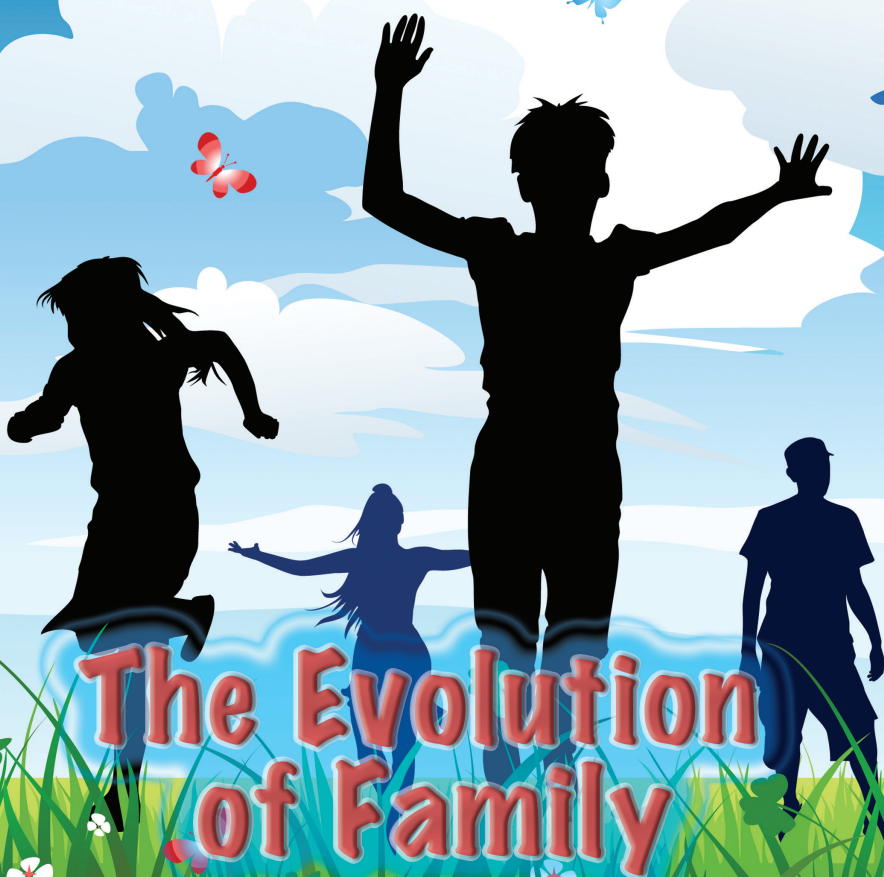


DOES GOD EXIST?

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

**Third Quarter 2020
Volume 47 Number 3**



The Evolution of Family

Does God Exist? Lectureships

No Lectures are scheduled, but visit us at doesgodexist.org, where many materials are available free of charge.

Visit the Clayton Museum of Ancient History at York College in York, Nebraska.

We hope that all our friends and readers of this *Does God Exist?* journal are staying healthy during this sheltering-in-place pandemic. We all need to rely on God to watch over us and protect us from this virus as well as from other maladies that we may face.

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The Evolution of Family



Your author has spent most of his adult life in South Bend, Indiana, a city that has been known for many things. One of those things is the strong Catholic influence in the community. University of Notre Dame is a significant part of South Bend. So also are St. Mary's University, Holy Cross College, and two large Catholic high schools. South Bend has traditionally had mayors who were Polish and Catholic, and political celebrations were frequently intertwined with major Catholic holidays. The West Side Democratic Club promoted Dyngus Day (the day after Easter), and if you were a Democrat, a Catholic, and had a Slavic last name, you were almost sure to be elected mayor.

In 2019 this all changed as Pete Buttigieg, the mayor of South Bend, who is not Catholic, married his gay live-in partner named Chasten. Then he announced he was running for President of the United States. Most people seemed to believe that Buttigieg was a good mayor. He is well educated, served in the military, is very personable, and speaks well. He was elected mayor before his sexual orientation was made very public, and did not marry his male partner until late in his second term. The Catholic community has had a hard time knowing what to do with this homosexual mayor, who is well-liked and is a capable politician.

We mention all this to try to focus on the issue of whether Mayor Pete and Chasten are a family. Is their union compatible with biblical teaching? How has “family” changed from the time of Adam and Eve through the Patriarchal and Mosaic age and into the Christian era? What does this tell us about God's design for the family and his relationship to the church—referred to as “the bride of Christ” in the New Testament?

FAMILY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

No word in the Old Testament corresponds precisely to the modern English term “family” as consisting of father, mother, and children (*The New Bible Dictionary*, page 415). There is a word which some translations render as family, but the Hebrew term refers to those sheltering under one roof (see Exodus 12:4). In Isaiah 5:7, the word refers to the whole nation of Israel.

The major problem in the Old Testament was the roles of the male and the female. The male was the “master” (*baal* in Hebrew) and “lord” (*adfon*) of



the wife. The woman’s primary role was to bear and care for children. There is no word for “bachelor” in the Old Testament. If a man died before producing offspring, his brother was obligated to marry his widow (Deuteronomy 25:5) and produce off-

spring that would bear the dead man’s name. In Genesis 38:9–10, a man named Onan refused to fulfill that responsibility and was struck down by God.

Genesis 2:20–25 gives the plan of God for the human family relationship. Verse 20 uses the word *ezer*, translated “help.” When coupled with the word “meet” in English it indicates a unique need of man being met by the woman who was taken out of his side. Verse 20 tells us that nothing else God created met a need that was a part of man’s design.

Genesis 2:24 summarizes this explanation of the relationship between man and woman: “Therefore shall a man leave his father

and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”

The Hebrew word translated “cleave” is *dabaq* meaning to adhere to. The reference is not primarily sexual but instead refers to a spiritual desire built into humans not to be alone.



FAMILY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

When Jesus discussed the relationship between men and women, he indicated that God tolerated humans violating God’s intent for husband and wife to remain together “because of the hardness of your hearts” (Matthew 19:8). He went on to say, “from the beginning it was not so.” Genesis 4:19 records the first case of polygamy by Lamech and marks the beginning of humans veering away from God, resulting in Noah’s flood.

We see the complexity of the family relationship between men and women in the rest of what Jesus said in Matthew 19. His disciples had questioned whether or not marriage was a good thing. Jesus



responded with: All men cannot receive this saying, but it is for those to whom the capacity has been given. Some men have always been unsuited for marriage, having been born that way, while others have been made so by men, and there are those who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake (verses 11–12).

Before sin entered the world, God planned that the family would consist of a man and a woman who adhered to one another. Throughout the Bible, the words for bride and bridegroom encompass the adhering that God intended in Genesis 2. The word “bride” in Hebrew is *kallah* and in Greek is *numphe* meaning “the complete or perfect one.” The word “bridegroom” in Hebrew is *chathan* and in Greek is *numphios* meaning “one who contracts affinity.” The relationship of Christ and the church is portrayed throughout the New Testament as a marriage, with the church being the bride of Christ (see Matthew 9:15; 25:1–10; John 3:28–29; Revelation 21:1–3, 9).

Romans 1:20–32 describes what humans have done to corrupt the initial plan of man and woman relationships.



The description in these verses is of people who have left God and sunk into substitutes for the worship of God (verse 23). Those described have turned their complete attention to satisfying their physical needs (verses 24–32) and totally ignore their spiritual needs. Romans 2:1–8 lets us know that there are consequences to making choices that violate God’s plan. Those consequences are not just what happens when our lives are over, but also what happens in our lives here on Earth.

How we deal with our sexual needs is different from how we deal with our spiritual needs. There are people of the same sex who can live together in a platonic relationship and not engage in the destructive behaviors listed in Romans 1. Jesus made that clear in Matthew 19 mentioned earlier. Some people can live alone and find spiritual help outside of the family, as Jesus also said. We suggest that adhering



to something other than what God has created for us, does not bring the level of happiness we all want. Those who wish to change their sexual identity find themselves on a cocktail of drugs for their entire life, and the data shows their life expectancy is reduced. Data on the stability of

gay marriages and the effects on children of being raised in a quasi-family environment is just beginning to accumulate, but the early data is discouraging.

THE BEST ALTERNATIVE FOR FAMILY

The apologetic value of this discussion is essential. When humans try to change what God has designed us for and instructed us to do, the result is always catastrophic. We live in a culture in which people are trying all kinds of alternatives to God’s plan of one man and one woman in a nuclear family. We have same-sex marriages, polygamy, polyandry, and perhaps soon marriages with animals and group marriages. Sadly, we have children being raised in the middle of these experiments. In America, we treasure the freedom to discuss the alternatives and to practice our choices. What Christians must do is to follow God’s design and plan for us, while encouraging others to do the same for their greatest happiness.

—John N. Clayton



What Is Your Faith?

All human beings have faith. It may be in a philosophy, a religion, a historical figure, a political system, or a relationship. We all have faith in something. We also have more than one faith. I may have faith in America and faith in the Chicago Cubs winning the World Series. One does not exclude the other. Jesus said, “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s” (Matthew 22:21). The challenge that we all must consider is the basis for our faith. There are three different ways we come about faith.

INHERITED FAITH

The beliefs of our parents strongly influence us. I was an atheist because my parents were atheists. I was a Democrat because my parents were Democrats. I had Shetland sheepdogs because my family always had Shelties as I was growing up. When there was a conflict between my parents and me, it was usually because I resisted what they thought I should be and do.

The problem with an inherited faith is that you must assume that what you based your faith on is what is best for you. My family based their morality and impor-



tant decisions in life on their atheist beliefs. Survival of the fittest was what my parents believed, and it was the basis for their moral choices. When I fell in love with a woman who was an insulin-dependent diabetic, my parents tried to stop me from marrying her. When I had a child born with severe disabilities, including blindness, mental retardation, cerebral palsy, and muscular dystrophy, my parents believed the child should be “put away.” “That baby is not fit, and only the fit should survive” was the message of their faith. For some time, I was “disowned” because I did not share my parent’s faith.

Intellectually we all know that an inherited faith does not work. Many people reject faith in God because their experience with the religion of their parents has been negative. Many young people tell me that they go to church “because it is a small price to pay for peace at home.” When they leave home, they leave their faith as well.

BLIND EMOTIONAL FAITH

The worst financial decision I have ever made was buying a time-share. We were brought into a conference by a group of people who had an emotional appeal that stampeded us into spend-



ing our savings on something that was not true. The salespeople lied to us about all the benefits of owning a time-share. Without checking out what they told us, we made a bad financial decision.

Many people buy into a religion on an emotional basis. It is not just the religious

fanatic who moves us that way. It is also the promoter of atheism or of a philosophy. The problem is that the person who moved us emotionally has an ulterior motive for wanting us to buy into their philosophy, religion, or whatever they are selling. When time reveals that their sales pitch was without merit, our faith is damaged, and our response to that damage can be disastrous. Many times people who inherit the faith of their parents or are emotionally brought into the faith become atheists because their faith had no depth, so it did not work. Reading Psalms 10 and 13 can show us that even biblical giants like David struggled with this problem.

EVIDENTIAL FAITH

You should not accept a faith that is inherited or emotionally based. That is true of something you buy, of a philosophy, or of a religion.

Does it work? One of the unique things about Christianity is that it calls us to an evidential faith. Romans 1:20 tells us we can know there is a God through the things he has made. In Matthew 6:26–30, Jesus tells his listeners to look at the evidence. Psalm 19:1; Psalm 139:14; and Proverbs 8:1–11 and 22–31 tell us to look at the evidence and think. Christians need to know the basis of their faith as 1 Peter 3:15 tells us. Acts 17:16–31 speaks of Paul explaining to the educated elite of his day, including the philosophers, why they should believe in Christ. John 11:16 and 20:24–29 tell the story of a man who lost his faith. The response of Jesus was to give him solid evidence that restored his faith.

Do not listen to what anyone says. Look at the evidence. Do not fail to check out whether the things people are telling you produce a quality of life and a hope for the future. I left atheism because when life got hard, and I was no longer “the fittest,” my atheistic faith did not work. It also did not work for my family and my atheistic friends and coworkers who were and are not now happy people. Our society is full of selfish, miserable people who exploit one another and find nothing but misery and frustration.

This ministry exists to help people find evidence. Do not listen to me, but seek out the evidence. Our does-godexist.org website can help you do that. We have nothing to sell and no personal gain from whatever you decide. But in the words of Joshua, “... choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, ... But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15).

—JNC





When I was a child, my parents used to take us to the Brown County State Park in Indiana, and we would spend Sunday morning in the swimming pool. It was great family time, and my father frequently commented about how nice it was to have the pool to ourselves while all the “religious nuts spent the ir time in worthless worship.” Our culture as a whole has viewed church services as generally worthless, and many churches have tried to make their service a time of entertainment to get people to attend.

People have found many substitutes for worship, including football and other professional sports, water sports, casinos, pop psychology, the entertainment industry, politics, animals, and self-help groups. Those activities are the beneficiaries of people’s time and energy leftover from non-involvement in worship. Lost in all of this is that the need for worship is built into us.

What is unique about humans? It is not our bodies or our strength or our brain size. Humans are unique in their spiritual properties. Atheists will object to that word, but whatever you call it, there is a quality in humans that makes us different from the animals. It allows us to experience and express beauty and to appreciate art and music. It gives us a concept of self and motivates us to be willing to suffer and die for a belief system, to experience guilt and sympathy, and to have a love relationship that is not sexual. The word “soul” identifies the presence of these qualities, and that word is not just a religious term. It is used in the entertainment industry and even by leading psychologists. Attempts to attribute it to the brain have been universally disappointing.

From a biblical standpoint, the concept of being spiritual is the key to understanding what it means to be human. The Bible says, “God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he them; male and female created he them” (Genesis 1:27). That is not talking about God’s physical image. God is a Spirit (John 4:24), and not flesh and blood (Matthew 16:17). If we were all created in God’s physical image, we would all be identical twins—created in the same physical image. We are spiritually in God’s image, and we ARE all identical twins spiritually—identical in value and function (Galatians 3:28).

God has provided food for our physical bodies, and our physical energy comes from physical food. Without that food, we would die. Our appetite drives us to secure as much food as is necessary. Our spiritual self also needs food, and we all have a need and desire for that spiritual food. The problem is that not all the food we eat physically and spiritually is good for us or satisfies our hunger. Someone told me that celery has a negative calorie count. It takes more energy to prepare and chew the celery than the celery produces in our digestive system. I do not know if that is true, but the point is that some foods are not that nutritious, and we could not survive if they were all we had to eat.

The same thing is true of our spiritual needs. We all have a hunger to fill the spiritual void in our lives. If that void is not filled, the results are catastrophic. As our culture has drifted away from the meaningful worship of God, our mental health as a people has diminished. Not having our spiritual appetite satisfied, means we simply increase in hunger. The substitutes for spiritual food leave us empty and even desperate. As our spiritual hunger increases and is not met by the substitutes, we turn to destructive alternatives such as alcohol, drugs, cults, sexual alternatives, aberrant religions, and for some, suicide.

Worship is not for God’s benefit. The God who created the cosmos does not need me to praise him. God does not have feelings of inferiority or inadequacy. He does not have a bad self-image or need to have his ego salvaged. The worship to which we are called is for our benefit because our spiritual nature requires that we look to a higher power. Many groups like Alcoholics Anonymous incorporate that phrase into their rules for those struggling with problems related to what people have substituted for religion.



The teachings of Jesus Christ centered around human spiritual needs. He warned us that “the traditions of the elders” and the doctrines associated with those traditions would harm us. In Mark 7:4–7, Jesus warned against following human rules that contradicted the Bible. Paul, in Colossians 2, repeated this warning. The biblical concept of worship involves reading God’s Word, learning, encouraging, and participating (1 Timothy 4:13). Hebrews 10:24–25 (NASB) tells us to “stimulate one another to love and to good deeds” by meeting together. James 1:27 defined religion as visiting the fatherless and widows in their distress and keeping oneself untarnished by the world.

We need this kind of worship to feed our spiritual nature. Without it, we starve to death spiritually, and no substitute helps. That worship is not just a Sunday morning thing. Hebrews 13:15–16 tells us to sing and praise God CONTINUALLY, which is not corporate worship. In Matthew 6:6–8, Jesus tells us to enter into your closet, shut the door and pray to your father in secret. Do not use vain repetitions ... much speaking does not do anything ... and your Father knows what you need. Our personal prayer is to be personal, private, current, and without show or pretense.

Another major act of worship in which we all need to participate is giving. Again, this is personal and private, and it is necessary for us to feed our souls. Hebrews 13:16 tells us, “Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for God is highly pleased with just such sacrifices as these.”



Sea of Galilee

My favorite analogy for this is two bodies of water from the time and geography of Jesus. One is the Sea of Galilee, a beautiful life-filled oasis that people come from miles around to see and enjoy. Its waters are full of life, and it blesses everyone who comes near it.

The other is the Dead Sea. It is an ugly, lifeless place that migratory waterfowl detour around to avoid being near it. Only brine shrimp inhabit its waters. What is the difference between the two? The same river feeds both lakes, and they receive comparable amounts of water. The difference is that the Sea of Galilee has more water flowing out of it than comes in from the river. Rainfall, springs, and other streams

constantly refill the lake, and it is fresh and beautiful. The Dead Sea has no outlet. It takes and takes and takes but never gives. Because of that, it is ugly and lifeless, and as its name implies, dead! Giving is an act of worship. God tells us to give, not because he needs our money, but because we need



Dead Sea with salt formations

to give. If we do not learn to give, we become as lifeless and ugly as the Dead Sea, and people will avoid us. It truly is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35). God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7) because he knows our spiritual makeup will suffer and die if we do not develop that characteristic.

Jesus told the Samaritan woman that “true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth” (John 4:23–24). Our

corporate worship is essential and brings us together and unifies us with fellow Christians. Sharing the blessing of Christ’s sacrifice is critical (1 Corinthians 10:16–17), but our worship must not end there. Understand that worship



is to benefit you. Do what you read in God’s Word, not what other humans tell you to do. Make learning, reading, and encouraging a part of your worship activity. Make worship a part of your day — every day. Sing and pray and give every day. You can do these things as you drive from place to place. You can use quiet times to do these things. Make giving a part of every day, but not just money. Give your time, kindness, support, compassion, and self-sacrificing love. Set aside time to do these things and your spiritual health, and everything that goes with positive spiritual health will reach levels of joy and contentment you can only dream about.

—JNC

Can Words for Children Draw Us to God?

by Dr. Leon Sanderson

He was a precocious boy who learned Latin when 4, Greek when 8, French when 11, and Hebrew when 13. Consider this boy at 15 who complained about Sunday morning hymns at his church. By that Sunday evening, he had written his first poem to honor the Lord. It was the beginning of 750 hymns in his lifetime. He was Isaac Watts (1674–1748).

In 1715, Watts compiled *Divine and Moral Songs for the Use of Children*. One notable entry was “I Sing the Mighty Power of God,” which is still in our hymn books. One stanza honors God as Creator of mountains, seas, skies, sun, moon, and stars. Another verse describes the goodness of the Lord that fills the earth with food and forms creatures he calls good. The song ends with the affirmation: “There’s not a place where we can flee, But God is present there.” The 24/7 presence and care of God is a blessing without equal. This blessing comforts children, helps us through trials and temptations, and draws all to him.

I sing the mighty power of God, That made the mountains rise,
That spread the flowing seas abroad, And built the lofty skies.
I sing the wisdom that ordained The sun to rule the day;
The moon shines full at God’s command, And all the stars obey.

I sing the goodness of the Lord, Who filled the earth with food;
Who formed the creatures thru the Word,
And then pronounced them good.
Lord, how thy wonders are displayed Where’er I turn my eye,
If I survey the ground I tread, Or gaze upon the sky!

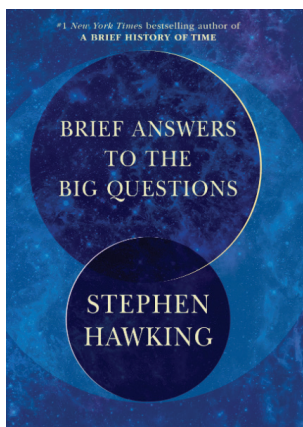
There’s not a plant or flower below, But makes thy glories known,
And clouds arise, and tempests blow, By order from thy throne;
Creatures that borrow life from thee, Are subject to thy care;
There’s not a place where we can flee But God is present there.

Stephen Hawking on Big Questions

by Al Cornell



Stephen Hawking's last book, *Brief Answers to the Big Questions*, was published posthumously. His first big question is, "Is there a God?" He believed there is not. So, his book gives us a look into the mind of an atheist who is also a self-declared optimist. To me, his book reveals the difficulty of merging optimism and atheism.



He departs from the universal concept of cause/effect to declare, "... it is possible that nothing caused the big bang. Nothing." He describes how the scientific undermining of the steady state theory, that the universe was unchanging, was troubling to atheists. He is satisfied to replace it with what he calls "the ultimate free lunch." It is the idea that the universe erupted out of nothing. That could certainly remind us of Genesis 1:1 with "God" replaced by "nothing."

Throughout the book, he brings up difficulties that make it challenging for him to maintain a positive outlook. In the context of nuclear weapons, he says, "... our world is more politically unstable than at any time in my memory." Though I also lived through the Cold War of the 1960s, I had not even considered that the present might be more politically unstable. His logic here stems from the number of nations that either have or may develop nuclear weapons, and the extremists that may be able to access them.

In a sobering discussion of multiple difficulties, he says, "Man-kind has presented our planet with the disastrous gifts of climate

change, pollution, rising temperatures, reduction in polar ice caps, deforestation, and decimation of animal species.” He believes that science can develop pathways to overcome these problems. However, he also says, “With Brexit and Trump . . . , we are witnessing a global revolt against experts, which includes scientists.” He never addresses the question of how science can get past this social/political revolt to make progress toward an extended peaceful existence.

After addressing the problem of human aggression, which he says served a purpose in the past, he adds, “. . . we will be able to



change and improve our DNA . . . during this century people will discover how to modify both intelligence and instincts like aggression . . . there will be a race of self-designing beings.” I am not sure how that can move past the problems of failed eugenics

of a century ago. Yet, that is a crucial element of his optimism that humanity can endure.

For humanity to have a long-term existence in the universe, he says, “I am convinced that humans need to leave the Earth.” This demands the scientific invention of space travel. Since he does not believe that curved space or “wormholes” will provide any shortcuts, he perceives all space travel to be limited to some fraction of the speed of light. Light from the nearest solar system takes 4.3 years to reach Earth. At our present speed of space travel, it would take three million years to get there. He describes some possible ways to increase that speed.

In addressing some problems associated with how our DNA could endure extended space travel, he suggests that we might be able to engineer more stable DNA. He then states that it would be easier to send machines and envisions machines that would be a new form of life, avoiding DNA problems. Later,



Top: © Sergey Nivens; bottom: © Corey Ford. Images from BigStock.com.

he worries about the potential problem of creating something that could surpass humans. Earlier, he called computer viruses the first human-created life.

I know there is a scientific difficulty in defining life, but his definition is extremely inclusive. One of Hawking's own unanswered questions is variously expressed as the unknown pathway to DNA's origin. "How did life begin on Earth?" Certainly, the Bible presents God as the originator of life (see Genesis 1 and Nehemiah 9:6). In spite of all our advances in genetics, the sixty-plus-year-old words of physicist A. W. Dicus, in his song "Our God, He is Alive" still hold—"Secure, is life from mortal mind, God holds the germ within his hand."

Hawking envisions a robot invented by humans that is capable of self-replication and surpasses human intellect. Who is going to put the heart into this tin man? Earlier in the book, he said, "But it would be an empty universe indeed if it were not for the people I love, and who love me." I like the words that concluded Pierre Grasse's *Evolution of Living Organisms* and which irritated his secular colleagues:



“Perhaps in this area, biology can go no farther: the rest is metaphysics.” This implies that there is a reality beyond science. Hawking’s vision might end as a universe without metaphysics, without love—indeed, an empty universe.

In other words, humans might invent the self-replicating machine, but where is there a shred of evidence that we could make it love?

In Hawking’s view of the universe, he thinks earthlike planets could have gotten a billion-year head start on life compared to Earth. He wonders, “Why hasn’t Earth been visited ...?” Next, he cautions that if they do contact us, “We need to be wary of answering back” We might be expendable in their intent to colonize Earth. Apparently, there is a chance of them getting this far without getting rid of the aggressive gene.

Near the end of the book, he lists the big unanswered questions: “How did life begin on Earth?” “What is consciousness?” “Are we alone in the universe?” He envisions our greatest needs as exploring space “for alternate planets on which to live” and to “use artificial

intelligence to improve our world.” From there, he hopes that there will be “billions of years of life flourishing in the cosmos.” I understand that being the best an atheist can hope for, but to me, it seems ultimately purposeless.

In 1962 and at 20 years old, Stephen Hawking was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) and was expected to live only a few years. He exceeded that expectation by many fold and used modern science techniques to share the discoveries and insights of his brilliant mind. I wonder if his personal struggles influenced his atheistic conclusion. The only hint I found in this book was the sentence: “For centuries, it was believed that disabled people like me were living under a curse that was inflicted by God.” If we could take the afflicted by the hand and lead them to the blind man in John chapter 9, we could show them Jesus’ answer to that heartless concept.

At one point in the book, Hawking mused, “... if there were such a God, I would like to ask however did he think of anything as complicated as M-theory in eleven dimensions.” Maybe a person or two match Hawking’s understanding of the complexity of the universe. I cannot grasp how one could envision asking an intelligent maker a question about the complexity and yet conclude that nothing suffices to explain it.



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SCIENTISTS AND GOD

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

NICOLAUS COPERNICUS (1473-1543) Founder of Heliocentric Cosmology

“To know the mighty works of God, to comprehend His wisdom and majesty and power, to appreciate, in degree, the wonderful working of His laws, surely all this must be a pleasing and acceptable mode of worship to the Most High, to whom ignorance cannot be more gratifying than knowledge.”

“Not the Grace received by Paul do I desire,
Nor the good will with which Thou forgavest Peter,
Only that which Thou didst grant the thief on the cross,
That mercy I ask of Thee.”



“For who, after applying himself to things which he sees established in the best order and directed by Divine ruling, would not through diligent contemplation of them and through a certain habituation be awakened to that which is best and would not admire the Artificer of all things, in Whom is all happiness and every good? For the divine Psalmist surely did not say gratuitously that he took pleasure in the workings of God and rejoiced in the works of His hands, unless by means of these things as by

some sort of vehicle we are transported to the contemplation of the highest good.”

Source: <http://nobelists.net>

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Cynthia's Corner

PRIORITIES



When we face our mortality, it gives us a perspective of what is most important in this life. If we knew we only had six months to live, what would we do? Who would we spend our time with? I think for many of us seniors who have been sheltered at home because of the coronavirus pandemic, we have had to think about these things.

God tells us to be ready to die and face Judgement (2 Peter 3:11–14). We do not know if we will see tomorrow. God says it is arrogant to say that we will (James 4:13–16). God also never promises to protect us from the consequences of living in this fallen, sinful world. The world is full of evil and violence, illness, disease, and decay—all things will die. God does NOT protect us from these things. In fact, he promises us trials and troubles in this life (John 16:33). But, if we are in Christ, and have his Spirit living in us (Romans 6), he promises to be with us always to help, comfort, talk to us, teach, guide, and give us spiritual strength to deal with whatever earthly trials we face (2 Peter 1:3,4). He promises us “a way out” so we will never have more than we can bear (1 Corinthians 10:13). God gives us his love, peace, and joy no matter what we face (James 1:2–5; 1 Peter 1:6–9).

He also gives us people to love and to love us. We call the people we love most and who love us our family. Family is not limited to blood or adoption. Family can also be those we love because of shared values and priorities and like-mindedness. We enjoy being together and have many deep bonds. God calls us to love our church family. He tells us to love, serve, pray for one another, bear each other’s burdens, and spend time together because of our shared love of God, Jesus, and his Word (Acts 2:42–47).

Most of all, our faith in God gives us hope (assurance, NOT wishful thinking! Hebrews 11:1) of an eternal life with God and Jesus when this earthly life ends (1 Peter 1:3, 4). God says to seek and find him (Jeremiah 29:11–13), to know him and follow him while we live a very short time on Earth so that our eternal soul can live with him forever. That is our purpose and reason for living. God loves us and has provided a way we can be reconciled to him through his Son, Jesus. We can have a relationship with him now and eternally.

—Cynthia Clayton

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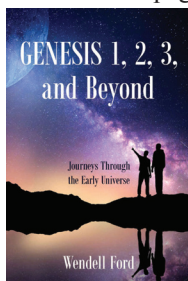


The books that are reviewed in the Book Reviews section are not available through us, but can be obtained from a local bookstore or through many online bookstores.

Genesis 1, 2, 3, and Beyond

by Wendell Ford, Reliant Publishing, © 2019,

117 pages, \$12.95 (paperback), ISBN-13: 978-1-64645-015-2



Wendell Ford is an electrical engineer with degrees from Oklahoma State, the University of Southern California, and the University of New Mexico. He worked at Los Alamos National Laboratory. As I read the book, I was amazed to find it had a unique approach to science and Genesis while being respectful of God's Word.

Ford approaches Genesis from the perspective of the people living at the time it was written. He wrote: "Genesis was not written to inform us of the details of how everything came into existence, but it is written to tell us who did it, what our relationship is to him, and what our responsibility is." He begs his readers to avoid making claims and assumptions the Bible does not make and to understand that science deals with material things while theology deals with the realm that science cannot reach.

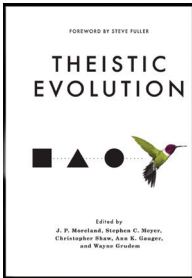
The book emphasizes what the Hebrew actually says, how many times words are used, and in what ways. An example is that the Hebrew word sometimes translated "rib" actually means "side." Ford feels that Adam and Eve may not have been the first humans, but they were the starting point for God's sending of his Son. He does not deal with the age of the Earth and says the question of time is irrelevant.

The book does not misrepresent science or use it in careless ways. Ford wrote, "What I had hoped to show in this book was that science and religion are two separate areas with two different methodologies. Therefore one cannot make claims about the other."

This is a challenging book and well worth reading. You may not agree with the author, but he does not try to force his understanding on the reader. Some of his approaches will challenge whatever you believe, but you will grow and be encouraged by reading it.

Theistic Evolution

Edited by J. P. Moreland, Stephen C. Meyer, Christopher Shaw,
Ann K. Gauger, and Wayne Grudem, Crossway, © 2017,
1000 pages, \$60.00 (hard cover), ISBN-13: 978-1-4335-5286-1



The complete title of this book is *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique*. I recommend it for academic arguments against modern evolutionary theory. It provides a survey of current claims of atheists, agnostics, and skeptics.

The book is a collection of essays by two dozen highly qualified scholars in science, philosophy, and theology. It contains a gold mine of indexed quotes from the best-known names in science. Thus it provides an excellent source for factual information about anything connected with Darwinism and the evidence for evolution. It is most useful for understanding the real scientific weaknesses of atheistic Darwinian theory.

The purpose of this book is to show that current promotions of theistic evolution are misguided. The recent thrust of theistic evolution is not the same as suggesting that God uses evolution to accomplish his will, which has been the meaning of theistic evolution in the past 50 years or so. The book challenges those “theistic evolutionists” who would accept the Darwinian idea that life evolved in an unguided and unplanned manner.

The book is divided into three sections, with each section containing essays by individual scholars. Each of the 31 essays covers a topic of its own. Section 1 is a scientific critique of evolution with excellent discussions of the weaknesses of Darwinism. Section 2 is a critical philosophical critique of modern theistic evolution. Section 3 is a biblical and theological critique of the problems with theistic evolution emphasizing historical interpretations of the Genesis account. All of the authors of this 1000-page book go into enormous detail with extensive documentation. It is academic in its approach and would be very useful for professionals and college students.

For the average reader, the book would make an excellent reference source. The index is very useful in giving a complete listing not only of topics but also of leading scientists and apologists. The book would be over the heads of most high school students, many lay teachers, and most preachers. For those involved in apologetics, it would be a very beneficial source.

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DANDY DESIGNS

How Fish Drink Water



Chinook salmon in freshwater at spawning time

Have you ever wondered how a fish drinks water? Your first reaction is probably something like, “It opens its mouth.” Like most things in life, it is not that simple.

All living things necessarily have some saltwater content in their bodies to keep chemical balance, allowing life to exist. The fluids inside an ocean-dwelling fish are only about a third as salty as the ocean itself. The water inside the fish’s body tends to leave by osmotic pressure, which is the tendency of fluids to move through membranes toward higher concentrations. To avoid this loss of water, the fish does simply open its mouth and drink seawater. But that brings large amounts of salt into the fish’s body. The salt concentration would be more than the fish’s kidneys could handle. To aid the kidneys, the gills of ocean fish are designed to expel salt, so the fish is not pickled by it.

In freshwater fish, the osmotic pressure is reversed, so the fluids inside the fish are saltier than the water outside. The skin of a freshwater fish is designed so that water seeps in through its skin and gills. Therefore, the fish does not have to drink at all. When a salmon leaves the ocean and enters a freshwater stream, it merely stops drinking. Like freshwater fish, it depends on its skin to bring in its water needs.

God’s design of life includes fitting living things with specialized equipment to survive in every environment. Fish are remarkable creatures specially equipped for the waterworld in which they live.

Source for both of these Dandy Design articles is *National Wildlife*, June/July 1995, page 30.

How Sea Animals Drink Water

Albatrosses and petrels are birds that can spend a year or more in the open ocean, but they need to drink water. Whales and seals



Wandering Albatross

also do not have land-based water supplies, and yet, like all mammals, they need water to survive.

So how do sea animals drink water when ocean water is salty? God's design of living creatures always includes unusual equipment to enable

them to deal with their environment.

In the case of sea birds, they have a set of salt glands in their heads that connect to the bird's nostrils. The birds drink seawater, but the glands are so efficient that within three hours, all of the salt is removed through the nostrils.

Whales and other aquatic mammals produce urine that has extremely concentrated salt content. By allowing high salt concentrations in the urine to diffuse into the ocean, the salt never reaches toxic levels inside the animal. An interesting sidelight to this is that the milk of these sea mammals is very low in water content. In that way, they conserve water. Milk from seals has only half the water content of lean hamburger.

Everywhere we look in the natural world, we see that a wonder-working hand has gone before. These marvelous designs are not the product of mindless chance. They show an Intelligence who created with purpose and wisdom.

In Job 38–40, God challenged Job to advance his understanding of God's power and wisdom by considering the natural things of creation. When Job questioned God's wisdom and purpose in his personal struggles, he did not recognize the wisdom shown in creation's design. We too need to look at what God has done and know there is a God through the things he has made (Romans 1:18–20).

See our videos at www.doesgodexist.tv

News and Notes

STAY UP-TO-DATE ON NEWS AND NOTES. The stories in News and Notes are condensed from articles previously published on our website www.DoesGodExist.today. You can use the QR codes with each of these articles to see the original posts for more details and references. There are also many other interesting and informative articles on that website each day. We encourage you to follow us daily on “Does God Exist? Today.” On that website, you can also subscribe to our free weekly e-mail update. We call it “The Best of the Week from DOES GOD EXIST?” It contains links to the most popular of our posts on DGE? Today and our Facebook page (Facebook.com/evidence4god).

DISNEY REMOVES LGBT CONTENT — FOR RUSSIA. To remain politically correct in the United States, Disney has gone to great lengths to include LGBT content in their productions, including those designed for children. However, Disney removes LGBT content in the Russian version of children’s movies to meet the government’s demands. They have also done the same for Muslim countries such as the United Arab Emirates and Singapore, where a very brief lesbian kiss was edited out of *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker*.

The Russian versions of *Onward*, *Rocketman*, and *Avengers: Endgame* were also edited for LGBT content. Interestingly, Disney removes LGBT content for Russia and Muslim countries. It seems strange that family values are emphasized by the entertainment industry for children in other countries and ignored in the United States. Source: www.texasonline.net



EXPERT IN ALL FIELDS — OR NOT. In today’s world, we see well-known atheists like evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins writing books and making speeches about God. His understanding of what God is and what the Bible actually says is full of errors. If he were not famous for his scientific knowledge in biology, his theological discussions would not get any coverage in the media.

Even Nobel Prize winners are not an expert in all fields. As a result, they have presented some very destructive teachings and

beliefs. William Shockley, the inventor of the transistor, received a Nobel Prize in 1956. He maintained that blacks were genetically inferior to whites and should be paid to volunteer to be sterilized. James Watson, the co-discoverer of the structure of DNA, received a Nobel prize in 1962. He said that blacks are inherently less intelligent than whites and that exposure to sunlight increases sexual urges.

Our point here is that it is not valid to use an expert in one area to prove something in an area outside of their field. A Ph.D. in one area of science is not an expert in all fields. Source: *Skeptical Inquirer*, May/June 2020



MEDICAL MIRACLE CURE CLAIMS. Beware of medical miracle cure claims for “a wide range of diseases, mental disorders and conditions.”

As I write this, I have a family member who is dying of cancer.



Hospice is caring for him, and he has only a few more days to live. What started as prostate cancer has gone to bone cancer and a massive brain tumor. When the bone cancer was detected, the family member was taken to a marijuana

clinic where he was placed on a treatment of marijuana compounds and a strict diet endorsed by some religious leaders. This treatment went on for many weeks.

Standard medical treatment did not have a cure for the bone cancer but could have controlled it, and the life expectancy would be for many years. My family member was told that marijuana treatment could eradicate the bone cancer. There were even a few “testimonies” given by people who claimed they had been cured. Eventually, it became evident that the cancer was growing, not shrinking. By the time they stopped the marijuana treatment, a baseball-sized tumor had developed in the brain. Because the marijuana treatments had replaced standard medical procedures, there was nothing that could be done.



Examine claims of medical miracle cures of any kind with skepticism. We are not talking about cosmetic issues or supplements for simple aches and pains. We are talking about major issues like cancer, mental disorders, and diabetes.

DECLINE IN PRACTICING CHRISTIANS. The Barna Research Group repeats studies to identify trends. Research this year indicates a decline in practicing Christians in America. They define a practicing Christian as: “Someone who identifies as a Christian, agrees strongly that faith is very important in their life, and has attended church within the past month.” In the year 2000, 45% of Americans surveyed identified themselves as Christians using that criterion. In February of 2020, that percentage had dropped to 25%. This research was based on interviews with 96,171 adults.

Many people who claim to be Christians have not made a practice of attending church services. At the same time, they would probably be upset to be called “non-practicing Christians.” However, the truth is that Barna used the same set of questions in 2000 and 2020. There can be no doubt that there has been a sharp decline in practicing Christians in America.



DEEPWATER HORIZON TEN YEARS LATER. On April 20, 2010, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill began. By the time technicians could bring it under control, it had dumped 134,000,000 gallons of crude oil into the Gulf of Mexico over 87 days. There is far more involved in this disaster than the removal of the obvious



Oil Spill in 2010

symptoms of the spill. Oyster production from Apalachicola to Galveston has collapsed. Louisiana has lost well over 50 million dollars in oyster harvest revenue. Scientists studying the oyster beds tell us that 8.3 billion oysters died as a result of the spill. A single oyster can filter up to 50 gallons of water a day. Oyster shells are used to make mortar, build roadbeds, and to supplement chicken feed. The Deepwater Horizon oil spill has changed all of that.

Skeptics criticize any notion of God creating the Earth by saying that if there is a God, he did not do a very good job. Humans are threatened with shortages of food and water. Why are there shortages? Human greed, selfishness, ignorance, desire for power, and refusal to live as God told us to live has resulted in destructive wars, mismanagement of resources, waste of incredible proportions, and foolish and irresponsible management of resources.

When God created the Earth, he provided for an abundance of food and water. We cannot blame God for what humans have done. Christians must lead the way in the responsible use of God’s gifts. Source: *National Wildlife*, February/March 2020.



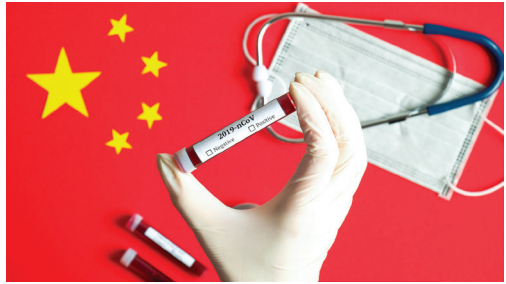
ARMY CHAPLAINS FROM OVERSEAS. Roughly 20 percent of today's Army Chaplains were born outside of the United States. Raja Kandanada, who was born in India, now works at the Pentagon as a family-life chaplain. He says that although he was born in India, he was born again in the United States. Although he experienced discrimination in India because of the caste system there, he has come to understand the meaning of God's love in America and the debt he owes to his adopted country.

As America veers away from belief in God, those who have lived elsewhere see the effect of faith in this country and want to be part of it. Source: *Christianity Today*, April 2020, page 19.



COMMUNIST CHINESE PRIORITY. While the world has been trying to stamp out a contagious virus that originated from China, the Chinese Communist government is battling something else. The Communist Chinese priority is to stamp out Christianity.

In March, the Chinese government began a campaign to remove crosses from churches in three eastern provinces. Government officials told the church leaders that the crosses “were too eye-catching” and might “attract people into the churches.”



Jian Zhu, director of the Chinese Institute at Lincoln Christian University in Lincoln, Illinois, said that China's persecution of house churches has intensified. Chinese authorities ask people to spy on their neighbors and report churches meeting in homes. They also require teachers and students to sign statements denouncing Christianity. He said, “Cameras are all over to watch church and Christians go to Sunday services.” What do the Communists do with the data they gather concerning Christians? According to Zhu, they threaten families not to go to church, “or they will be punished or their relatives could be in trouble.”

Pray for the Chinese Christians as they suffer for their faith.



CHRISTIAN WITNESS DURING THE PANDEMIC.

As we write this, the nation has been shut down by COVID-19. We have no way to know what the situation will be when you read this, but there is no question whether the virus has impacted families and the country's economy. At the same time, some positive things are happening because of Christian witness during the pandemic.



An exciting story was circulated by SAT-7, an interdenominational Christian television center in the Middle East. A man in Iran called the television station and said that what they were presenting was not like the message that dominated his country. He said he could not believe that they had joy

and peace about them which he found attractive. He did not have a clue as to who Jesus is. However, he knew that what Jesus was saying was better than the violence, terror, and killing that were a part of the religion that dominates his part of the world. A week later, this man called again, but this time he had 25 young men crammed into a tiny apartment, and all of them wanted to hear about Jesus. Secret house churches are blossoming all over the Middle East. The coronavirus allows Christians to show compassion and bring help and necessary medications to people who are suffering.

In America, the coronavirus is showing the huge contrast between atheist beliefs and what Christianity offers. Survival of the fittest as a guide to life does not work well with a pandemic. Many first responders are Christians, and serving others and saving lives even at personal risk to themselves is the exact opposite of atheistic belief systems.

The coronavirus is not God's retribution for human sin, but all things work for the good of those who love the Lord (Romans 8:28). Christian witness during the pandemic brings a shining light in a culture that suddenly finds itself unable to manage.



EVIDENCES OF GOD, VOLUMES 11 and 12. We have two new books available in the Evidences of God series. Volume 11 contains articles that appeared in our journal from 2007 to 2010. And volume 12 contains articles that appeared in our journal from 2011 to 2015. They are comb-bound and include a subject matter content guide. For example, if you want to find an article on evolution, you can look in the guide and find every article we published on evolution within those dates.

Earlier volumes of *Evidences of God* are also available going back to 1973 when we began printing the journal. People have told us about three favorite uses of these books. Those who prepare church bulletins find the articles to be a fast and easy way of having something available on a given topic. A second use is in “letters to the editor” columns in local newspapers. A third use is when someone raises a question on a topic we have covered, you can

copy the article and hand it to the person. A fourth use is to get a perspective or data on an issue when preparing a speech, a sermon, a term paper, etc.

These books are available on loan or to purchase for our cost of \$6.00 each with postage paid from Does God Exist?, PO Box 2704, South Bend IN 46680.

PERSPECTIVE

One of our readers sent us the following article by an unknown author titled "Perspective." We thought it was worth sharing.

Imagine you were born in 1900.

* On your 14th birthday, World War I starts, and ends on your 18th birthday. 22 million people perish in that war.

* Later in the year, a Spanish Flu epidemic hits the planet and runs until your 20th birthday. 50 million people die from it in those two years.

* On your 29th birthday, the Great Depression begins. Unemployment hits 25%, the World GDP drops 27%.

* That runs until you are 33. The country nearly collapses along with the world economy.

* When you turn 39, World War II starts. You are not even over the hill yet. And do not try to catch your breath.

* On your 41st birthday, the United States is fully pulled into WWII.

* Between your 39th and 45th birthday, 75 million people perish in the war.

* At 50, the Korean War starts. 5 million perish.

* At 55, the Vietnam War begins and does not end for 20 years. 4 million people perish in that conflict.

* On your 62nd birthday, the Cuban Missile Crisis is a tipping point in the Cold War. Life on our planet, as we know it, could have ended.

* When you turn 75, the Vietnam War finally ends.

Think of everyone on the planet born in 1900. How do you survive all of that? When you were a kid in 1985, you did not think your 85-year-old grandparents understood how hard school was or how mean that kid in your class was. Yet, they survived through everything listed above.

Perspective is an amazing art, refined as time goes on, and enlightening like you would not believe. Let us try to keep things in perspective.



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, CDs, courses, books, and other materials. These materials are offered on a loan basis or at our cost. Many of these materials are available online. 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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