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and the Bible
is His Word.***

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WHY DID GOD BECOME MAN?

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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

Does God Exist? websites: <http://www.doesgodexist.org>;
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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

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WHY DID GOD BECOME MAN?

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of mankind ... The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
—John 1:1–4, 14 (NIV)

There are many things about Christianity that are so unique that people outside of the Christian system have a hard time understanding them. It is not just atheists and skeptics who struggle with this issue, but many people who claim to be Christians and attend church regularly have the same problem. It is easy to see why this is true because Jesus' disciples failed to understand and attempted to make Christ a political and military figure. When Judas and the religious leaders of the day came to seize Christ, Peter drew his sword and attacked, cutting off the ear of Malchus (John 18:10). James and John sent their mother to Christ asking him to make them top officials in his kingdom (Matthew 20:21).

We cannot be too hard on people who struggle with understanding this because throughout history churches have gotten caught up in the political and military notion of Christianity. The structure of many denominations copies the Roman concept of a top commander like Caesar. His subordinates ruled divisions of the Roman Empire and had lieutenants who answered to them. In Catholicism, we see the pope, cardinal, bishop, etc., arranged similarly. Many denominations and mega-churches have a similar pyramid structure.

If your notion of what God wants his followers to be is political or military, you do not understand why God sent his Son to Earth to live among us and establish the church. You are also not in a position to answer the hard questions about why God created us and why we suffer. Hopefully, we can approach those questions more reasonably when we get a complete picture of what Jesus meant when he said, “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36).

From the very start of human existence on Earth, what defined humans as being unique was the fact that we were created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26, 27). In the beginning, human communication with God was direct and personal and involved the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We see that in the fact that the word for God is the plural form *Elohim* and the fact that God said, “Let US create man in OUR image” (emphasis mine). The other thing that was unique to humans was our capacity to love in a way that was not sexual or survival-based. That kind of love comes from being created in God’s image. “God is love” (1 John 4:8), and we can uniquely choose to love. Without choice, love is not possible. Sexual love without choice is rape and has no love in it at all. All kinds of love that involve true emotional satisfaction require choice.

Without choice, love is not possible.

When Adam and Eve chose to reject God and his love for them, a struggle between good and evil began. Humans became the playing field for that struggle. Angels became a part of the battle joining with Satan and those who embraced evil. The Old Testament is full of stories of people rejecting God’s way and suffering the consequences of that rejection. Ephesians 6:12 tells us clearly, “For our



struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, but against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” Ephesians 3:10–11 tells us that God’s “intent was that now, through the church, the manifold

wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

The struggle between good and evil has been the theme of nearly every video game, movie, and novel ever written. The problem is not in recognizing the struggle, but in believing that we are a part of it. We play games where we “zap” the bad guys, but then real life comes around, and we begin to see that the bad guys are not just weak charlatans wearing sinister costumes. ISIS has shown us just how bad sin can be. In the past, the bad guys have shown their fruit from Cain to Jezebel to Judas. Galatians 6:7 tells us that evil begets evil. Every attempt of humans to live by their own rules instead of God’s has ended in disaster. Anyone who believes that humans can

live good and productive lives entirely on their own is either too young or too isolated, or he is deliberately deceiving himself. Man's inhumanity to man is based on a mentality that justifies everything on the basis of "survival of the fittest." Even religions who use force to impose their belief systems maintain that their religious leader rains destruction on other beliefs because he/she/it is more powerful than all other systems.

The culmination of all of this reached a peak with the series of human power dynasties starting with Nebuchadnezzar and ending with the Roman Empire. All human attempts to build a system of good that would endure and eradicate evil, ended with the final destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem in 70 A.D. It was during this process that the true power of good over evil came into the world. Evil lost its most powerful tool as God became man and destroyed death. This did not happen by human violence, war, hatred, politics, or any human creation. The victory of good came by the overpowering capacity of love.

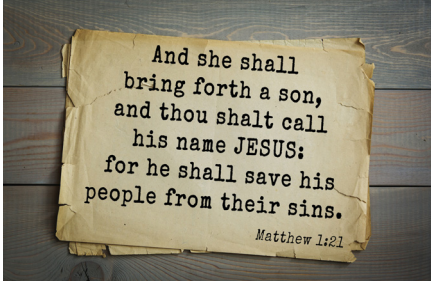
The Bible makes it clear that God's plan for this and for God's entry into the battle was planned from the start, but known only to God (Ephesians 3:9). In Genesis 3:15, God predicts the ultimate end to the battle with Satan's "head" being crushed. That crushing is not militaristic but a reference to Christ's sacrifice and victory

over death. Peter tells us that angels knew the objective, but not the plan, "... the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things" (1 Peter 1:12). The last book of the Bible describes the overthrow of tyrannical Rome and urges Christians to be encouraged that unlike earlier followers of God, they would see the power of



God overthrow the evil that had afflicted them so horribly. Hebrews 11:13 tells us of the great biblical heroes who never got to see God's triumph.

All of this tells us how special the birth of Christ was. It was not just the babe in the manger, the miracle of conception accomplished by the Holy Spirit, or the star of Bethlehem that made this event special. What made it the most significant event in history was the



fact that God became man and lived for awhile among us. God who created time and began the beginning also lived without sin—something only God could do. In the lifetime of a human, God would teach and demonstrate what good is all about. Matthew 5–7 tells us of God's plan for replacing human legal-

ism with heart attitudes of love and reconciliation. Human theocratic society rejected this and embraced evil to physically oppose it.

The final victory of good over evil would come when good destroyed death. To accomplish that, God had to start with life, so Jesus was born physically. For God to have avoided death in some way would not have shown God's absolute power over all that evil could offer. Hebrews 4:15 tells us that none of us will be able to say to Jesus in judgment, "Lord, you don't know how it was!" That is because Jesus "has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin." God came to Earth and became a man. To the skeptic or proponents of other religious beliefs, this is beyond comprehension. They want their leaders to be great military and political leaders. Mohammed was one of the greatest military minds that ever lived. The Hindu beliefs revolve around successful conflict among human or animal-like gods and goddesses. Buddha rejected much of what the Hindu system taught, and the Dalai Lama has flatly stated, "There is no God or supreme being." Atheists like Peter Singer and Richard Dawkins continue to harp on the physical characteristics they ascribe to God. Their concepts of God violate the biblical descriptions.

The skeptic is left with one alternative—to deny that good and evil exist! Dawkins says it best "In a universe of



blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky; and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at the bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good, nothing but blind pitiless indifference. ... DNA neither knows nor cares. DNA just is. And we dance to its music" (*River Out of Eden* [New York; BasicBooks, 1995], page 133).



Why did God become man? "To make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3:9–11). And to do so in such a way that there could be no doubt about the sources of all kinds of good and evil.

—John N. Clayton





Do you believe in angels? That question is almost sure to prompt a vigorous discussion. There is much religious uncertainty about angels, and the basic understanding of what angels are varies from generation to generation, culture to culture, and religion to religion. The major religions of the world have always had angels involved in special roles. Moslems claim that the Koran came from the angel Gabriel. Mormons believe that an angel named Moroni gave Joseph Smith the Book of Mormon. Catholics frequently speak of “guardian angels,” and the Catholic Relief Services has a guardian angel coin on a CRS card they distribute. The coin has this poem: “Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God’s love commits me here, ever this day be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.”

So what does the Bible say about angels, and what can we logically and reasonably believe about them? *The New Bible Dictionary* (Eerdmans Publishing) gives this definition:

ANGEL: A messenger of God, familiar with him face to face, therefore of an order being higher than that of man. Certainly, he is a creature, but also yet endowed with free will, and therefore not necessarily impervious to temptation and sin.

This definition supports the biblical position that angels are not physical beings. We are not talking about humans with wings or people who have become better than the rest of us. If you believe in Naturalism—that all there is or will be are the physical things that we can perceive through our senses, then you will stop right here in

the discussion. The logical problem with taking that position is that you also rule out most of quantum mechanics and a great deal of nuclear science. When superstring theorists proposed 11-dimensional vibrating strings, they certainly were not describing something that we could perceive through our senses. What we propose to do in this discussion is to look at what the Bible tells us about angels.

ANGELS EXIST IN AN ORDER THAT IS HIGHER THAN THAT OF HUMANS.

What that means is that angels cannot die, they do not experience time-dependent restrictions as we do, and they are unlimited in space. The Bible shows these characteristics over and over. In Numbers 22:21–31 we see the story of Balaam, the donkey, and the angel. The angel can control both what the donkey sees and what Balaam sees. In Daniel 3:26–28 Nebuchadnezzar tells us that an angel was sent to protect Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fire. The fire not only did not affect the angel, but the angel was able to shield the humans from the fire. In Acts 5:17–20 angels not only walked through prison walls, but they opened physical obstacles for the humans to walk through. In Matthew 1:20 and 2:13, 19, Joseph experiences an angel appearing to him in his dreams in such a way that he obeys the angel. Jesus tells us in Matthew 22:30 that we will become like angels when we die (but not become angels) when our physical existence is over.

It is also interesting to note that Satan has angels that have chosen to follow him and reject God. “For Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light” according to 2 Corinthians 11:14. Galatians 1:8 tells us that angels can “preach another gospel” and James 2:19 tells us that “even the demons believe that—and shudder.” Matthew 25:41 tells us that there is an “eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” And 2 Peter 2:4 tells us that angels have sinned, and Jude 6 adds that angels “abandoned their proper dwelling.” Revelation 12:9 adds that Satan and his angels will be cast out when judgment finally comes.

ANGELS CAN DO MANY THINGS.

Remember that the definition said that angels are familiar with God face to face. The intimacy that angels have with God allows them to take God’s place in some situations. When this happens, the passages morph into God being the speaker. In Judges 6:11–17 Gideon starts out talking to what appears to be a physical man, but the word quickly changes from angel to Lord. In Genesis 32:24–32 a similar thing happens as Jacob wrestles with a physical man who morphs into God. We know that no mortal can wrestle with the Creator of the cosmos, but the angel provides the intermediary to allow God to make his point



with Jacob. In Exodus 3:2–4 an angel of the Lord calls to Moses out of the burning bush in verse 2, but in verse 4 God is doing the calling. In Genesis 18:1–10 Abraham entertains three angels that appear as men, but he speaks to one of them as

“LORD.” Abraham later has an angel interfere with his sacrifice of Isaac on Mount Moriah (Genesis 22:11–18). And Hagar has a similar experience in Genesis 16:7–13. Hebrew 13:2 tells us to let our love govern what we do because some have entertained angels without knowing it. Notice the enormous range of abilities and actions that angels can do.

THERE ARE ALSO THINGS ANGELS CANNOT DO.

Because they are outside of time and cannot die, angels cannot sin without eternal consequences. Both 2 Peter 2:4 and Jude 6 make it clear that there is no turning back for angels. They cannot seek forgiveness because forgiveness requires the time dimension. In this way, humans differ from angels because as long as we are in the flesh, we can seek forgiveness. If we obey God and are washed in the blood of Jesus through baptism, the blood of Christ continues to cleanse us throughout eternity. John tells us in 1 John 1:7 that “the blood of Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin.” The verb in that passage is active, meaning it is a continuous process—it never stops.

Another thing angels cannot do is prevent the result of a promise of God from being fulfilled. All the things Jesus promised to his followers will happen, and nothing Satan and his angels can do will ever change that. Galatians 6:7 tells us, “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.” We cannot sin again and again and expect God to cancel that promise. When we make a big mistake that brings consequences, we cannot be upset that God does not take those consequences away. I have often said that if there are such things as guardian angels, I want a replacement for mine. I have had a lot of bad things happen to me. My dear friend at Notre Dame (a priest) responded to that by saying “John, guardian angels don’t protect you from being stupid!” That is undoubtedly true, but realize something else.

ANGELS CANNOT DO ANYTHING THAT WOULD TAKE AWAY OUR FREE WILL.

Ephesians 3:10; Ephesians 6:12; and the book of Job all tell us that we are in a battle—the battle between good and evil. Job came to

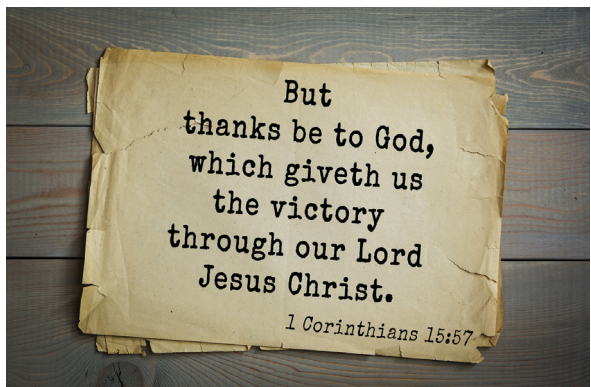


understand that, and in Job 42:5 he praises God because, in spite of all that has happened to him, he knows that his life mattered in the great battle of all time—the war between good and evil. We too are in that war, and the

“spiritual forces of evil” that Ephesians 3:10 and 6:12 talk about, involve angels. For God to step in and take away what was happening to Job would have been to turn Job into a mindless robot. Angels cannot defeat the purpose for which we were created. No angel can stop you from rejecting God, discarding the Bible, or refusing salvation. That is a choice you alone can make.

WHAT ANGELS DO.

What God does through angels is to provide you with a way out. First Corinthians 10:13 tells us that we all face the same temptations. Then it makes this promise from God which we know is handled by angels: “God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.” The



choice you make is yours alone. Angels are watching your response with eagerness and anticipation.

—JNC



GIVING—A PROOF OF THE VALIDITY OF CHRISTIANITY

This article is not a solicitation for money. In fact, it is exactly the opposite of that. It is a discussion about what Christianity teaches that Christians should do. It is not about what is done for Christians. It is about the change in mind-set that Christianity offers to those who will accept it. It is about becoming ingrained with a desire to give—not to receive.

Acts 20:35 is an interesting verse where Paul quotes Jesus as saying, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” That statement by Jesus is not in the gospels, and yet it is the essence of the Christian life. The statement is not just about money, but about how Christianity helps us to get the best of family, work, recreation, sex, and peace of mind. We are blessed by giving. Paul makes this even clearer in his discussion on Mars Hill in Athens, recorded in Acts 17:23–28: “You are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you. The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. . . . ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’” God does not need our money.

Christianity is unique in its teaching about how Christians should build their lives and deal with the world around them. There are two

kinds of people in the world. One type is the person who wants to receive. Those whose goal in living is to build a materialistic paradise for themselves will follow a “survival of the fittest” mentality. Our society emphasizes “being number one” as a goal in everything. Our magazine titles tell the story of modern America. When I was a child the main magazine that people read was *Life* magazine. *Life* was pretty much about everything, everywhere. As time has gone by, our magazines have become more restricted. *U.S. News and World Report* was smaller than *Life* because it focused on us, not life in general. Eventually, *People* became our magazine of choice. *People* is smaller than *Life* and removes emphasis on things not related to us as individuals. The next magazine that comes to mind is *Us*, which is smaller than *People*. Now we see magazines like *Self*. Narcissism (self-love) has become a dominant attitude in our world today.

Where does the desire to receive and the attitude of “looking out for number one” lead? Have you ever wondered how someone could abuse a baby? We have recently had a 20-month-old move into our



house with his mother and father. He is as cute as a baby boy can be. When people see him, it is hard not to smile. What people do not see is that he can be exasperating and sometimes destructive. The second day he was here he was swinging on a kitchen cabinet door and broke it in half. The baby has been a big

financial load for a retired teacher living on a pension. Some things I would like to do, I cannot do because of the financial crunch that the baby has brought. As a Christian, I welcome this opportunity to serve another human being. Have I been frustrated with the situation at times? Of course, but as a Christian, the idea of hitting the child when he is loud or abusive or wasteful is not on my radar. I have been in a hospital ward when a baby was brought in badly beaten by his father. Being forced to give when your goal in life is self-gratification can cause some of us to lose control.

Being only a receiver robs us of the best of everything. Our jobs cannot be only for the money we make, or we will be miserable in our work. Getting married, having a family, and even our recreation is unfulfilling if it does not provide us the opportunity to give and share with others. The singer Peggy Lee had a song titled “Is That All There Is?” In the song, she talked about going to the circus, and when it was over asking herself, “Is that all there is to a circus?” I have been to Disney World several times. One time my wife and I



went without kids or grandkids. It was pleasant, but not that special. Right after my wife died, I took all the grandkids to Disney World and found the park to bring joy and fun beyond description.

Even sex is only totally fulfilling and satisfying when your first focus is the pleasure of your partner. If you give, even in physical pleasure, it makes receiving so much better. First Corinthians

7:2–4 describes the joy that man and wife can have when they are concerned about the needs of their spouse.

So how do we grow to be people who have a giving attitude? How does being a Christian enhance our ability to give? Why should Christianity give us a better ability to give? I would suggest five reasons:

1. THE BIBLE CONSISTENTLY DESCRIBES GOD AS THE GIVER OF LIFE AND THIS WORLD.

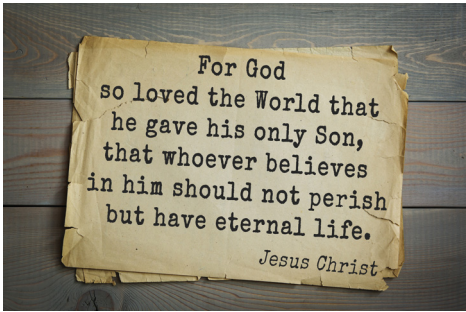
Psalm 8:3–6 says, “When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet.” Psalm 19:1 tells us that “the heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.” A more intimate view is expressed by Paul in Acts 17:27, 28 as he describes God “that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’”

My training in science makes me aware of how precarious our situation on this planet is. You have to be pretty callous not to overflow with gratitude and thanksgiving at what God has given us, and continues to give us. That example should make us anxious to give back in every way that we can.



For in him we live and move and have our being.

2. THE EXAMPLE OF LOVE AND GIVING THAT WE SEE IN GOD SENDING HIS SON TO EARTH SHOULD ALSO MOTIVATE US TO WANT TO GIVE TO OTHERS.



“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” God has given us salvation freely and from his grace. How can we not want to extend that to others around us?

3. THE BIBLE’S INSTRUCTION ABOUT GIVING PRECLUDES DOING IT FOR SHOW.

Jesus gave a clear picture of the wrong motivation for giving in Matthew 6:2. “When you give to the needy, do not announce it ... to be honored by others.” He goes on to say that if your motive for giving is the praise of men, you already have your reward. Showy gifts are not what the Christian system calls for us to do. Jesus taught “do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing” (Matthew 6:3).

4. JESUS DEMONSTRATED GIVING AS A WAY OF LIFE FOR HIS FOLLOWERS.

In John 13:4–15 he washes the feet of his disciples and uses this as a teaching moment which all Christians are to follow: “Do you understand what I have done for you?” ... “You call me ‘Teacher’



and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.” Can you imagine most religious leaders throughout time doing such a thing? Our reading

of the Koran does not resonate with this attitude. The religious conflicts going on in the world today could be resolved if all sides would put serving and giving to others, no matter what their ethnic background, at the top of their list.

5. THE “NEW COMMANDMENT” OF CHRISTIANITY UNDERLIES OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD OTHERS.

Jesus Christ said, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13:34, see also 1 John 2:8 and 3:23). Why do you give service and



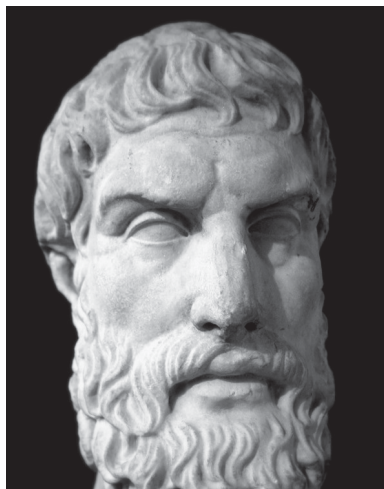
goods to your children? Because you love them. What Jesus said would separate Christians from the rest of the world was that they would love each other and give to those that are in need. Their love of Christ would propel them to give to all who were in need. “As we have the

opportunity, let us do good to all people” (Galatians 6:10).

In 2 Corinthians 8:1–9 Paul writes to us as well as the congregation in Corinth. He talks about the congregations in Macedonia who lived their lives as Christians radiating an attitude of giving. In verses 2 and 3 he indicates that they gave, even though they were in poverty, to help those who were in need. He says to us that as you “excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. ... For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor.” Religious figures in most faiths are known for their elaborate temples and power in world affairs. Christians are known for their persecution and for their willingness to give and serve. That was true in the first century, and it is becoming truer today. Not everyone who claims to be a Christian understands this, but a massive amount of the disaster relief work, medical service, educational service, and care for the orphans and the elderly is done by people doing so because of their identity as Christians. It is one of the greatest arguments for the validity of the Christian system.

—JNC





EPICURUS ON DEATH AND FEAR

by Roland Earnst

About 2,300 years ago in ancient Greece there lived a man named Epicurus. He spent his time thinking about things and taught others about the things he was thinking. One of the things Epicurus thought about was death. That is not unusual. There has never been a living human being who has not thought about death at one time or another. But Epicurus was a professional thinker (also known as a philosopher), so his thoughts were influential. What do we hear from Epicurus on death and fear? In his thinking, he concluded that death was the end of body and soul. When we die, we just cease to exist and therefore, he said, death should not be feared.

Epicurus died in 270 B.C. at the age of 72 in great pain because of kidney stones. However, he wrote a letter in which he said it was, “a happy day to me, which is also the last day of my life.” Since Epicurean philosophy says that death is nothing to be feared, why do people still fear death? Perhaps it is because most people think that Epicurus was wrong.

What is the source of the greatest joy and fulfillment in life? Is it not love? The relationships we have with others bring us happiness and give us purpose as well as joy. Loving and being loved by family and friends is the greatest of human experiences. God never intended for us to be alone (see Genesis 2:18). Being rejected by those we love is the source of the greatest pain. Interestingly, Epicurus believed that a happy life is one in which friends surround us. We know that nothing makes us as sad as the loss of those we love. Death is the most permanent form of separation and loss. Death steals away those we love one-by-one if we manage to live long enough. Death gives us much to fear, and then finally death comes to take us.

If Epicurus was right, then death is the end of love. If there is no existence beyond the grave, there is no love. If you believe that death is the end of existence, seeing a loved one dying is the most fearful and terrible experience in life.

But what if death is not the end? What if love goes on? Genesis tells us that death was not part of God's original plan for humans. Death is a consequence of human sin. Jesus wept at the tomb of his friend Lazarus out of sympathy for Mary and Martha. He must also have been weeping over what sin had done to the human race. Grief and anger over the mess brought on by human disobedience touched the emotions of the human Jesus.

But Jesus was more than human. He is also God. He had the power to bring Lazarus back from the grave and restore him to the sisters who loved him. But that resurrection was only temporary. Lazarus, as well as his sisters, died at some later time.

Soon after raising Lazarus, Jesus conquered the power of death once and for all. His death brought both fear and grief to those who loved him. But as Timothy Keller wrote in his book *Making Sense of God*, "... the darkness of death swallowed Jesus, he entered it, but then he blew a hole out of the back of it." The pain of those who wept was turned to joy as Jesus was alive again. When Jesus conquered death, he brought not only joy but also hope. Death is not the end of love and relationships. Love goes on.

So what can we conclude about Epicurus on death and fear? Epicurus was right when he said that death should not be feared, but he had the wrong reason. For those who accept the gift offered by Jesus Christ, death is the entryway to eternal life and a love relationship with the One who IS love (1 John 4:8).



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Our first lectureship was in the fall of 1968, and our first Grand Canyon trip was in the winter of 1970.

WE WILL CELEBRATE THOSE EVENTS WITH A CANYONLANDS TRIP: September 9–14, 2018.

- We will visit by air-conditioned bus Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument, Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, Zion, and Petrified Forest (including the Painted Desert) national parks, a boat trip on Lake Powell, and Meteor Crater.
- As we travel, Alan Doty and John Clayton will lecture on the things we are seeing and how they support the biblical record.
- This will be a trip for believers. Prayers and singing will be a part of every day's activities.

Trip arrangements are managed by
Story Land and Sea, 12835 E. Arapahoe Road, Tower 1-500,
Centennial CO 80112. Phone 877-865-6711.

E-mail: Mark@StoryLandSea.com

Website: www.storylandsea.com.

No money is paid to or managed by John Clayton, Alan Doty or the **Does God Exist?** ministry. The total cost is \$1,100.00 which includes bus travel from Flagstaff, all entry fees including the boat trip, breakfast on Tuesday through Friday, motels Monday through Thursday night. Not included are lunch and dinner meals, gratuities, travel to and from Flagstaff, or Sunday night and Friday night housing.

SCIENTISTS AND GOD

Editor's Note: Atheists attempt to suggest that scientists are intelligent people who have rejected faith and do not believe in God. The fact is that some of the most productive scientists who have ever lived were believers in God. We share some of their thoughts with you in this column.

HENRY F. SCHAEFER, III
(1944-)

American Computational and Theoretical Chemist
One of the world's most highly cited scientists
Five-time nominee for the Nobel Prize

“The significance and joy in my science come in those occasional moments of discovering something new and saying to myself ‘so that’s how God did it.’ My goal is to understand a little corner of God’s plan.”
“I am sympathetic to teleological arguments, but primarily I am a proponent of Jesus.” (*US News and World Report*, 12/23/91)



“While there are many questions that intelligent people ask about God, ... I do not believe that any of these are sufficient to keep a reasonable person from pursuing a personal relationship with God.

“In fact, the answers I found to these questions were an important factor in an incredible discovery that I made during my fourth year on the faculty at University of California, Berkeley. I discovered that God offered forgiveness to me for all of my disobedience and rebellion against Him. I found that Jesus Christ had paid the penalty for all of my self-centered actions when He suffered and died on the cross and was raised from the dead. When I trusted Jesus to be my Savior that year, I discovered that through Jesus I had been forgiven of my sins. I also found that I had been given a clean relationship with God, a purpose for living, and the assurance of spending eternity with God when I die. Can you imagine anything more wonderful than that?”

From “Questions Intellectuals Ask about Christianity” available on www.leaderu.com/offices/schaefer/docs/questions.html and Wikipedia contributors, “Henry F. Schaefer III,” Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Henry_F._Schaefer_III&oldid=808656087 (accessed November 6, 2017)



Cynthia's Corner



EVIDENCE FOR GOD IN CHRIST'S INCARNATION AND RESURRECTION

Christians believe that the God who created everything loves us so much that he became human to show us who he is, what his will for us is, and how to have a relationship with him (Hebrews 1:1–3). Jesus of Nazareth was that human. How do we know that? “God testified to it [salvation through Jesus’ deity] by signs, wonders, and various miracles” (Hebrews 2:4).

First of all, Jesus’ mother, Mary, was a virgin when he was born. “She was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit” and “what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 1:18–25).

Secondly, when Jesus began his ministry, he did miracles that only a supernatural, all-powerful God could do. A few examples are: turning water into fine wine (John 2:1–11), controlling weather and walking on water (Mark 4:39; Matthew 14:25), paralytics walking (Matthew 9:1–8), the blind seeing, the mute speaking (Matthew 9:27–33), and many kinds of illnesses and diseases completely and instantly healed (Matthew 9:35). The most unnatural and powerful of all the miracles was raising the dead. Not only did Jesus rise from dead, but he also raised Lazarus (John 11), a dead girl (Matthew 9:18–25), a widow’s only son (Luke 7:11–15), and others (Matthew 27:50–53).

The purpose of all of these supernatural miracles was to prove that God the Creator did, in fact, become human in the person of Jesus. God’s ultimate proof of that was Jesus’ bodily resurrection. After his resurrection, Jesus was seen by more than 500 people (1 Corinthians 15:3–8). His resurrection started the Christian movement which has changed the world by changing people’s lives through Jesus’ teachings and his power working in us.

Christianity is unique among world religions in that God the Creator reached out to mankind by sharing in our humanity, becoming human (Hebrews 2:14), solving our sin problem, and showing us how to have a relationship with him now and eternally. God in the flesh never sinned, though as a human he was capable of sinning (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus, the Son of God, died for our sins so we can be reconciled to God. Jesus’ sinless life and his death, burial, and resurrection prove his deity (Acts 1:3).

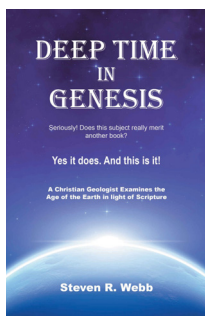
—Cynthia Clayton



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.

Deep Time in Genesis

by Steven R. Webb, Westbow Press, © 2016,
160 pages, \$10.36 (paperback), ISBN-13: 978-1-5127 -3597-0



Those of us who are trained in the field of geology are constantly disturbed by statements in the press and in many books and pamphlets written by non-geologists that deal with geological subjects. We frequently see statements like, “California is about to slide into the Pacific Ocean,” and we shake our heads at the ignorance of the general public in these areas.

As a Christian, what concerns me most is the level of bad information that is circulated by many religious writers. A majority of them have a doctrinal position that they are trying to defend by throwing up a false geological claim. The age of the earth, what the flood would do, how dinosaurs lived and when, and the whole issue of how fossil fuels were produced are areas where profound ignorance is displayed in creationist literature and DVDs.

Steven R. Webb has advanced geology degrees and has worked for a large oil company as a professional geologist for 33 years doing sequence stratigraphy. He also has a Master of Divinity degree and is an active Christian. The first chapter of the book explains in practical terms what a geologist does and how our understanding of geologic history enables us to locate fossil fuels. The next 118 pages talk about religious views that conflict with known scientific data.

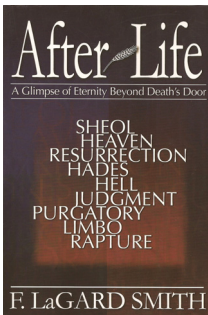
The age of the earth is becoming more of a faith issue as we move deeper into the twenty-first century. Most well-educated young people in today’s world know enough science and geology to be unwilling to accept the idea that dinosaurs never existed, that they coexisted with humans, or that the flood produced the entire stratigraphic structure of the Earth. We daily hear from kids who

reject much of what creationists are saying and from their Christian parents who wonder why their kids have abandoned belief in God.

This is a book that people teaching classes and making public presentations in apologetics should read. I may disagree on some issues of how to resolve the claimed conflicts between science and faith, but Webb's explanations are well written and easy for anyone to understand. Well-meaning believers need to stop building a wall between faith in God and the Bible and the scientific evidence. This book is a good tool to tear down that wall before it gets built any higher and more precious young souls are lost.

**After Life:
A Glimpse of Eternity Beyond Death's Door**

by F. LaGard Smith, Cotswold Publishing, © 2003,
334 pages, (paperback), ISBN-10: 0-9660060-4-6



F. LaGard Smith is one of the most prolific authors of our time with over 20 books in his collection including *The Daily Bible* which is a chronological arrangement of the NIV translation. This book is perhaps the most valuable book Smith has written because it exposes misguided views of death. Smith explains these views and details why they are inconsistent with what the Bible teaches. Some of the points he makes contradict some traditional views, but the biblical basis of his writing is undeniable.

Smith's style is humorous and light which can be seen in his chapter titles. The chapter that deals with why heaven is not a physical place is titled "Give Me Heaven; You Can Have the Streets of Gold." Purgatory is explained and denied with the title "Purgatory—Slapping Grace in the Face." The book is divided into two parts: "Peering Over the Edge of Eternity" and "Bedlam On the Brink of Eternity." Discussion of the Seventh-Day Adventist, Jehovah's Witness, and Mormon views are handled as appendices. At the back of the book, there are some useful charts showing different approaches to understanding what happens when we die.

You may disagree with Smith's conclusions on some of these issues. He makes a splendid case for the soul being subject to death which we have seen and reviewed in the past from Edward Fudge's book *The Consuming Fire*. Smith makes his case biblically, and he is much easier to understand than Fudge.

The book is thorough, well-written, heavily biblically based, and is arranged in a way that makes it useful for classes, sermon preparation, and personal study. We recommend this book highly.

DANDY DESIGNS



Honeybees are master engineers of the storing of dense fluids. Their fluid is honey, and they store it in an amazing way. Worker bees gorge on honey and excrete slivers of wax. Other workers take that wax and position and mold it into columns of six-sided cells. The bees cluster to keep the temperature of the wax at 35 degrees C (95 degrees F) so that it is firm but malleable. Each wax partition is less than .1 mm thick with a tolerance of .002 mm. The cell walls must be at a 120-degree angle in relation to each other to make a lattice of regular hexagons.

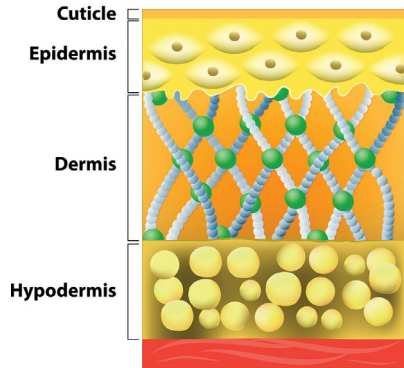
There are only three regular polygons which pack together snugly without leaving gaps—equilateral triangles, squares, and regular hexagons. The perimeter of a hexagonal cell that encloses an area is less than that of a square or a triangular cell, making it the most economical shape. Mathematicians have tried other options, such as using curved sides or a mixture of polygons. They have confirmed that curved polygons could not do as well as straight line hexagons. The cells are tilted upward at an angle of 13 degrees from the horizontal. That is exactly the angle needed to stop the honey from dripping out. There is one more problem. How can the bees seal off the bottom of the columns? They construct the bottom with three, four-sided diamond shapes that meet in a point. Two rows of cells are placed back-to-back and offset, so they interlock. With the cells backing each other up, only one layer of wax serves as the bottom of both cells.

It is difficult to believe that structures such as these are accidents or the final product of trial and error. Mistakes are usually lethal or at least result in a loss of vital energy resources. We think the honeybee engineers learned the principles of structural design from their Creator who is the Master Engineer.

YOUR AMAZING SKIN

The largest organ in the human body is your skin. I asked a group of five-year-olds one time, what their skin did for them? One young man after thinking about the question for a minute said, “It holds everything together, so nothing falls out.” Another volunteered, “It keeps the bugs and worms out of my stomach.” A young lady said, “It lets me smell good when I take a bath.” Then her little brother belched causing her to look at me and say, “Not like that smell!”

The fact of the matter is that our skin does all of those things. But there are a large number of other designs built into the skin that we may not realize. Our skin reduces water loss from our bodies. It helps regulate temperature, insulates our bodies, and helps produce vitamin D. Under our eyes our skin is only .5 mm thick, while on our back it is 14 mm thick. Sweat glands, hair follicles, and connective tissue are strategically placed to allow us to live on a planet that has large swings in surface temperature. The highest concentration of touch receptors in our skin (aside from genitals) is in our fingertips. That gives us the important sensations we need and treasure.



The structure of our skin is amazingly complex. There are two different layers separated from each other by a membrane which is a thin sheet of fibers that transmit nutrients and remove wastes. This sits on a layer called the hypodermis which supports the upper layers. The outer layer called the epidermis has no blood vessels of its own but carries on its functions with the outside world by capillary action and diffusion.

One area of mystery even today is why our skin wrinkles when it is wet for too long. Recent studies show that there is a lattice in the epidermis made of a fibrous protein called keratin. The lattice expands when it gets wet and carries water away leaving the wrinkles. Some researchers believe the wrinkles give the fingers or toes better traction on wet surfaces, but not all agree on that. We do not have to go far to see God’s wisdom in the design of our bodies. Just look at your hand. “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, ...” (Psalm 139:14).

News and Notes

ANNOUNCING OUR 2018 CANYONLANDS TOUR! Once again we will be conducting an educational tour of the Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, Zion Canyon, and the desert southwest. The dates will be September 9–14. For more information, see page 19.

THIS IS OUR LAST QUARTERLY ISSUE FOR 2017. Since the first of this year we have been publishing quarterly rather than bimonthly. In order to be more up-to-date, we have a new website with daily features. You can find it at www.doesgodexist.today or use the QR code. The response to this change has been positive and we appreciate your continued interest in our message. We will be back with you in print in 2018, or keep up with us daily at Does God Exist? Today. You can use the QR codes to read more about these stories in News and Notes.



ATHEIST RUNS INTO ISLAMOPHOBIA PROBLEMS. The American media is paranoid about allowing anyone with convictions to express those convictions. The fact that I have quoted the statements of Jesus Christ that, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no one can come to the Father except through me” (John 14:6), has caused me to be excluded from a number of media presentations and publications.

Richard Dawkins, perhaps the world’s most publicized atheist, was cancelled in August 2017 from giving a speech at an event hosted by the publicly funded radio station KPFA in Berkeley, California. The statement from the station was that he had made an “abusive speech against Islam.” Apparently someone found a 2013 tweet in which Dawkins said, “Islam is the greatest force for evil in the world today.”



What is interesting is that in his defense Dawkins points out that he is “a frequent critic of Christianity, but has never been de-platformed for that.” We have

Visit: doesgodexist.today

pointed out that the media bias against Christianity is huge, and Dawkins has underlined that fact. For more on this go to: www.doesgodexist.online/dawkins-admits-anti-christian-discrimination.

UPDATED WEBSITE. We now have a redesigned website for the videos, audios, and printed materials that we publish. We invite you to visit www.doesgodexist.tv. On that redesigned website you can watch the entire **DOES GOD EXIST?** video series. We recently added four more programs for a total of 36! You can also listen to the 26 sessions in the **DOES GOD EXIST?** audio series. The website also has links to other materials and resources including links to our main website www.doesgodexist.org.



RELIGIOUS BUSINESS RIGHTS GOES BEFORE SUPREME COURT. On August 31, 2017, an opening brief was filed with the United States Supreme Court in a case called Masterpiece Cakeshop vs. Colorado Civil Rights Commission. This case involves a Christian man named Jack Phillips who designs cakes. Mr. Phillips has always used his custom works of cake art to promote messages



that he can support morally and religiously. If he were asked to make a cake showing pornographic material, he would decline, even if it did not violate the law. The state of Colorado is maintaining that he is violating the rights of a couple who asked him to make a cake for their same-sex marriage.

He said that doing so would violate his Christian convictions.

The implications for this case are huge. There are several other cases of Christian owners of flower shops, printing companies, wedding venues, and photographer/videographers facing lawsuits, fines, and bankruptcies for not wanting to participate in same-sex marriage ceremonies. It will be interesting to see how the Supreme Court deals with this question of whether freedom means that no moral standards can be involved in what a business does or sells. Could not this same principle be applied to Christian ministers who refuse to perform same-sex marriage ceremonies or owners of art galleries who refuse to display erotic art? For more on this use the QR code or go to: www.doesgodexist.online/business-owners-religious-freedom.



GREAT AMERICAN ECLIPSE “ENGINEERED.” On August 21, 2017, there was a total solar eclipse that crossed the United States from west to east. The next total eclipse to cross the U.S. from south to north will occur in 2024. One message that should stand out



from the eclipse is the precision that God has built into the creation of the cosmos. Some have questioned how astronomers can predict when eclipses will occur including the exact time for a given location. We can do that because God created an orderly universe.

Many of us earth science teachers use the *Earth Science Curriculum Project*. It has a lab where students plot an eclipse and predict what kind of eclipse will occur. They can predict when it will start, how much of the Sun will be covered, and when it will end. One of my students commented after doing the lab, “Wow, what engineer thought up this system?” Another student responded “No engineer did it. God did it!” The first student responded, “Well, God is a pretty cool engineer!”

We think God is much more than just a “pretty cool engineer.” You can read more about the eclipse and God’s design on DOES GOD EXIST? Today at www.doesgodexist.online/great-american-eclipse-engineered/.



WHERE IS GOD WHEN NATURAL DISASTER STRIKES? Many times atheists and skeptics use natural disasters as proof that God does not exist. The argument is that an almighty and loving God would not allow these things to happen, so therefore God does not exist. That is a faulty argument that assumes we know more than an omniscient God could know.

So where is God? Why does he not do something about the suffering? God is there, and he is doing something. God is working through his people. We are all created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). When tragedy strikes, even those who do not have a good relationship with God begin to show a little bit of that image as they reach out to help. Those of us who are Christians should be the most willing and eager to show God’s love. We not only bear the image of God, but we also remember what Jesus did and what he said about helping “the least of these” (Matthew 25:34–40).



To read more, go to www.doesgodexist.online/where-is-god-natural-disaster-strikes/, and we also have a website devoted to the question of why God allows pain and suffering. www.whypain.org.



TURKEY REMOVES EVOLUTION. Turkish education minister Ismet Yilmaz has announced changes to the textbooks in that country. Starting next fall, the Turkish government will remove evolution and all references to Charles Darwin from the textbooks along with 170 other topics that do not coincide with the Islamic government views. The new curriculum to replace these topics is said to be “value-based” and in harmony with student development.

The current biology course for twelfth-grade biology has a section titled “The Beginning of Life and Evolution.” It is being replaced with a unit titled “Living Beings and the Environment.” This new course is said to include discussions of adaptation, mutation, and natural and artificial selection without mentioning evolution or Darwin. An earlier section for an eleventh-grade philosophy class will be titled “Evolution and other Ontological Opinions.”

The situation is complicated in Turkey not only because of the influence of Islam but also because of the failed coup in 2015. The government is using the schools as a part of its control of the population. Included in the new curriculum are units about the groups that the government is fighting such as the Kurdistan Workers’ Party and the U.S. based cleric Fethullah Gulen. American creationist groups that want to include their particular view of biology may want to look at what is happening in Turkey. The new curriculum, which is religiously based, is turning the classroom into a political football.

We have pointed out that modern agriculture, animal husbandry, aquaculture, and fish management depend upon the basic concepts that Darwin presented. The fact that animals can change and that this change can be used to benefit mankind is important for young people to learn. The enemy is naturalism in which these concepts are expanded to exclude God’s role. Source: *Detroit News*, 9/18/17, page 5A, AP release by Zeynep Bilginsoy.

DATA ON PORNOGRAPHY—A GROWING PROBLEM.

One of the ongoing debates between atheists and Christians is over whether atheism promotes immorality and Christianity uniquely opposes it. Christians maintain that we need a fixed moral standard to live by. Romans 3:20 says that knowing God’s law gives us the knowledge of what sin is. Atheism maintains that there is no such thing as evil and therefore no such thing as sin (see Richard Dawkins’ book *River Out of Eden*, quoted on page 7 of this publication).

How can you maintain a moral code when the basis of the code is changing or non-existent? Pornography advocates say that porn helps them meet their sexual needs. Their philosophy is “survival of the fittest” and doing whatever meets your emotional needs to stay fit. Society has moved away from Christian values, and naturalism has become the guide for how we live. What has been the result?

Here are some sample numbers:

- An MSNBC.COM survey shows that 8.7 million Americans are addicted to pornography.
- Prison officials maintain that 100% of inmates incarcerated for a sex crime were pornography users.
- 600,000 children are victims of pornography each year.
- 77% of those who molested boys and 87% of those who molested girls were regular users of hard-core pornography.
- Children spent 64.9% more time on pornography sites than they did on game sites in 2000.
- 91% of first exposure to pornography by teenagers was during benign surfing of the Internet.
- 53% of teenagers have been exposed to pornographic materials on the Internet.
- UNICEF reports that one million children each year are forced into prostitution and used to make pornography.

You can argue that these statistics have a cause other than the decline of belief in God. However, the “other causes” have not been identified, and we would suggest they do not exist. Atheist attempts to provide an intellectual approach to being moral may be good in theory, but they do not work. People who claim to be Christians sometimes do not follow God’s code of conduct, but for many people over the centuries, the moral standards God has given have worked.

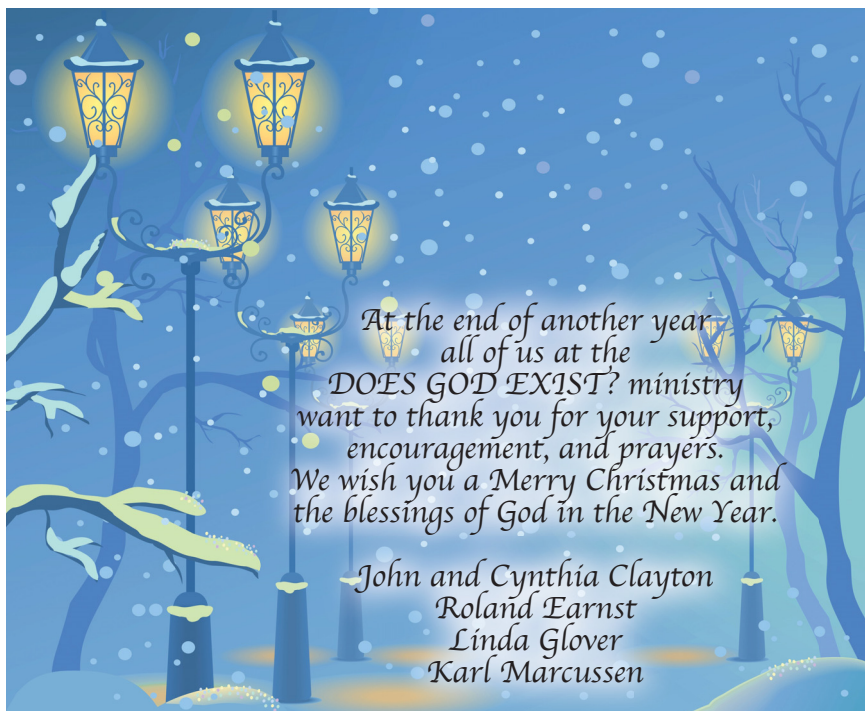


Some excellent books are available that go into this discussion in depth. We recommend Paul Chamberlain’s book *Can We Be Good Without God?* Source: *Pornography’s Pain* by Allen Webster, available from www.ceibooks.com/church-supplies/tracts/pornographys-pain-pack-of-10 or use the QR.



We produced a DVD with Jimmy Hinton titled *Spiritual Warfare: Safeguarding Churches from Child Predators*. It is available at www.churchprotect.org or from us.

Visit: doesgodexist.today



*At the end of another year,
all of us at the
DOES GOD EXIST? ministry
want to thank you for your support,
encouragement, and prayers.
We wish you a Merry Christmas and
the blessings of God in the New Year.*

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

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Signed—Karl H. Marcussen, Managing Editor, November 8, 2017

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 bi-monthly journal, the **Does God Exist?** program offers DVDs, CDs, 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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*It's scientists vs. preachers,
not science vs. the Bible.*

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