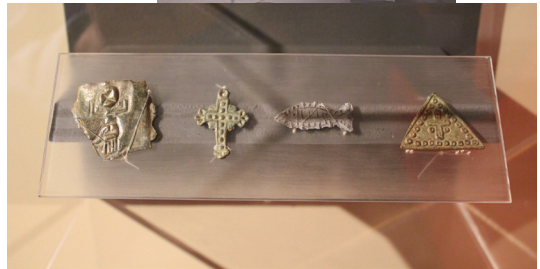
There is also a Roman weapon of mass destruction called the “onager,” which means “wild donkey.” It was given that name because it has quite a kick to it.



In the Clayton Museum you will find items relating to Roman history.



You will also find items left behind by the early Christians.



There is also another section displaying portions of early Bible translations such as the Geneva Bible, also known as the Pilgrim's Bible.

A temporary exhibit shows pictures of various locations of great historical significance which have been damaged or destroyed by acts of war and conflict. Many of them are very recent.



Another area displays a large picture of the Western Wall in Jerusalem surrounded by many visitors. There is also a model of a section of the wall where you can write your prayers on pieces of paper and put them into the cracks in the wall just as Jewish visitors in Jerusalem do today. There is also a scale model of the Temple in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus.

There is also a children's area which was still being developed.

The Clayton Museum of Ancient History is an excellent tool for learning about the world in biblical times and during the early period of the church.



John Clayton is very pleased with the museum and honored to have it named after him. This picture shows (from left to right) Foster Stanback, John Clayton, and York College president Steve Eckman standing in front of the beautiful mosaic at the entrance to the museum. John pondered over his legacy from the work that he has done for over 40 years. He said, "My legacy is Foster Stanback and John Oakes and Doug Jacoby who ... know so much more, are so much more creative and can do so much more than I could ever do." John

is honored to have had a part in the lives of these men. John said this about the Clayton Museum with the Foster Stanback collection, “This is going to be an incredible tool ... and I’m honored to be even a distant part of it.”



The mosaic and other artwork in the museum are the work of Kate Dibbern, shown here on the left.

On the right is Amber Soderholm, the museum’s curator whose talents have made this museum truly world-class.

Check out the museum’s web page at:
www.york.edu/claytonmuseum



To learn more about the work of John Oakes and the Apologetics Research Society founded by Foster Stanback go to:
www.evidenceforchristianity.org

To learn more about Douglas Jacoby’s work go to:
www.douglasjacoby.com



To learn more about Legion VI Victrix Roman soldiers visit:
www.legionsix.org

And, of course, we have to add the **Does God Exit?** website at:
www.doesgodexist.org



ANTICIPATED ANSWERS TO DISPUTED QUESTIONS

by Owen D. Olbricht

Gospel preacher Harold Sharpe once said that the Bible is proven to be inspired because it anticipated objections to its inspiration hundreds of years before they are made. This seems to be true concerning arguments against Jesus' resurrection.

The following quotation, "TV Myths About the Death and Resur-

rection of Jesus (Easter Series Part Three) appeared online, Minneapolis, Minnesota, April 6, 2015/Christian Newswire/*



“John lied about Jesus' dying words (Fox and Friends). Jesus was eaten by wild animals at Golgotha (History Channel). Jesus didn't die on the

cross—he was drugged by the Romans and revived in the tomb faking a resurrection (Discovery Channel). For decades atheistic cable networks have excelled at spreading Bible myths for viewers/ratings. Why no rebuttal from the church? Most Pastors rarely present scriptural/archaeological defense information to their congregations. That's why weekly church apologetics classes are desperately needed today, stated Rick Dack of Defending the Bible International (www.defendingthebible.com).”

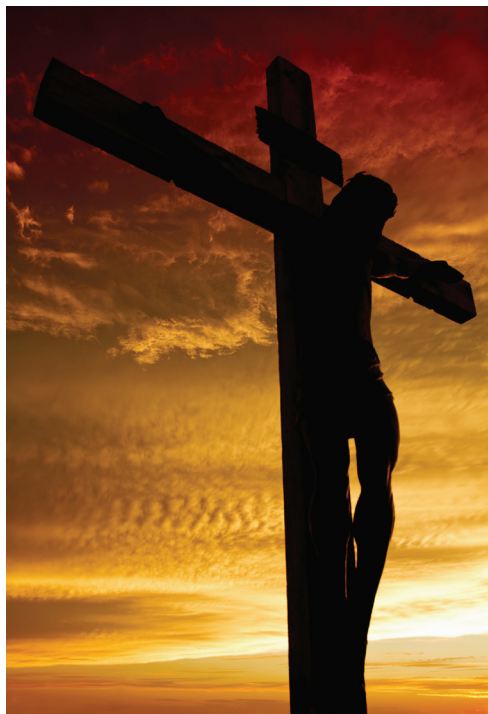
DID JOHN LIE?

Richard Dack dealt with the question, “Did John lie about Jesus' dying words?” He quoted Bill O'Reilly's statement on “Fox and Friends” (September 2013), “that the words of the crucified Jesus are unknown due to the proximity of the mourners.”

Dack then responded, “Crucified victims were typically in close proximity to the general public (a physical and psychological deterrent) not at a distance.”

The Bible seems to have anticipated O'Reilly's statement. The two crucified criminals could have heard what Jesus said (Matthew 27:38; Mark 15:27; Luke 23:33; John 19:18, NKJV), but they did

* www.christiannewswire.com/news/2484475832.html



not live to tell it. However, Matthew and Mark stated that those passing by “blasphemed Him [Jesus]” (Matthew 27:30; Mark 15:29). The chief priests, scribes, and elders also did the same, and some of them were present when Jesus uttered his last words (Matthew 27:46, 47; Mark 15:35; Luke 23:35). The centurion was there as well as the soldiers who were guarding Jesus (Matthew 27:54) and who mocked Jesus (Luke 23:36). Of all who were present, the most likely to report Jesus words, “I thirst” and “It is finished” (John 19:28, 30) was John, who quoted these words in the book of John. He was standing by the cross

with Jesus’ mother and two women (John 19:25).

Besides the many who were passing by the cross, reliable witnesses were standing beside the cross whose testimony is indisputable.

EATEN BY ANIMALS

Dack mentioned those who believe Jesus was eaten by animals, “John Dominic Crossan and other television documentary interviewees believe this is probable.” He wrote that Jewish historian Josephus stated, “... that the Jews used to take so much care of the burial of men, that they took down those that were condemned and crucified, and buried them before the going down of the sun” (Jewish Wars 4).

All four of the gospels testify that Joseph of Arimathea buried Jesus (Matthew 27:57–60; Mark 15:43–46; Luke 23:50–53; John 19:38–42). Women followers of Jesus sat opposite the grave and witnessed Jesus’ burial (Matthew 27:61; Mark 15:47; Luke 23:55).



This is strong evidence that Jesus' body was entombed and not disposed of by the Romans to be eaten by animals.

WAS DRUGGED

Dack correctly addressed the argument that Jesus was drugged, by writing: “The Mandrake (plant) ‘drug’ was used as a surgical anesthetic in the first century not to fake death yet could be fatal—the right consistency was necessary, yet I can’t imagine Roman crucifiers working at the foot of the cross with a Mattel Kiddie Chemistry Set checking levels of toxicity,”

The Roman soldiers were adversaries, not friends of Jesus, so they were very unlikely involved in such a conspiracy. After the trial, when Pilate released Jesus, “... the soldiers of the governor ... gathered



the whole garrison around Him. And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. ... twisted a crown of thorns ... put it on His head ... mocked Him, ... spat on Him, ... and struck Him on the head” (Matthew 27:27–30). While Jesus was on the cross,

“The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, and saying, ‘If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.’” (Luke 23:36, 37).

Not only did they mock Jesus, “But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out” (John 19:34). Even if Jesus had swooned or was drugged, He would not have survived the loss of blood from the wound made by the soldier.

The soldiers had no reason to conspire with Jesus to fake His death by use of a sedative drug. The blood and water from Jesus’ side was proof that Jesus was dead.

CONCLUSION

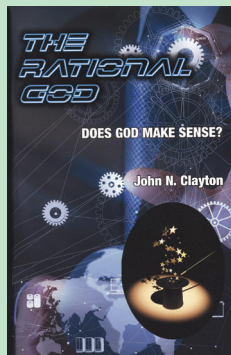
All the arguments that have been made to deny Jesus’ resurrection are answered in the Bible, not only the ones made above, but others which contend that the women hallucinated or went to the wrong tomb. If so, the Jews could have gone to the right tomb and produced the body of Jesus, thus proving the report that Jesus was resurrected was false.

What is amazing is that the answers to the objections to Jesus’ resurrection were written in the Bible years before they were made.

Some New Things from DOES GOD EXIST?

THE RATIONAL GOD: DOES GOD MAKE SENSE?

John N. Clayton has written a new book examining questions like:
"Is the Church a Rational Creation of God?"
"Do Miracles Discredit the Bible?"
"Is Biblical Morality Relevant?"
"Do Heaven and Hell Make Sense?"



This book and other materials are available from:



Does God Exist?
PO Box 2704
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Or from:

www.powervine.biz/product-category/does-god-exist/

A new kids' website www.grandpajohn.club



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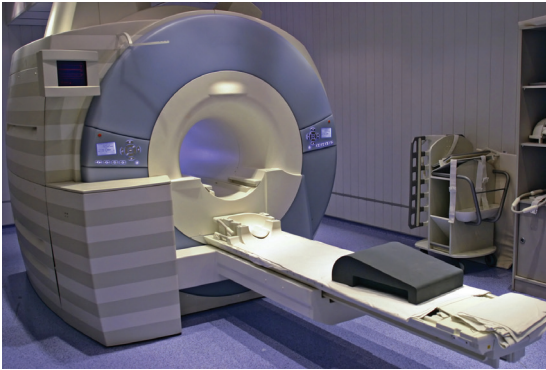
GREAT SCIENTISTS AND GOD

Editor's Note: There are many writers who claimed that good scientists and intelligent, well-educated people do not believe in God. This simply is not true. Tihomir Dimitrov (<http://nobelists.net>) has been researching the statements of the greatest scientists of all time, and we are reproducing some of their statements in this column.

Raymond Damadian
1936-

Armenian-American Physician

Inventor of the MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging)
Inducted into the National Inventors Hall of Fame



“How could a scientist achieve his goal of discovering the absolute truths that govern the natural world without the blessing of the Author of those truths? For me now the true thrill of science is the search to understand a small corner of God’s grand design, and to lay the glory for such discoveries at the Grand Designer’s feet.”

“For the scientific mind, the Bible is wonderful if you read it from start to finish. It fits together with an astonishing consistency, which was the opposite of my secular perception. My early impressions were that it was rife with contradictions.”

“Some theologians and preachers qualified certain statements in the Bible, making their accommodations with the scientific world saying ... most of the claims for creation and for miracles have alternate explanations. If the Bible has to be qualified at every verse, then it isn’t long before you drift away from its authority.”

Quotations from: Jerry Bergman, Ph.D. 2015. Raymond Damadian, Inventor of the MRI.
Acts & Facts. 44 (5)

Cynthia's Corner

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE



The key to understanding the Bible largely depends on why we are reading it, and there are many reasons for reading the Bible.

First, the Bible is a literary masterpiece which can be studied and appreciated strictly as a great work of literature. Because of its literary perfection, it is used as an English language textbook to teach English as a foreign language. It can be studied academically. It can be read for various personal reasons—to look up Scripture passages, to find fault with it, to disprove it, to ridicule it, or to find support for what you already believe. We know that many evil leaders from Hitler to Khrushchev used the Bible to support their own ideologies and agendas. The Bible even forewarns us of this, saying that Paul's "letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:16). Or, you can read it trying to understand who wrote it and what the message is.

The Bible is a very special book and unique in its claim to be the Word of God. There are many scriptures that tell us that the Bible is "not something that man made up" (Galatians 1:11 and 1 Thessalonians 2:13); but is, in fact, written by many chosen authors who were given divine inspiration by the Holy Spirit. They "have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven" (1 Peter 1:12) and "men spoke from God as they were guided by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20, 21). Also read 2 Timothy 3:16. Besides the many claims of inspiration within the scriptures themselves, there are many evidential proofs that the Bible is indeed the Word of God.

If we read the Bible with an open mind and a heart seeking to know who the author is, what its purpose is, and how that relates to us and our lives, then we can come to understand it. It is God's communication to us. Our Creator is revealing his nature, his purposes, and his will to us. If our minds and hearts are open to him, God reveals in his Word truths and mysteries about our existence and reasons for being. God's Word gives us a deep understanding of our spiritual nature and describes an eternal existence to come after this physical life is over. If we read the Bible with a sincere desire to know God (and ourselves) and his will for us, and to act on that knowledge, God promises us that we can and will understand (Proverbs 2:1–6).

You will ... find me when you seek me with all your heart
(Jeremiah 29:13).

—Cynthia Clayton

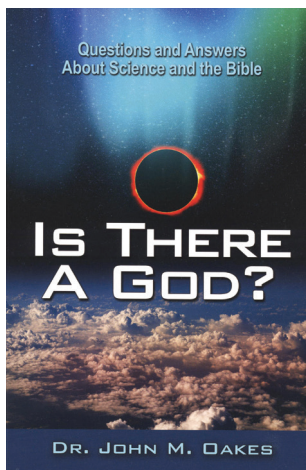
January/February 2016 • 21



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

Is There a God?

by John M. Oakes, Illumination Publishers, © 2015,
191 pages, \$13.99 (paperback), ISBN-13: 978-0-9776954-2-3



John Oakes has a Ph.D. in chemical physics and is a chemistry professor at Grossmont College. He has a strong background in science and he also has a ministry called the Apologetics Research Society (evidenceforchristianity.org) which offers courses and materials in apologetics.

This book presents “questions and answers about science and the Bible.” We agree with one of the endorsements of the book which says, “The need for scientifically current apologetics books—well thought out, well written, and well adapted to our generation—is great. I believe that, with this volume, you have acquired such

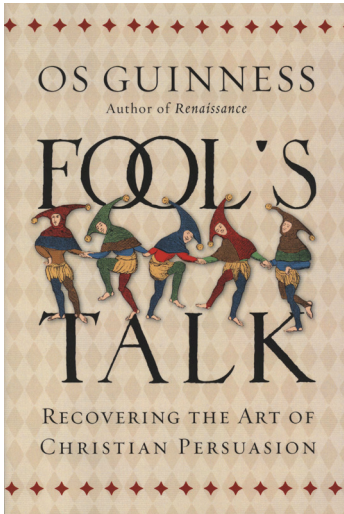
a book.”

The book is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the existence of God and it deals with creation. The uniqueness of the book is that it considers the evidence from a young-earth creationist perspective, an ancient-earth creationist perspective, and an atheist or agnostic perspective. Capable spokespersons are quoted, documentation is given, and weaknesses of each position are explored with a conclusion based on evidence.

The second part on science and the Bible, deals with evidence that the Bible is God’s word with challenges from atheists and other religious systems being explored. There is an excellent appendix dealing with the application of the second law of thermodynamics to the origin of life. This is an excellent book and is unique in its approach. We recommend it highly.

Fool's Talk

by Os Guinness, IVP Books, © 2015,
270 pages, \$22.00 (hardcover), ISBN 978-0830836994



Os Guinness is an Oxford-trained philosopher, well known by leading apologists. Ravi Zacharias calls the book “a must read for anyone interested in engaging the skeptic or seeker.” The book claims to tell us how to “recover the art of Christian persuasion.” This is not a book designed to prove the existence of God or the validity of the Christian faith, but rather an instruction manual on how people wishing to share Christ with others should carry their message to those who are not Christians.

Os Guinness has been involved for a very long time in dealing with people who are not Christians. He is extremely well educated, has a vast knowledge of the subject of apologetics and answering atheist, agnostic, and skeptic challenges to the Christian faith from a philosophical and theological background.

The book is divided into 13 chapters. These chapters do not deal with arguments for faith, but rather with how defenders of Christianity have failed to understand why unbelief happens, and why those who defend Christianity have failed in the past. The book is not negative about what has been done, but offers some suggestions for how we can better approach people who have faith issues. The reasons for disbelief are presented with good documentation, and a variety of ways to better communicate the evidence are presented.

We would recommend this book to people working with college students, to professionals dealing with colleagues who resist the Christian faith, and to philosophy and theology majors who have not seen the need for Christian apologetics. It would not be useful to people seeking arguments for the existence of God or for defenses of Christianity. It is for people concerned about how to approach people who do not share our faith in the message of Christ.

DANDY DESIGNS

YUCCA, YUCCA

Yucca is a perennial shrub or tree which grows largely in warm and dry areas of the Americas. Yucca is used for decorative planting and extracts from the yucca plant have medicinal uses. Yucca plants are able to survive in dry areas because their thick leaves store water and are covered with an oily or waxy substance which helps to prevent loss of moisture through evaporation. They also store water in their thick roots and the curved leaves of the yucca channel rain-water toward



the roots.

Yucca is also the name of a moth which has an exclusive symbiotic relationship with the plant. The female yucca moths are designed in such a way that they can transfer pollen from the stamens of one yucca plant to the stigma of another yucca plant and then lay an egg in the flower. As seeds develop, the moth larva hatches and feeds on some of the seeds. I say some of the seeds because it always leaves enough seeds so that the yucca plant species can survive. The yucca plants are pollinated only by the yucca moth



and the yucca moth larvae feed only on the yucca seeds. Without the yucca moth, the yucca plant could not survive. Without the yucca plant, the yucca moth could not survive. That relationship is called “symbiosis,” which is derived from two Greek words meaning “living together.” It is one more example of the wonderful design we see in the world around us and design demands a designer.

Amazing Frogs

Several years ago we published a children's book titled *Frogs and Toads: God's Bug Snatchers*. You can read all of our children's books at www.grandpajohn.club. In frogs and toads we find an amazing amount of diversity which enables them to survive in unique ways. Sometimes these characteristics are special for the environment in which the animal is located, and sometimes it is just an interesting design feature with no apparent dependence on the environment but just an expression of creativity. Here are some examples which seem to support the statement that we can know there is a God through the things he has made (Romans 1:20).



- ★ There is a desert frog that can go seven years without water by surrounding itself in a type of transparent bag that becomes its first meal when the rains do come.

- ★ The wax frog retains moisture in dry weather by producing wax and coating its skin with it.

- ★ Asian tree frogs build nests in trees over water so that when the tadpoles hatch they drop directly into the water.

- ★ In the Seychelles there is a male frog that carries its young on its back until they become adults.

- ★ The eggs of the marsupial frog are laid in a brood pouch in the mother's back and the young hatch out in a zipper-like fashion from the pouch.

- ★ Some frogs can jump up to 20 times their body length in a single leap.

- ★ A frog's skin reflects the same amount of ultraviolet light as its immediate surroundings. This protects them from animals that use U.V. to hunt their prey, including some snakes.

- ★ The male Darwin's frog takes its mate's eggs into its mouth as soon as they show signs of life. The eggs stay there until they emerge as froglets.

- ★ The bright colors of poisonous tropical frogs warn predators with color vision that they are poisonous.

- ★ The grey tree frog can survive the cold even though its heart stops. It does this by making its own antifreeze which stops the body from freezing completely.

Source: Irish Peatland Conservation Council



News and Notes

CORRECTION! One of our readers pointed out a serious mistake in the first “News and Notes” item in the September/October 2015 issue of this publication. We incorrectly stated that there are more atheist chaplains in the military than there are Southern Baptist chaplains. That is not correct. Also the total number of military chaplains was over-stated. We are now told that the total number of military chaplains is under 3,000 and there are NO official atheist chaplains. We appreciate readers who keep us on our toes, and we apologize for the error.

KILLING THOSE WHO TRY TO LEAVE. On October 11, 2015, two young boys were savagely beaten by members of the Word of Life Christian Church in New Hartford, New York. Nineteen-year-old Lucas Leonard died from the attack which was administered because they wanted to leave the church. Atheists are using this incident to bash Christianity, and it is important for Christians to be able to defend their faith in accordance with 1 Peter 3:15. The fact that Old Testament statements from Proverbs 10:13; 22:15; and 23:13–14 are used to justify the beatings is missed by the press. These statements are not a part of the Law of Moses and contradict everything Jesus Christ taught. This should be a teaching opportunity for Christians, to show the importance of looking at who wrote the passage used, when they wrote it, who they wrote it to, and what the people of the time understood the statement to mean.

ASHLEY MADISON GETS INTO THE CHURCH. Ashley Madison is a website that helps people find partners for extramarital affairs. The site claims that there are 30 million people who have accounts. In July 2015 the Ashley Madison website was hacked, and the names and business locations of people with accounts was published. As you might guess there were a number of preachers and church leaders who were identified as having accounts. The teachings of Jesus in Matthew 5:27–28 tell us that letting our minds be fed with sexual thoughts sets us up to sin against God. That is true for every human on the earth. Teaching our young and old members including preachers how to avoid sexual temptation needs to be a part of

the teaching and preaching of every congregation. We should not be surprised when leaders fail because this has not been done. For an excellent article on this by Wayne Turner, read *The Gospel Herald*, October 2015, page 4.

MEDIA DISTORTIONS FEED ATHEISM. The headline in the *Daily Express* (Express.co.uk) in October 2015 reads “Historic Discovery: Physicists ‘Prove’ God Didn’t Create the Universe.” The article is full of flashy four color pictures from NASA and reports on a theory of Dr. Mir Faisal at the University of Waterloo in Ontario. Dr. Faisal has proposed that “virtual particles” can come into existence

out of nothing. He does this by guessing that negative gravitational energy and positive matter energy of the universe balance out creating a zero sum—thus nothing. You may notice that the word “prove” is in quotes in the title of the article. That is because this is a theory



based upon possible mathematical models. There is no way to test “virtual particles” because if they are virtual, they are unreal. This is not science because it cannot be falsified or tested in any way, and it certainly is not proof. This is not a discovery, but one man’s idea. It is important for young people to know what science is, and how evidence is presented and handled. Media ploys by an atheistic press is neither based on evidence nor logical arguments.

NEW SPECIES RELATED TO HUMANS CLAIMED.

One of the interesting facts about anthropology is that the history of humans, apes, and monkeys is incredibly complex. On September 10, 2015, an announcement was made by Dr. Lee Berger, a professor in Johannesburg, of the discovery of a new group of 15 individuals which has been named *Homo naledi*. *Naledi* means “star” in the local language and was given because the cave in which the bones were found is the Rising Star cave system. Some 1,500 bones have been found. It appears that this is nothing new with the brain size being very small but the rest of the bones similar to *homo erectus*. The mixture of

physical characteristics caused Susan Anton of New York University to say “the fossils are fabulous and a bit confusing.” Variations in ape and human populations can be enormous just as the races of humans today can vary. Calling it a new species is premature, but it will fit some models of anthropological change. We would suggest it is just a testimony to how much characteristics can vary within a population. A bone layout appeared in *Science News*, October 3, 2015, page 6. *National Geographic* has a special article on this find in their October 2015 issue, page 36.

SIX CHOICES OF GENDER. Incoming freshmen at the University of California are being offered six different genders from which to choose: Male, Female, Trans Male/Trans man, Trans Female/Trans Woman, Different Identity, and Gender Queer/Gender Non-conforming. One would need an explanation of many of those titles, but the confusion of sexual roles has left a great deal of collateral damage in our culture. God’s creation with well defined roles gives stability that all of us need. Source: www.focusonthefamily.com/socialissues/sexuality/male-and-female-by-design/male-and-female-why-it-matters-in-the-culture-and-public-policy.



GIANT FLYING REPTILE DISCOVERED. Some paleontologists have discovered the largest specimen of a flying reptile called a pterosaur. With the claims of birds being dinosaurs or flying reptiles, the picture of how birds came to be gets increasingly complicated. The Bible indicates that there were two “kinds” of flesh that could be considered dinosaurs or reptiles — the flesh of fish and the flesh of birds (see 1 Corinthians 15:39). This creature could fit either one. It will be interesting to see what new specimens come to light in the months ahead. This site in Utah has produced over 11,000 bones so far. Source: AP in the *South Bend Tribune*, October 18, 2015, page C6.

HOW MUCH OF YOUR BRAIN DO YOU USE? The famed psychologist William James claimed that we are making use of only a small part of our brain. Later that claim was made more specific by a journalist putting the amount of our brain used at 10%. New studies show that not all of our brain is active at once, but if any part of the brain is damaged there are physical, mental, and behavioral effects. We use 100% of our brain. Source: *Popular Science*, November 2015, page 50.

THE BLIND—A NEGLECTED POPULATION. For many years we have worked with Glynn Langston in his ministry to the blind called “Insight International.” Glynn is blind, and has reached large numbers of blind people all over the world using modern technology as a tool to teach God’s word. Recent data shows that there are 285 million people in the world who are visually impaired and 39 million who are blind. Many of them are children. This is a field “ripe unto harvest.” Data from *Orbis*.

NEW FIND OF TORAH SCROLL. One of the questions raised by skeptics is whether the Bible has been altered and changed throughout time. In the past, copies of the Torah (the books of Moses) had existed from the 10th century A.D. and the Dead Sea Scrolls from 250 B.C. Recently copies of the Ashkar-Gilson manuscript from the 7th century A.D. have been released containing a crucial section of the book of Exodus. When all of this is put together, what it tells us is that there have been no major mistakes in the copying of the books that make up our present Old Testament. The Torah that we have has been strongly supported by this new find. Source: *Biblical Archaeology Review*, November/December 2015, page 46.

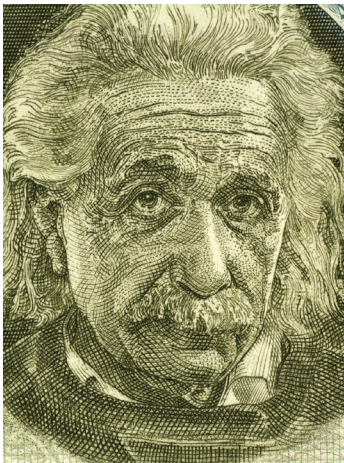
BE CAREFUL ABOUT TAKING ZOO PICTURES. In 2011 David Slater took a picture of an Indonesian macaque. Slater is now being sued by the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) who claim that the copyright belongs to the animal itself, not to the person who took the picture. When you deny the uniqueness of humans as having been created in the image of God, you claim all living things have equal rights. That means that all kinds of irrational claims come to the surface. Source: *Time* magazine, October 5, 2015, page 10.

ATHEIST CAMPS AND BOY SCOUTS. In 2013 the Boy Scouts lifted their ban on gay youth membership. In previous years gays were not allowed in scouts. In July 2015 the scouts lifted the ban on openly gay Boy Scout leaders. Boy Scout troops are operated through a charter organization, which is classified as civic, faith based,

or educational. Seventy percent of all units are faith-based, meaning they can continue to impose a ban on openly gay leaders if they choose to do so. Two atheists who were formerly Boy Scout leaders now head up an atheist camp called Camp Quest for young people from atheist, agnostic, and non-religious families. The camp started in 1996 with 20 campers for a week in Boone County, Kentucky. In the summer of 2015 1,300 kids from 14 states and three countries attended. We have done apologetics programs with a large number of camps over the years. There is no question that great teaching and/or indoctrination can be done when you have kids for a week. For many kids, it is the only real spiritual teaching they will get. Christian camps do a great work and need to be supported. Source: *American Atheist* magazine, Third Quarter 2015, page 22.

SOLAR SYSTEM MOONS AND SECULARISM. In recent years the number of moons in the solar system has grown to 178 as of November 2015. Jupiter has 67 moons and Saturn has 62. Uranus now has 27 moons and Neptune has 14. In the past, names given to these moons have been taken from mythology and religion. The new moons are being given names from William Shakespeare and Alexander Pope to avoid religious connections. Source: *Astronomy*, November 2015, page 12.

GENERAL RELATIVITY HITS THE 100 MARK. On November 25, 1915, Albert Einstein presented his work on the general theory of relativity. In our September/October 2015 issue we had a discussion of Einstein's work and its relevance to all areas of our existence. In the October 2015 issue of *Smithsonian* magazine (page 21) is a good article on Einstein's work and how he came to his conclusions.



PROBABILITIES AND ATOMS. When arguments are made about the odds of something happening by chance, skeptics usually respond by saying that if you have infinite space and infinite time it is going to happen no matter what the odds are. The difficulty with that argument is that all evidence shows there was a beginning to the cosmos so there is not infinite time. The size of the cosmos is also not infinite. The newest measurements indicate that the universe contains about 2.4 quinvigintillion atoms or 10^{80} atoms. Calculations of the odds of cosmological coincidences

necessary for human life are in the realm of 10^{800} so the numbers are not even close for a mutual interaction. In other words the odds of life on this or any planet happening by chance are much greater than the number of atoms in the universe. Source: *Astronomy* magazine, March 2015, page 71.

CHURCH ATTENDANCE. A study released by AARP in their October 2015 *Bulletin* (page 36) shows that less than half the population of the United States attends church, synagogue, or mosque weekly (as of 2014). Only Utah had more than 50% and Utah had only 51%. In Vermont only 17% attended and in the Bible Belt the number was about 45%. The remainder of the states were between 22 and 39%. The United States is not a “church going” country.

WATER ON MARS. The Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter satellite has detected salty water trickling down canyons and craters. This is not really a surprise as evidence has been seen in a number of ways. Water has also been detected on moons of Jupiter and Saturn. The media treats this as if it is an issue for the existence of God. Water does not necessarily mean life, but if God chose to establish life elsewhere we should not be surprised. Source: *The Week*, October 9, 2015, page 18.

KIM DAVIS—HERO OR VILLAIN. Kim Davis is an Apostolic Church member who is also a county clerk in a government office that issues marriage licenses. She refused to obey the law and issue a marriage license to gay couples and was jailed as a result. The question is whether Christians should support such actions. We oppose gay marriage, but we also support obeying the law of the land as taught in Romans 13. Nurses who are morally opposed to abortion have been able to opt out of participating in abortions in many places and Davis should have been able to do the same. Conscientious objectors have had other options than serving in the military. In Davis’s case, holding her up as a model for what Christians should do is rather weak. She has been married four times, and had two kids out of wedlock, but that was before she became a Christian. Just as bombing an abortion clinic is not the answer to abortion, disobeying the law to oppose gay marriage is also not a good answer. Source: *The Week*, September 18, 2015, page 6.

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