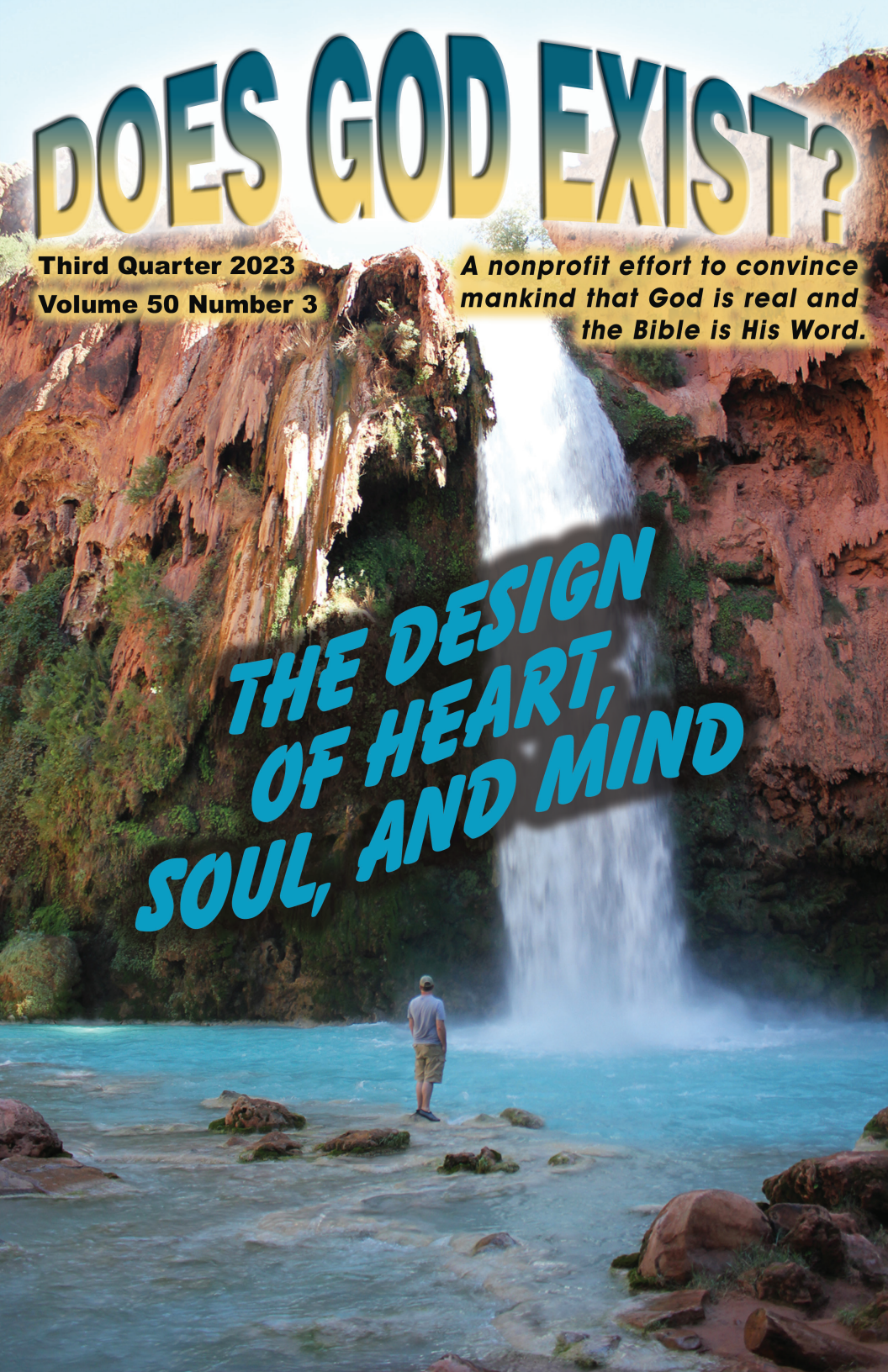


DOES GOD EXIST?

**Third Quarter 2023
Volume 50 Number 3**

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

**THE DESIGN
OF HEART,
SOUL, AND MIND**



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I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

Psalm 139:14 NIV

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A photograph of a man in a light blue shirt and shorts standing on a rocky ledge in front of a large, powerful waterfall. The water is cascading down a reddish-brown rock face into a pool of bright blue water. The scene is lush with greenery.

THE DESIGN OF HEART, SOUL, AND MIND

Have you ever had your heart broken? Experiences in our lives tug at us in a way that affects our physical well-being. According to Wikipedia, “Broken heart is a metaphor for the intense emotional stress or pain one feels at experiencing great and deep longing. The concept is cross-cultural, often cited concerning unreciprocated or lost love.” In other words, it is not a minor bump on life’s road.

The medical term is “stress-induced cardiomyopathy,” caused by a surge of stress hormones. It can cause dramatic changes in the heart’s rhythm and blood pressure. Mental health experts tell us that heartbreak goes through various stages of denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.

Psalm 139:14 finds David saying, “I will praise you [God] for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are your works, and that my soul knows very well.” In Mark 12:30, Jesus refers to the ten commandments by saying that the greatest commandment tells us to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind” God has created these three designed parts of a human that are present in all of us. This is why Jesus gave his followers the unique command to love not only their brothers but even their enemies. That command is centered on the fact that all humans are of infinite worth because they are created in God’s image.



The naturalist philosophy would say that all love is only in the brain, but the Bible tells us there is more to human emotions than the physical heart and brain. The Old Testament uses the term “heart” (Hebrew, *leb* and “*lebab*) in many different ways. Only 29 of those uses refer to physical existence. It means inner life or character 257 times. Another 166 times, it refers to emotional states of consciousness, including intoxication, joy, sorrow, courage, or fear. It references intellectual activities 204 times. (For example, see 1 Kings 3:9 and Exodus 28:30.) Finally, 195 times, these words refer to volition or purpose (for example, 1 Samuel 2:35) (reference: *The New Bible Dictionary*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids).

In Luke 24:32, when Jesus appeared to Cleopas and his friend, they said, “Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us on the road?” The brain is an essential part of our physical being, but we believe that how we act is not just a function of our brain. The fact that we are created in the image of God has to do with our spiritual makeup, not the physical. Our brain brings information to the body, but God’s Spirit also works on us. Acts 2:38 tells us that when we are baptized into Christ, we “receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

The bottom line is that our physical hearts are vital for existence, but there is something not physical within us that we refer to as the “heart.” Jesus said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37). The design of heart, soul, and mind working together in harmony to love God allows us to love one another. The apostle John wrote,

“If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar, for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?”

Our heart must be right to follow the instructions of Jesus, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this, all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:34–35).

—John N. Clayton



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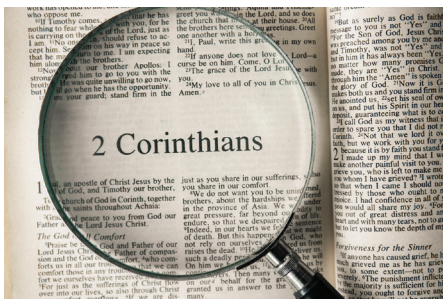
The Difference Between Pain and Suffering

One of the attributes unique to humans is the ability to suffer. You may think the words “suffering” and “pain” are synonyms, but they describe different things. The difference between pain and suffering demonstrates the uniqueness of humans.

Pain is a physical characteristic of almost all living things. It is easy to show that when a nervous system experiences a violent stimulus, it produces an electric signal. For animals, the nervous system is connected to a muscular system that frees the organism from damaging stimuli. This design is present in all members of the animal kingdom to protect them from being wiped out by predators or destructive environmental agents.

The difference between pain and suffering shows us that suffering is a different response and serves a different purpose. Romans 8:16–18 tells us that Christians are joint heirs with Christ and that Christians will suffer with Christ. This means that “the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us.” It is obvious that not all Christians have been physically crucified as Jesus was.

In 2 Corinthians 1:5–7, Paul writes, “For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so ... we endure the same sufferings ... for your salvation and our hope for you is knowing that you are partakers in the suffering.”



In Philippians 3:8–10, Paul says that he has suffered the loss of all things and refers to the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. In Colossians 1:24, Paul talks about his sufferings for the church in Colossae. Hebrews 2:10 refers to Christ enabling his followers to be made perfect in their salvation through sufferings. Christ himself, according to Hebrews 5:8, “earned obedience by the things he suffered.” This theme is repeated in 1 Peter 1:11; 4:13; and 5:10.

The context of all of these passages is clear. There is a difference between pain and suffering. We are not talking about physical things like being burned, scourged, tortured, or beaten. The early Christians did endure those things, but that is not what the passages above describe.

The simplest example of the sufferings described is what we endure when we have what we call a broken heart. Having heartbreak does not refer to something physical. Most of us who have had our hearts broken would be glad to take a beating instead. A physical beating does not last long. I have had physical pain from a beating, but that pain is a distant memory. The heartbreak of watching my wife die is still heavy upon me, even though it happened more than a decade ago.

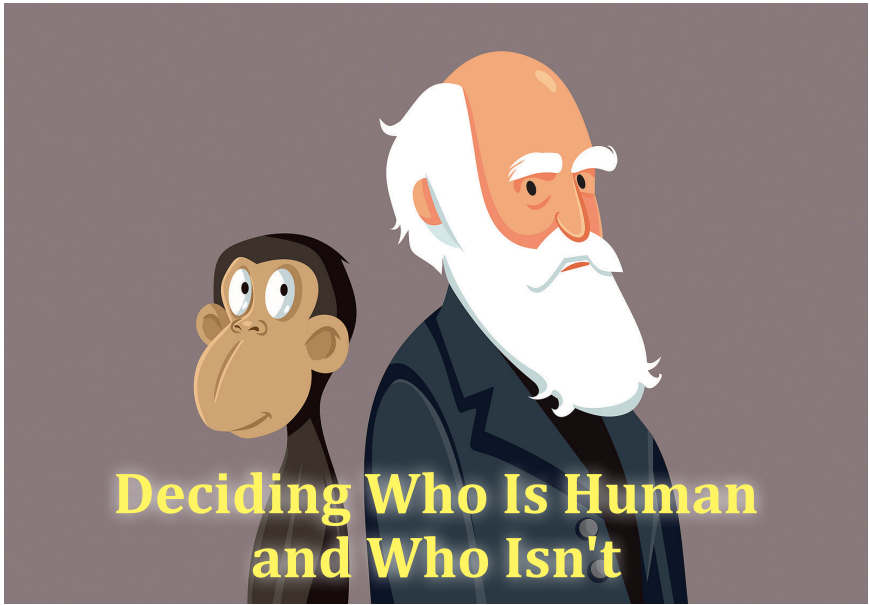
Christians in today's world share some of the sufferings that first-century Christians endured. Some of us have suffered being rejected and disowned by family. Others have lost good jobs because of their faith. Speaking out in favor of Christ and Christianity can result in verbal abuse, ridicule, ostracism, exclusion, and rejection. This suffering is real and scars you emotionally and sometimes spiritually.



Animals do not show evidence of the kind of suffering we described. Animal behavior is based on food and instinctive drives to reproduce. Guilt, empathy, and sympathy are not part of animal behavior. Claims of grief in animals such as elephants may or may not be real. If it is real, it is based on the social structure of the pack or group and not because the animal is suffering from the memory of a loss that will extend for the rest of the animal's life.

We can see the difference between pain and suffering in humans because we have a unique spiritual makeup that allows suffering and enables us to relate to the suffering of others. Because we are created in the image of God, we can understand how an agape type of love is possible. That is why Christianity is the one hope the world has for the peace of all people. Your soul suffers, and this suffering can last a lifetime. We need to help animals avoid pain, but human empathy is what may someday foster world peace. That hope is always before us and is unique to humans.

—JNC



The Bible tells us that humans are created in the image of God, giving us a spiritual nature—a soul. That means all races and sexes of humans are equal. Galatians 3:28 says it well, “you are all one in Christ Jesus.” While that is speaking of Christians, it applies to all humans since anyone can become a Christian. Those who reject belief in God have a harder time deciding who is human and who is not.

In the past, people justified slavery based on the claim that certain racial groups were not human and thus could be exploited by those deemed human. People today use the same illogic to justify abortion.

People use various criteria for deciding who is human and who is

not. For example, when I was a young college student in the 1950s, we were told that the ability to make and use tools was the deciding factor. That teaching was nullified when researchers found that many animals make and use tools. For example, researchers have seen macaques in Phang Nga Bay, Thailand,



crack nuts with stones and discard sharp flakes, similar to early human tools.

Anthropologists have suggested that the ability to recognize yourself in a mirror is evidence of self-awareness and is a cognitive ability unique to humans. One reason for this interpretation is that

chimps and orangutans show they recognize themselves when they look in a mirror. That led to the conclusion that chimps, orangutans, and humans are all one family. However, a recent study of bluestreak cleaner wrasses by cognitive scientists at Osaka Metropolitan University in Japan has shown that these inch-long fish can recognize themselves in a mirror.



When researchers put a parasite-like mark on cleaner wrasses' throats and allowed the fish to see their reflection in a mirror, they rubbed

themselves on rocks to remove the mark. The wrasse could also pick its picture out of four photos that included three other wrasses. It is essential to point out that self-awareness allows the physical survival of these fish because the wrasses eat parasites off the bodies of other fish. Knowing which fish will seek their help and which will eat them involves recognizing faces. This private awareness is a survival feature God has given them and does



Cleaner wrasses cleaning a large fish



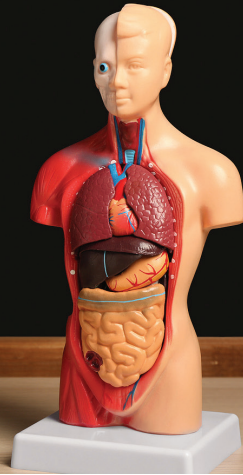
not translate to emotions, thoughts, or language.

Humans are unique because of our spiritual nature, created in God's image. Therefore, other criteria for deciding who is human and who is not are doomed to failure.

JNC

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The Heart Is On the Left



When I was in high school, a required health course involved a plastic model of the human body with the organs visible. We named the model “Oscar.” We learned that correct internal organ placement is essential. Getting all the organs into Oscar was difficult because they were hard plastic, and not all are symmetrical. We learned that the heart is on the left, but we did not know why.

We learned there is a reason for the brain to be at the top of the body to avoid a stroke. The pressure in a column of liquid is greater at the bottom than at the top. For that reason, a blood vessel can rupture in our feet but we can still survive. If our brain were in the lower part of the body, a broken blood vessel would lead to a stroke.

So what determines where our organs are placed? A recent study led by Harvard Medical School researchers gave some answers to that question. In early embryonic development, a cluster of cells called the left-right organizer contains some hair-like structures called motile cilia. They sense the biomechanical forces that shape the body plan. The cilia beat rapidly, moving extracellular fluid in the correct direction to move organs to the proper place to function most efficiently.

Incorrect left-right placement of the internal organs can result in various disorders, including heterotaxy syndrome and primary ciliary dyskinesia. These disorders can cause recurring respiratory infections and congenital heart disease.

In Psalm 139:10–14, David speaks of God forming him in the womb. In verse 14, David says, “I will praise you, God, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made” The more we learn about how our bodies are designed and formed, the more we understand the truth of that statement.

—JNC



Why We Need Tears

The human body is amazing. Things we take for granted or try to explain in simple ways are incredibly complex when we fully understand how they work. Tears are a classic example. In 1662 Danish scientist Niels Stensen discovered that the lacrimal gland in the corner of each eye is the source of our tears. The word “lacrimal” comes from *lacrima*, the Latin word for tear.

Human eyes produce three different types of tears, each with different purposes.

BASAL AND REFLEX TEARS

The first is basal tears that clean and lubricate the eyes. Secondly, we produce reflex tears in response to environmental stresses. For example, we experience this kind of tears when we cut an onion or are exposed to smoke or dirt.

EMOTIONAL TEARS

The third type, emotional tears, are more mysterious. These tears contain a complex mix of salt-water mixed with antibodies, oils, and enzymes not present in basal tears. Emotional tears carry protein-based hormones, including leucine-enkephalin, a natural painkiller released when the body is under stress. Crying causes the release of oxytocin and endorphins, which are chemicals that help us feel better.



Emotional tears confirm to others that we are truly happy or very sad. They are different from other tears since only humans release emotional tears in moments of joy or sorrow to communicate and share our emotions. The limbic system in the brain, which is associated with emotional arousal, triggers the production of emotional tears. Crying can generate social support because emotional tears tell others we need help.



People who shed emotional tears and receive support from others feel better. One difference between emotional tears and other tears is that we can have some control over them. However, holding back the tears or not receiving social and moral support leaves a person feeling less satisfied. These tears can bring us together for spiritual and emotional healing. As humans, we have unique needs because of our relationship with each other and with God. That is one of the many factors to show that God created us in his image.

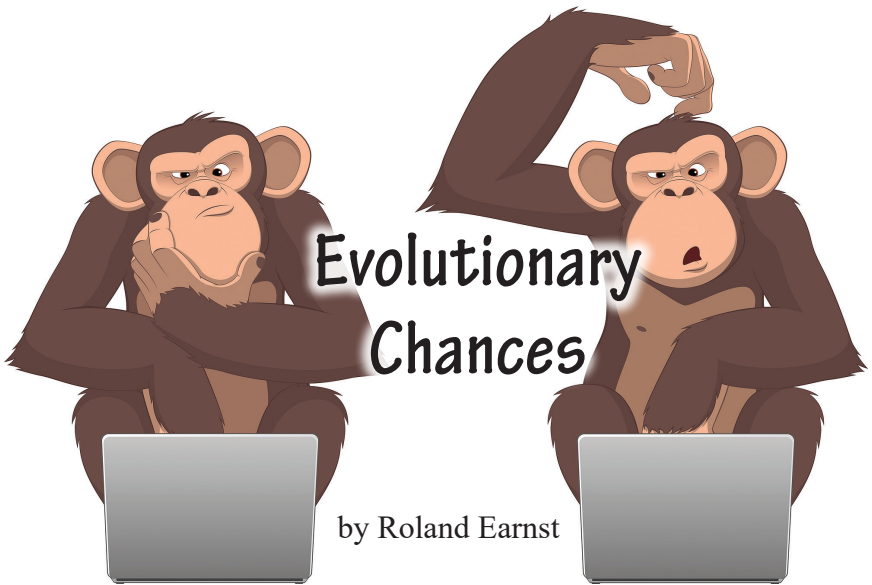
Babies do not have fully developed lacrimal glands, so they cannot produce visible tears until they are seven or eight months old. Instead, they audibly cry when they need attention. As humans mature, emotional tears indicate a broad range of needs and feelings, including compassion, empathy, and sentimental or moral feelings. The average human produces 15 to 30 gallons of tears a year.



It is incredible that such a simple thing as tears has such a complex design and serves many different purposes. The bottom line is that our Creator knows everything about us, even our tears. "You have kept record of my

days of wandering. You have stored my tears in your bottle and counted each of them" (Psalm 56:8 CEV).

—JNC



Advocates of unguided naturalistic evolution say that evolution could have gone in many directions, and we are lucky to be here. But what are the chances of evolution producing you and me as we are today? Evolutionists say the chances are 100% since we are already here. But, if we go back to the cosmic creation event, or big bang, the chances that naturalistic evolution would have put us here are zero. On the other hand, if God planned and guided the creation because he had us in mind, the chances would be 100%.

The DNA that makes us who we are physically is a highly complex strand of information. What are the chances that it could have written itself by chance? First of all, information comes from intelligence, not chance. Calculating the likelihood of something after it has happened is a statistical fallacy. After all, DNA is here, and so are we, so the chances are 100%. But what are the chances if we go back before the fact? What



DNA Structure

are the chances that non-living chemicals could come together in a just-right way to form the first living cell? Then what is the statistical evidence for that first cell multiplying and modifying by random chance mutations and natural selection to create humans?

One imagined scenario involves a billion chimpanzees typing on a billion keyboards for a billion years, accidentally typing one line of

Shakespeare. What are the chances of that? Well, the short answer is that it will never happen. Computer keyboards have various numbers of keys, from about 78 to 109. Let us simplify by selecting 100 keys for our keyboard.

Forget Shakespeare. Let us go for the line “I love you more.” without quotation marks. That is a total of 16 letters, spaces, and a period. With 100 keys and 16 letters, what are the chances of accidentally typing that line? To compute that, you would have to multiply 100 by itself 16 times, which can be expressed as 100^{16} or 10^{32} . That is ten quadrillion quadrillion possible 16-letter combinations.

I love you
More 

Typing continuously at a speed equivalent to 45 words per minute, it would take trillions of years to have a 50/50 chance that one of those chimps would type that phrase. Absolutely nobody thinks that the Earth is trillions of years old. Nobody even suggests that the universe is that old. For this thought experiment, we are only looking for one short line of text, “I love you more.” That is 16 items compared to about 3.2 billion bases in the human genome. Typing that line is nothing compared to the complex system of life on this planet.

The bottom line is that we cannot explain life or the fine-tuned physical constants of the universe by chance alone. But we can explain those things if God planned and guided the creation because he had us in mind. With God, our chances of being here were 100% from the beginning (see Genesis 1:1 and 26–28).

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According to Darwinian evolution, all life forms can trace their heritage to a common ancestor. From that first life form, branches diverged to form a tree of life. At some point, those branches split again. When two life forms on different branches develop a similar characteristic that their last common ancestor did not have, scientists call it convergent evolution. There are many examples, such as dolphins and bats. Both use echolocation for navigating or finding food, but they cannot be closely related.



Another example is animals that can fly including insects, birds, and mammals such as bats. Nobody claims that these creatures have a common ancestor that could fly. However, they all use aerodynamic principles and wings to defy gravity. We see similar mouthparts in animals that suck blood, such as mosquitos and fleas. Both are insects but not closely related. We can say the same for insects that suck nectar from flowers, such as bees and butterflies.

Many plants produce edible fruits to encourage animals to scatter their seeds. That includes tomatoes, apples, and raspberries — which

are not related. We find similar types of eyes in very dissimilar animals. Birds, butterflies, and even some plants use structural coloration, even though they are unrelated and live in very different ecosystems.

According to evolutionary scientists, one of the most dramatic examples of convergent evolution is found in thousands of plants that use ants to disperse their seeds. The plants attach food bodies called elaiosomes to their seeds. The elaiosomes are rich in nutrients to attract ants. The ants carry the seeds to their colonies, where they eat the elaiosomes and discard the seeds. Scientists say that over 11,000 plant species developed this technique, called myrmecochory, more than 100 times independently. How could that happen? Evolutionists call it convergent evolution, but could it perhaps be evidence for design in plants?

A repeated convergence appears in the crab-like body shape. A crab has a flat, rounded shell, and a tail that tucks under its body. Evolutionary biologists say that body plan has “evolved” at least five times. This convergence is so common that scientists have named it carcinization. However, they can only guess why it happened.

The result of carcinization is that many crustaceans that are



not closely related have a crab shape, and we often call them crabs, even though they are not true crabs. A familiar example is the so-called king crab on the opposite page. Crab-shaped animals come in a wide range of sizes and

live in various habitats, from the oceans to the mountains.

With these creatures living in diverse ecosystems, scientists have difficulty explaining why they evolved the same body plan. One suggestion by researchers is greater safety from predators because the body shape allows them to move sideways.

Evolutionary biologists may be unable to explain how various species independently evolved the same traits, but they insist that these are all examples of convergent evolution. In other words, evolution is intelligent and uses the same ideas in various species. Rather than convergent evolution, could the common traits be explained by a common Creator? Could an intelligent Creator have used the same creative ideas in multiple species? Which is the best explanation of the evidence? We suggest that evidence for design in living things calls for a Designer of life.

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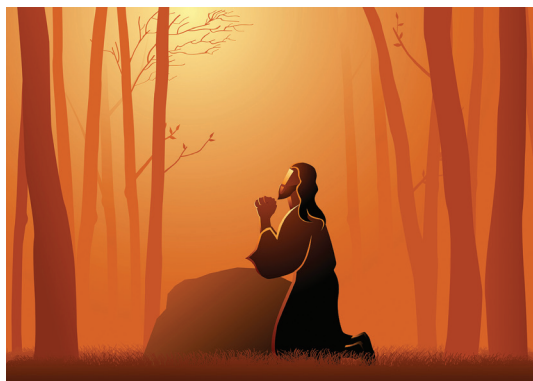
Broken Heart Syndrome

by Roland Earnst

The medical name is takotsubo cardiomyopathy, but a more common name is “broken heart syndrome.” Extreme stress or emotions can cause it, such as losing a dear loved one. A “broken heart” can temporarily weaken your physical heart muscle. Research has shown a person has a 41% increase in the risk of dying in the first six months after losing a spouse.

Extreme emotional stress increases the release of the hormones cortisol, adrenaline, and norepinephrine while causing a reduction in the feel-good hormones of oxytocin, dopamine, and serotonin. The result can be broken heart syndrome with depression, poor sleep, fatigue, anxiety, high blood pressure, and physical pain.

I have often heard of broken heart syndrome used in connection with Jesus as he agonized in prayer before the crucifixion. After all, while Jesus was fully God, he was also fully man. He was “tempted in all things just as we are” (Hebrews 4:15). But what about the disciples? They had spent three years with him. He was their closest friend as well as their teacher/rabbi. They had begun to recognize that he was the Messiah who had come to restore God’s kingdom. Imagine the shock they



experienced when they saw him crucified like a common criminal. They must have considered the three years they spent with Jesus all for nothing, and their faith in God must have been shaken.

Broken heart syndrome literally changes the structure of your heart, even though we know that the physical organ is not the center of our emotions. So you could say that those disciples were broken-hearted emotionally and physically. They fled, and hid, and wept, and pondered. They were in despair.

However, in a few days, they became bold proclaimers of Christ. They had a new courage that they never had before. They were not afraid of the Roman authorities or the Jewish leaders. There is only one possible explanation for the change. They saw, heard, touched, and even ate with the resurrected Christ.

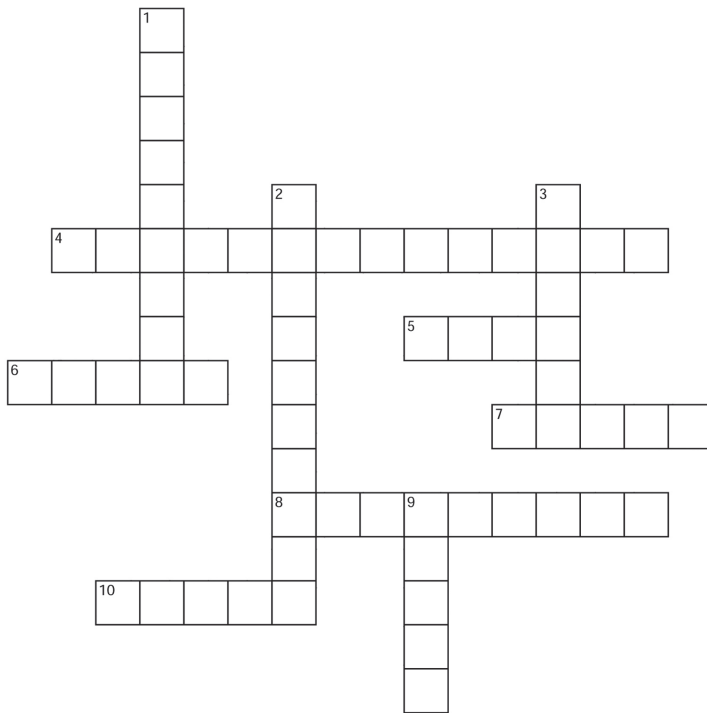


The disciples were in agony for two days, but on the third day, their broken hearts were restored to “brave hearts.” They never stopped proclaiming Christ’s resurrection, even though their lives were tragically shortened because of their message. There is no way to explain their courage except that they knew first-hand that their message was true.



Does God Exist? 3rd Quarter 2023 Crossword

Solve this puzzle based on the articles on pages 3–17



Across

- [4]** Medical term for a broken heart.
[5] The chances of naturalistic evolution putting us here is _____.
[6] Humans are unique because we are all created in God's _____.
[7] The psalmist David wrote that God counts our _____.
[8] Only humans produce _____ tears.
[10] Broken heart syndrome changes the structure of your physical _____.

Down

- [1]** There is a difference between pain and _____.
[2] Evolutionists explain unrelated life forms having similar features as _____ evolution.
[3] Having your brain at the top helps avoid a _____.
[9] There are _____ kinds of tears.

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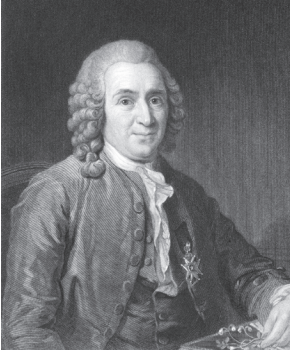
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SCIENTISTS AND GOD

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

CARL LINNAEUS (1707 – 1778)



Swedish botanist, zoologist,
taxonomist, and physician.
One of the founders of ecology.
Formulated binomial
nomenclature – the modern
system of naming organisms.

“God infinite, omniscient and omnipotent, woke me up and I was amazed! I have read some clues through His created things, in all of which, is His will; even in the smallest things, and the most minute! How much wisdom! What an inscrutable perfection!”

From *Imperium Naturæ*, 12th edition, quoted in https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Carl_Linnaeus

“Theologically, man is to be understood as the final purpose of the creation; placed on the globe as the masterpiece of the works of omnipotence, contemplating the world by virtue of sapient reason, forming conclusions by means of his senses, it is in His works that man recognizes the almighty Creator”

Quoted in https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Carl_Linnaeus

Cynthia's Corner



THE EYE IS THE LAMP OF THE BODY

God has blessed me with a healthy body except for glaucoma and macular degeneration in my eyes. Modern medicine can use God's design of the eye to enable me to retain my sight. My glaucoma has been addressed by surgically putting in a bleb—a flap that allows fluid inside the eye to escape so the internal pressure remains low. New medications have helped keep the pressure down and minor surgeries have kept the bleb working well.

These medical and surgical treatments work because of the doctor's knowledge of God's design of the eye. This experience has led me to understand and have a deeper appreciation for the complexity and intricacies of all of God's designs. The Psalmist says, "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14).

I no longer take my vision for granted but cherish and sincerely appreciate every day of seeing. I love reading and especially reading God's Word. I know that those who are blind have other ways of hearing what God says, but it is an incredible blessing to be able to read it over and over and meditate on what it says.

In Matthew 6:22–23 Jesus says, "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness." These verses are from the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus talks about earthly treasures and heavenly treasures. In 1 John 1:5–7, we read, "God is light, in him there is no darkness at all." John goes on to say that walking in the light leads us to have fellowship with him and one another "and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin." John writes in 2:11, "But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them."

God created us to see and be guided by spiritual light, which is even more important than visible light. Just as we can shut our eyes and cut off the visible light, we can choose to reject the spiritual light, causing us to live in darkness. Indeed, "How great is that darkness."

—Cynthia Clayton

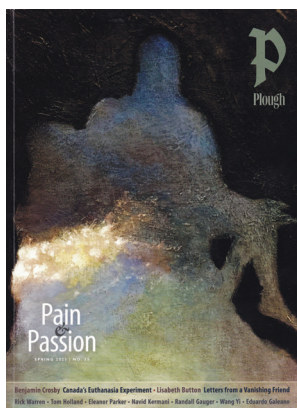
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This quarterly is published by an Anabaptist group known as the Bruderhof Communities. They promote what they call “radical discipleship in the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount,” attempting to follow what they believe was the practice of the first-century church in Acts 2 and 4. They renounce private property and share everything in common while “seeking to live a life of nonviolence, justice, and service to others.” The Bruderhof Communities operate 29 settlements in the U.S., England, Germany, Australia,

Paraguay, South Korea, and Austria.

This quarterly contains essays, poetry, and discussions of Bible teachings. We have found each volume to be very thoughtful and helpful in dealing with the issues in today’s world. For example, the Spring 2023 issue of *Plough* had an excellent article on Canada’s embracing of euthanasia. It also contained several biblical discussions of pain and suffering, one of which is by Rick Warren. The issue also included discussions of the ecological problems we face in our age of climate change.

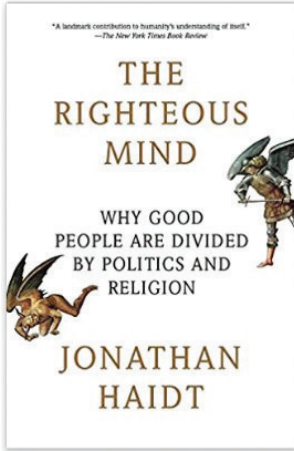
This is a very challenging publication with scholarly approaches to the issues of our day. Although you may not agree with everything in it, it is a helpful resource for understanding those issues.

Visit the Clayton Museum of Ancient History
at York University, York, Nebraska

The Righteous Mind

by Jonathan Haidt, Vintage Books reprint © 2013
\$18.00 paperback, 528 pages, ISBN-13: 978-0307455772

The subtitle of this well-written book is “Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion.” Haidt is a social psychologist and the Thomas Cooley Professor of Ethical Leadership at New York



University’s Stern School of Business. This book is a psychological discussion of why people believe what they believe. Haidt is not promoting religion or morality, and the book is an academic discussion using Darwinian theorizing to explain what we see in a wide range of areas that affect us all.

There are times when Haidt is downright brutal and shows why some of the weak parts of our civilization believe and function as they do. His analysis of politics and atheism is especially accurate and critical. Although not a believer, he treats religion fairly and accurately. He examines the question of

why morality can and should exist and explains why moral standards differ between different groups.

This is not a book promoting biblical standards of morality, and Haidt’s discussion of religion is very broad, viewing religion in a universalist framework. His treatment is accurate for most religions and most denominations. Haidt does not hold the Bible, or any religious book, as having absolute Truth. Since most religious belief systems are human-made, his evolutionary explanations are helpful and accurate.

The book has many quotes, and the documentation is very thorough. It shows the failure of atheism and secularism to produce workable moral frameworks to live by. Haidt’s purpose is to promote a psychological approach to morality that allows humans on an academic level to “disagree more constructively.” However, trying to do that from a Darwinian belief system ignores the moral framework Jesus gave to promote peace and understanding. This is not a book for the average reader but would be helpful for college students and academics trying to understand the combative nature of today’s society.

For documents and archives of this journal plus booklets and more: www.doesgodexist.org

DANDY DESIGNS

Painted Lady Butterfly



We can find some of the most incredible demonstrations of design in the insect world. Survival in places where very cold winters exist presents a challenge for insects. Some can bury deep underground, but that is not always practical. Another method of avoiding being wiped out by freezing temperatures

is migrating to warmer areas for the winter.

The painted lady butterfly (*Vanessa cardui*) is one of the most common butterfly species in the world. Researchers knew that painted ladies in Europe fly over 9,000 miles (15,000 km) across the Sahara desert to winter in Africa. But, until recently, they did not know precisely where these butterflies go. Now scientists have learned that they live and breed in the savannas and highlands of central Africa.

Painted lady butterflies from Europe spend their time in semiarid savannas from September to November. When those areas become too dry, they head further south to the savannas and highlands across central Africa for December to February. They avoid tropical rainforests because they are too humid for these insects. Like monarch butterflies, they go through multiple generations before the adults return to Europe in the spring.

The researchers who studied this incredible migration have learned where the painted lady butterflies go. However, questions remain unanswered. For example, who told these butterflies to make this long journey, and how do succeeding generations know to make the same trip? Most of us in North America are familiar with monarch butterflies and their impressive migration to Mexico. Still, the migration of painted lady butterflies is the longest journey of any butterfly.

God's design for the survival of all creatures speaks of his wisdom and planning. When we see the design in the insect world, we appreciate the wisdom and power of God, who has entrusted us with protecting all of his creation.

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Black Heron Canopy Feeding

Securing food is often hazardous for animals, but eating is a higher priority than avoiding danger. An example of all this is the canopy feeding of the black heron (*Egretta ardesiaca*) in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The jet-black color of the black heron causes two problems for the bird. One is that there is no camouflage in its coloration, so predators



have no trouble seeing it. The black heron is very obvious from above or on the ground. The other problem is that being black means the bird is in danger of overheating because black absorbs solar radiation in the form of heat.

These problems make you wonder about the wisdom of the black heron being black. This is where we find an ingenious design feature built into the bird, allowing it to have all it wants to eat. The black heron eats fish, but finding fish is challenging for all fish-eating birds. Black herons solve this problem by spreading out their feathers in an umbrella-like fashion for what is called canopy feeding. Small fish in the area looking for shade are drawn to the bird's canopy. Because of its black color, the water under the bird is too dark for the fish to see the heron.

This cloak of darkness and the cooling create a huge attraction for fish. As they gather in the heron's shade, the bird can simply choose which fish it wants to eat. This canopy feeding provides food for the heron while controlling the small fish population so they do not overgraze the area.

To attribute the black heron's canopy feeding to trial and error or chance requires some imagination. To attribute the black color, which seems counterproductive for the climate, to the survival of the fittest is beyond reasonable thinking. God's design and creative wisdom are evident in all life forms. Romans 1:20 tells us that we can know there is a God through the things he has made, and the black heron is an excellent example of the truth of that statement.

For documents and archives of this journal plus booklets and more: www.doesgodexist.org

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](https://www.facebook.com/evidence4god)).

AFTER SCHOOL SATAN CLUBS: One of the consequences of the rejection of God and Christianity in the United States has been the success of the Satanic Temple. This group, active worldwide and claiming 700,000 members, is headquartered in Salem, Massachusetts. They have launched a nationwide campaign to bring After School Satan Clubs to elementary schools.

After School Satan Clubs offer a coloring book published by the Satanic Temple, which engages children in satanic rituals and constructing a pentagram, the official symbol of the Church of Satan. The Washington Post commented, “The Satanic Temple is determined to give young students a choice: Jesus or Satan.” The message of the Satanic Temple ridicules Christianity, belief in God, and the Bible’s moral teachings.

The United States Supreme Court ruled in 2001 that elementary schools could not stop the evangelical Good News Club from hosting after school club meetings. That decision opens the door for After School Satan Clubs. Christians must be aware of this threat. Parents and local church leaders need to educate themselves on what is being taught in the schools and be ready to oppose satanic teaching if it comes to their communities.



GOVERNMENT PUNISHES BIBLICAL VIEWS: The Bible makes it very clear that God created male and female as two

separate sexes. God told Adam, and likewise, future males, that they would provide by “the sweat of your face” (Genesis 3:19). Through Eve, God told females that they would be able to fill the roles that males could not accomplish on their own, especially giving birth to children. Yet, today, the government punishes those with biblical views.

Society today has decided that respecting the difference between men and women violates the rights of various groups, so we must deny those differences. We see this in schools and colleges nationwide. The government has decided that having separate restrooms for men and women violates the rights of men who want to use women’s facilities.

Christian colleges with separate dormitories for men and women are receiving crippling fines and threats of closure. Another significant issue is whether a biological male who claims to be a female has the right to compete in women’s sports. Christianity espouses moral conduct found in God’s Word, but the government punishes those with biblical views and forces them to act against their moral beliefs. We must pray for America and those affected by the government’s actions in their distorted attempt to expand human rights.



THE SCOURGE OF PORNOGRAPHY: A BBC report on May 9, 2023, summarized psychologists’ research on the effects of pornography on British children. It listed behavioral issues in eight year olds, such as profanity and violent language, directly related to viewing pornography. Elementary teachers attempting to stop disruptive behavior commonly hear the “f” word from their students, and the study shows a direct connection to watching pornography.



The Bible gives real solutions for Christians to avoid evil. In 1 Thessalonians 5:22, Paul tells us to avoid every appearance of evil, and Galatians 5:16–26 details the consequences of allowing “the works of the flesh” to saturate our thinking. Churches cannot remain silent about evil, including the consequences of lust. We must clearly teach children and adults what pornography does to children, marriages, and physical health.

The reason pornography is a major problem today is that it enriches certain people with money and influence. We cannot expect atheists and non-believers to stop the scourge of pornography. Therefore, Christians must be motivated to stop pornography’s spread, especially to children, but many in the religious community avoid the subject.



UNDERSTANDING ANIMAL COMMUNICATION: Reports tell us that portable sensors and artificial intelligence may make a form of human-animal communication possible. Researchers use digital bioacoustics to record the animals and artificial intelligence to interpret what they say. So far, scientists have studied the communication of bats and bees. Using tiny digital bioacoustic recorders, researchers at Tel Aviv University have gathered bat communication at frequencies above the limit of human hearing. Computers lower the frequency and slow it down to make it audible to humans, and artificial intelligence compiles the data to make it intelligible.

Understanding animal communication can involve more than sounds. Dr. Tim Landgraf at Freie Universitat in Berlin has deciphered bee communication, which involves both sounds and body movement. He has decoded the signals which tell other bees where to find nectar or warn of danger. Landgraf even built a robot named RoboBee that can enter a hive and control what the bees do.

Understanding animal communication is challenging since every animal is different, but that shows another level of design that science is just beginning to understand. The more we learn about the creation, the more we have to be amazed at the wisdom of the Creator.



CANNABIS USE BY SENIORS: The use of marijuana to treat chronic pain and discomfort like arthritis has been widely publicized and legalized in many states. So naturally, those of us who are older look for any way to relieve the aches and pains that come with age. Because of that, the use of cannabis by seniors has increased dramatically.



We are responsible for ensuring that what we use to relieve discomfort is good for us and does not harm our bodies. That means we must use caution and listen to research about so-called miracle cures. But unfortunately, new studies of the use of cannabis by seniors have raised a red flag about its safety. *The Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, January 9, 2023, reports on visits to emergency departments in California, where marijuana has been legal for any use for several years. Cannabis-related visits to emergency rooms by seniors (ages 65 and older) rose from 366 in 2005 to 12,167 in 2019.

Unfortunately, there is big money in cannabis so merchants promote its use. However, you should only use it under a doctor's supervision and not accept the "miracle cure" claims made by your local marijuana store.



EFFECTS OF ALCOHOL: A flurry of new research reports on the terrifying effects of alcohol. The University of Victoria, The Cleveland Clinic, The American Cancer Society, the U.K. Biobank, and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism have all contributed the following data on alcohol consumption:

One of the terrifying effects of alcohol is that it contributes to more than 75,000 new cancer cases and 19,000 deaths in the U.S. every year. Alcohol is the direct cause of seven types of cancer — oral cavity, throat, larynx, liver, breast, and colorectal cancer. Heavy drinkers have five times the risk, and moderate drinkers have 1.8 times the risk. In addition, one drink a day raises the risk of breast cancer by 9%.

Alcoholic liver disease kills 22,000 Americans every year. Two alcoholic beverages a day for five years can damage the liver, and one drink a day increases the risk of heart attack and stroke by up to 20%. Previous claims said that red wine could do good things to improve health, but the ingredient in red wine that does this is the antioxidant resveratrol. A person would have to drink 500 liters of red wine daily to get significant benefits, which would cause high blood pressure, stroke, and abnormal heart rhythm.



The terrifying effects of alcohol result in immense pain to humanity. One way to oppose the use of alcohol is to educate people about its destructive nature.

WASTE OF FOOD AND RESOURCES: One of the great tragedies of American culture today is the incredible waste of food and resources. People in many places around the world are surviving on less than 1000 calories per day, and starvation is killing vast numbers. Over a third of the food produced in the United States is never eaten.

On average, Americans throw away a pound of food per person daily.

God has provided us with all the resources we need to feed the world's population, but corporate greed, selfishness, ignorance, and a lack of concern for others cause the problem of world hunger. In Matthew 25:31–46, Jesus described judgment based on how we conduct

ourselves in meeting the needs of others. The first thing Jesus mentions is that providing food for others is a responsibility of his followers (verses 35 and 42). One way we can do that is by avoiding the waste of food and resources God has given us and becoming leaders in the war against hunger. By living in obedience to Christ, we can witness the reality of God to the world.



ELIMINATING PAINT PIGMENTS: What if we could reduce environmental problems by eliminating pigments in paint? Creating colorful paint without pigments is possible by copying something found in the natural world. For example, butterflies,



birds, fish, and cephalopods use structural color to create their dazzling beauty. Light, rather than pigments, creates structural color.

Debashis Chanda and colleagues at the University of Central Florida have researched eliminating pigments in paint by using structural color. Pigment colors are artificially synthesized

molecules, requiring different chemicals for each color. Structural color involves producing a geometrical arrangement of two colorless materials to make any color of the rainbow.

Unlike pigment color, structural color never fades. Another advantage is that it reflects infrared radiation, so the material under the paint can stay 25 to 30 degrees F cooler than with chemical paint. In addition, since the colors will not fade, there may not be a need to repaint as often, and eliminating pigments in paint reduces chemical substances that can cause environmental impacts.

Interestingly, structural color is another thing we learn from studying the natural world, where the colors we see in living things often come from structural color rather than pigments. This is one more example of the intelligence God built into the world, and we can learn from what God has already done.



PURPOSE FOR HUMAN EXISTENCE: “Why do I exist?” People have discussed and debated the purpose for human existence from about every philosophical direction imaginable. Atheists have written books to tell us that we are just accidents with no purpose for existence.

In the Bible, we can find clues to help us understand more clearly the purpose for human existence. First, we see a major confrontation in the war between good and evil in Matthew 4:1–10 when Satan tempted Jesus. Then we see the culmination of the conflict in Revelation 20–22. People often fail to understand the Book of Revelation because they do not understand that it is not describing a physical war. The war between good and evil is in a realm beyond this material world.

Ephesians 6:10–20 makes it clear that the purpose of our existence is beyond flesh and blood but involves a struggle “against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” In Ephesians 3:8–13, Paul writes that his purpose in existing was “to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was according to the eternal purpose he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Revelation 20–22 gives a prophecy of the ultimate destruction of evil and describe the wonderful existence we all can have if we fulfill the purpose for which God created us. John 1:5–9 makes it clear that we will not be perfect, but we will be forgiven and cleansed as we fulfill the purpose for human existence.

Atheists try to tell us that evil does not exist and that there is no reason for us to be here. However, the evidence and the biblical message show us the reason for our existence and the joy and love God makes available to us all.



Visit the Clayton Museum of Ancient History at York University, York, Neb.

ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD PUZZLE ON PAGE 18
 DOWN: 1-suffering;
 2-convergent; 3-stroke; 9-three
 ACROSS: 4-cardiomyopathy;
 5-zero; 6-image; 7-tears;
 8-emotional, 10-heart



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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. 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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