

DOES GOD EXIST?

A diverse group of people of various ages and ethnicities are standing behind the title 'DOES GOD EXIST?'. Some are raising their hands in a gesture of praise or agreement.

**First Quarter 2024
Volume 51 Number 1**

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

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE HUMAN?

A diverse group of people of various ages and ethnicities are standing behind the title 'WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE HUMAN?'. Some are raising their hands in a gesture of praise or agreement.

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

Romans 1:19–20

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What Does It Mean to be Human?

“Do Insects Have Feelings and Consciousness?” is the title of an article by Avery Hurt in the February 3, 2023, issue of *Discover* magazine. If you put that title into your Web search engine, you will find a nearly endless series of articles reporting on studies and opinions of writers who claim the answer is “Yes.” The U.K. government recently recognized lobsters, crabs, and octopuses as sentient beings. The *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* says, the meaning of sentient is “capable of sensing or feeling: conscious of or responsive to the sensations of seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, or smelling.”

In the past, most people considered humans the only sentient life, while Buddhism taught that all life was sentient and, therefore, of equal value. Periodicals such as *Discover* and *Smithsonian* have described studies showing bees and other insects doing things expressing emotions or play activities. This is a critical issue for everyone because if we classify every living thing as equal to humans in every way, then eating any animal is a cruel and barbaric act.

In Genesis 9:2–3 God tells Noah, “The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all



the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.” In Acts 10:9–15, God gives Peter a vision of a large sheet coming down containing “all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air.” God told Peter to kill and eat these animals. When Peter objected, saying that he had never eaten anything unclean, God replied, “Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.” Western Christian churches have allowed their members to eat anything based on that passage, at least in part.

The key here is what it means to be human. When I took my first anthropology course, I was told that a human was any form that stood erect, walked on two legs, had a brain size of more than 1200 cc, and made and used tools. That definition did not stand the test of time when science found humans with brains smaller than 1200 cc. Studies have shown that many animals make tools and use them to secure food. Scientists found ancient apes that clearly traveled on two legs and left tracks, proving that they favored that mode of walking. In recent years, the definition of being human has included evidence of learning, demonstrations of advanced communication, and even being able to produce agriculture. The problem with all of these definitions is that we can always find animals that can, in some way, accomplish whatever criteria are chosen.

There is also the problem of anthropomorphizing the actions of



animals. In simple terms, anthropomorphizing means interpreting animal behavior in a way that makes it look like they are doing what humans do. When a dog jumps up and down and vocally explodes with loud sounds, is that an expression of joy as it might be when I see a child or spouse after a long absence?

Or is it more likely that the dog has learned that acting that way results in a treat or a feeding?

A well-known example of anthropomorphizing occurred when a gorilla named Koko was trained to do various human things, including learning and using the American Sign Language of the deaf. Koko was born in the San Francisco Zoo but spent all her life living with humans. When a young gorilla named Michael was introduced to Koko, he used human-looking gestures, encouraging Koko to come near him. Researchers have observed over 100 unique gorilla

gestures, indicating a communication system peculiar to the gorillas. Communication obviously does not indicate humanness.

The biblical definition of a human is a being created in God's image. The biblical account of creation clearly distinguishes between man as an animal and man as a being created in God's image. In Genesis 2:7, the Bible says, "And the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living being." Notice that this is a physical description that might even be able to be duplicated someday by modern science. In Genesis 2:19, God brings all the other forms of life, which also "were formed out of the ground." Obviously, being human has nothing to do with our bodies. We are made of the same stuff that makes up every other form of life.

We see the answer to what makes us human in Genesis 1:26–27. Notice that the statement of God in verse 26 is plural: "Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness: ... So God (*elohim* in Hebrew—a plural word) created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them" (emphasis added). The word "create" in these verses is *bara*, a Hebrew word used to describe something that only God could do. The plural nature refers to that which makes us human—the Father referring to our intellect, the Son referring to our likeness to Jesus Christ, and the Spirit referring to our soul. Being human shows up in our likenesses to God. Being in God's image allows us to create art and music, to be able to have a concept of self, to worship, to feel guilt, to have sympathy and empathy, to be taught to think, and to have an *agape* form of love not based on sex or survival.

Because I am created in God's image, I can wonder at the beauty of a sunrise or sunset or the beauty of outer space. Because I am in God's image, I can see the beauty in the colors of birds and fish, which have nothing to do with their survival. Because of God's image,



I can love other humans just because they are human—even if they are unkind to me. What makes me human is being created in God's image, allowing me to do these things no other living species can do. I can even appreciate the behavior of insects or fish or birds that I do not understand. Admiring God's

creation is another way for me to praise God and enjoy the beauty and wisdom he has built into every nook and cranny of planet Earth.

—John N. Clayton



Does AI Threaten Humanity?

The media thrives on exaggerations and misrepresentations involving doomsday scenarios. One of the biggest movies when I was a teenager was titled *When Worlds Collide*. It was a science fiction story of a rogue star and its planet hitting and destroying Earth with



only a select group of humans escaping. A recent popular movie was built around scientists developing an atomic bomb while fearing it would destroy the planet. Several media presentations have suggested that Artificial Intelligence (AI) will wipe out humanity. Media outlets like *The Guardian*, *The New York Post*, *Entrepreneur*, and the BBC have all indicated that AI is a huge threat to humanity.

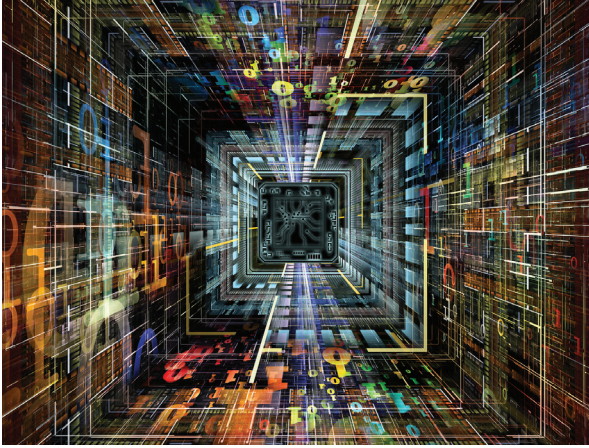
Artificial Intelligence is the simulation of human intelligence processes by computer systems. Science fiction has long postulated that machines will replace humans and rule the world. Many science fiction stories revolve around

non-human enemies of humanity or heroes such as R2-D2 and C-3PO. What can computers do or not do? Is it true that AI is a huge threat to humanity?

AI can do some jobs faster and with greater accuracy than humans. Computers can build and run automation systems, causing the loss of human jobs. Computers can process languages more quickly than humans. They can also process numbers faster and more ac-



curately, meaning that AI can predict economic change, develop weaponry, and invade human privacy quickly and efficiently. AI can



create images, both authentic and fake, and even produce videos known as deepfakes. AI can deliver fake news with video support that is so good humans cannot tell what is real and what is not.

As we consider whether AI is a huge threat to humanity, we must

understand that the dangers are philosophical and not inevitable. There is an adage about computers that says, “garbage in, garbage

out.” Building computers capable of producing AI requires intelligence and design by humans. Like almost everything humans create, we can use AI to mislead and damage or to improve people’s lives. As in everything else, we desperately need people guided by Jesus Christ’s teachings to decide how we will use AI.



—JNC

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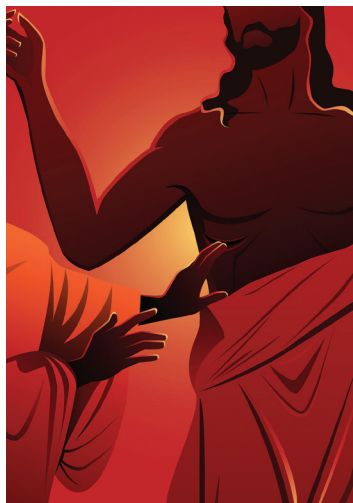


Generation Z Questions and Faith

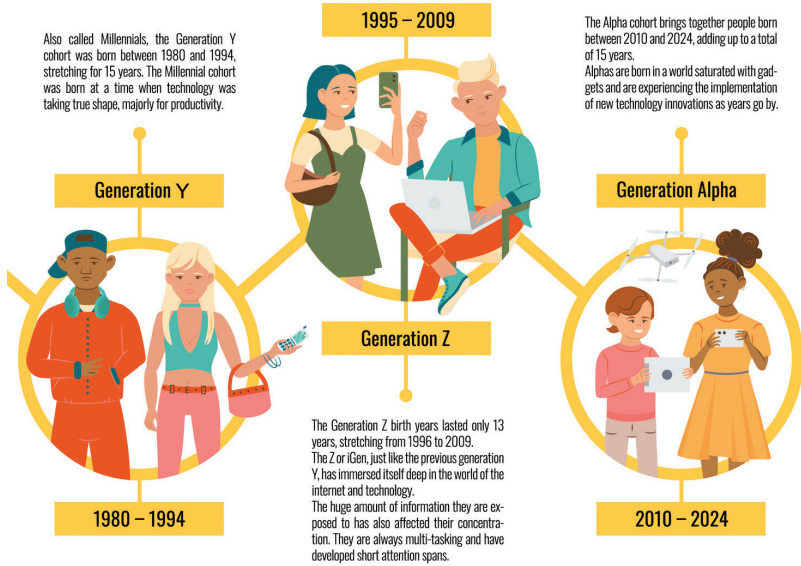
Generation Z is a label applied to those born between circa 1996 and 2010. These young people have grown up with climate concerns and lives run by digital controls. Gen Zers have been bombarded by hypocrisy in adults, threats of violence, and an atheistic government lacking moral standards. How do those factors affect Generation Z questions and faith?

Those who study demographics tell us that 33% of these young people believe it is impossible to know if God is real. Only 4% have a biblical worldview, and less than 40% identify themselves as “Christian” in the broadest sense. It is not hard to understand why these numbers exist, but more importantly, how can we address Generation Z questions and needs?

The answer is not in preaching to them or quoting scripture. That does not mean the Bible should not be part of addressing their needs, but we must change how we approach them. How did Jesus address the struggles of his disciples and other people of his day? In Luke 7:20–23, John the Baptist sends men to Jesus, asking if he was the one the prophets had said would come. How did Jesus respond to the question? In verse 22, he said, “Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard.” He then refers to the evidence of the miracles performed. When Thomas did not be-



lieve that Jesus had risen, what did Jesus do? (see John 20:26–28). In Luke 24:36–43, the disciples were frightened, thinking they were seeing a ghost. Jesus said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see.” He then ate a piece of broiled fish so they could see he was real.



The point is that Jesus dealt with doubt by showing evidence. He did not tell them to blindly believe. He did not quote scripture to them. If Jesus appeared in the flesh today, some people would still find a way to deny him, as the religious leaders of that day did. However, our discussion must center around evidence, not human-made creeds or denominational dogma, and it must be backed up by living a Christ-like life.

We must show evidence that God is real, that we are uniquely created in God’s image, and that we have a soul that makes us different from other forms of life. Furthermore, the teachings of Jesus show that he is far beyond a mere human, and following his instructions can give us a life of fulfillment and purpose. Generation Z questions are the same things people asked of Jesus. We have the tools to address those questions as we show the reality of faith by how we live our lives.

—JNC

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Atheists and skeptics maintain that pain and suffering are the most significant proof that there is no God, and the Bible is not true because a good and loving God would not allow it. Is there an inconsistency between the descriptions of God in passages like 1 John 4:7–8 and the history of Israel? Unfortunately, skeptics and atheists fail to consider the alternative if pain did not exist.

The ability to exist in a physical world requires being able to feel pain. How could we survive if we could not know that a stove is hot when we put our hand on it? The ability to feel pain lets us know if something is sharp, or dangerously hot or cold.

Pain occurs on more than a physical level. What kind of person could not feel guilt, compassion, empathy, and sympathy? These characteristics are unique to humans. We may condition an animal to display a response we interpret as one



of those emotions, but humans uniquely experience mental anguish over the circumstance of another person or even an animal. People who bury this capacity, such as Hitler, Mao, and Putin, have created enormous problems for the whole human race.

The Bible clearly tells us that God can perform miracles. However, a careful study of the biblical miracles shows there was a reason beyond the curing of a disease or infirmity. If people could escape

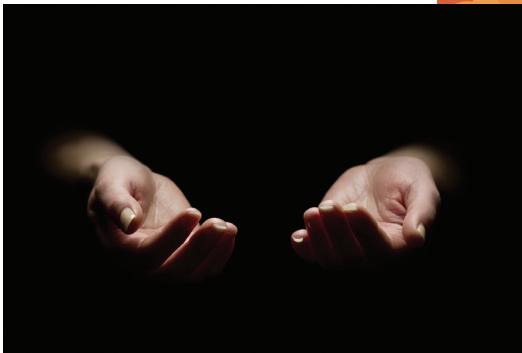
life's problems by becoming Christians, many would come to Christ to escape even minor physical pain. The apostle Paul struggled with suffering, which he called his "thorn in the flesh." He would not have learned an important lesson if that pain did



not exist. He wrote, "Three times I prayed to the Lord to relieve me of it." God responded, "My grace is all you need; power comes to full strength in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:7–9).

None of us like to have any kind of pain, but this life is only temporary. We would suffer adverse consequences if pain did not exist in this life. Christians have peace in knowing that the future holds an existence that will be free of pain. My suffering has given me a purpose in living and the strength not to fear dying. Denying God's existence adds another level of denial and uncertainty to life.

—JNC



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



The Church Can Answer Loneliness

Statistical data from 2021 showed that 63% of men and 58% of women in America felt “lonely.” Our ministry receives phone calls from people who say, “I just need to talk to someone.” Because we invite questions and discussions in our printed material and online, we get communications from various lonely people. The church can answer loneliness.

One of God’s answers to loneliness is marriage. In a Christian marriage, there is always someone to talk to, share with, and care about. I vividly remember sitting in my kitchen the night after my wife died and being overwhelmed with loneliness. In Genesis 2:18, God says, “It is not good for the man to be alone: I will make a helper suitable for him.”

I found that being with people was important to me, even though I am not a very social person. “Suitable helper” refers to filling in what man cannot do for himself. It does not imply servitude but an equal. Galatians 3:28 tells us that no matter who or what we are as Christians, “we are all one in Christ Jesus.” That is how the church can answer loneliness.



The description of the first-century church shows their cure for loneliness. Acts 2:42 says, “They continued steadfastly in ... fellowship.” Verse 44 says, “... all that believed were together, and had all things in common.” Verse 46 says, “Continuing daily with one

accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and singleness of heart.” The church can answer loneliness, but driving to a building, sitting by yourself, and watching a worship service once a week does not deal with the issue of loneliness.

We do a great deal of work in prisons and nursing homes. On those rare occasions when we are allowed to go into a prison to be with inmates, we often hear that the most significant pain they experience in incarceration is loneliness. Frequently,



these men and women are in prison because their drug habit started when they were in the depths of loneliness.

One of the great tragedies of nursing homes is that many folks are placed there by family and are never visited again. Recently, a blind man in a nursing home we regularly visit told me that losing sight was not as bad as losing time with people he loved.



Rejecting God and his people is an invitation to loneliness. Visiting a bar or a club is a band-aid approach to fighting loneliness. We need to



spend time with others of like faith and be active in the joy of serving others. Matthew 25:31–40 describes Christian activities that non-believers cannot comprehend, but they are another way the church can answer loneliness.

—JNC

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The Biological Complexity of Living Organisms

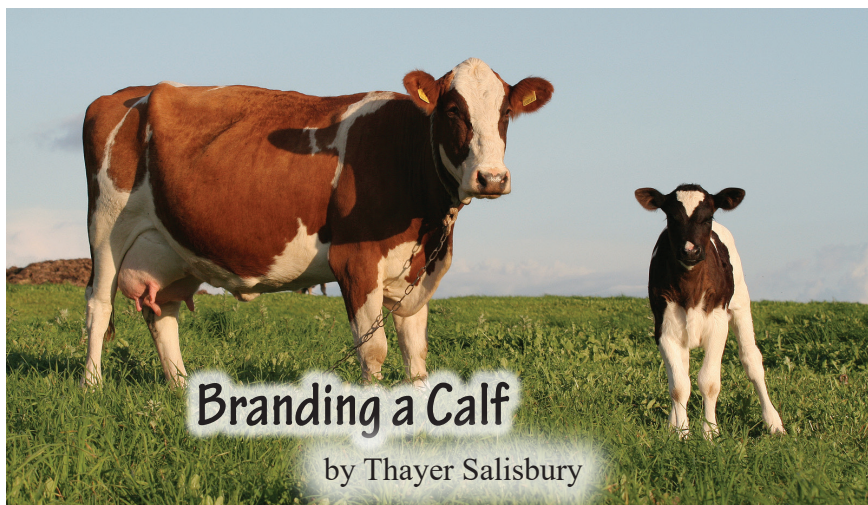
by Roland Earnst

Those who advocate for naturalistic evolution have a problem. Well, they have more than one, but this one is a math problem. In a publication on the National Institutes of Health's Pub Med website, Alexei A. Sharov presents a dilemma for evolutionists. Simply stated, the size of the genome indicates biological complexity in living organisms, while macro-evolution requires exponential growth to achieve that biological complexity.

Perhaps this will be easier to understand if we relate it to Moore's law in semiconductor technology. In 1965, Gordon Moore of Fairchild Semiconductors and Intel projected that the number of components in each integrated circuit would double yearly. In 1975, the prediction was revised to every two years. It took on the quality of a "law" as the semiconductor industry used it as their target for planning production. Moore's law has led to technological changes that produced economic growth and social change. The point is that doubling the complexity of electronic technology means a logarithmic increase in versatility, as we have seen over the years.

Sharov applied that principle to evolution based on the exponential growth in biological complexity. Using the exponential increase of biological complexity in living organisms as a guide, it is possible to go backward in evolutionary time to see when life began. If the exponential hypothesis is true, tracing back in time, the origin of life would have been ten billion years ago. That is how long it would take for the genome to evolve to its present complexity in humans. No evolutionist or other scientist believes our planet is that old. That presents a math problem for naturalistic evolution.

So, what do Sharov and others propose as the solution? They call it "panspermia," meaning that life came to Earth from outer space. Nobel Prize winners Fred Hoyle and Francis Crick advocated panspermia, but most evolutionary scientists reject it. Perhaps there is a better way to explain the fact that naturalistic evolution does not fit into Earth's timeline. The solution, soundly rejected by Hoyle and Crick, is the idea that a Creator outside of time and space designed the universe and life and put us on this planet for a purpose.



Branding a Calf

by Thayer Salisbury

There was a time when there were very few fences in America. Much of the land in what is now the western United States was open rangeland until the 1890s. Ranchers would allow their animals to wander about most of the year. Once per year, the various ranchers would send representatives to round up the cattle and separate the herds belonging to the ranches. Unbranded cattle would be branded. But how did they know what brand to place on the unbranded calves? The process was simple.

Theodore Roosevelt owned two ranches in Dakota Territory in the 1880s. He describes these roundups in his autobiography. He states, “Each calf was branded with the brand of the cow it was following.” It was simple. It was obvious. It could be that occasionally, for some reason, a calf followed the wrong cow and ended up branded wrongly and sent to the wrong ranch. It was rare, but I suppose it may have happened occasionally.

Thankfully, people are not branded like cattle these days. So how do we know which people belong to which owner? It is simple. We watch them. Those following Satan’s herd belong to Satan. They may deny it. They may take offense at the identification. But the habit of following Satan’s herd invites the identification. If we do not want to be identified with Satan, if we do not want to be marked with his brand and sent to his ranch, we had better stop following his cows.

“Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company ruins good morals.’”
(1 Corinthians 15:33 ESV)

“Even a child makes himself known by his acts, by whether his conduct is pure and upright.” (Proverbs 20:11 ESV)

The Journey to Safety

by Roland Earnst

We have often talked about the design of animals and how various animals act on what we often call “instinct.” Programmed into sea turtles is a journey to safety. When baby sea turtles hatch on the beach, they instinctively and quickly head to the ocean to escape the predators on land. Their mothers did not teach them to do that. It is programmed into them. When a kangaroo is born, it will instinctively journey to safety by climbing into its mother’s pouch. She does nothing to assist the tiny creature. Programming a specific action is very efficient, so we program computers to do specific tasks.



In contrast to programmed actions, there is free will. When we tell our children what to do, they may do something entirely different. The child can understand our

instructions but still refuse to follow them. The reason is the child finds other things he wants to do that are more appealing.

The bottom line is that commanding actions is less efficient than programming those actions. A robot or a baby sea turtle or kangaroo will act as it is programmed. If you are a parent, you have realized that your child will not always do what you command. The question,





then, is why did not God program humans to do what he wanted? Why did he give us free will? Programming us to act as he desired would have been much more efficient.

God commands us rather than programming us to do his will because he wants to have a relationship with us. Robots can be very efficient because they have specific functions programmed into them and will do what their designer intended. That is not true of humans. However, you can never have a real relationship with a robot. God wants to have a relationship with us. He knew what would happen when he created the first humans, but he did it anyway. We

have rebelled and made a mess of our lives and our world. The result is hatred, war, and mayhem.

Why, then, did God choose to create us? He knew that having a relationship with us was worth the price. Jesus Christ came to Earth to restore the relationship we had broken. He was the perfect man, but at the same time, he was God in the flesh. He showed us how to have a loving relationship with God and each other. Then,



he bore the punishment for our disobedience to restore the broken relationships.

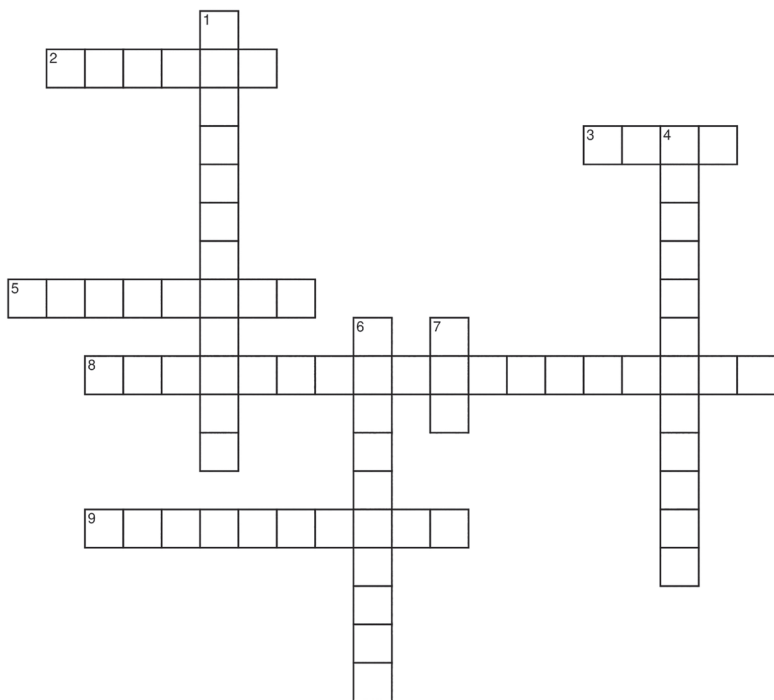
We are not robots. We are God's creation, in his image, with free will. We can choose the journey to safety or ignore God and choose our own path. Since God has made the journey to safety and peace available to us, why choose the path to destruction?



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Does God Exist? 1st Quarter 2024 Crossword

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



Across

- [2] Unbranded calves follow their _____ cow.
- [3] In the physical world _____ is essential for survival.
- [5] Jesus dealt with doubt by showing _____.
- [8] “Humanizing” animal behavior is _____.
- [9] Naturalistic evolution cannot explain biological _____.

Down

- [1] God gave us free will because he wants to have a _____ with us.
- [4] AI is short for Artificial _____.
- [6] For people in prisons and nursing homes _____ is a major problem.
- [7] Humans are created in the image of _____.

(If you get stumped, read to the end of this issue for answers on page 31.)

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



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New Course Available:

BEYOND REASONABLE DOUBT

See page 23 for details.

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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.

*Freeman Dyson (1923 - 2020)
Professor Emeritus in the Institute for Advanced
Study at Princeton University
Winner of The Fermi Award in 1993,
The Templeton Prize in 2000,
and the Henri Poincare Prize in 2012,
among ten other major awards.*

Below are some Freeman Dyson quotations found online.



“As we look out into the Universe and identify the many ‘accidents’ of physics and astronomy that have worked together to our benefit, it almost seems as if the universe must, in some sense, have known that we were coming.”

“Science and religion are two windows that people look through, trying to understand the big universe outside, trying to understand why we are here. The two windows give different views, but they look out at the same universe. Both views are one-sided, neither is complete. Both leave out essential features of the real world. And both are worthy of respect.”

“Trouble arises when either science or religion claims universal jurisdiction when either religious dogma or scientific dogma claims to be infallible. Religious creationists and scientific materialists are equally dogmatic and insensitive. By their arrogance, they bring both science and religion into disrepute.”

Quotations above are from the following: quote 1: <https://mathshistory.st-andrews.ac.uk/Biographies/Dyson/quotations/>;
quotes 2 and 3: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freeman_Dyson

Cynthia's Corner

What Does It Mean to Be Human?



Humans are classified as *Homo sapiens*, meaning “wise man.” According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, “They are distinguished by a marked erectness of body carriage freeing their hands for manipulative use (tools, writing, etc.) and a more highly developed brain and a resultant capacity for articulate speech and abstract reasoning.” In Genesis 1, after God created the cosmos and Earth became habitable for life, he created sea creatures and birds and then land animals. Lastly, God created man, the only animal he “created in his own image” (Genesis 1:26–27). How does that make humans unique from all other animals? What did God give humans that he did not give to other animals, and why?

Let us start by acknowledging that God, the Creator, is a spiritual being, not a physical one. So if he gave humans something “in his likeness, in his image,” it has to be spiritual, not physical. We have a body, a mind, and a spiritual soul that comes from God.

How does our soul manifest itself since it is not a physical part of us? We cannot see it. We cannot see God either, but we can see his effects. Romans 1:19–20 tells us, “... what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world, God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made” Just as we can “see” God’s invisible qualities, we can also see the effects of our being made in God’s spiritual image.

We are conscious of good versus evil (read Genesis 2:17 and 3:1–11), meaning we are moral beings who can choose to do right or wrong. God gave us free will. We are reasoning beings who seek knowledge and understanding of the world. We are creative and curious. Because God made us in his image, we have the capacity to appreciate beauty, art, design, music, etc., as no other living thing can.

The Bible says God is love (1 John 4:16). He created us with a desire to love and be loved and to love him. Because of our soul, we have the capacity for sacrificial love, compassion, mercy, justice, and kindness that other animal life does not have. The most important thing that shows we are in God’s image is our capacity to look to a higher power and believe we have an eternal purpose. We express that ability when we seek and worship God. God says through Solomon in Ecclesiastes 3:11, “He has set eternity in the hearts of men.” Our eternal soul longs to know God.



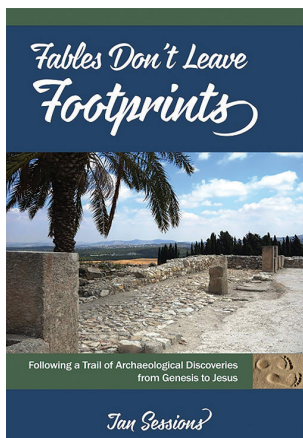
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The **Does God Exist?** program has a video course called *Beyond Reasonable Doubt*, designed to give evidence to skeptics and those who doubt the biblical account. People have said that our series is fine for adults and college students, but they want a book with pictures and explanations anyone can follow. This book serves that need.

Jan Sessions has developed a program called the D2Project for Digging Deeper. Jan started with a 4th–5th grade Sunday school class but expanded her work with the support of her husband, Steve. This book is subtitled “Following a Trail of Archaeological Discoveries from Genesis to Jesus,” and it has lavish color pictures.

After an introduction, the first section, “Beginnings,” starts with Mesopotamia, the flood accounts, and the tower of Babel. Next is support for the Patriarchs, and the journey from slavery in Egypt through the establishment of the nation of Israel. “The Realm of Ancient Warfare” reviews the history from Nineveh through Persia. The following section covers Greece and Rome and the history of Jesus. The last two sections are summary chapters and resources for those who wish to dig deeper.

This book will be useful for Bible school classes of all ages. While it omits some recent archaeological finds, it avoids getting bogged down with too much material. We highly recommend this book, but it is not for apologetics study at the college level. You can find that in the course described on the next page.

NEW COURSE AVAILABLE



We are pleased to announce that our *Beyond Reasonable Doubt* correspondence course is now available. This 13-lesson course is based on John Cooper's video course with the same title available on DVDs and for free viewing on our www.doesgodexist.tv website. John Cooper and John Clayton worked together to prepare these printed lessons and a question worksheet.

The **Does God Exist?** ministry offers eleven correspondence courses. Two of the courses deal with apologetics evidence for God's existence, and the other nine are Bible studies. Those nine courses range from beginner level to advanced study, and Linda Glover of our **Does God Exist?** team manages them. Linda has several graders who work with students in those nine courses, and like all of our courses, they are free and postage-paid. Several of the courses are for specific needs. One called *Prisoner of Hope* is a general Bible study for incarcerated men and women. A course titled *Freedom Steps* is written for those who are concerned about substance abuse and is based on the 12-step program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The new *Beyond Reasonable Doubt* course does not deal with the existence of God but with evidence that Jesus Christ is a historical figure and was the Son of God. It also offers evidence that the Bible is the Word of God and is accurate in its historical content. John Cooper has degrees in archaeology and provides the content for the course, and John Clayton has written the lessons and questions from an educational standpoint. He will also be grading the lessons of those who enroll in the course.

This course can be used in a class setting, but we cannot supply it free of charge for that use. To take the course one lesson at a time, e-mail John Clayton at jncdgc@aol.com. We will send the first lesson and a postage-paid envelope to mail the answer sheet back free of charge. We will return the graded answer sheet along with the next lesson. This ministry has been involved in prison work since 1968, and over 5,000 prisoners have taken our courses. We welcome anyone who would like to study this material.

DANDY DESIGNS

Neon Tetras Avoid Bottlenecks



Most of us who have had tropical fish aquariums are familiar with the fish known as neon tetras. These fish are great for aquariums because they are tiny — usually about an inch long. They have a brilliant blue stripe running laterally and a red strip underneath toward the tail. These fish are native to the Amazon Basin and live in freshwater.

Researchers have discovered that neon tetras have a quality lacking among many humans — the ability to wait their turn. Researchers took a school of tetras and put them in a tank that had a narrow opening to get to a food source. The tetras could get through the narrow opening without clogging and impeding passage. The small fish did not collide with one another as they swam through the opening to get to the other side of the tank. Researchers say ants are the only other form of life to demonstrate agility in avoiding bottlenecks.

One has to wonder why these fish have this ability since humans have not solved the problem of getting large numbers of people through narrow openings. Neon tetras live in streams that pass through many rocks, and being able to wait their turn gives them a better chance of survival than if they ended up with a bottleneck.

All living things have characteristics carefully fitted to their needs and environment. As we study life forms, we see this repeatedly, and it screams out the message of Romans 1:20: We can know there is a God through the things he has made.

See our videos at www.doesgodexist.tv

Hogfish See With Their Skin



The many unique characteristics we see in animals enabling them to survive give evidence of God's design and planning. Our daily posts on Facebook and our *Dandy Designs* book series show hundreds of examples.

A new example is the hogfish (*Lachnolaimus maximus*) living in the Atlantic Ocean reefs from the Carolinas to Brazil. You can almost say this fish sees with its skin. Like many animals, the hogfish's primary method of survival is camouflage. They hide by changing colors and altering skin patterns.

Many animals, such as chameleons, squid, and cuttlefish, have chromatophores, pigment-bearing cells that can change color to match the environment. Hogfish also use chromatophores in their skin to change colors, but they have a layer of opsin, a light-sensing protein, under the chromatophore layer.

The hogfish moves through different background materials as the reef has varied colors and textures with corals, sponges, and sediment. The fish can change its color to match the environment but cannot turn its head to see what color it is. The opsin layer acts as a primitive eye looking at the chromatophores to see that the color matches the surroundings. In that way, this fish sees with its skin.

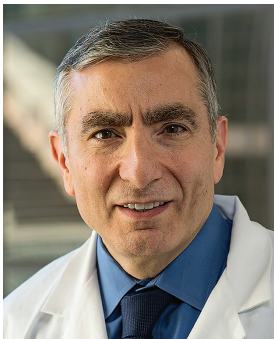
The design of fish survival in a reef involves a wide variety of techniques. Some can swim rapidly, others bury themselves in the bottom sediment, and others have immunity to stinging organisms. Some fish can fly (glide), some can swim in schools, and some, like the hogfish, can camouflage themselves. Together, they make the reef a place full of life and beauty. That beauty may encourage humans to preserve the world's reefs as places of great aesthetic worth.

Follow us daily on "Does God Exist? Today."

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)).

THE JAMES TOUR CHALLENGE: How did non-living chemicals become living plants and animals? Origin of life research has been the focus of countless hours and vast expenditures by expert scientists for the last 70-plus years. The results have been, well, unremarkable. Chemist Dr. James Tour of Rice University issued a 60-day challenge to the leading origin-of-life researchers, calling for them to show what progress they have made in 70 years.



Dr. Tour points out that there are five major hurdles that the origin-of-life scientists must clear. He said if they could show that they had solved even one of those problems, he would

shut up about the issue.

The James Tour 60-day challenge expired at the end of October 2023. Not one scientist could meet his challenge. In other words, in 70 years of research, no progress has been made on any of the major roadblocks to non-living matter becoming a primitive living cell.

If brilliant scientists with the best equipment and modern laboratories ever manage to produce life from basic elements, they will not prove that life can originate by unguided accidents. They will have demonstrated that an intelligent being can create life from non-living matter. That is what the Bible has said for thousands of years.



SYPHILIS EPIDEMIC AND ITS COST: When people fail to follow God’s rules for sexual behavior, the result is always pain and suffering for themselves and collateral damage for innocent people.

The clearest case in the United States is Nevada, which had a 44% jump in congenital syphilis from 2021 to 2022. In 2021, there were 77.9 cases of congenital syphilis per 100,000 live births. The problems documented in these babies included blindness, bone damage, and stillbirths. In many cases, the mother did not know she had syphilis until it showed up in her baby.



The damage syphilis does to adults is less severe than in infants, but we are all financially affected by this problem. The real beauty and value of sex are lost when the sex industry takes over or when it becomes a recreational activity. The biblical concept of the sexual relationship is to form a unique bond between husband and wife, with each partner being concerned about the well-being of the other. Abandoning God’s plan leads to a syphilis epidemic as well as other STDs. As people drift further from God and the teaching of his Word, the syphilis epidemic will only get worse, and the cost in dollars and misery will increase.



ANSWERING TODAY’S CHALLENGES: In October 2023, the Survey Center on American Life and the Associated Press/NORC released new data revealing the attitudes and beliefs of our friends and neighbors. If the church is going to lead people to faith in God, we need to know what they believe.

Here are some results of the recent surveys:

1. 44% of Americans have “hardly any confidence” in organized religion.
2. 29% of Americans believe evolution is the best explanation for the origin of life on Earth.
3. 38% believe humans and other living things have evolved over time due to processes guided by God or a higher power.
4. 31% believe humans and other living things have evolved over time, and God or a higher power had no role in this process.

You cannot reach people today based on people’s beliefs in the twentieth century. God’s Word does not change and is a rock-solid

guide for life, but young people today are radically different from last century. Answering today's challenges requires meeting people where they are and not depending on methods that worked in the past.



TRANSPLANTING ANIMAL ORGANS INTO HUMANS:

On September 20, 2023, Lawrence Faucette had a pig's heart transplanted into his body to replace his own heart, which was a total failure. Xenotransplants, transplanting animal organs into humans, have been tried in the past, but the patient's immune system destroyed the transplanted organ. Faucette's animal heart came from a pig that was genetically modified to make it more human-like. Unfortunately, Mr.

Faucette passed away on October 30.



The medical science community is interested in xenotransplants because there is a massive shortage of human organs for transplantation. Many people have questioned the religious implications of xenotransplants.

Various Bible passages speak of the human heart but not the physical organ. The bottom line is that God is not primarily concerned with the physical organ but with our thinking, attitude, compassion, and capacity to love and serve. What happens to a person's body is that it will eventually return to the Earth from which it came.

Doctors have used valves from pig hearts for a long time, with great benefits for those who receive them. Understanding God's design and creative wisdom opens the door for transplanting animal organs into humans, providing ways to make a human's short tenure on Earth more pleasant. However, our soul and relationship with God are ultimately of primary concern.



IS MODERATE DRINKING GOOD FOR YOU? Media reports have claimed that alcohol is good for you, but we are now finding that the studies that led to those headlines were severely distorted by poor sampling. They linked all nondrinkers together and called them all "abstainers." Some of them were recovered alcoholics who had quit drinking. Others were non-drinking substance abusers or those suffering from chronic illnesses. Meanwhile, the

“moderate drinkers” in the study could include those who ate healthy and exercised. More balanced modern studies answer “Is moderate drinking good for you?” with a “NO!”

Based on more non-biased studies, by 2022, the World Heart Federation stated that alcohol did not protect people from cardiovascular diseases. The World Health Organization (WHO) has now stated that any amount of alcohol is dangerous. U.S. and Canadian authorities have lowered their definitions of “moderate-risk drinking.” A growing body of research says that any amount of alcohol raises the chance of premature death from various causes. We know that:



Half of all cases of liver disease are attributed to drinking.

Alcohol is a potent carcinogen because it breaks down in the body to form a compound called acetaldehyde, which damages DNA.

Fifteen percent of breast cancers are linked to alcohol.

In Europe, 50% of all cancers linked to alcohol are caused by “light” or “moderate” consumption.

The distressing thing about this is that young people are bombarded with messages and music glamorizing drinking. Television shows encourage drinking by showing a glamorous picture of people drinking alcohol. According to the WHO, “There is no safe amount that does not affect health.”



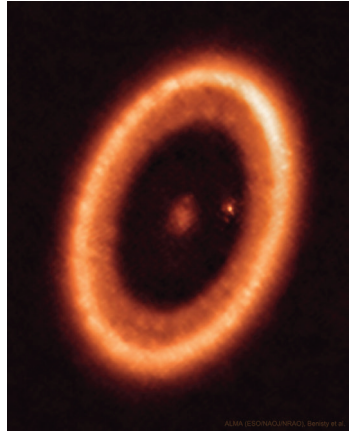
SOLAR SYSTEM FORMATION: NASA released a fascinating picture showing solar system formation. The star in the picture is PDS 70, and the resolution is so good that a planet orbiting the star is clearly visible. Also visible is a disk around the planet, apparently forming several moons. This is the first time astronomers have seen a solar system formation in progress, and it is very reminiscent of the Bible’s description of the process God used to produce our solar system.

Genesis 1:1 uses the Hebrew word for creation (*bara*), which describes a process that only God can do, creating something from nothing. Modern science has now shown that time, space, and matter/energy came into existence at a point called a singularity, but cannot answer what went on before that. From verse 1 through the rest of Genesis chapter 1, the word *bara* is not used until verse 21, when

God created the first animal life. The term used elsewhere is *asah*, which describes changing something already created (see verses 7, 16, and 25.) The word *bara* is used again in verse 27, when God created man and woman in his own image. Genesis 2:3 summarizes what God had done by saying that he rested from all he had created (*bara*) and made (*asah*).

What we are now seeing is how material already created is crafted into a solar system. We may never know God’s purpose, but watching this solar system formation helps us understand the forming (*asah*) of our solar system and our unique planet. We know that the giant gas planets Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune are strategically placed to protect Earth from collisions by comets and other objects coming from outside our solar system.

In Psalm 8:3–4 we read, “When I consider the heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him,” We do not see the answer to that question in the physical processes God has used and continues to use, but the Bible and Jesus Christ’s teachings reveal God’s spiritual purposes for the creation.



SOLAR ECLIPSE: Speaking of the design of our solar system, we are amazed that we can accurately predict solar (and lunar) eclipses hundreds of years, even a thousand years into the future. That is because we live in a precision-designed universe and solar system. The next solar eclipse crossing North America will be a total eclipse at 2:10 p.m. Eastern time on April 8, 2024. You can put that on your calendar and prepare to observe God’s power.

Eclipses have taught us many things about our Sun and the solar system design. Regardless of what some people may try to tell you, eclipses are not prophetic signs. They are part of God’s design for a planet where life can live and prosper.



THE RED GIANT STAR MU CEPHEI: The astronomical data on the red giant star Mu Cephei, amazes us at its size and power. We read passages like Psalm 19:1, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the sky shows his handiwork.” The Hebrew word for “glory” is *kabod*, and the lexicon’s first use of that word is weight or power. Mu Cephei is an incredible demonstration of the power of the Creator.

If we could put Mu Cephei in the place of the Sun, the orbit of Jupiter would fit inside it. That means the size of this one star, which is relatively close to the solar system (2800 light years), would exceed the orbits of Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars. We now understand that the stuff we see is only 5% of the universe. The European Space Agency’s Planck satellite has revealed that 68% of the cosmos consists of dark energy, 27% is dark matter, and only 5% is atomic matter. So the red giant star Mu Cephei and everything else we can see is only a tiny part of the cosmos. We cannot even see most of God’s handiwork.



OTZI HAD DARK SKIN: “Otzi” was the name given to a frozen mummy found on the border between Austria and Italy in 1991. The mummy, also known as “the iceman,” was in such good condition that researchers could complete a DNA analysis of his genome in 2012. Recently, more advanced studies of that DNA show that the earlier sample was contaminated by modern DNA, and Otzi had dark skin.

The Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany, compiled a new genome for Otzi. Johannes Krause, writing for the Institute in the August 16, 2023, issue of *Cell Genomics*, reported that there is no connection between Otzi and modern residents of Austria or Italy. The revised genome shows that Otzi had dark skin and was related to Neolithic farmers.

Modern genomes of ancient humans show that dark skin has been the norm for humans until relatively recently in human history. Light skin tones only appeared in the genomes 3 to 4,000 years ago, showing once again the foolishness of racism. You cannot use the Bible to justify racial prejudice. The statement that God “has made of one blood all nations of men to dwell upon the face of the earth” (Acts 17:26) is absolutely true. Let us put racial prejudice to rest and embrace the claim of Galatians 3:28 that we “are all one.”



**ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD PUZZLE
ON PAGE 18**

ACROSS: 2-mother; 3-pain; 5-evidence;
8-anthropomorphizing; 9-complexity
DOWN: 1-relationship; 4-intelligence;
6-loneliness; 7-God



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.

Send request to:

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South Bend, IN 46680-2704

*It's scientists vs. preachers,
not science vs. the Bible.*

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Please send me a catalog of books, DVDs, and CDs that can be purchased.