

DOES GOD EXIST?



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

**Second Quarter 2019
Volume 46 Number 1**

***Knowing God
Through His Creation***

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This journal has been in existence since 1970, and in all those years we have had numerous articles dealing with evidence for the existence of God from a scientific perspective. We have talked about cosmology and the question of the creation of time, space, and matter/energy. In recent years, we have considered approaches from quantum mechanics and relativity. We have given numerous evidences from a teleological perspective, that there is design in the creation that cannot be explained by chance. Also, we have talked about evidence that the Bible is not of human origin, and if there is inspiration, there has to be an inspirer. We have dealt with those characteristics of humans that are not a product of our brains and suggested that we are created in God's image. The concept of morality and why humans can be moral is another area we have talked about. All of these arguments tend to say that "there is something out there" without identifying in any detail what the nature of that "something" is.

In previous issues of this journal, we talked about why we exist and knowing God can help us go further with that understanding. Here are five things we can know about God through our observations of the creation itself and through a careful reading of his Word.

1. GOD HAS AN APPRECIATION OF BEAUTY.

In the Genesis account, there is repeated use of the phrase, "and God saw that it was good." In Genesis 1:10 the phrase is used in reference to dry land and the seas. In verse 12 the phrase is used in reference to land vegetation. In verse 18 it is used in reference to sunlight and moonlight, and in verse 25 it is used in reference to animal life on the surface of the earth.

Scientific studies of the earth and life on Earth not only show how things work, but they also show the beauty in everything we examine. When we think about the wavelengths of visible light that allow photosynthesis and the way that same light displays the colors of leaves in the fall, we marvel at the choices that make it possible. When botanists study the complexities of flowers, the design that allows the colors and patterns we admire, we cannot help but wonder at their creation. Jesus referred to this in Matthew 6:29 when he reminded us as we look at a lily “that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.”

Psalm 50:1–2 tells us, “The Mighty One, God, the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to where

it sets. From Zion, perfect in beauty, God shines forth.” We understand the science behind beautiful sunrises and sunsets, and we know why the sky is blue and why trees are green. But our understanding of this involves a con-



scious creation of God that allows us to admire beauty which in many cases is unnecessary. The choices God has made tell us he knows about beauty at all levels. Have you ever sat near a waterfall and seen the rainbows and the colors of your surroundings and thanked God for creating it with those characteristics? Have you snorkeled or scuba dived and wondered at the beauty of your surroundings and thought about the fact that the colors in some cases are unnecessary from a survival standpoint, but they speak to us about God’s love for beauty? We praise diversity for several reasons, but many things in the creation have color not as a requirement for survival, but as a statement about God’s nature.

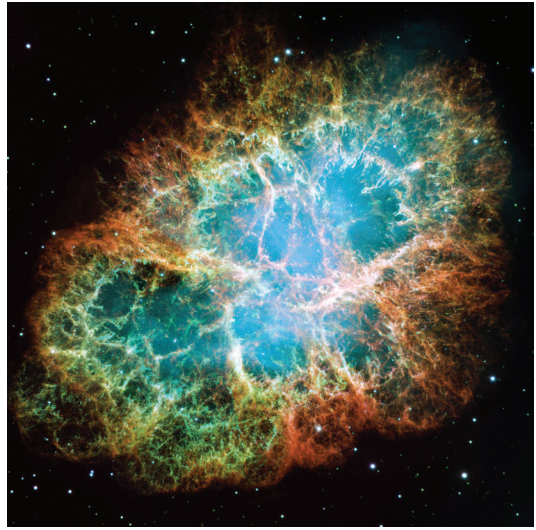
2. GOD HAS WISDOM FAR BEYOND OUR CAPACITY TO UNDERSTAND.

Proverbs 8 is a passage that speaks about another characteristic we see in God. That is wisdom. In verse 1 we are told, “Does not wisdom cry out? Does not understanding raise her voice?” In verse 5 wisdom continues, “You who are simple, gain [wisdom]” and then some wonderful characteristics of God are brought out. Verse 22 tells us

that wisdom was involved before the beginning, before the earth ever was.

The past 25 years we have seen science verify the fact that before the physical creation in which we exist there were a large number of things being carefully and intelligently produced. We are just beginning to understand from a scientific perspective how electric charge, magnetism, mass, gravity, and time were created.

What we are seeing is that the universal laws that govern physical matter do not accurately describe how those things were produced. Proverbs 8 ends with wisdom saying, “For those who find me find life and receive favor from the LORD” (verse 35).



3. GOD FUNCTIONS IN A DOMAIN THAT FAR EXCEEDS WHAT HUMANS CAN COMPREHEND.

One of the major human errors is to create a god in our image. The “old man in the sky” concept of God is alien to the Bible and to common sense. But we see cartoons in the media and even read books that relegate God to being a superhuman, but a limited human none the less. Paul addressed this error in his wonderful discourse in Acts 17 when he told the Athenians that he was going to tell them about the God that they ignorantly worshipped (verse 23). He went on to describe God as One in whom “we live and move and have our being” (verse 28).

Science has demonstrated to us that there are dimensions beyond the three dimensions we know about, and that those dimensions have a relationship to us. Scientific discussions about string theory and brane theory argue about eleven spatial dimensions. Studies of light have taught us that two-dimensional objects like photons behave differently than us three-dimensional beings. Understanding that God is not limited as we are allows us to understand more about why God created us. It helps us to understand the nature of our moral choices and why after our physical bodies no longer function we have an existence beyond the physical.

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4. GOD HAS LOVE FAR BEYOND OUR CAPACITY TO UNDERSTAND.

The Being we have just described also has a capacity to love that is beyond our ability to understand. The very fact that there are four different Greek words for love tells us that love is far more complex than we realize. Our culture has become obsessed with sexual love, but there is much more than that. How could God love us enough to give “his one and only Son” that we might enter the domain in which God exists?

We have a hard time with Revelation 21:3–5 in which God describes the domain that his love offers to all people. It tells us that God will be with us, that all pain, tears, death, and crying will be gone. God says he will make “everything new” (verse 5). How can God love us that much? Because we cannot comprehend that dimension of love, humans have reduced the message of the Bible and of salvation to the three-dimensional world in which we live. We see war and death and all kinds of evil instead of the spiritual existence that God describes.



Scientific studies of human love find it far more complex than “survival of the fittest.” The human element of being willing to die for someone else that you are not related to places naturalists between a rock and a hard place. You cannot deny that humans do things that defy Darwinistic models of animal behavior. The very notion of patriotism, adoption, benevolence, and giving speak of what God’s love provides us with the capacity to do. All branches of anthropology support the view that human love is unique, and being created in God’s image is far more meaningful when we understand that.

5. GOD LOOKS INTO THE FUTURE IN MAKING HIS DECISIONS AND IN EXECUTING JUDGEMENT.

How many times have we said, “Why did this have to happen?” We as humans have a hard time with life because we cannot look into the distant future. We also struggle with understanding how God can look ahead and not move to change what is going to happen. Someone has said, “If I can know the mind of God, then God is not God.”

There are many aspects of this question to consider. The reason for God’s creation of humans and the struggle between the forces of

good and evil is a part of this, but those are not things that can be scientifically verified. What we can understand from science is God's patience and his reason for action.

Why is there a New Testament and an Old Testament? Trying to answer this from a political or social standpoint may be satisfying, but not convincing to many of us. What we know scientifically is that the first humans on this planet were nomadic and primitive. There is a good medical reason why the hygienic laws given in the Old Testament were as restrictive as they were. Food taboos are understandable. We understand the danger in eating poorly cooked pork. The reasons for not eating blood are clear. The reason to quarantine certain human ailments has been verified by modern medical science.

God's patience is clearly seen in how long he tolerated potentially destructive human behaviors such as polygamy and war. When Jesus Christ came to Earth, he brought a whole new way of thinking. Modern psychologists and sociologists and even a few political leaders have come to understand from their scientific disciplines the wisdom of what Jesus taught. Modern skeptics trained in the sciences have a tough time denying the validity of everything Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount. The potential to eliminate hunger in the world is available to us if we get rid of the practices that worked when humans were nomadic and without ovens or medical facilities. If we consider every human to be special because every human is created in the image of God, we can eliminate war, violence, abuse, and other ills of humanity. God is patient and has created the world patiently and with the understanding that some humans will reject what he has called us



to do. “Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and will deceive many. You will hear of wars ... Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes ...” (Matthew 24:4–14). We cannot know and see what God knows and understands,


but his patience is essential to us.

If God were not patient with me, I would have been destroyed long ago. Paul concludes his discourse in Athens by saying, “In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by [Jesus Christ]” (Acts 17:30–31).

I am thankful for God's creation of beauty, for his wisdom, for the dimensions that have made this world possible and especially for his love and patience.

—John N. Clayton

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IMPLAUSIBLE COINCIDENCES

For the past 50 years, we have presented a large number of evidences that the creation of Earth and life on Earth cannot be a product of chance. Our arguments have been statistical, starting with the basic rule that when you have many parameters, you can estimate the total probability by multiplying the odds of all the factors involved. That approach has not changed, but the number of parameters and the odds grows with new data and information. Implausible coincidences continue to compound.

In recent years, astronomers have found thousands of planets orbiting other stars in the Milky Way. Skeptics point out that the probability of one of those planets harboring sentient beings like ourselves gets better with each new discovery.

An article by John Gribbin appeared in *Scientific American* (September 2018, page 96). The title of the article is “Alone in the Milky Way?” Although Gribbin suggests that some form of life exists elsewhere in the galaxy, he insists there could be no sentient beings like ourselves. The reasons for concluding that we are alone in the Milky Way galaxy are these “amazing” and “implausible” “coincidences.” In the article, Gribbin plainly states this:

Optimism about the possibilities of intelligent extraterrestrial life ignores what we know about how humans came to exist. We are here because of a long chain of implausible coincidences — many, many, many things had to go right to result in the situation in which we find ourselves. This chain is so implausible, in fact, that there is good reason to conclude that humans most likely are the only technological civilization in the galaxy.

—John Gribbin in *Scientific American*

That is an interesting conclusion. The article goes on to list the variables that point to that conclusion. Here is a summary of some of those variables:

SPECIAL TIMING

The elements that make up a terrestrial planet like Earth are produced from hydrogen and helium by thermonuclear fusion. Astronomers can see supernova explosions producing the heavy metals that make up a terrestrial planet and life itself, but it takes time for this process to create the necessary elements. Most of the exoplanets we see have minimal amounts of the heavy elements because they are early in their stellar evolution. Even the sun itself is 71% hydrogen and 27% helium with only 2% metals. The timing of putting the materials together to make a terrestrial planet is critical.

LOCATION IN THE GALAXY

The location of a solar system in the galaxy makes a difference. The galactic habitable zone is the area where there is a freedom from the concentration of supernovae. Systems near the center of the galaxy have high levels of radiation in the form of X-rays and cosmic rays.



There is an enormous black hole in the center of our galaxy called Sagittarius A which produces massive amounts of radiation. Gamma-ray bursts occur in certain places in the galaxy. In our area of the galaxy, sterilizing

radiation bursts do not happen. Recent studies of the galactic habitable zone tell us that it extends from 23,000 to 30,000 light-years from the center or only about 7% of the galactic radius. This zone contains only about 5% of the stars because stars tend to concentrate toward the core of the galaxy. Our Sun is close to the center of the galactic habitable zone providing rare long-term stability.

TYPE OF PLANET

So far astronomers have discovered about 50 “Earth-like planets.” What that means is that they have found rocky planets in the habitable zone that are about the same size as Earth. Venus would qualify as an “Earth-like planet,” but it is an excellent example of how misleading that statement is. Venus has a thick crust with no sign of plate tectonics, no magnetic field, no way to recycle materials, and

no stabilizing moon. Our Moon keeps the tilt of Earth's axis at 23½ degrees providing a stable climate.

Realize that all of these factors are just to have a ball of rock in the right place at the right time with the right materials with which to make life. Now we would need to calculate the odds of getting the right chemicals together at the right time in the right place with the right catalyst to make the first living thing. Books have been written about how improbable those steps are. The writers are not religious fanatics, but scientists who are doing the research.

Based on the evidence, John Gribbin reached the conclusion that we are alone in the Milky Way:

As we put everything together, what can we say? Is life likely to exist elsewhere in the galaxy? Almost certainly yes, given the speed with which it appeared on Earth. Is another technological civilization likely to exist today? Almost certainly no, given the chain of circumstances that led to our existence. These considerations suggest we are unique not just on our planet but in the whole Milky Way. And if our planet is so special, it becomes all the more important to preserve this unique world for ourselves, our descendants and the many creatures that call Earth home.

—John Gribbin in *Scientific American*

We must make one additional point. If the process involved an intelligent Creator, the probability of a habitable Earth with life on it is 100%. Perhaps we are not really alone in the Milky Way because there is a God who cares about us. For those who might want to consider this option, we encourage you to watch program 6 of our video series available free on www.doesgodexist.tv.

Gribbin's article concludes by describing the improbable nature of advanced human life. However, it credits evolution for the creation of that life while showing how "implausible" and "amazing" it is. We believe a supernatural intelligence was involved. We call him God.

—JNC



Located at York College in York, Nebraska, the Clayton Museum of Ancient History features the Foster Stanback collection. The museum has an interactive area where children can learn about life in ancient times. For information

about hours or group tours, call 402-363-5748 or go to www.claytonmuseumofancienthistory.org.

The Canyonlands Again



On Sunday, September 9, 2018, we began our 36th “Canyonlands Educational Tour.” Since 1968 we have been taking what I call field trips into the Grand Canyon National Park and the areas that surround the canyon—Bryce Canyon, Zion, Petrified Forest (including the Painted Desert) national parks, including Lake Powell, Meteor Crater, and the areas that surround all of these places.



Alan Doty in Bryce Canyon

My constant companion and technical expert has been Alan Doty from Sedona, Arizona, who holds advanced degrees in geology and has been a well-known figure in the Canyonlands area and an active Christian. Alan has made over

300 trips to the bottom of the Grand Canyon and was the first to climb Isis Temple. His knowledge of the area is second to none. Our trips into this area have included four boat rides floating the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon, ten bus trips in which we spend a day at each of the sites of interest, and 16 hikes into points of interest in the Canyonlands area. We have prepared field trip guides and have conducted studies and lectures on all of these trips.

Why do we do this? The **Does God Exist?** ministry is dedicated to providing evidence to convince thinking people that science is a

friend of faith in God, and that science and the Bible do not conflict. As educators in the public schools, we have seen a great deal of bad science and bad theology combine to destroy the faith of many young people. There is no area where more bad science and bad theology have been promoted than in the Canyonlands area. Not understanding the evidence and not taking the Bible literally has been a major source of conflict for many people. Taking the Bible literally means looking at who wrote the passage, to whom they wrote it, why they wrote it, and how people of the time would have understood it.

Having a week of concentrated study in one of the greatest natural science laboratories on Earth is a wonderful way to combat bad

science and bad theology. It is also our hope that participants will go back home and use what they have learned in our seminars. We want them to build the faith of people in their home



The Grand Canyon

congregations and combat the efforts of local skeptics to discredit the Bible and destroy faith in God.

Our trip in 2018 was a bus tour in which 50 people participated. We departed from Flagstaff, Arizona. That area allows us to study the basic rocks from which all other rocks are made—and that is volcanic material. Our analysis of rocks in space and of the minerals



Sunset Crater

in the crust of the earth show us that all rocks are made of materials found in the interior of the Earth. Granite, for example, is made up of quartz which when it is broken down makes sand and thus sandstone. Orthoclase is another constituent that is found in granite, and it weathers to produce clay which is a major part of shale. Visiting Sunset Crater and seeing the volcanic mountains surrounding Flagstaff allows us to understand the method by which all other rocks were produced.

The first session of our trip was held on Sunday evening before we departed. In that session, we pointed out the one basic assumption that underlies our entire trip. That assumption is that God is not a magician who does everything by sleight of hand and magic. God is more of an engineer, who uses natural processes to produce things in the creation. The Bible tells us that “God planted a garden” (Genesis 2:8) not that he waved a magic wand and a garden appeared. When God created man’s body in Genesis 2:7, he “formed man of the dust of the earth.” The Hebrew word used to describe that process is



Bryce Canyon

yatshir which is a word denoting something an artist might do in creating a work of pottery. God did not “zap” the Grand Canyon into existence with all its many kinds of rocks and embedded fossils. Many religious people want to have God “speaking” these things into existence, even though the Bible indicates God commanded the creation elements indicating that other agents were doing the actual work. In our twenty-first-century mentality of rejecting scams and con artists, it is important not to put God into the role of being a trickster. God did his creating processes in such a way that he can tell us to know he exists through the things he has made (Romans 1:20). Wisdom speaks of God’s engineering skills in Proverbs 8.

Our approach to all of the evidence of the creation and all of the scriptures that explain what happened MUST agree. If the same God who gave us the Bible also did the creating, they cannot disagree. If

there seems to be a conflict between the scientific evidence and what the Bible says, we either have bad science or bad theology or both.

Because so many denominations have a theology that maintains that God is going to institute a physical kingdom with Jesus being the ruler of that physical kingdom, there has been great conflict between the physical evidence that Earth is very old and the creation week of the Bible. As we visit the Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, Zion Canyon, Petrified Forest and Painted Desert the massive amount of evidence that Earth is much older than 6,000 years old becomes very apparent. So how



Zion Canyon

do those of us who are not locked into denominational belief systems resolve this apparent conflict? The answer is to take the Bible literally. Look at who wrote it, who they wrote it to, why they wrote it, and how the people it was written to would have understood it.

The answer to the questions is revealing. Genesis was written in the style of Hebrew poetry to all of humanity—those living in the days of Moses as well as those living in the twenty-first century. We cannot expect the account to deal with quantum mechanics, because the people of Moses' day would have had no way to understand it. The animals that are described in Genesis are animals that people of the time of Moses would know existed. Do not look for duck-billed platypuses, echidnas, or walking birds like an ostrich or a penguin, or a dinosaur in the Genesis account. Do not look for stellar production of heavy elements by nuclear fusion, continental drift, or stellar evolution like the Hertzsprung-Russell diagram. Hundreds of things can be listed that would not be expected in the biblical account because the ancient Israelites would have no way to understand it.

With that in mind, we would not understand a long, tedious discussion of how Earth was prepared for humans. Genesis 1:1 answers that question in one sentence, “*reshith elohim bara shamayyan erets.*” That is Hebrew for, “In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.” This is a historical statement which says there was a beginning to everything in space and on Earth. It tells us that everything was caused by God acting to accomplish a planet with everything that humans would need to exist including water, coal, oxygen, oil, nitrates, etc. *Erets* refers to a functional Earth, not to a blob of gunk.



Painted Desert

As we drive through the Canyonlands, we see how this has been accomplished, and that physical, chemical, and biological agents have been involved. It is interesting to see that dinosaurs, as well as many microscopic forms of life, were the gardeners who made all of this happen. Without dinosaurs, there would have been no agents to process the giant plants of that day and spread their seeds. Without diatoms, there would have been no agents present to form the oil and other fossil fuels that we need. Notice that this verse is untimed and undated! How long did it take? When did it happen? The Bible does not say.

When the second creation occurs in the “creation week” there is a specific explanation of where the plants, water creatures, cattle, goats and sheep, chickens and ducks, etc., of ancient Israelites came from. The first thing that happens is that the earth is formed. This is the same word as in Genesis 1:1 translated from the Hebrew word *erets*. This second usage is clearly different, however, because Genesis 1:9–10 indicates this earth is separated from the water confining it to the earth (land) people live on, not the planet itself.



Petrified Forest

The rest of the Genesis account uses the creation week to identify the sequence in which God prepared the animals that Israel knew. Each Hebrew word refers to domesticated animals, not unknown animals. Days are used to provide continuity to the sequence with which the life is created. How long those days were, whether they were in sequence or had long time periods between them can be debated endlessly. This is a creation of the animals that Israel knew.

Genesis 1:1 describes the creation made by God with the things humans would need to survive on Earth, and it is untimed and undated. All of the studies of geologists and biologists as to how those resources were produced are answered in Genesis 1:1. The creation week is a description of the actual production of humans and the animals they domesticated.

Our trip into the Canyonlands area allows us to see God’s power, wisdom, and planning that made it possible for us to exist. Proverbs 8 shows that wisdom is the causal agent of creation—not blind, mechanistic chance. Theological claims that create conflict between God’s word and the display of his wisdom and design are due to human error, not to the Creator.

—JNC

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THE AMERICAN SOUTHWEST: EXUBERANT GRANDEUR!

Written by Cari King who was one of our guests
on the Canyonlands Educational Tour.

Driving through the West, Tom and I cringe at its dryness. Endless sand tufted with grass. Dust devils form whirling dervishes on flat land dotted with isolated stony mountains.



So why do we feel like we're underwater?

It's easy to picture ourselves on the sandy bottom of a vast sea, with islands formed by those mountaintops. Maybe it is easy because 300 million years ago, that is

exactly how it was.

Earth was a completely different place eons ago. Our truck would have been underwater. There were no continents except one huge landmass called Pangaea. Then like an amoeba, Pangaea divided. Her daughters migrated, some rising, some sinking, until the earth assumed its modern form. Happily for us, the American West rose.

The Colorado Plateau, containing many of our National Parks, rose repeatedly. As I climb up a trail in the Grand Canyon, I have to stop and catch my breath—not surprising at 6,000 feet! The clear





air rings with the panorama stretched out below. As the Colorado River sculpted its way through the land, it revealed deposits left by those ancient seas in the form of horizontal stripes in all colors. Folding of Earth's crust ensured that not all the peaks look the same. Watching over this kaleidoscope is the indigo high-desert sky. The thin air is not the only thing taking my breath away!

Bryce Canyon is even higher. Walking along the rim at 9,000 feet, we appreciate the benches every 25 yards. Sharing our perch are ponderosa pines clutching the rock with arthritic roots. As we gaze into the heart of the earth, eagles circle in search of prey some



2,000 feet below them. We sit about 1,000 feet above the birds. Although this place reminds us of the Grand Canyon, it lacks the gentler slopes we saw there. Why? At 9,000 feet, the mercury dives below freezing 200 times a year. Water flows straight down, and as it freezes, it chips vertical slabs from the rock. The resulting formations are called hoodoos and remind me of a crowd of football fans standing to watch their team score.

Zion Canyon offers the opposite perspective. A superb tram system carries us through the emerald oasis that forms the canyon floor. What a peaceful



change from high-desert dryness! The landscape reminded Mormon settlers of a temple, and they named the place Zion. The Indians simply called it Straight-Up Land. We like their name better. Golden sandstone cliffs reach confidently toward the turquoise sky.



How does sand become stone? Pressure jams the grains together while rainwater leaches minerals that form cement. The same process clogs our pipes back home.

No western trip is complete without dinosaurs, so we go on the hunt. Every hunter knows if you want to find a critter, you find its food

source. Dinosaurs are no different, so we head to the Petrified Forest. Here we see a record of life 225 million years ago.

Back then, this child of Pangaea had not wandered far from the equator yet. It was hot, humid, and green. Fossils show ferns, fish, and yes, dinosaurs. Stone logs the size of redwoods lie on the ground. In ages past, fallen trees were buried under layers of earth whose minerals leached into the wood. As the wood decayed, the stone remained. Different minerals left a confection of colors. If it is too hot to enjoy the logs, the dinosaur museum is air-conditioned.

Here is a little travel advice. First, the sun at 6,000 feet is three times as intense as it is where I live. Cover up and drink twice the water you think you need. Second, the traffic jams are legendary. For instance, one has to drive through a mile-long tunnel to get to Zion. This tunnel was opened in 1930 and features



a broad, two-lane highway—for Model Ts. Today's motor coaches have to drive single file through the middle. Make your reservations early and be prepared to take your time.

The National Parks of the American West offer an experience unavailable anywhere else. Furthermore, they belong to us. Add them to your bucket list and do not wait too long.

See our videos at www.doesgodexist.tv

DOES GOD EXIST?

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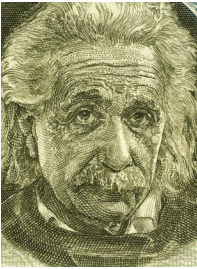
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SCIENTISTS AND GOD

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.

ALBERT EINSTEIN
(1879-1955)

Theoretical Physicist who developed
the Theory of Relativity



“The more I study science, the more I believe in God.”

“I want to know how God created this world. I am not interested in this or that phenomenon, in the spectrum of this or that element. I want to know his thoughts; the rest are details.”

“Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.”

“As a child I received instruction both in the Bible and in the Talmud. I am a Jew, but I am enthralled by the luminous figure of the Nazarene. No one can read the Gospels without feeling the actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates in every word. No myth is filled with such life.”

“The fanatical atheists are like slaves who are still feeling the weight of their chains which they have thrown off after hard struggle. They are creatures who—in their grudge against traditional religion as the ‘opium of the masses’—cannot hear the music of the sphere.”

“I’m not an atheist, and I don’t think I can call myself a pantheist. We are in the position of a little child entering a huge library filled with books in many languages. The child knows someone must have written those books. It does not know how. It does not understand the languages in which they are written. The child dimly suspects a mysterious order in the books but doesn’t know what it is. That, it seems to me, is the attitude of even the most intelligent human being toward God.”

Cynthia's Corner



RECOGNIZING GOD'S DIVINE NATURE IN HIS CREATION

What may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made.

—Romans 1:19, 20

What is God's "divine nature"? We know that God is holy and cannot be tempted by evil (James 1:13). We know that God IS love (1 John 4:8, 16). We also know that God is not a God of chaos, but a God of order, design, and wisdom (Proverbs 8:24–31; 1 Corinthians 14:33). Most scientists who study "what God has made"—the world and the universe we live in—see evidence of intelligent design all around them. John's books on "Dandy Designs" are just a few examples of many design features we see throughout God's creation. Jeremiah 10:12 says that "God made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding." The more science learns about God's creation, the more evidences they see of God's wisdom, power, and design.

Another aspect of God's divine nature is his creativity, artistry, and love of beauty. The fact that we live in a world full of spectacular color and beauty and diversity speaks eloquently of the nature of its Creator. "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world" (Psalm 19:1–4).

Because we alone, as humans, were created uniquely in God's image, in their likeness (Genesis 1:26), we are able to reflect his nature, to some degree, sinful though we are. We can find fulfillment and happiness in relationships, in work, and in pursuing our individual interests and talents. We can appreciate and get satisfaction from the beauty and diversity and awesome natural wonders that surround us. This is why we create, why we love art and beauty and design, why we seek love, purpose, and meaning—we are but a poor reflection of our Creator and his divine nature.

—Cynthia Clayton

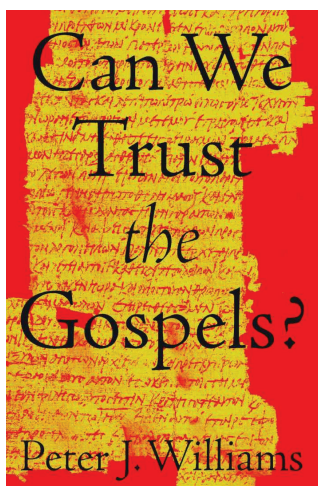
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The books that are reviewed in the Book Reviews section are not available through us, but can be obtained from a local bookstore or through many online bookstores.

Can We Trust the Gospels?

by Peter J. Williams, Crossway Books, © 2018,
160 pages, \$17.99 (paperback), ISBN-13: 978-1433552953



I just finished reading a brand new book by Peter J. Williams. It is available from Crossway Books. The title is *Can We Trust the Gospels?* In this book, Williams takes a fresh look at the evidence underlying confidence in the reliability of the four gospels. His arguments are stated humbly. In fact, he could be accused of understating his case. Yet, in the end, the arguments are devastating to those who try to claim that the gospels are second-hand accounts and unreliable as to the miracles contained, the statements of Jesus, and the nature of his ministry.

The book uses a combination of the relatively standard information used to show the reliability of the gospels, combined with some relatively new arguments. Williams ties them all together to leave the case settled: the gospels are reliable first or second-hand accounts of things actually done and said by the man Jesus of Nazareth and preserved in virtually the identical text as written in the first century. The traditional arguments used include the manuscript evidence, the writings of non-believing sources, and of church fathers. The additional material includes some which are brand new to this volume and some of which have been out there, but not combined to such a devastating conclusion. This includes evidence from undesigned coincidences. These are examples of things said in one gospel which explains a mystery brought up by another of the gospels, which can only be explained by believing that these are there because the gospels are a record of

actual events, recorded reliably by eye-witnesses. Other new material includes the type and frequency of names of people and places used in the gospels which do not make sense unless we assume that eyewitnesses to the actual events in Palestine wrote Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, or those who interviewed the eyewitnesses.

At the end of the book, Williams asks us to consider this fundamental question: What is the most reasonable conclusion of the given facts (names, places, Jewish materials, surprising content, undesigned coincidences, fulfilled expectations, and more). To accept what unbelievers propose—that the gospels are inventions of people trying to create a false religion about a god-man—requires us to believe a set of coincidences or purposeful conspiracy which defies reason and common sense. The only rational conclusion is that the gospels are reliable accounts of actual events. He then goes on to apply this to the resurrection, the fulfillment of prophecy, and the undesigned coincidences between the life of Jesus and the Old Testament to reach a conclusion which is beyond reproof: The gospels are what they claim to be: the record of the Son of God and his miraculous ministry to save mankind from their sins. I strongly recommend this book. When you are done reading it, you are going to want to give your copy to a friend who does not yet believe in Jesus.

—Reviewed by John Oakes

Here is what another highly-respected apologist has to say about this book:

The wild and unscholarly yet widely accepted assertion by Richard Dawkins that the only difference between *The Da Vinci Code* and the Gospels is that the Gospels are ancient fiction while *The Da Vinci Code* is modern fiction deserves a measured and scholarly response. There is no one better qualified than Peter Williams to provide it, and this book is a masterly presentation of a compelling cumulative case that “all of history hangs on Jesus.”

—John C. Lennox, Emeritus Professor of Mathematics, University of Oxford

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DANDY DESIGNS

Amazing Corneas



Eyes are among the great challenges to those who insist that unguided, naturalistic evolution created all living things. Eyes are complex devices that display engineering design skill. Each animal has eyes well-designed for the life they live. That is certainly true of the amazing human eye.

Many things about human eyes make them amazing. One of those is the cornea, the clear front covering of our eyes. Corneas must be perfectly clear to allow light to pass through for an unobstructed view of the world around us. Because of the need for complete transparency, they have no blood vessels. Our corneas get their nourishment from the aqueous humor (the liquid inside the eye) and the tear fluid on the outside. They get oxygen from direct contact with the air.

Corneas must be designed to fit a curving surface full of a fluid which maintains the critical pressure inside the eye. However, there is a problem with the cornea being exposed to the air with all of the contaminants it contains—pollen, dust, chemicals, and grit. Corneas can become scratched. Over time, any surface exposed to dirt and grit, and sometimes bumps and blows, can get tiny scratches. How is it possible for corneas to remain transparent with so much abuse?

When you cut your skin, as the cut heals, scar tissue forms. Scratches in our corneas must heal without scar tissue. When the outer layer of the cornea gets scratched, the surrounding cells move toward one another and close the scratch leaving no scar tissue. This is only one feature of corneas which consist of five different layers, each having an important function and showing evidence of design.

Think what it would be like if scar tissue formed every time the surface of our corneas got scratched. By the time we reached middle-age, we would certainly be looking through cloudy lenses. If you can read this, you should be thankful for just one of the features of the amazing human eye!

Leaf Design to Preserve Trees



Heavy winds frequently blow down human-made structures, but healthy trees are almost never blown down. You would expect trees to be major victims of high winds. That is not the case, and it is due to leaf design.

To survive strong winds, trees need two things. The

most obvious is structural support—strong, flexible branches, sturdy trunks, broad bases, and good root anchorage. A more subtle requirement is a leaf design to preserve the tree. Leaves must have minimal wind drag. A fluid, such as air, flowing around an object generates drag. To minimize drag requires some streamlining to reduce the amount of friction between the fluid and the object. A highly streamlined object will usually be gently rounded upstream and elongated and pointed downstream.

For healthy trees, the leaves offer the most surface area and thus the most drag. Different trees have different design features, but all of them are designed to avoid destruction in a wind storm. American holly leaves have a method that involves the leaves being able to flatten themselves against each other. When the wind becomes strong, the leaves turn and lie flat, significantly reducing the drag.

Tulip tree leaf design allows the leaves to roll up in strong winds. The blade of the leaf points away from the stem. As the wind blows against the leaf, it forms a cone pointing upwind at the stem. The blade forms the broad area of the cone away from the wind direction. The higher the wind, the tighter the cone and the less the wind resistance. Black locust leaves similarly roll together to produce a cylinder.

Each of these designs depends on the properties of the leaf. If the leaves were too stiff, they could not assume the right geometry. The flexibility of their stems has to be high, and the surface of the leaf must be carefully designed and restricted. You can argue that natural selection does all the designing and that given enough time it will select the proper shape. But remember that changes in climate mean you do not have infinite time to apply the process.

God's engineering wisdom gave us leaf designs to allow the longest season for each tree. Sit in your backyard on a breezy day and watch what the leaves do to preserve that tree you prize so highly.

News and Notes

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SURROGATE MOTHERHOOD AND ABORTION. Surrogate motherhood is becoming more common. In a surrogacy contract, a woman agrees to allow someone to rent her body to have their child. Some fertility specialists are selling surrogacy as a part of their offering.

The *Citizen* magazine (January/February 2019, page 13) reported the case of a surrogacy contract running into difficulty. The surrogate mother had agreed to deliver twins — a boy and a girl. A male embryo and a female embryo were implanted into her body. The female embryo failed to implant, and the male embryo split into male twins. The surrogate mother developed pre-eclampsia, and her organs began to shut down forcing delivery of the baby boys ten weeks early. This caused the boys to battle for their lives in the hospital’s neonatal intensive care unit. The couple who had paid to have a boy and a girl became hostile because they were not getting what they had paid for. They were not interested in the boys, but the surrogate mother bonded with the twins. When they were placed in the neonatal unit, she was left “with a deep sense of emptiness, anxiety, and regret.”

The Supreme Court has refused to hear two cases on surrogacy issues. In both cases, the surrogate mothers wanted to keep the children. In one



case the woman was carrying triplets for a single man who wished to abort at least one due to financial concerns. The other was a mother who learned that the couple she was working for had strong racial prejudices. In both cases, the surrogates lost. The practice of surrogate motherhood exploits low-income women and families. We would suggest that surrogacy is morally wrong.

Abortion advocates maintain that a baby is merely an extension of the mother's body. So she has the right to exterminate the baby because it is just an unwanted part of her body. Surrogate motherhood assumes that the baby is a singular physical entity that can be engaged or terminated at the will of the adults involved, for any reason. The Bible tells us that humans are uniquely created in the image of God. The baby possesses a soul and is fully human. Luke 1:41–44 tells us that when Elizabeth saw Mary who was pregnant with Jesus, the unborn John leaped for joy in Elizabeth's womb. The Bible makes it clear that life and motherhood are sacred.



JAMES WATSON'S RACIAL REMARKS. James Watson along with Francis Crick discovered the double-helix structure of DNA, and they received a Nobel Prize for their work. Even though he is 90 years old, Watson has been highly sought after as a speaker, but his racial remarks have changed things. In early January 2019, Watson said in a PBS interview that “genes are responsible for inferior intelligence among blacks.” There are so many problems with that claim that it is hard to know where to start.

The claim that blacks have inferior intelligence is a very ignorant statement. IQ tests are loaded with cultural bias, and there are different types of IQ tests. My foster son would consistently score 40–50 on the Stanford-Benet test, and yet he would score 90–100 on the Otis. The Otis was a test based on verbal skills. Because we read to Tim regularly during his childhood years, he had average verbal skills. The Stanford-Benet was not verbal but was based on reasoning. Tim was and is mentally challenged in those areas.

Many blacks do score lower on IQ tests that were written by upper-class whites in New England. On an IQ test written by a black author raised in a profoundly racist geographic area, blacks have better scores than whites. Unbiased testing does not support Watson's assumption that blacks have inferior intelligence.

Another issue is that there are different kinds of intelligence. Koko, the gorilla trained by Penny Patterson, could use the sign language of the deaf. His IQ score was in the 90s, close to normal human values, on a test that measured literary capability. On a test that measured scientific reasoning, the scores were far lower. That test measured a different kind of intelligence.

Because of James Watson’s racial remarks, the laboratory he once led stripped him of honorary titles. The Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory immediately printed a statement saying Watson’s comments were “reprehensible and completely without a scientific basis and were a misuse of science to justify prejudice.”

The Bible describes humans as created in the image of God, and condemns all attempts to separate humans on any criteria. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). James Watson is an expert on DNA. He is not an expert on racial origins or how our understanding of the function of DNA impacts areas as nebulous as intelligence. Watson’s racial remarks make that clear.



COSMIC COINCIDENCE. A cosmic coincidence took place on November 5, 2018. It had to do with our Sun and two probes that NASA sent into space. A bubble surrounds the solar system which scientists call the heliosphere. The sun sends out charged plasma particles called the solar wind. There is a limit to how far the solar wind reaches, and that is the outer edge of the heliosphere bubble. NASA’s Voyager 2 reached it on November 5.

Also on November 5, NASA’s Parker Solar Probe reached the inner edge of the heliosphere by flying toward the sun. The fact that both probes arrived at the extreme boundaries of the heliosphere at the same time was not and could not be planned by the scientists at NASA. We would have to call it a cosmic coincidence.

Forty-one years earlier in 1977 NASA launched Voyager 2. On its journey out of the solar system, it flew past and took pictures of all four gas giant planets (Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune). In late August 2018, its plasma detectors, called Faraday cups, began to indicate that it was reaching the edge of the heliosphere. After 310 days of crossing that boundary, scientists determined that it passed out of the solar wind on November 5. Earth is about 93 million miles (150 million km) from the sun. Voyager 2 had reached 120 times Earth’s distance from the sun.

Meanwhile, NASA launched the Parker Solar Probe on August 12, 2018, and it traveled toward the sun. In three months it arrived at the sun’s outer atmosphere called the corona. So, the cosmic coincidence is that two NASA probes launched 41 years apart arrived at almost the same time at the outer and inner limits of the heliosphere. Their arrival at the same time was a pure coincidence. The marvelous system they are investigating and that supports life on this planet is certainly not a coincidence. It shows the power and wisdom of the Creator.



GERMAN RELIGIOUS TAX. When Germans fill out their tax forms for 2019, they are required to indicate their religion. The state then collects a tax which is about 9% of the person’s income tax and distributes the money to the relevant church or synagogue. If you refuse the German religious tax, you can be denied access to church schools or day care centers, and you can even be denied communion or burial services.



The problem with this arrangement is that many religious groups do not register as public corporations, and groups such as Islam or the Church of Christ do not have a national church system. The founder of a liberal mosque in Berlin, Seyran Ates, wants to establish a “democratic Islamic Council” but conservative Muslims want no part of such an idea. Groups like the

Church of Christ which do not have a national board or assembly are opposed to any solution on very much the same idea.

Jesus told his followers to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s (Matthew 22:21). The Bible also makes giving a personal decision that is between the giver and God (2 Corinthians 9:7). When those guidelines are not followed, the chaos that results will eventually destroy religious freedom.



MIRACLE SOIL. For over 200 years people have used soil from the churchyard of Sacred Heart Church in the Boho Highlands of rural Northern Ireland as a remedy for a variety of ailments. Is there something miraculous about that soil?

Scientists have been studying the soil and have found that it can halt the growth of the top six superbugs, including MRSA. The researchers discovered a previously unknown strain of *Streptomyces* bacterium that is responsible for the soil’s seemingly miraculous ability. One of the problems of treating diseases like MRSA is that pathogens develop resistance to common drugs, and science needs to find new antibiotics to control them. The Sacred Heart soil has a natural antibiotic.

The *U.K. Times* magazine reported on the Sacred Heart miracle soil. It quoted the principal researcher Gerry Quinn about folk cures. Quinn said, “Some of these cures might have been perfectly effective, but the people just didn’t have any knowledge of the scientific principles or biochemistry behind them.” Science can help us to know the difference between bogus medical claims and treatments that really work.

The question of how this particular antibiotic got into the churchyard soil will stir debate. We would suggest that in all areas of nature there is a balance because God designed it that way. If scientists continue to look to nature, they may find natural cures for most human maladies. They may even find them not only in churchyards but also in the yards of leading atheists.



REAL CREATION. In virtually all areas of science, one thing is always true — when we answer one question, we find many others. No area demonstrates this better than the subject of real creation.

By real creation, we mean an understanding of how the cosmos came into being out of nothing. What we are not talking about is the processes of biological change which is known as evolution. Darwinian evolution is not an alternative to creation because it is an entirely different subject. Darwinian evolution studies changes in biological systems which have already been created. It has nothing to do with the processes involved in creating the physical universe including time, space, and matter/energy.

Quantum mechanics agrees with the biblical account that real creation was not a physical process which can be explained by classical physics. We can use classical physics to describe what continued the formation of the cosmos as we see it today. However, that is not real creation because it only deals with changes in what was already created.

Astronomy magazine published an excellent article by William Jones in their February 2019 issue (page 68). Dr. Jones, a professor at Princeton University, gave a summary of how cosmologists approach the question of real creation:



The answer is the combination of a big extrapolation and even bigger assumption based on a solid hunch and the surety of our ignorance regarding what is really going on. The truth is, everything about the early universe is speculative, and that is precisely why we study it.

Dr. Jones then goes on to explain what our current guesses are and what we base them on. For those of us with a scientific interest and background, this kind of study helps us comprehend the nature and power of God. We hope to learn more about the processes involved in preparing a



place for us creatures created in God's image to exist as we transition to the dimension where it all started.

In addition to helping us comprehend God's nature, these studies help us see the wisdom of God and his planning. Proverbs 8:22–32 describes the role of wisdom in the process of real creation.

WILLIAMSON PINK DIAMOND. We sometimes hear traditionalists say that apologetics is an affront to faith. The idea is that you just have to believe. They say that trying to show evidence for God's existence is misdirected. They insist that nowhere in the Bible is there an attempt to convince people that God is real. The story of the discovery of the Williamson pink diamond illustrates the role of looking at evidence to come to a valid conclusion.

First of all, we would question the assertion that the Bible does not attempt to convince people of God's existence. Passages like Psalm 19:1–3; 139:14–18; Proverbs 8, and Romans 1:19–23 certainly make an apologetic argument. In using parables, Jesus called people to look at the creation around them to come to faith.

The Williamson pink diamond is the main feature of the royal brooch of Queen Elizabeth II. It forms the center of a flower with five white diamonds forming the petals. It was a 54.5-carat rough diamond which was cut to a 23.6 brilliant cut diamond.

John Williamson was a Canadian geologist. In 1947 he was driving his Land Rover on a muddy back-country road in what is today Tanzania when he got stuck in the mud. As Williamson was digging the Land Rover out of the mud, he noticed a pink rock that was typical of rocks that contain diamonds. Because of his geology training, he knew rocks and the formations of the area. He carefully extracted the rock and cleaned it up, realizing that it was a very large diamond. That is how he found the flawless pink diamond. At the time of his death from cancer in 1958, Williamson owned a diamond mine at that location and was one of the world's wealthiest men.

Thousands of people had driven that road and probably saw the rock that contained the pink diamond. Williamson's training enabled him to realize what the rock was and pushed him to look at it carefully. Being able to recognize evidence is essential. There are some of us who have come to faith through science.

The **Does God Exist?** ministry was started and has been maintained for over 50 years by men and women who recognize the scientific evidence for God's existence and the credibility of the Bible. Like John Williamson who gave the Williamson pink diamond to Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip upon their wedding in November 1947, we wish to share the evidence that led us to faith. This ministry is a part of our attempt to share the valuable gem we have found through science.



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 quarterly 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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