

DOES GOD EXIST?

March/April 2016

Volume 43 Number 2

*A nonprofit effort
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the Bible is His Word.*



*Marriage and the Family:
an Evidence of God's Design*

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Marriage and the Family: an Evidence of God's Design

In the past several years we have seen a great deal of confusion in our country about what marriage is and who should be allowed to participate in it. Throughout history, there has been great conflict about what the purpose and nature of marriage is. In some cultures, marriage has been a way of providing for women, and even polygamy has been promoted as a way to provide for more women. In other cultures, marriage has been a mark of ownership. A man marries a woman to mark his territory, and the woman is a possession and is essentially a servant to the man. In the Western world, marriage has been redefined and is now in *Webster's Dictionary* as “any close union” and to marry is “to enter into a close relationship.” The United States Supreme Court has operated on this definition with a ruling that may make sense to politicians and secularists, but which misses the purpose of marriage as spelled out in the Bible.

God's design for human emotional and psychological needs is fulfilled in marriage. It is interesting that in Jesus' day a couple would not have sexual relationships until long after the marriage was announced. Joseph had not had sexual relationships with Mary and yet is called her husband (Luke 2:5 and Matthew 1:18–24). In Genesis 2:18 we see God stating, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I

will make a helper suitable for him” (NIV). If I might inject a personal note here, when my wife died after 49 years of marriage it was not the loss of a sexual partner that afflicted me the most. It was sitting alone at our kitchen table after a day of work and having no one with whom



to share my joys and frustrations, and no one to discuss what was going on in my life. I know some people can handle not having that relationship, but for me, God’s wisdom in marriage provided for a need I had. It was a need that nothing else could fill. Genesis 2:24 tells us, “That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife: and they become one flesh.” The word “united” in this verse is *dabaq* in Hebrew meaning “adhere to” and is usually used to describe a relationship to God (see Deuteronomy 10:20; 11:22; 13:4; Joshua 22:5; 23:8).

God’s design for men and women’s sexual needs is fulfilled in marriage. For the most part, our culture does not understand sex. Sex has become a commodity and is used to sell things and to assert control. Our society sees sex as an entertainment gimmick, and as a release that



is used individually for pleasure. “Being sexy” in our culture is equated with being successful. This view has corrupted sex and brings enormous pain to everyone. The teenager who feels he has to perform sexually to be accepted and popular is in for disillusionment and

disappointment. The Ashley Madison website that helps married individuals find partners for extramarital affairs is thriving because of the view of sex as a commodity. In the June 2013 issue of *Atlantic* magazine there was an article by Liza Mundy titled “A Gay Guide to Marital Bliss.” In the article, she told of a survey of gay couples in which 82% of those interviewed said that sex outside their relationship was acceptable. All of this is a reflection of our culture’s failure to understand what sex is about and how marriage meets the needs of men and women sexually.

God has always portrayed marriage as something beautiful and as a covenant. Procreation has been a part of that covenant, and the process has been described as a thing of beauty and purpose. In Genesis 1:28 sex was commanded as Adam and Eve were told to be fruitful and fill the earth. Sex was beautiful and purposeful because sin had not yet entered the picture. The writer of Proverbs 5:17–23 describes the beauty of sexual commitment by saying “Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer — may her breasts satisfy you always, may you

ever be intoxicated with her love. Why, my son, be intoxicated with another man's wife? Why embrace the bosom of a wayward woman? ... The evil deeds of the wicked ensnare them; the cords of their sins hold them fast. For lack of discipline they will die, led astray by their own great folly." Every study by scientists from Masters and Johnson down to the present day have shown that the best of sex is found in a singular, committed relationship.

In the Corinthian letter, Paul writes to Christians who live in a sexually charged culture where prostitution was open, rampant, and encouraged. Paul tells these Christians to marry because "it is better to marry than to burn with passion" (1 Corinthians 7:9). Earlier in verses 2–5 Paul tells couples to meet each other's sexual needs by not depriving each other so that "Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control." God's design for sex not only brings the greatest satisfaction, but it shields us from the exploitation by a sexual culture.

God's design for marriage provides role models for children. Our society has seen a great erosion of role models for children to learn from and emulate. In my 41 years of teaching in the public schools,

one of the great joys of my teaching experience was having young people cling to me as a role model. That does not mean that I was a perfect example of what a man should be. It certainly does not mean that I had a macho image to project, or that I



was an example of how a man should dress. These kids came from families where there was no man in the home. When I would make a joke about an activity dominated by men or talk about doing something that attracts men they were on the edge of their seat wanting to know more. I taught across the hall from a lady who taught a class on what was called "home management" (home economics in the 1960s). Kids from single parent families were always hanging around her room asking questions, including a lot of questions about how to "look like" a wife or mother.

Between America's divorce rate, single parents who were never married, and the gay community there are many children who cry out for role models that they have never seen. When you read the Bible, you



see men having a significant role in raising children (Ephesians 6:4 and Colossians 3:21). It is difficult to read Proverbs 31:10–31 and not see God’s plan for roles being held out as the ideal. It describes the ef-

fect of the ideal wife and mother on her husband and family. This need of children can be partially met by grandparents and dedicated Christian leaders, but nothing can replace the ideal plan that God has given for the home. Not only do these biblical teachings show us what is best for children, but there is also the effect of these ideal roles on adults. When we read Ephesians 5:22–33 we see the wisdom of teaching men and women to respect and submit to one another, to love one another as they love themselves, and to have the oneness that God called us to in Genesis 2:24.

People have tried just about every alternative there is to God’s way. Polygamy, polyandry, group marriage, harems, promiscuity, prostitution, free love, same-sex marriage, and monasticism have all fallen short. Now we have redefined marriage with a commodity view being the core of our beliefs, and all of these systems are being tried again. It has failed in the past, and it will fail again. God’s way works, but it seems that people have to try everything and learn the hard way that what God says is true. We should not have to put our finger into the fire to know that it is hot.

—John N. Clayton



FATHERS, ... BRING THEM UP IN THE TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION OF THE LORD.

EPHESIANS 6:4 (NIV)



In Genesis 2:18 God said it was not good for man to be alone. He then created a mate suitable for the man and brought her to him and performed the first marriage. God had already taught the man about the “birds and the bees” by showing him the birds and the bees and the goats and the camels and the rest of the animals. Adam had the opportunity to see the pairings as he gave the animals names. I think Adam was smart enough to catch onto the fact that the animals were in pairs, but he was one-of-a-kind. So God gave Adam the missing part of his life by taking Eve from Adam’s body. They were the matched pair, a complementary pair. They complemented each other in more than just physical characteristics. Any married person can recognize that men and women are different in their attitudes, their desires, and in the way they see things. Sometimes both men and women become frustrated with those differences, but we are wise to thank God for the differences. The differences make life much more interesting as men and women complete each other in every way. I would like for you to think a little deeper about marriage and family, and what God had in mind when he created us. Did God want to teach us something by giving us marriage and family?

Remember that there are many things we cannot fully comprehend. We cannot understand a God outside of time and space since we are limited by those barriers. The Bible tells us that God is a spirit (John 4:24), and we can only understand persons who have physical bodies. To help us understand and relate to God, he took the form of a man in Jesus Christ. Jesus came not only to redeem us but to show us what God is like.

When we realize the vastness of the universe, we wonder how a God who created and controls all of this could care about us. The Bible refers to God as our Father—a perfect Father (Psalm 68:5, 103:13; Proverbs 3:12; Isaiah 9:6, 63:16, 64:8; Matthew 5:16, 45, 48). We



can begin to get an understanding of a father's love and care for his children when we have fathers who care for us or we become fathers ourselves. God is even sometimes described in “mothering”

terms (Psalm 91:4). If we did not have or become mothers or fathers, we would be hard-pressed to understand this relationship. Perhaps God created parenting to give us a clear, physical object lesson. We can now say, “I get it!” We can understand God as Father (or parent) only because we understand that concept in our own lives.

When I read the book of Revelation, I see how John struggles with describing heaven. He uses terms like gold, rubies, and emeralds. John runs the gamut of precious and beautiful things we have here on earth, but I am sure that heaven is much more than gold and jewels. John can only describe what he sees with words that he and his readers will understand. The real thing must surely be much more precious, amazing, and beautiful than words can describe. The same goes for descriptions of hell using fire, brimstone, and worms. Do those things literally describe hell? No, I believe it is much worse than human words can describe, but words we understand are all we have to use.

Getting back to marriage, did God have something more in mind when he gave us marriage and family? Did he know that we could never comprehend our relationship with him unless we had something we could physically perceive? I think that God gave us marriage so we could grasp the relationship he wants to have with us. At Mount Sinai, God performed a marriage with his people, his bride that he had rescued from Egypt. The covenant of marriage was sealed with two tablets of stone. Amazingly the bride was unfaithful at the marriage ceremony, but God forgave and gave her another chance. In fact, he gave many more chances as the bride failed to be

faithful. God kept calling her back. He even used the prophet Hosea to illustrate this relationship. He told Hosea to marry a prostitute (Hosea 1:2). Hosea brought Gomer out of the street life and made her his wife, only to experience the pain of her going back to the streets and Hosea buying her again. By reading the story of Hosea and Gomer, we can feel the pain of this unfaithfulness in a way that we could not comprehend otherwise. We can feel God's pain at our unfaithfulness. We can finally understand what God meant when he told Moses on Mount Sinai, I am a jealous God, you shall have no other gods before me (Exodus 20:3–5). Without the object lesson of marriage, I do not think we could ever really understand how God feels.

Then we come to the New Testament, and we find the marriage illustration used again to describe the church as the bride of Christ. Marital love and faithfulness make it possible for us to understand that word picture. The pain of unfaithfulness and divorce allow us to realize the importance and meaning of what God is saying.

God gave us a beautiful gift in marriage, family, and parenthood. But did God have more in mind? Did he give us marriage and fatherhood as a dynamic object lesson so that our feeble minds could see something greater? Maybe we cannot fully understand what heaven is like and we cannot fully understand what God is like. We do not have words to adequately describe either, but we can understand our personal relationship with him as our Father and our corporate relationship with Christ as his bride. We can know those things only because God has given us a physical object lesson. It is an object lesson we live out so we can see and understand a greater truth. Marriage and family are

gifts from God to make life meaningful and to give us an understanding of spiritual concepts that would otherwise be beyond our grasp. Is that the reason Satan is working so hard



to destroy marriage and parenting—especially fatherhood? Yes, I absolutely think that is the reason.

—Roland Earnst

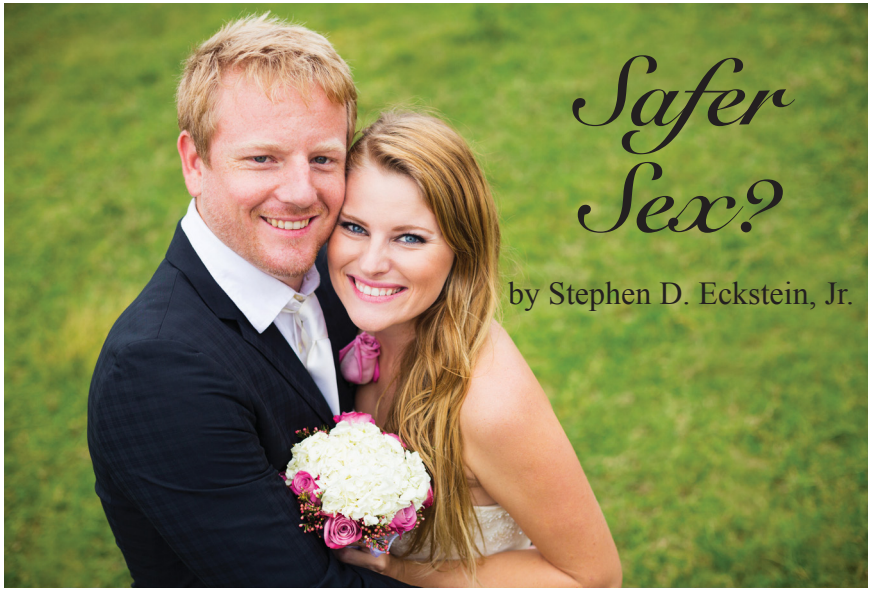
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SOME NEWS ITEMS RELATING TO SEX, MARRIAGE, AND LOVE

MONEY AND MARRIAGE. An interesting study by Emory University scientists found that couples who spent over \$20,000 for their weddings were three-and-a-half times more likely to end up divorced than couples who spent less than that amount. Men who spent more than \$2,000 on a ring were also more likely to be divorced than men who spent less. There are obviously a number of different explanations for this, but the overriding message is that a lack of money is not a primary cause of marriages failing. Source: *National Geographic*, December 2015.

DATING SITES AND STDS. We are told that one in five relationships begin online, and thanks to dating websites that is likely to increase. What we are not told is that sexually transmitted disease rates are rising and apps like Tinder and Grindr are contributors. In 2014 sexually transmitted diseases in Rhode Island reached a 10 year high with cases of gonorrhea rising thirty percent. A separate study shows that homosexual men who use these sites had a higher rate of gonorrhea and chlamydia than the general population. Dating apps attract a population that can be dangerous. Your chances of finding a soul-mate are better when you meet someone in person at Bible class, and the STD rate is less. Source: *Popular Science*, October 2015, page 30.

DO ANIMALS KNOW WHERE BABIES COME FROM? That is the title of an article in *Scientific American* (January 2016, page 67). It should not be surprising that understanding that sex leads to babies does not seem to be comprehended by animals. Instinctive behavior can allow reproduction, and can even establish levels of social interaction in animals. Their cognitive skills, however, are not good enough to allow understanding in animals, and the article discusses investigations that have led to evidence of this. One of the things that demonstrates human spiritual nature is our capacity to function independently of instinctive drives. We are not robotically driven by instincts as most animals are. Art, music, worship, feeling guilt, being sympathetic, and doing things that may not positively affect survival are all attributes of humans that are not seen in animals. The fact that love in humans can be an “agape” type of love rather than just a physical attraction speaks well of our spiritual capacity.



Safer Sex?

by Stephen D. Eckstein, Jr.

Sexually transmitted diseases plague America and the world. Society has resorted to a new gimmick to fool the ignorant and destroy the simple. Government and public officials supported by some from the medical profession have urged the widespread use of condoms to lessen the spread of these diseases. This is a tacit admission that people are going to engage in promiscuous sexual encounters regardless of the risks involved or the consequences suffered. The real tragedy is that already many have fallen for the deception of Satan, and many more will be slain by their arch enemy. Here are some points worth considering.

FIRST

The assumption that sexual relationships outside of the Divine marriage arrangement are acceptable is a folly of the greatest magnitude. The Bible states the real picture in honest, plain language. “Be not deceived. God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life” (Galatians 6:7–9, MEV). Homosexuality is a sin (Leviticus 20:13). Adultery is a sin (Exodus 20:14) and whoever commits the same destroys himself (Proverbs 6:32). Fornication is a sin (Galatians 5:19). Bestiality is a sin (Leviticus 20:15–16). Rape is a sin (Deuteronomy 22:25–27). Prostitution is a sin (1 Corinthians 6:15–18). Incest is a sin (1 Corinthians 5). Those who persist in these sins shall not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9–10; Galatians 5:19–21).

SECOND

The concept that one can break the commandments of God with impunity is also a folly of the highest order. No one has ever broken the commandments of God and escaped the guilt and consequences of his or her sin. The Bible records many instances of such by nations and those of individuals. Sodom was destroyed by the cataclysm of heavenly fire for its many sins (Genesis 19). Israel engaged in immorality in Moab and saw 24,000 swept away by a plague (Numbers 25:1–9). David committed adultery and followed it with murder. He and Israel suffered many consequences as a result (2 Samuel 12:7–14). Amnon raped Tamar and was later murdered by Absalom (2 Samuel 13). You might say that no one has ever broken God’s commands—people simply **BREAK THEMSELVES ON GOD’S COMMANDS**. All the commandments are still here centuries and millennia after those who did their own thing lie in marked and unmarked tombs around the world.

THIRD

The so-called momentary pleasures of these illicit sexual forays are offset by a life-long sense of a lack of fulfillment. Who can measure the sorrow, heartache, and inner misery that wrenches the souls of the guilty? Who can relate the consequences suffered in every area of life? Those who are honest and bare their souls freely admit that the fear of disease haunts them continually. Such fear often turns them from being happy, open people to recluses who retire within themselves hoping no one will discover them. Others try to put on a front that they are the “real” people of society. But the camouflage is artificial. Those who are unmarried and have been promiscuous do not know what to do. If they tell a prospective marriage partner, they risk rejection. If they do not tell about their affairs, they always wonder if it will come out after the ceremony. Honesty is a bedrock foundation for a true marriage.



FOURTH

Those who contract disease suffer far more and longer in the body for the illegal momentary gratification of the flesh. Disease knows no boundaries, attacking the single and the married. Fornicators get it. Adulterous mates can and do infect their unsuspecting wives and husbands. Guilt and consequences rage, and families are divided. Those who contract AIDS begin the slow death of the body which houses the anguished soul. The gospel of Jesus Christ can cleanse the soul of the genuine believer who is born again of the water and spirit. Still, the body of death must claim its victim before the threescore and ten years. Innumerable additional cases could be cited of human beings ravaged by fear, pain, sorrow, and death.

The crass stupidity of sinful humans sanctioning and advocating “safer sex” is a paradox. How utterly incomprehensible is the great emphasis on eliminating smoking from commercial aircraft and public buildings, prohibition of nuclear waste and radiation, pollution of air and water, an all-out war on drugs, while simultaneously accelerating the foolish into sexual wreck and ruin. How blind are those who will not see.

THE SOLUTION

Christians should do all in their power to repudiate the “safe sex lie.” We must be lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation (Philippians 2:15). Husbands and wives must hold marriage in high esteem before our observing youth. We must portray that which is beautiful, attractive, and pure. We must be models or examples who stand out in direct contrast to the sleazy, corrupt, and deviant behavior blatantly set forth in society and the media. Let us challenge our youth to become a modern generation of Josephs who do not succumb to the peer pressures of a pagan world, but who will stand in God’s strength and the power of his might. May their number increase and become legion. Remember, you and God are a majority! As my father said many times, “Do something TODAY you can rejoice about TOMORROW.”

The only safe sex is the sex of God’s arrangement—holy, pure, beautiful—the physical sexual bond between husband and wife. In that sexual relationship, there are emotional, intellectual, and moral components based on the great spiritual foundation of Jesus Christ. This is the divine way—safe sex, true sex, joyful sex, real sex. Experience Proverbs 5:18–19, whether you have been married one day or fifty years.



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by Al Cornell

A while back, I worked with a young woman who had just graduated from the University of Wisconsin Wildlife Ecology department. In driving to and between work sites, we had opportunities to discuss her atheism. I suspected she had developed that concept while at the university, but she informed me that she was an atheist before attending UW-Madison. Though from a church membership family, other things had caused her to gravitate toward unbelief. However, she did reference friends who appear to have constituted an atheist support group at the university.

I reminded her that Aldo Leopold, the respected initiator of Wildlife Management as a college curriculum, had a section on the relationship of wildlife to morals and religion in his famous *A Sand County Almanac*. Leopold taught at UW-Madison from 1928 until his death in 1948. He started that section in the book by referencing a young man who was raised an atheist but changed his mind when he saw that “there were a hundred-odd species of warblers, each bedecked like to the rainbow, and each performing yearly, sundry thousands of miles of migration.”

A Sand County Almanac retains a prominent place in the wildlife ecology curriculum. However, I wonder if that portion of the book has been mentioned since I did a presentation in Russell Labs and quoted a portion of it many years ago. Though this young woman

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had not become an atheist while at the university, she undoubtedly found a niche in which the atheist concept was frequently watered. I know from my college years that unbelieving professors sprinkle in comments to undermine faith. In fact, the brazen comments of one instructor motivated me to comment on faith when it seemed appropriate.

Most youth will assume the well from which they drink is pure and life-sustaining. A majority will have determined their theological concept at least by the time they graduate from college, and they will never second guess it. For many, it will be shallow, but never questioned. Of course, this does more than just help perpetuate atheism. Since a considerable portion of home-schooling curriculums teach young-earth creationism, many youth end up believing that is sound doctrine or even a salvation matter. They retain that view as adults.



I have noticed that various blogs can get turned into sites where people vent about God and the Bible. It does not constitute a debate because the setting often dictates one-line answers that primarily just amount to a vote on the subject. People add their comments based on statements from their instructors, books, or friends without having considered the issues for themselves.

The line used most frequently by atheists reads something like, “You’ve been duped by a bunch of ancient fairy tales.” I often wonder if that represents the totality of the poster’s theology. Somebody told them, they repeat it, and that is all they need to know about the existence or non-existence of God. What is annoying is that their posts often portray an intellectual aloofness. Of course, some have a grasp on why they are atheists, but others just parrot a catchy phrase to cast their vote.

I am impressed when I come across material that demonstrates that an unbeliever has some insight into Jesus’ character. Many just jump on the Richard Dawkins’ bandwagon and relate all religion with war. They have failed to learn that with the advent of modern atheism, atheists have exceeded their share of atrocities.

In contrast, the agnostic Loren Eiseley, writing in the 1960s, spoke of a characteristic of Jesus Christ precisely as it is expressed in the

four gospels. He wrote, "... that great impulse—love, compassion, call it what one will—which, however discounted in our time, moved the dying Christ on Golgotha with a power that has reached across two thousand weary years."

In every age, there are those who twist Christianity to fit cultural, social, and political agendas. Eiseley, unlike many, did not let those taint his vision of Christ. He must have read the gospels for himself and caught a glimpse of Jesus. That bit of theology exceeds what Dawkins and his followers bother to learn. They want to debase theology, but, at the same time, are determined to perpetuate their theological perception.

The power of being able to change ones' viewpoint beyond the concept that was adopted during youthfulness is exemplified in Antony Flew. Flew, who had been the leading spokesperson for atheism for decades, changed his viewpoint in his late years. His explanation for being able to do so was that he had always maintained a determination to go where the evidence led.

The following quote from Francis Collins, who led the human genome project, occurs on the front of the dust jacket on Flew's book, *There Is a God*, "Flew's colleagues in the church of fundamentalist atheists will be scandalized." Of course those colleagues resorted to comments about old age and senility. They were not willing to accept the idea that Flew could have changed his mind based on evidence.

We all need to test the water we drink. We cannot just send in a sample and have it tested. To do so would result in relying on someone else's values and biases to determine our own course of life. We must learn testing skills and apply them ourselves.

Church folks need to hold several popular doctrines up to the light of God's Word and of scientific facts to grasp reasonable and spiritual concepts. Denying human-influenced global warming has no scriptural support. A proclamation that radioactive dating methods are bogus rings hollow in the mind of one trained in science. Resisting scientific evidence for continental drift, soil formation, glaciation, universe expansion, and dozens of other things adds to the concept that Christians have been drinking the wrong water. Biblical interpretations that oppose scientific discoveries undermine the foundation of Christianity's validity. Pure Christianity endorses the harmony of Scripture and Creation.



For each person who adopts Flew's principle of going where the evidence leads, life will become more intricate. It is much easier to determine just to stay on whatever path you were pointed toward at



an early stage in your life. If you are an atheist, read the gospels, not just from a perspective of trying to find fault, but attempt to harmonize the person you find there with your perception of reality. If you are a Christian, delve into some science field and

harmonize your concept of reality with the physical universe of which we are a part. Fear no truth.

Take time to develop a concept of the fundamental reason we exist. Hurrying to get through your faith decisions may have undesirable consequences for you or those you influence.

IN EVERY AGE, THERE ARE THOSE WHO TWIST CHRISTIANITY TO FIT CULTURAL, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL AGENDAS.

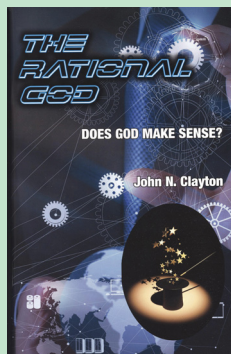


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Some New Things from DOES GOD EXIST?

THE RATIONAL GOD: DOES GOD MAKE SENSE?

John N. Clayton has written a new book examining questions like:
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"Do Miracles Discredit the Bible?"
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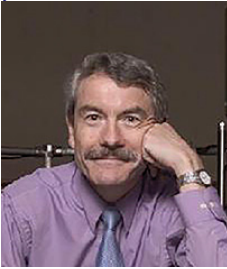


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GREAT SCIENTISTS AND GOD

IAN HUTCHINSON

There are skeptics in our world today who maintain that most scientists do not believe in God, and try to convince the public that science and belief in God are opposed to each other. This column provides quotes from outstanding scientists of today and the past that reflect their belief in God, and in many cases, their faith in Jesus Christ. The scientist we are quoting this month is a professor of Nuclear Science and Engineering at M.I.T. He designed, built, and operates the Alcator C-Mod tokamak fusion device.



“Today, ... Christian commitment informs, influences and motivates the activities of many scientists. Among academics, scientists are, if anything, more likely to be Christians than non-scientists. At my university (MIT) I know dozens of Christian faculty members. And the number of Christians in its academic leadership is remarkable. The previous president was a Christian, and over the years I’ve noticed on many occasions how active Christian faculty are in the running of the Institute. Perhaps this is because, at its best, academic administration and committee service calls for a selfless effort to assist the achievement of others—a trait that does not come naturally to anyone, least of all ambitious academics, but that does come from Christian teaching (Philippians 2:3). Certainly in my own career, I’ve come to appreciate that scientific leadership calls for many skills that go far beyond the knowledge of scientific phenomena and the detached impersonal interrogation of nature that we learn in the classroom and at the lab bench. For me, Christian spiritual study and growth have been the most important source of those other vital skills.

“Finally, at church we want our children to hear the gospel in a way that, with respect for both God’s word and God’s works, will not alienate them either from the church or from science.”

From *When God and Science Meet* published by National Association of Evangelicals © 2015, pages 39, or online at <http://nae.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/When-God-and-Science-Meet.pdf>.

Cynthia's Corner



GOD'S GIFT TO US: MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

God said after he created man, "It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him" (Genesis 2:18). This statement is the foundation for marriage. It reflects the purpose of marriage which is not to go through life alone, and to have a partner to help you. Genesis 1:28 says, "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number.'" Children are a blessing from God, and grandchildren "are a crown for the aged" (Proverbs 17:6). Marriage and families are God's design and plan to provide companionship, love, and support throughout the lives of humans. God is love, and he created us in his image with the need to be loved and to love. He fulfills that need in his design for marriage and families.

This family foundation is to be protected, honored, and lasting. That is why God in his Word gives us many specific instructions and guidelines regarding how to do this. For instance, he tells us plainly that sex outside of marriage is sinful and wrong. Hebrews 13:4 says, "Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure." The "one flesh" concept God mentions in Genesis 2:24 concerning marriage goes far beyond sexual relations. God intends for husbands and wives to be united until death. Their relationship is designed to be the closest and deepest human bond that exists. But, for that to become a reality, we must follow God's guidelines. He tells husbands and wives to respect one another. He tells husbands to love their wives and be considerate and not harsh with them. Wives are told to submit to and respect their husbands. Fathers should not embitter their children, and parents are instructed to discipline their children and bring them up to know and love God. Also, children are told to obey their parents. The scriptures regarding marriage and families are too numerous to list here.

I can tell you from personal experience and life observations, that if we reject God's guidelines, our marriages and families will suffer. God is a God of love, and he desires to bless us with love, companionship, joy, and security throughout our lifetime in family relationships that he designed. We must follow his pattern to receive these blessings.

—Cynthia Clayton

**MARRIAGE SHOULD BE HONORED BY ALL, AND THE
MARRIAGE BED KEPT PURE.**

HEBREWS 13:4 (NIV)

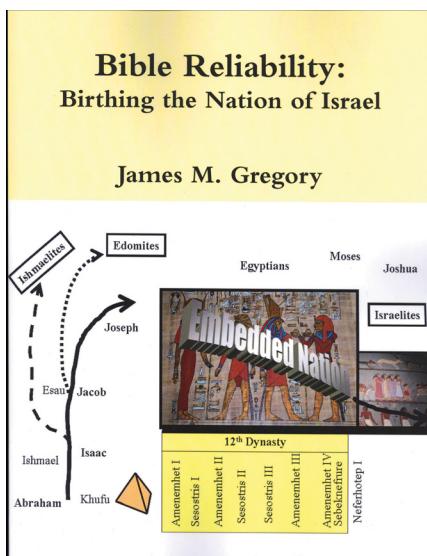


BOOK REVIEWS

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.

Bible Reliability: Birthing the Nation of Israel

by James M. Gregory, self-published, www.lulu.com, © 2014, 213 pages, \$21.95 (paperback), ISBN-13: 978-1-312-78059-0

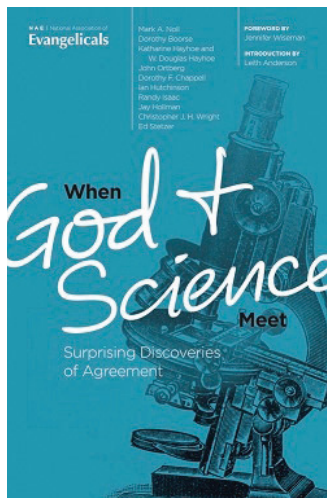


There are many reasons for an author to self-publish his research. Our materials have been self-published for 47 years. These reasons have been to keep the price down, preserve our message which tends to be altered by publisher editing, and to allow us to make the material available free to people we feel need it. We have reviewed material by James Gregory before and have found it to be useful and well researched. Dr. Gregory has been a professor at the University of Missouri and Texas Tech for over 30 years.

Skeptics have criticized the Bible for being unreliable in its record of history, and the stated objective of this book is “to analyze and show evidence that the Bible is accurate about the development of the nation of Israel.” The book is in a 9 x 14-inch format and is divided into four sections: (A) Birthing the Nation of Israel, (B) Events of the Exodus, (C) Law and Faith Building, and (D) Rules for a Nation. The format allows numerous charts, maps, and usable information about the accuracy of the Bible in everything from medical knowledge to sexual conduct. There is strong documentation and the book is very easy to read. We recommend this book highly to anyone interested in the credibility of the Bible.

When God and Science Meet

by The American Scientific Affiliation ©2015,
available in bulk quantities for shipping and handling only
from <http://network.asa3.org/general/shop.asp>



We are always looking for good material to share with college and high school students that will help them become more educated about the relationship of science and faith. Sometimes the books we review are neutral as far as biblical interpretation, and their value is in understanding science and hearing from academic scientists who are believers. This book is of that nature. It contains 10 essays by scientists who have advanced degrees and who are leaders in their Christian denominations. The ten essays are:

- 1) “The History of Science and Christianity” by Mark Noll
- 2) “The Wonder of Creation” by Dorothy Boorse
- 3) “The Competencies and Limitations of Science” by Katharine Hayhoe and W. Douglas Hayhoe
- 4) “Questions That Faith Asks Science” by John Ortberg
- 5) “Worshipping God Through Discovery and Science” by Dorothy F. Chappell
- 6) “Science as Christian Calling” by Ian Hutchinson
- 7) “Creativity and the Development of Technology” by Randy Isaac
- 8) “Genetics, Medicine and the Image of God” by Jay Hollman
- 9) “Tending God’s Earth” by Christopher J. H. Wright
- 10) “Reasons to Engage in Science” by Ed Stetzer

I can guarantee that you will not agree with everything the authors of this book say, but you will learn and be impressed by their scholarship and their commitment to God. The book could be used in college discussion groups or as a supplement to college level apologetics classes.

ADDRESS CHANGE? To remain on our mailing list, please give us both your old and new addresses with both zip codes at least six to eight weeks before the move, if at all possible. Thanks!



DANDY DESIGNS

ICE: THE INCREDIBLE TOOL OF GOD

Ice is a critical blessing that we often take for granted. You probably even get angry with it if you live in a place where ice on the ground or roadway can be a threat to your travel safety. Ice is a very useful and vital item in the design of planet Earth. Ice stores water and allows some



of our major rivers to exist. The Ganges, Indus, Hwang, Ho, and Yangtze rivers, plus all the Canadian rivers feeding Lake Winnipeg get their water from ice stored in winter and melted in the spring and summer. Some 80 cubic kilometers of meltwater feeds the rivers of Europe and the Middle East. Most of California gets its water in the same way. In Job 38:22 (NIV) God challenges Job with, “Have you entered the storehouses of the snow?” Stored snow is one of the tools God has used to provide for humans on a planet where shortages of water can be catastrophic.

In addition to storing water, ice molds and shapes the surface of the earth and produces soil for agriculture. The odd shape of the water molecule, which is V-shaped, means that when water freezes it will expand in volume instead of contracting as you would expect. When ice forms, the geometry of the water molecule locks in the molecules so that the hydrogen/oxygen bond expands due to the geometry involved. The force of this expansion is enormous—enough to crack rocks and move boulders. When put under pressure, ice behaves as a fluid, and this is what allows glaciers to move. Glaciers are a major sculptor of many mountains and land surfaces, including most of North America.

It is the design of the water molecule that allows us to enjoy so many benefits of ice. Great wisdom and intelligence is built into this seemingly minor part of our existence, which is an incredible tool of God.

THE OPOSSUM: MISUNDERSTOOD MARVEL



Some have referred to opossums as the “Rodney Dangerfields of the animal kingdom—not getting any respect.” The fact that they look like a rat and have a prehensile tail like a monkey contributes to that attitude. Like all of God’s creatures, the opossum is incredibly well designed to live successfully

in a wide variety of ecosystems.

Baby opossums, like baby kangaroos, are called joeys. Opossums have the shortest gestation period of any mammal — 12 days. Upon birth, the babies crawl through their mother’s fur into a fur-lined pouch where they nurse for roughly 100 days. What is remarkable about the opossum is what it is immune to and how that is helpful to humans. Opossums are immune to the sting of honeybees, scorpions, and rattlesnakes. They even eat rattlesnakes. Recent studies have shown that opossums protect us from ticks. Opossums are fastidious in their grooming, scratching, licking, and chewing to remove any tick that is in their fur. Recent studies have shown that opossums may kill as many as 4,000 ticks a week, reducing the chance of Lyme disease being spread.

Opossums do better than rats, cats, rabbits, and dogs in intelligence tests. They are rarely aggressive and eat nearly anything. Because they originated in the tropics, they cannot stand cold for prolonged periods of time. That means they frequently invade human-occupied areas looking for warmth in winter. Most of us know that “playing possum” is a favorite survival skill opossums possess. When faced with a threat the opossum will keel over and look dead. They also defecate and exude a noxious, oily, green slime from their anal glands. This is not a conscious activity of the opossum, but happens involuntarily.

Recently scientists have found a peptide in opossum blood called Lethal Toxin Neutralizing Factor (LTNF). This peptide works by bonding to a toxic protein in the venom of a snake, scorpion, or even some toxic plants. Claire Komives, who has written on the amazing ability of the opossum, says the peptide works so well against all natural poisons that it is “like a miracle.” God’s design of all life is a miracle, but the lowly opossum may be one of the most under-appreciated of all of God’s creatures. Sources: *National Wildlife*, April/May 2015, page 33, and *The Week*, April 10, 2015, page 17.

News and Notes

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ON CAMPUS EVAPORATING.

One expected result of the Supreme Court ruling that same-sex couples could marry is that zealous officials would use the decision to silence opinions of those who did not agree. This is showing up at colleges and universities in massive numbers. The Alliance Defending Freedom is distributing written cases of students and professors who have been persecuted for speaking about their convictions on same-sex marriage. A few examples are: (1) Julia Ward, who was expelled from Eastern Michigan University's counseling program. (2) Emily Brooker, who was called before an ethics committee and threatened with having her diploma withheld at Missouri State University. (3) Jonathan Lopez, who was verbally assaulted in front of other students and labeled a "fascist" because he quoted two Bible verses in explaining the biblical view of marriage. (4) A conservative student newspaper at Oregon State University, which had copies of their paper confiscated and trashed by the university. (5)

The University of Florida which refused to recognize the Christian Fraternity Beta Upsilon Chi because they limit membership to Christian men. If you are interested in this area of concern, go to ADFLegal.org or call 800-835-5233.

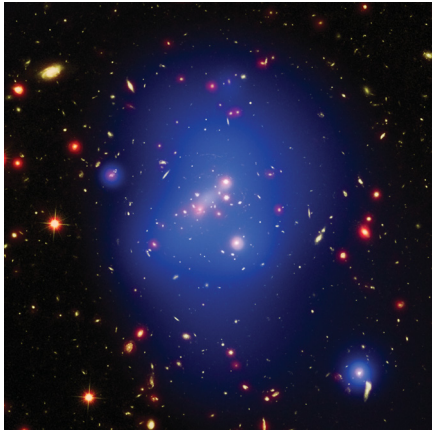


FOUR-LEGGED SNAKE. One of the interesting descriptions in the Bible is the explanation that snakes at one time had legs and lost them as a visual picture of Satan's role in the curse. Whatever view a person takes of that account, there is an article in *Discover* magazine (January/February 2015, page 91) about the discovery of a fossil snake named *Tetrapodophis amplectus* which had four legs. The back legs were larger than the front legs, but the rest of the anatomy is similar to modern snakes.

NIGERIA EXPORTS CHRISTIANITY. I recently had a prisoner in Texas tell me that Nigerian Christians had been imported to assist in some areas of the prison in which he was incarcerated. I then came upon an article in *The Christian Science Monitor Weekly* (September 28, 2015, page 21) which talked about Nigerian Chris-

tians now numbering around 100 million living in other countries and serving in a variety of ways in those countries, but bringing an evangelistic thrust in the places that they work. The services these folks give to the countries where they work are vastly superior to the government services. Tope Olukole, one of the workers in a Pentecostal church says “Traditionally churches came from the Western world, but now we are returning the kingdom back to them.” Much of the popularity of the Nigerian churches is because they are bringing a prosperity gospel to people who are destitute, and the message is materialistic in nature. Getting the concept of restoring the church as it was in the first century with emphasis on spiritual riches is also happening. The fields are ripe unto harvest.

THE BIG NUMBERS AND LIFE IN SPACE. In 1950, the famous Italian physicist Enrico Fermi raised what has been called the Fermi Paradox. He said “If the universe contains life, then where is it? Why hasn’t life showed up at our doorstep?” Recent calculations show that there are over 100 billion galaxies, and some of them like our Milky Way have as many as 400 billion stars. Our latest measurements show that roughly three-fourths of the stars have planets which would suggest that there are approximately 10^{23} planetary systems. That would be 8,000 billion billion. Are we the only planet with life? There are two potential mistakes here. One is the religious fundamentalist error of saying, “Yes, we are alone because the Bible says so.” The fact is the Bible does not say so — it is silent on this question. The other error is the person who tries to say that if the numbers are great enough, it will happen. That is like saying that if you draw a card from a deck, the chances of it being the ace of spades is 1 out of 52; but, if you draw 52 times, on the average, it will happen. The problem here is an ignorance of how many factors have to be “right” for life to happen. The media presents the idea that if you are in the “Goldilocks Zone” (the distance from a star where water can exist as a liquid), that life will be there; but, there are a multitude of other factors that have to be present for life, especially higher forms of life, to exist. God may have created life elsewhere; so, do not throw your Bible away if life is discovered. But do not be surprised if it never happens. Source: *Astronomy*, January 2016, page 6.



Galaxy Cluster: IDCS J1426.5+3508

BIG DOLLARS PRODUCING SHOWY CREATIONIST STRUCTURES. A change that has taken place in apologetics in the 48 years we have been involved has been the influx of money that denominations have brought to creationist projects. Ken Ham has been able to lead the way with his \$17 million creationist museum in Kentucky, and he is now well into another project to build



a replica of Noah's Ark. A group called Mt. Blanco has started a fossil museum in Crosbyton, Texas. Answers in Genesis (AiG) and Creation Ministries International (CMI) sponsored a trip to Mount Ararat to find Noah's Ark. After spending a lot of money and a lot of time the folks involved in that expedition have given up. AiG and CMI agreed that going to Ararat is a waste of time. The Institute for Creation Research (ICR) is now in a fund-raising effort to build a \$22 million "Dallas Museum of Science and Earth History." You can see the elaborate plans on ICR.org/museum. We share the concerns of these ministries, but because of the denominational teachings built into the projects, we are pessimistic about the potential for them to make a difference. They might even increase the attacks on Christianity by atheists and skeptics. Think what could be done educationally if that amount of money could be directed into accurately presenting what the Bible says and showing how all scientific evidence supports it?

THE FRUIT OF PLURALISM. The politically correct view of religious issues in our day is to believe that all roads lead to the same God. The logical problem with this view is it assumes that all religions are equally valid. My atheist friends would say that since there is no God, pluralism is true because all beliefs lead to the realization there is no God. That does not answer the evidence for God's existence that we present with each issue of this journal. It has also allowed the world to get into the quagmire of radical Islam. Pluralism has to believe that all religions are equally valid, and that simply is not the case. *The Week* news magazine said it well, "The unfortunate reality is that the Quran's 7th-century text provides 'ample support'

for the belief that ‘armed jihad’ against nonbelievers is the duty of all Muslims” (November 27, 2015, page 6). It can be equally well said that the Ku Klux Klan does not represent the beliefs of all Christians, but the difference is that everything the Klan stood for opposed what Jesus taught. That is not true of Muhammad and the Quran. We urge everyone to compare the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels, especially the Sermon on the Mount, with the teachings of Muhammad. There are many good, peaceful, kind, non-violent Muslims in the world; but the book they live by is not a book of peace. Pluralism will continue the wars and terror we have seen in the past years.

ANOTHER MILITARY UFO. Just when you think the whole UFO thing has been laid to rest, another one shows up. This time, it was in mid-November when a blazing light flashed over the skies of California. The singer Josh Groban got things rolling in style by tweeting “DID. ANYONE. ELSE. JUST. SEE. THAT. #ufo.” It turned out the Navy had just launched an unarmed Trident II (D5) missile from a Navy submarine, but the project was top secret, so no one knew it was coming. The rocket went over San Francisco, but was seen as far away as Arizona. There are no UFO sightings that do not have a probable explanation, and some have been verified as human-caused or the product of meteors. People are still looking for any way to get out of this life alive, and an alien abduction still appeals to some people. Source: *The Week*, November 20, 2015, page 7.

LESBIAN MAYOR PUSHES HER AGENDA. Annise Parker, the openly lesbian mayor of Houston, Texas, enacted a measure called The Houston Equal Rights Ordinance (HERO). The big issue was allowing any restroom to be used by anyone claiming to be of the right gender. Business owners who did not allow this would be fined \$500 a day. When ministers in Houston resisted the ordinance they were ordered to turn over all text messages, phone calls, communications with parishioners, speeches, presentations, or sermons to the mayor. All of this has resulted in petitions and threats of court challenges. The Texas Attorney General referred to the ordinance as “a direct assault on the religious liberty guaranteed by the First Amendment.” On November 3, 2015, the ordinance was rejected in a city-wide referendum vote. Parker was replaced as mayor by Sylvester Turner on January 2. In his campaign, he vowed to reenact HERO. We can expect to see more of this in the future. For background on this continuing story see *Citizen* magazine, November 2015, page 12.

IS “BIBLE” A DIRTY WORD? In the September/October, 2015, issue of *Biblical Archaeological Review* (page 6), there is an

interesting article by Dr. Hershel Shanks. In the article, Dr. Shanks tells of a change in archaeology that involves removing the word “biblical” or “Bible” from any academic writing in the Middle East. Shanks points out that the American Schools of Oriental Research has just changed the name of its popular magazine *Biblical Archaeologist* to *Near Eastern Archaeology*. They did that because it was the only way they could get articles about archaeological projects being conducted in Arab countries. Oxford University Press has changed the name of its new archaeological encyclopedia from *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Biblical Archaeology* to *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East* to enable the editors to obtain entries about archaeology in Arab countries. Jordanian authorities just changed a sign at Tall Hisban taking the word “Biblical” out of the title. Perhaps we can understand the motivation for all of this. Freedom of speech in academia apparently cannot include certain words depending on your prejudice or where in the world you live.

ATHEIST SIGN CAMPAIGN. American Atheists has started a campaign in which billboards have been erected in North Carolina and Colorado that say “Go ahead and skip church! Just be good for goodness sake.” The fact remains that there is no compelling reason to be good if you can get great pleasure out of not being good and you have no one to answer to. Source: Associated Press release 12/24/15.



BRITISH GOVERNMENT BANS CROSSES AND PRAYERS. The European Court of Human Rights has agreed to hear a challenge by two women who were prohibited by the British government from wearing crosses to work. The British government also stopped the town of Bideford from opening its public meetings with a prayer. Interestingly Queen Elizabeth rebuked the government on the prayer issue. Source: *Christianity Today*, May 2012, page 10.

SPACE IS FLAT. One of the big questions in cosmology over the past 100 years has to do with the shape of space. Is space flat like a sheet of paper or is it round like a sphere? If space is curved and if you go far enough in one direction, you would end up where

you started. If it is flat, that will not happen. The implications of this are enormous for cosmological theories. Many theories would have to be discarded if space is flat because matter would never return to its original position in space. As astronomical measuring devices have gotten more precise, the answer seems to be without a doubt that space is flat. Dr. Martin White in *Astronomy* magazine (June 2015, page 44) says, “We find that space is flat to the limits of our capacity to measure it.” Once again the biblical statement that there was a beginning and that there will be an end fits the data very well.

COMET IS NOT JUST ROCK AND WATER. In the past two years a lot of attention has been given to comets. This includes the close observation of a comet and an actual landing on another comet. Close analysis of a comet that passed through the solar system in 2015 revealed that there are some alcohols and sugars in some comets. The comet has been nicknamed “The Happy Hour Comet” because it contains these organic compounds. Unfortunately, it will not be back in this part of the solar system for 8,000 years, but what it shows us is that fragments of the compounds that make up life on this earth exist on other astronomical bodies. Organic compounds are not confined to planet earth. Source: *Time* magazine, November 15, 2015, page 10.

ORIGIN OF WATER ON EARTH MYSTERY GROWS. There has been much research to answer the question of how Earth got all of its water. A favorite theory has been that the water came from comets early in Earth’s history. The problem with that theory is that all the evidence seems to be against it. Deuterium (a heavy isotope of hydrogen) is found in smaller amounts in comets and dust particles in space (122 ppm) while it is found in the oceans of Earth in high amounts (156 ppm). There is water trapped in molten rocks in volcanoes, and its amount of deuterium is much closer to the level found in Earth’s water. It appears that water was in the mind of the Creator as the materials producing the Earth were formed. That is no surprise when you realize the importance of water in allowing life to exist. Source: *Science News*, December 12, 2015, page 12.



This journal is a part of a program of service titled **Does God Exist?** The purpose of the program is to provide thinking, seeking people with scientific evidence that God does exist and that the Bible is His Word. It is our conviction that all men can logically and rationally believe in God. In addition to this bimonthly journal, the **Does God Exist?** program offers DVDs and video tapes, CDs and audio tapes, courses, books, and other materials. These materials are offered on a loan basis or at our cost. We also are more than willing to correspond with you and answer any specific question(s) you might have. If you would like further information on borrowing or purchasing these materials, we would be glad to send it to you. Check the boxes below to describe what you would like and mail it to us. We will get it right out to you.

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