

DOES GOD EXIST?

A diverse group of people, including men and women of various ethnicities, are walking together in a brightly lit indoor space. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. The group is composed of people of different ages and backgrounds, creating a sense of community and shared purpose.

**Fourth Quarter 2022
Volume 49 Number 4**

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

**EVIDENCE FOR GOD
IN CHANGED LIVES**

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 University, York, Nebraska

“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”) — Matthew 1:23.

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EVIDENCE FOR GOD IN CHANGED LIVES



There are many evidences for the existence of God. In this journal, we have discussed evidence in the design of life, planet Earth, the solar system, and the cosmos. In addition, we have looked at evidence in the Bible and archaeological evidence supporting the Bible's divine integrity. Many of these evidences overlap, but we also see strong evidence for God in human beings created in his image. The effect of Christianity on the lives of believers who obey Christ's commands gives some of the best proofs of God, and the Bible as his Word.

Many people feel that only a miracle can change people's lives. This is an unfortunate misunderstanding of the purpose of miracles, why God created us, and our role in the war between good and evil. If all we had to do to be cured of a terminal disease or avoid a disastrous accident were to become a Christian, people would claim Christianity to escape their problems. God never promised that becoming a Christian would give us diplomatic immunity from illness, accidents, or other issues. Christianity is not an escape from



reality, and Christians can better support others when we face the same struggles as everyone else.

The miracles of Jesus and the apostles were intended to address a credibility issue in the first century. Like today, there were all kinds of scammers claiming to speak for God. We read about them in passages like Acts 8:9–11 and 19:13–15. Miracles clearly showed who spoke for God and who was a scammer. Those miracles had a purpose that is not needed today. When God’s written Word became available, there was no need to wonder who spoke for God and who

did not. Today, God’s Word is available and speaks for him. We read in 2 Timothy 3:16–17, “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly



furnished unto all good works.” If miraculous acts of God are not required, how do we see Christianity changing lives and giving evidence of God’s existence?

GOD’S PROVIDENTIAL ACTIONS CHANGE LIVES.

We are not saying that God is dysfunctional in the lives of his believers. On the contrary, there is a practical reason for Christians to pray, and we often see God acting in our lives. For example, in Acts 9:15, God tells Ananias that Paul “is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.” God did not force Paul to become a great evangelist. He could have refused to do what God called him to do, but the providence of God made a choice available that defined Paul’s life.

In the same way, today, we see people’s lives influenced by God in a way that is not miraculous but allows the individual to fulfill a role that would have seemed impossible. Your author was raised by parents who were atheists. My father was a Ph.D. student of John Dewey and became a professor and head of the philosophy department in the school of education at Indiana University. I grew up as a militant, campaigning atheist, a leader in the atheist movement, and a close compatriot of Madalyn Murray O’Hair, the leading atheist at the time. Now I am a dedicated believer in God and the Bible as

his Word. A series of incredible, unlikely events led me to become a Christian and ultimately a campaigning apologist for Christianity.

An atheist would attribute my journey to chance. If it were a single event, I might accept that diagnosis. However, I believe a series of God's providential activities took my life in a different direction. Ultimately I had to choose whether to become a Christian and be disowned by my family and friends or reject God and accept leadership of the atheist movement in Indiana.

GOD'S INSTITUTIONS CHANGE LIVES.

By an institution, we mean something God set up for our benefit, but we do not mean human buildings or programs. One institution God established was marriage. God's plan is one man and one woman for life, and that plan works. When it does not work, it is because humans contaminated it or refused to follow God's instructions for maintaining it. People have offered polygamy and polyandry as alternatives to God's institution of marriage. But those systems fail miserably and produce an imbalance in relationship demographics since males and females are born in approximately



equal numbers. All studies on the long-term effects and stability of monogamous heterosexual relationships have shown they produce positive outcomes. Closely related is the institution of the nuclear family. The instructions of Ephesians 6:1–4; Colossians 3:18–21; and Titus 2:2–7 have produced stability and productivity in human societies.

GOD'S MORAL RULES CHANGE LIVES.

Christianity is not about obeying a silly collection of laws or restrictive rules. From the time of Adam until today, God has given strong moral rules to follow. Some of the rules are common sense shared by other faiths and even unbelievers. Not murdering, stealing, and lying are not unique to Christianity. However, the teachings of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7) are unique. Loving

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your enemies, turning the other cheek, and going the extra mile are not part of the human moral code. The teachings of Christ regarding sexual purity and relationships expressed only in a monogamous marriage bring clear emotional and mental health benefits.

It is tragic that throughout history, humans have refused to live as God called them to live. God's rules uniquely produce peace and well-being for all humans in contrast to the result of "survival of the fittest" moralities. The military practice of religious leaders such as Muhammad gives strong evidence that Christianity is not a product of human wisdom.

GOD GIVES US FREEDOM IN CHRISTIANITY.

One of the great values of Christianity, often missed by many, is the freedom it offers. Colossians 2:14–23 talks about being free from the ordinances that enslaved people for so long. Galatians 3:26–29 speaks clearly against all divisions of humans and shows that racial, national, and sexual prejudice are non-existent in true Christianity.

Romans 14 makes it clear that we are free to make our own choices as long as we are not disobeying a commandment of God. The freedom that Christianity teaches is unique and speaks of being from God. Compare that with what other religious systems teach. Even some that claim to be Christian add other rules which are not in the Scriptures. True Christianity produces no power struggle caused by a distinction between clergy and laity and no dependence on sacred places or buildings. That freedom is from God and speaks of his wisdom and design.

THE LIVES OF COMMITTED CHRISTIANS VERIFY THE TRUTH OF CHRISTIANITY.

In Matthew 25:31–46, we see Christ identifying the fruit of Christianity. He commended his followers because they fed hungry people, brought water to thirsty people, provided clothing for those who did not have any, administered help to sick people, and reached out to those in prison. What has resulted from the actions of those who tried to do what Jesus taught? How many hospitals have been built and maintained by people expressing their faith in Christ? How many schools and universities have been created and staffed by Christians? Who runs the homeless shelters and missions that care for the homeless and impoverished? Christ's followers have done all of those things and more.



Skeptics like to complain about Christian missionaries bringing their faith to primitive tribes and alien cultures worldwide. What has been the fruit of those missionaries? How many have brought medical help, food, agricultural techniques, and better use of resources to impoverished people? Many cultural practices that primitive tribes had developed needed to be abolished. Sacrificing children, polygamy, bad dietary practices, using contaminated water, and tribal wars needed to end. Missionaries have sometimes made mistakes such as overturning non-destructive local customs that should have remained.

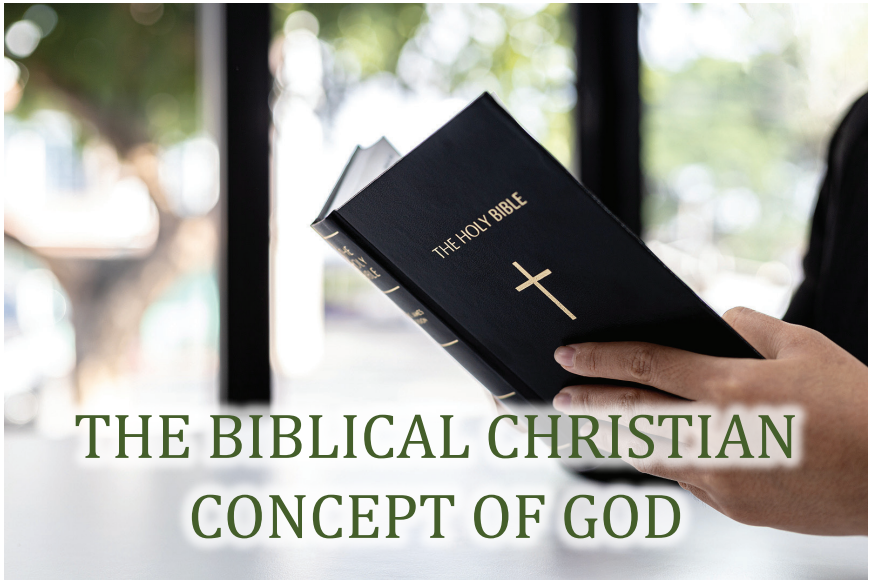
On the other hand, what contribution has atheism made to those suffering from disease or starvation? How does “survival of the fittest” benefit hurting people? I might disagree with Mother Teresa’s theology, but it is very hard to criticize what she brought to scores of people in an impoverished society.

If someone convinced me that there is no God, that Jesus never lived, and that the Bible is just a bunch of silly myths, I would still want to be a Christian. I have lived as an atheist. I have seen the result of that lifestyle in my family and today’s culture. My life today is so much better than my atheist days and better than what I saw my family go through as they lived by their atheist credo. A true belief in God and living as God has called us to will change our lives and bless those around us. People have said, “I would rather see a sermon than hear one.” The example of people whose lives have been changed by their faith in God and his Son is a powerful testimony to God’s existence.



—John N. Clayton

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THE BIBLICAL CHRISTIAN CONCEPT OF GOD

What is God? Is God male or female? What race is God? Is God bisexual, lesbian, trans, homosexual, or heterosexual? Is God on the Earth or in the stars or the air? Does God dwell in animal life? Are animals reincarnated humans who are in the image of the natural gods? All of these questions are ones we have received and have done our best to answer.

The confusion is partly due to what people say about God on television or radio, in books and magazines, and how movies and video games portray God. Even some world religions present gods active in sexual relationships or military conflicts. Some people propose God as a solution to climate or agricultural problems, disease pandemics, or infertility. Others present God as a cause—or solution—to losses or victories in war or athletic competition.

Is there any wonder that many people do not believe in God? Why is there so much confusion when the Bible plainly shows the Christian concept of God?

WHAT IS GOD?

Some ask if God is male or female. God is not a sexual being, and gender descriptions in the Bible are always symbolic of the message presented. It is obvious that someone does not understand the biblical concept of God if they ask, “What gender is God?”

When Jesus expressed his sorrow for Jerusalem, he used the female image of a hen and her chicks in Luke 13:34. At other times,

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he referenced male images when he spoke of “my Father.” But the essential point is that God is not a physical being. Throughout the New Testament, there is a strong emphasis that God is a spiritual being. For example, “God is spirit, ...” (John 4:24).

The message is that God is concerned about spiritual things over material things. The Bible describes prayer as being oriented toward the spiritual and not the physical. Even Christians have been



confused about how God answers prayers. James 4:3 says, “You ask, you do not receive, because you ask in error to consume it on your lust.” Asking God to meet our physical desires emphasizes the wrong thing and will not produce a positive result.

When people read passages such as Matthew 7:7–8 and John 14:1–15; 15:7, 16, they assume Jesus is saying that anything his followers ask will be given to them — no matter what it is. However, if you look at the context of these promises of Christ, you will see that they all relate to spiritual things. If all a person had to do to be cured of sickness or to make a lot of money were to become a Christian and pray to God, people would be flocking to churches to get a solution to their physical dilemmas.

WHY DO WE PRAY TO GOD?

Understanding what God is and what he desires for us can help us understand the meaning and importance of prayer. There is nothing wrong with praying to God for our physical needs. You can see that in the model prayer, “Give us this day our daily bread” (Matthew 6:11). However, it is illogical and unbiblical to get upset when God does not answer our physical requests in the way we desire. Failure to receive the things we pray for is rooted in a failure to understand what God desires for us.

When I was an atheist playing football in high school, one of my teammates asked God for victory in every game. Late in the season,





we played a team from a Christian high school. One of their team members told me that he knew they would beat us because they had prayed to God for victory. Unfortunately, we

lost that game, and my teammate, who had been praying for us to win, decided he needed to be an atheist like me because, clearly, God did not answer prayer.

There have been wars between cultures that worshipped the God of the Bible. Examples are the American Civil War and the Irish wars between Catholics and Protestants. Both sides prayed to the same God for victory. However, winning a victory would mean killing people who were Christians on the other side of the conflict.

When I gave my lectures in Ireland, people expressed great interest in my message that science supports belief in God. However, many people wanted nothing to do with the church because of the history of religious warfare. A Catholic priest in full clerical garb attended one of my lectures and informed me that he was an atheist. He was still conducting mass because that was the source of his income, but he did not believe in God. The things we pray for reflect our concept of God. It becomes clear that even “religious” people often do not understand the Christian biblical concept of God.



WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD?

We are familiar with the physical world, so it is easy for people to look for God to bring a physical earthly kingdom. However, the New Testament calls for us to understand that Christians serve a God who is not a man — or woman. Galatians 3:28 tells us that “there is neither male nor female” in Christ’s kingdom, the church. This same message appears in Romans 10:11 – 13 and Colossians 3:11. In John 18:36 – 39, Jesus told Pilate, “My kingdom is not of this world,” making it clear that he was not bringing in a physical earthly kingdom. Yet, even today, some Christian groups interpret Christ as a military

leader who will defeat all other belief systems and establish a physical kingdom in Jerusalem.

This struggle to understand God goes back to Genesis 1:1, describing the creation of time, space, and matter/energy. When Peter describes the end of the world in 2 Peter 3:3 and 10–12, he says that time will end and the physical cosmos will “dissolve in fervent heat” (verse 12). God is in a higher dimension than time or the material cosmos. He created the human soul in his image, not our physical bodies.

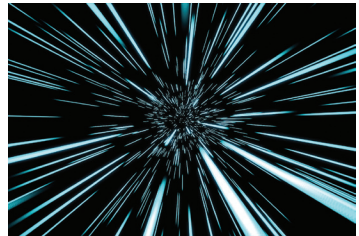
In 1 Corinthians 15:35–55, Paul conveys the concept of a kingdom that is not of this world. People in that day did not understand it, and still today, many Christians do not understand it. The fact that Christ’s kingdom is not an earthly physical kingdom makes it unlike any human system. That brings us back to the biblical Christian concept of God.

WHAT IS THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPT OF GOD?

The Bible tells us that God is beyond time, space, and matter/energy, because he created them. As science goes deeper into understanding the structure of matter/energy, it becomes increasingly evident that there are forces beyond our familiar physical laws. For example, quantum mechanics and studies of the nature of matter show that creation is not merely a physical process.

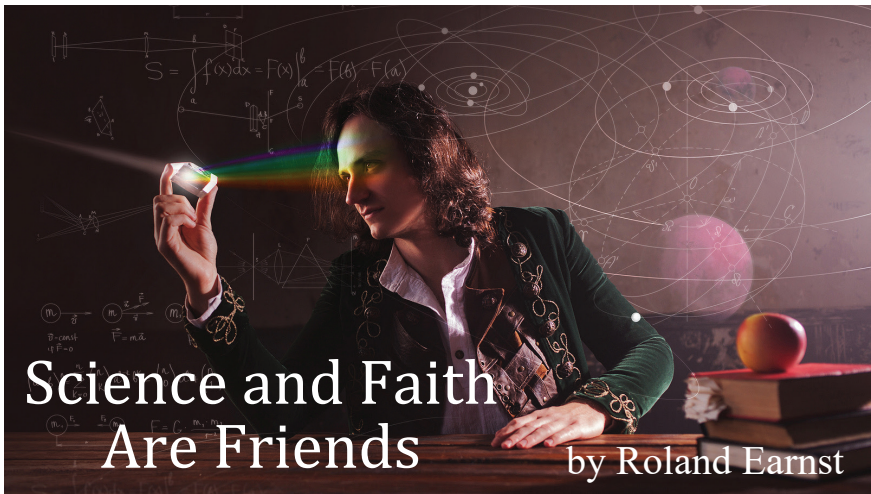
Heaven and hell are not physical places with physical rewards or punishment. When we die, our soul, that part of us created in God’s image, will no longer be limited by time. All the bad things that time brings will be gone, “... there will be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away” (Revelation 21:4).

We struggle to understand metaphors in the Bible that use physical pictures of things that are not physical. The result is that when we approach them with a physical understanding alone, we become confused. These metaphors become much clearer if we understand the biblical Christian concept of God. Christ’s promise of life after our physical life is over gives us joy and comfort beyond physical understanding. We can rejoice in knowing that the things afflicting us in this life will be gone, and our future will be secure and filled with joy in spiritual union with our Creator.



—JNC

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Science and Faith Are Friends

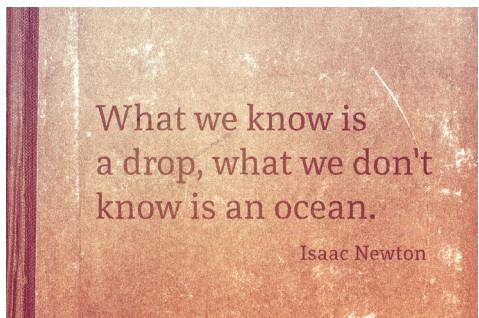
by Roland Earnst

Both science and theology deal with the fundamental human desire to know. We are naturally curious because God made us that way. Science began with Christian believers who sought to learn more about God through his creation. A desire to learn about God through the things he has made motivated men like Roger Bacon, Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Newton, and others to create what today we call “science.”



Faith in a loving and orderly Creator opened the door to a realization that the universe is orderly and not the chaotic product of the many gods of the ancient Greeks and Romans. As a result, theology and theologians developed many of the methods of modern science. Also, it was theologians who recognized that only natural causation is open to our direct study. They knew by faith that God was the ultimate cause of the universe. But since God is not a physical being, we can only study the secondary causation.

Even though we recognize that God is the only possible cause of the universe, all we can do is discover how he did it and marvel at the precision fine-tuning of the cosmos. If we say that God “zapped” these things into existence without a process, we deny God’s engineering



and architectural skills. Science and faith are friends, and we can know there is a God through the things he has made (Romans 1:20).

Today, well-known skeptics use books and TV programs to proclaim atheism, materialism, and scientism. At the same time, prominent and often highly-paid religious teachers debunk science and tell people to take off their “science glasses” and put on “Bible glasses.”

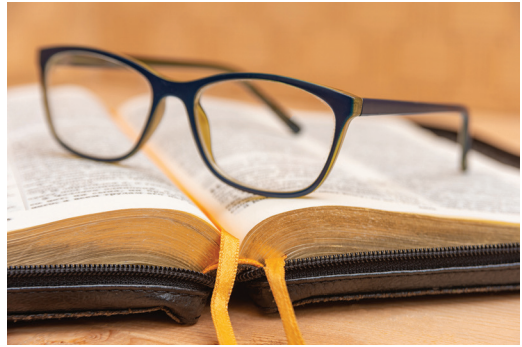


It is time to call a truce in the war between science and faith. Although the Bible is scientifically accurate beyond its time, it is not a science book. Although nature can tell us much about God, only the Bible can tell us everything we need to know about the Creator of the

universe and how to have a relationship with him. Good science and good theology go hand in hand because science and faith are friends.

The scientific understanding of the Cause of the universe matches the biblical description of God. Since God is outside of time, he can hear the

prayers of millions of people all over the world at the same time. We cannot imagine what it would be like to be outside of time because



being locked into time is all we know. If we could step out of history’s timeline and see it from God’s perspective, we could understand why God allows things to happen. We could understand the things that make us ask, “Why doesn’t God prevent that?” We could see the conclusion of all things and know that because of God’s wisdom, justice, and love, the conclusion is good.



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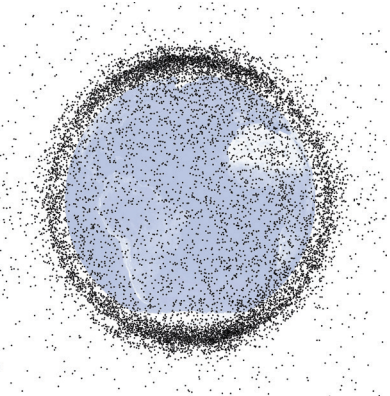
God's Presents – Man's Presence

by Don Betts

An aggregate of materials proclaims the existence of humans, especially evidenced in large cities around the world. Macadam, concrete, steel, aluminum, glass, and signage dull and lighted are in use. In addition, composites of materials that produce a desired structure or its effects are in view extensively.

The Main Street and First Avenue crossing in any given metropolis is usually devoid of any, or precious little, presence of nature, i.e., trees, flowers, or grasses. Developers bulldoze acres of transpiring flora, including old growth oaks and other hardy trees and shrubs, scraping the earth bare, then cover the space with homes or structures of various descriptions. Some of those spaces seldom, if ever, see the light of day again. Replacement trees, palms, or plants fall short of providing the aesthetic or ecological values of the natural growth they are meant to replace.

Using the elements provided by the Creator, humans have added thousands of objects that orbit in space above the Earth. Most of them, in time, will fall back to Earth or vaporize in the atmosphere. Thankfully, we rarely see these objects with the naked eye. Thus, their presence does not diminish the beauty of the blue skies and clouds by day or the unfathomable majesty of the night sky.



Space Junk

Far away from the halo of artificial light that hovers over town or city, especially the larger metropolitan areas, the remarkable beauty of stars appears in the expanse of the night sky. The stars, of course, make up the millions of galaxies in the celestial cosmos and, along with the Moon, provide the “lesser light” for our benefit when the Sun “sets.”



Human existence upon the face of God’s creation is noticeably transient. Human sojourn on Earth has left footprints that speak to the ages. Indigenous tribes leaving minimal clues, and, in time, creative master builders leaving one to ask, “How did they do that?” Currently, aspirations for larger, taller, and farther into space are coupled with expanded electronic capabilities.



A view of planet Earth from the space station reveals little of human endeavors since Adam inhaled his first breath. The tallest, most immense structure completed to date pales into insignificance alongside the Creator’s handiwork. Descriptive penning by his-



Top: © denbelitsky. Image from big stock.com; middle: ©.https://www.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/thumbnails/image/52292004124_d0c8bd35c6_o.jpg; bottom: https://blogs.nasa.gov/commercialcrew/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/HDEVView1.jpg

torians, poets, essayists, and photographers all speak to the beauty of nature and the wonders of the ball in space created and made for the habitation of God’s likeness. Holy scripture describes the universe’s origin, majesty, and mystery—all created by the omnificent God.

The creative presence of humans is made manifest by the abundance of raw materials available for all things the human imagination brings to fruition. The elements found in varying forms and possessing differing chemical or ready-to-use functions were a gift from the Creator for our inventive or intuitive use. The presence of humans is thereby noticeable, albeit limited when compared to the Divine Presence of God.

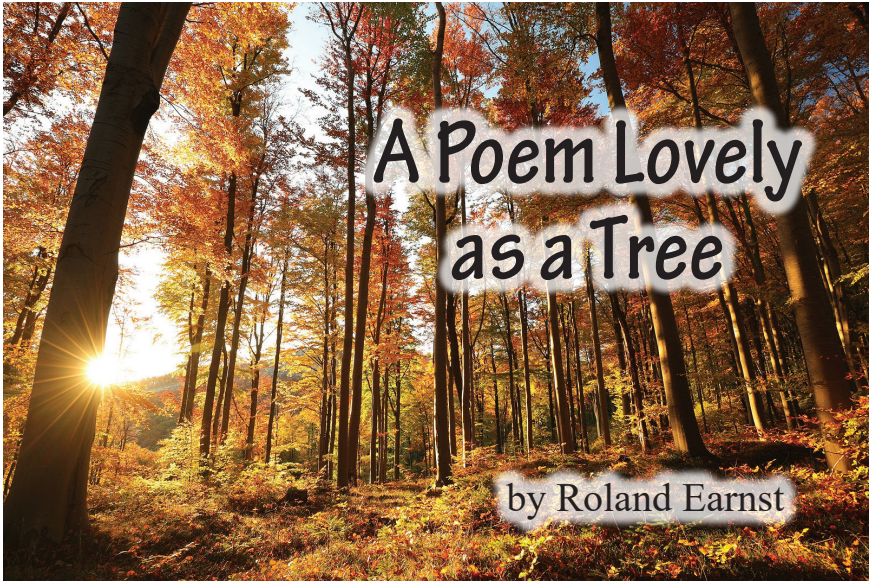
God’s physical gifts for the benefit of humanity will continue until the end of Earth’s time. The elements needed for human existence will continue to be mined, quarried, pumped, and forested. Daily blessings of air, water, and sunlight will not cease. We will continue to use those physical gifts for good or evil, ultimately making our mortal presence known.

The Creator, ever faithful, will

continue providing gifts to his children. The greatest gift of all is the hope of eternal life in his “house of many mansions” (John 14:2). He says, “You will know me by the things that I have made” (Romans 1:20). He commands, “Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).



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A Poem Lovely as a Tree

by Roland Earnst

In 1913 poet and journalist Joyce Kilmer wrote his best-known poem simply titled “Trees.” It begins with, “I think that I shall never see / A poem lovely as a tree.” In fact, poems and trees have one thing in common. They are hard to define. What one person considers poetry could be something very different to another. The same is true of a tree. How can we define a tree?

There is no universally accepted common or scientific definition of a tree. Scientists classify all plants and animals into categories such as family, genus, and species. But trees, in general, do not fit into any of those categories. You can assign any of those labels to a specific tree, but you cannot fit all trees into one classification. The best you can do is say that all trees are in the plant kingdom.

Even the common concept of a tree is a bit vague. You could say that a tree is a tall, woody plant with branches, leaves, bark, and a trunk that shows rings when you cut it down. That means what we call “palm trees” are not trees. Neither are banana trees, papaya trees, or Joshua trees. Also, bamboo is a plant that can grow to heights that exceed many trees, but we classify bamboo as grass. Many woody plants that we call shrubs or bushes can grow as tall as some trees. How tall does a bush have to grow before we call it a tree?



No matter how you define trees, consider the benefits they give us. From trees, we get wood for furniture, homes, and buildings. We get fuel for campfires and even heating homes. Without the wood from trees, our ancestors could not have built boats and wagons that allowed them to travel, explore, and spread around the world. Trees provide shade, protection from wind, and in many cases,



fruit. They can live for decades, centuries, or even thousands of years, releasing oxygen and taking in carbon dioxide to reduce Earth's greenhouse effect. We will never find a poem lovely as a tree in spring, summer, or fall.

In Genesis, we read about the progressive steps of creation as God placed on Earth first grasses, then spore bearing plants, and then trees having seeds and bearing fruit (Genesis 1:11 – 12). God told the first couple to enjoy the fruit of all the trees except one. The beauty of the paradise where God placed Adam and Eve must have been beyond description. However, the tragedy that came because of the sin of pride and disobedience did not completely destroy that beauty. A glimpse of it has remained for us to enjoy, and it inspired Joyce Kilmer to write those words, “I think that I shall never see / A poem lovely as a tree.”

No matter how you define trees, we cannot live without them. Kilmer's poem ends with, “Poems are made by fools like me, / But only God can make a tree.” God made the trees, and it was on a tree that he made the ultimate sacrifice for the sin that began with Adam and Eve (see 1 Peter 2:21 – 24). Sin has marred the beauty of the world and our lives as well. However, God has provided the solution—if we are willing to accept it.

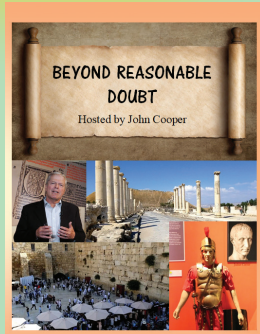


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SCIENTISTS AND GOD

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.



*Sir Arthur Eddington
(1882–1944)*

British Astronomer

English astronomer, physicist, and mathematician who is best known for being the first scientist to give observational confirmation of Einstein's General Theory of Relativity during the eclipse of May 19, 1919

“We all know that there are rare regions of the human spirit untrammelled by the world of physics. In the mystic sense of the creation around us, in the expression of art, in a yearning towards God, the soul grows upward and finds fulfillment of something implanted in its nature. The sanction for this development is within us, a striving born with our consciousness or an Inner Light proceeding from a greater power than ours. Science can scarcely question this sanction, for the pursuit of science springs from a striving which the mind is compelled to follow, a questioning that will not be suppressed. Whether in the intellectual pursuits of science or in the mystical pursuits of the spirit, the light beckons ahead and the purpose surging in our nature responds.”

Source: This quote is from his classic work titled *The Nature of the Physical World*.

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Cynthia's Corner

EVIDENCE FOR GOD IN CHANGED LIVES



Skeptics and non-believers react to evidence of God's existence with hard hearts and closed minds.

The bottom line is people want to live as they please without having to conform to God's standards. They deliberately forget or ignore that God has given us the freedom to make our own choices, but with that freedom comes accountability. Choices have consequences not only in this life but in the life to come. The Bible says all humans sin (Romans 3:23), but God is holy and cannot be tempted by evil (James 1:13). God made us in his spiritual image (Genesis 1:26–27) with an eternal soul that lives on after the body dies. Therefore, sin separates us from God not only in this life but eternally.

Our choice to deny or accept God and his Word has eternal and real consequences in this life. God says we reap what we sow (Galatians 6:7) and “your sins will find you out” (Numbers 32:23). Living to please our sinful, selfish nature can be fun for a while, but it does not last and often ends in broken relationships and broken hearts. People turn to drugs, alcohol, money, or materialism to dull their heartaches and disappointments.

God created us to love and be loved, and that is how we can live a truly fulfilled and happy life. Real love is unselfish, sacrificial, and giving, and God sets the example. He allowed his only Son to become human and face temptations, hardships, and persecutions. Finally, he experienced a cruel, slow, agonizing death on a cross (1 John 3:16). God did this because he loves us (John 3:16) and wants us to be with him in heaven. We can only love as God has shown us (1 John 4:7–12) by dying to our old, sinful selves and becoming new in mind and heart.

When we choose God over self and die to our old life in baptism, we become new in Christ (Romans 6). God not only forgives all our sins (Hebrews 8:12), but his Holy Spirit helps us overcome our sinful nature (Romans 8) and live a godly, unselfish life. As we grow in God's love (1 John 2:5) and the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22–23) we can experience real joy, happiness, peace, and contentment. We demonstrate the change in our lives by how we treat others and spend our time and money. The moral decisions we make and the priorities we set show the actual changes in our heart and mind. A life changed by God is a powerful “sermon” that unbelievers cannot deny or dismiss.

—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.

The Dead Sea Scrolls

Published by Meredith Operations Corporation,
225 Liberty St., New York, NY 10281, © 2022
\$14.99, 9" x 12" 97 pages

This book was initially printed in 2016 but has been updated and reissued in 2022. It contains a detailed history of the writing and meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The book's first section explains how the scrolls were discovered in 1947 and traces them to where they are on display today in the Shrine of the Book in Jerusalem's Israel Museum.

The book's second section deals with scrolls found in other places and their contents. The sites near the Dead Sea are Wadi Murabba'at, Nahal Hever, Nahal Se'Elim, Wadi Daliyeh, and Masada. The third section discusses the scrolls themselves and the difficulties that experts had with their fragile nature, the languages used, and the scholars involved in verifying their authenticity. Next is a discussion of the history of the time when the various scrolls were written (597 B.C. to 4 B.C.). The book also attempts to bring apocalyptic references from the book of Revelation into an understanding of the scrolls.

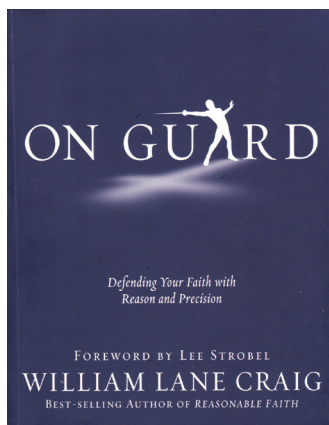
The book's third section deals with "The Custodians of the Scrolls." This involves the Essene community and the Qumran library and includes a brief discussion of the "teacher of righteousness" and his Essene roots and possible connection to Christ. This necessarily involves the Maccabees and the resistance against the Romans as well as the Essene history.

The 4th section of the book deals with the modern mechanics of studying the scrolls, how and where they have been preserved, the languages of the scrolls (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek), and other non-biblical finds. This book will be very useful for those interested in history and the credibility of the Bible.

Visit: [Facebook.com/evidence4god](https://www.facebook.com/evidence4god)

On Guard

by William Lane Craig, David C. Cook Publishing, © 2010,
\$18.99 paperback, 286 pages, ISBN-13: 978-1434764881
Also available in Audio Book, Kindle, and Audio CD.
A Study Guide and a Presenter's Edition are available.
The Presenter's Edition is designed for use in Sunday school,
youth group, or small group study.



This book is a training manual for those who wish to defend their faith with reason and precision. William Lane Craig is a Research Professor of Philosophy at the Talbot School of Theology and is probably the top apologist for Christianity in the world today. He holds several degrees in philosophy and is an accomplished debater. If you buy one book dealing with the logical philosophical arguments for the existence of God and the credibility of Jesus Christ as the Son of God, this is the one you should buy.

The book begins with a foreword by Lee Strobel explaining why such a book is needed followed by a short history of the start of Craig's education. The continuing of his evolution of faith comes in later chapters. One of the great strengths of Craig's writings is that he knows the arguments of leading atheists and skeptics and accurately states them and answers them. He discusses the question of why anything exists and the evidence that the universe had a beginning. Craig quotes experts in cosmology and answers objections.

The book carefully discusses whether God is necessary for objective morality to exist. Craig also presents a philosophical viewpoint on the question of human suffering. The last part of the book deals with the credibility of Christ, exploring the historical proof that Christ existed, who Jesus was, and whether he rose from the dead. Dr. Craig presents logical responses to the claims of skeptics and exhaustive documentation of leading philosophers and theologians. The book ends with the question of whether Jesus is the only way to God.

Craig has a kind, generous, open, sensitive, and careful treatment of the issues surrounding the proofs of the validity of Christianity. In addition, he answers the claims of those who oppose Christianity, making this book one that should be in everyone's library. We recommend it very highly.

See our videos at www.doesgodexist.tv

DANDY DESIGNS

Christmas Holly



It is an evergreen tree that can live for 500 years and grow up to 33 feet (10 meters) tall. However, it usually does not live for more than 100 years or grow taller than 10 feet (3 meters). It is often associated with Christmas because people use it in wreaths and garlands, and you see it pictured on many Christmas cards. So what does European (or English) holly (*Ilex aquifolium*),

also known as Christmas holly, have to do with Christmas?

The connection to Christmas goes back to medieval times in Europe. People said that the sharp-pointed evergreen leaves reminded them of the crown of thorns Christ was forced to wear at his crucifixion. The berries, which are red during the Christmas season, reminded them of the blood Christ shed, and the white flowers stand for purity.

European holly grows as a tree or a bush. The berries are mildly toxic to people and harmful to dogs or cats. However, they provide winter food for birds, rodents, and other animals. In addition, the flowers are sources of nectar for bees and butterflies. European holly grows in shady areas in forests, and it can form a dense thicket along forest borders. Because it is a dense evergreen with sharp points, people often use it for privacy hedges.

In its native areas of Europe and other regions, holly is an ornamental plant admired for its beauty. However, since people brought it to North America's west coast, it has become an invasive species. It thrives in the shade of forests and crowds out species native to that area.

Like other plant species, European holly has an ecological niche to fill. Problems often arise when people do something to upset the balanced relationship God has designed into nature. From the beginning, humans have done things to upset our relationship with God. That brings us back to Christmas and why God came to Earth as a man who lived a pure life and shed his blood on the cross to redeem us. Christmas holly reminds us of that.

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Amazing Chickadees

If you have a bird feeder on your property, you are probably familiar with chickadees found throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The six North American chickadee species do not have large fat reserves like some birds. Instead, their trim size gives them more mobility to evade predators such as cats or sharp-shinned hawks. However, it also means chickadees must find enough fuel daily to maintain their metabolism.



One way chickadees survive is by lowering their body temperature at night. A chickadee's daytime body temperature is 108 degrees Fahrenheit, but it drops to around 86 degrees at night. This controlled hypothermia is a nocturnal semi-hibernation that slows their metabolism by about 25%. The next day, they must find enough food to maintain their daytime metabolism while replacing fat lost the previous night.

Besides the seeds at our bird feeders, chickadees eat caterpillars, insects, spiders, and conifer seeds. Since chickadees do not migrate south for the winter, they store food for use during the cold months. Their stockpiles exist in various places, such as wedged into pine needle clusters or tree bark or even pounded into the ground. In addition, they store food in the lower branches of conifer trees, so it will be available when the upper branches are covered with snow.

Storing food for later use requires remembering where it is, and studies have shown that chickadees can remember where they stored items for months. The hippocampus is the area of the brain involved in memory and spatial learning. When food storage moves into high gear in the fall, the chickadee brain grows new neurons in the hippocampus. Their brain stores visual cues such as the spatial relationship between significant landmarks, allowing them to remember their cache locations from fall until the following spring. The complexity of chickadees is extraordinary. They are another example of God's design in the natural world, enabling the survival of a small creature we take for granted.

-> **History at York University, York, Neb.**

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).

BIBLE GOSPELS AND APOCRYPHAL GOSPELS: Skeptics have written many books trying to deny that Jesus was anything more than a strange aberration of history. Some of these books are written by authors who claim to be experts, and many of the writings have been promoted in the tabloids or on television as revealing some new discovery about Jesus from sources outside of the biblical gospels known as the apocryphal gospels.

We have seen claims that Jesus was a peasant cynic philosopher, a leader of a hallucinogenic cult, or married to Mary Magdalene. The authors base those claims on the so-called apocryphal gospels such as the Gospel of Peter, the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Hebrews, the Infancy Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Judas, and the Gospel of Philip. None of these apocryphal gospels have any validity compared to the biblical gospels we have in the New Testament.

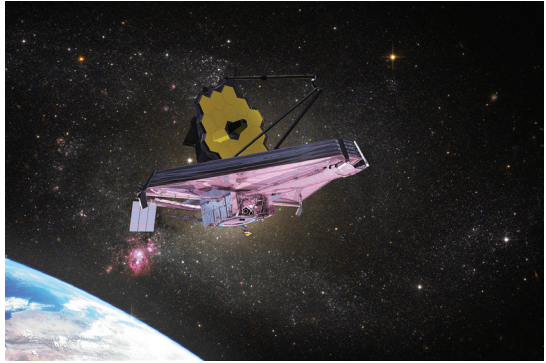
The apocryphal gospels appeared in the second half of the second century, influenced by pagan Gnostic philosophy competing with the true gospel. In contrast to those late manuscripts, the biblical gospel writers lived during the lifetime of Christ and in the formative years of the church. Archaeology has verified the characters and many of the events described in the gospels. You can trust the biblical gospels and believe they are accurate and contain the Word of God. Any attempt to discredit them fails in the face of the evidence and the weakness of claimed alternatives to the message they contain.



JAMES WEBB SPACE TELESCOPE: On July 12, 2022, NASA released the first public images from the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST), launched on December 25, 2021. JWST is a remarkable tool of astronomy that can see objects in outer space not visible to Earth-bound telescopes. Dr. Scott Acton is a 1984 Abilene Christian University graduate and a scientist who worked on the JWST for almost 24 years. As a Christian, he said, “Seeing these images will increase your faith.”

As a remarkable tool of astronomy, the JWST enables us to expand our understanding of the incredible size and magnitude of the creation. As the tools of observation improved, astronomers realized that our Milky Way galaxy was just one of many. Thanks to the JWST, we can now see countless galaxies that astronomers have never seen before, and each one contains billions of stars, many of which have planets orbiting them.

These distant galaxies send out all kinds of light—not just visible light. The JWST can see the light invisible to our eyes and see it without the obstruction of our



atmosphere. That light can tell us the history of the cosmos and testify to the truthfulness of what the Bible says about creation.

In Job 38:6–7, God says to Job, “Upon what are the foundations of the earth fastened and who do you think laid the cornerstone when the morning stars sang together?” Dr. Acton said that he imagined the galaxies singing: “Not in any kind of language that people could understand, but certainly the emotion we can understand. I would call that emotion joy. It’s almost like the galaxies or the universe was happy that after all this time, we could finally see them.”



PARENTAL RIGHTS IN EDUCATION: What rights should parents have concerning the education of their children? Unfortunately, with the current theories about sexual identity, race, and learning, parental rights and input have been shoved aside as schools struggle with pressure from special interest groups. This is especially true if parents want to give their children spiritual instruction at home that is not opposed by secular learning at school.

ParentalRights.org reports that 39 states have no statutes that expressly define and protect parental rights. The Goldwater Institute

(January 2020) reports that 47 states do not grant parents the right to review the learning materials and activities before their use. The Heritage Foundation (May 2019) says that 12 states do not allow parents to be involved in their schools' sex ed curriculum. As a result, schools are forcing many things on very young children without their parent's consent or knowledge.

The transgender movement in America has become a fad, with many children being pressured by school officials encouraging kids to change their gender identity. This is called "affirmative care" and can even involve the use of drugs to catalyze a child's movement away from their birth sex. Unfortunately, the long-term effect of this kind of counseling, especially the drugs and surgical procedures used, is destructive.

The introduction of critical race theory to young children without the knowledge or consent of their parents is another concern. Children are being taught that all white parents are racist or that all black parents feel that no matter how hard they work, their success will be limited by their skin color. That is simply not true. The terrible history of race relations in this country, neglected in the past, must be presented in history class. A first grader of any race should receive a positive picture of the American dream and that all humans are of equal value.

If public education is to survive, it must acknowledge parental rights, allowing parents to determine their children's moral, sexual, and racial training. Parents must not be excluded from the process of making public schools neutral on these issues. As it is now, America is becoming a police state where parents have no rights and children are forced into a framework that violates what public education is all about.



SYNTHETIC EMBRYOS: Can a baby be produced in a laboratory without sperm and an egg? The answer for mice, at least, is a partial "yes." Researchers at the Weizmann Institute of Sciences in Israel produced a "lab-created womb" in which they placed mouse stem cells producing a mouse embryo. The synthetic embryo "lived" for eight days.

Researchers could coax stem cells into a placenta or yolk sac by treating them with chemicals. Then other stem cells developed into organs and tissues without intervention by the researchers. Some turned into beating heart tissue or a rudimentary nervous system. However, 99.5% of the stem cells failed.

This kind of research has a practical purpose beyond producing a synthetic embryo. For example, scientists hope to eventually grow human organs in a synthetic womb to replace diseased organs for which no donor is available. Scientists have already used this system

to produce rudimentary artificial kidneys and hearts, but they are not yet suitable for medical use. Researchers are also hoping to find a way to nurture premature babies outside of the mother's womb.

Like many efforts to produce life, researchers are copying natural processes to create a synthetic embryo of a mouse. The debate among philosophers and ethics professionals concerns philosophical and ethical problems with this type of medical research.

The struggle to duplicate the design of reproduction that God built into living things shows us how impossible it is to believe that the original creation was the product of blind chance. As Paul wrote to the Romans, "We can know there is a God through the things he has made (Romans 1:20).



PLACEBO TREATMENT: *Reader's Digest* published an article by Lia Grainger titled "The Placebo Cure." That article tells about a man diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. He became part of a study to see if a drug used to treat type 2 diabetes could also help treat Parkinson's.

When the study began, the patient immediately started feeling better. His joints ached less, he could move more easily, and he was able to start taking walks around the neighborhood. He said his memory was more robust, and he was convinced he was daily receiving the new drug.



It turned out that he had been given a placebo.

The article defines the "placebo effect" as when the brain convinces the body that the fake treatment is authentic. Doctors have been using placebos for a very long time. One study showed that 89% of physicians used placebo treatment at least once a month. The scientific community only poorly understands this effect, but it is genuine and not questioned by medical researchers.

The design of the human body is one of God's finest creations. Our minds have incredible power over the physical needs of our bodies, and it seems to be unique to humans and not a product of evolution or a chance process. Our drug-saturated culture tends to throw a chemical at every problem. God has built into us an incredible number of ways in which our bodies fight disease and physical impairments.

We need to quickly emphasize that we are not saying there is no need for antibiotics, vaccines, or medical treatments. But, at the same time, we need to understand



that we “are fearfully and wonderfully made” (Psalm 139:14). One part of that is how our brains help our bodies maintain a high level of physical well-being.

MISUNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF PRAYER:

We often find both atheists and believers misunderstanding the concept of prayer. Atheists see prayer as a crutch and an exercise in futility. Madalyn O’Hair, the leading atheist in the late 1900s, was fond of saying, “No god ever answered any prayer at any time, nor ever will.” Other atheists have said that a god who needs his ego fed by the constant praise of humans is not worth having. For many believers, prayer is a crutch to lean on when you are in trouble.

Some religions view prayer as a payment to their concept of god. They see prayer as something their god commands as a price of membership or payment for blessings received. The Christian prayer, as presented in the Bible, is very different. The Christian concept of prayer is not to boost God’s ego or to inform him about a situation. Instead, Matthew 6:8 tells us, “...your Father knows what you need before you ask him.” Jesus followed that statement with a model prayer acknowledging God’s power and glory, recognizing that everything we need comes from him, and seeking his forgiveness as we forgive others.

Because prayer is integral to spiritual health, it is also a huge contributor to good mental health. Humans need to look to a higher power. Passages like Matthew 7:7–8; Luke 11:9–10; and John 14:13–14 do not promise physical comfort but spiritual results. James 4:2–7 makes it abundantly clear that prayer is not a selfish request for physical pleasure. Those who do not see their prayers answered in the way they desire may misunderstand the concept and purpose of prayer.



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The Promise of a New Year reminds us of how much we appreciate your support. We pray that 2023 will be a great year for you and your family.

Thank You from
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