

*Life's Ultimate Question:*  
**Does God  
Exist?**



# Asking the Crucial Questions

The discovery was stunning. For 10 days astronomers had carefully trained the Hubble Space Telescope on a tiny patch of sky that appeared no larger than a grain of sand held at arm's length. Focusing on a spot near the Big Dipper where the view wouldn't be obstructed by nearby planets or stars, the scientists used the giant orbiting telescope's instruments to methodically gather 342 exposures, averaging 15 to 40 minutes long. They patiently recorded miniscule points of light four billion times fainter than detectable with the human eye.

They hoped to find answers to fundamental questions about the universe. How vast is it? How far might we be able to see in our search for galaxies billions of light-years from our own? Could they find clues to the origin of the universe and our own Milky Way galaxy?

The astronomers were awestruck when the hundreds of images were combined and the fruits of their labors were revealed. Before them was an astounding image. The tiny speck of sky scrutinized in such careful detail by man's most powerful telescope contained a kaleidoscope of hundreds upon hundreds of galaxies of various shapes, sizes and colors. Looking through a "tube" of sky roughly the diameter of a human hair, they counted *no fewer than 1,500 galaxies*.

Exploring the detectable limits of time and space, they concluded that the faintest galaxies they had recorded were more than *10 billion* light years away. Some of the brighter ones were quite close, only *2.5 billion* light years distant.

Even more astonishing, scientists concluded that the universe contains far more galaxies than we can imagine—at least *100 billion* and quite possibly far more.

How big are those numbers? To put them in perspective, if you counted galaxies at the rate of one per second for 24 hours, you would take almost *32 years* of such counting to reach one billion. You would spend more than three centuries to reach 100 billion galaxies, and that is only

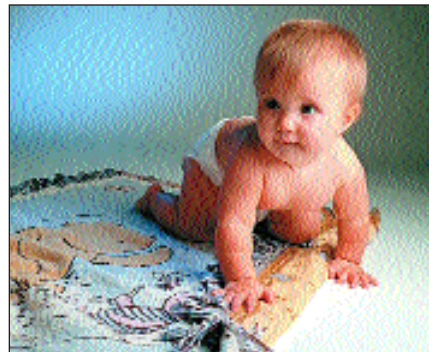
the estimated number of *galaxies* in the universe. The average Milky Way-sized galaxy is thought to contain *200 billion stars* and untold numbers of planets.

Such astounding numbers quickly outgrow our limited comprehension and imagination.

## Fundamental questions about origins

Who among us has not gazed up into the nighttime sky and wondered why we are here? What is our place in the universe? What is the purpose of life?

At a time of an astounding increase of knowledge about the universe, philosophers, scientists and other thinkers ask these same questions. The assumptions



**Why were you born? Why do you exist?** *People have asked these questions for centuries, but few have found the answers.*

they have drawn from traditional scientific understanding and thoughtful reasoning have been tried and found wanting.

British theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking, author of the best-seller *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes*, considers some of these vital questions: "We find ourselves in a bewildering world," he writes. "We want to make sense of what we see around us and to ask: What is the nature of the universe? What is our place in it and where did it and we come from?" (1988, p. 171).

People have asked questions relating to our existence since the dawn of history. But rarely have they been so well expressed as by the eminent scientists, historians and philosophers of our age.

Professor Hawking does not claim to have all the answers. But, through his extraordinary scientific knowledge and ability—especially in the fields of astrophysics, cosmology and mathematics—he asks the right questions.

He is not the only scientist to ponder these fundamental questions. The late Carl Sagan, also a brilliant scientist and best-selling author, wrote in his introduction to Professor Hawking's book: "We go about our daily lives understanding almost nothing of the world. We give little thought to the machinery that generates the sunlight that makes life possible, to the gravity that glues us to an earth that would otherwise send us spinning off into space, or to the atoms of which we are made and on whose stability we fundamentally depend" (*ibid.*, p. ix).

Professor Sagan dedicated his life to bringing scientific thought to the nonscientific public. Notice another of his observations: "Except for children (who don't know enough not to ask the important questions), few of us spend much time wondering why nature is the way it is; where the cosmos came from, or whether it was always here . . ." (*ibid.*).

Perhaps most of us feel unqualified to weigh the mysteries of the universe, that we would be wasting our time. But that's not true. This intellectual curiosity comes with the territory of being human. You should ask the questions, and you should have the answers.

Professor Hawking emphasized this point in the last pages of *A Brief History of Time*: "... If we do discover a complete theory [that explains everything], it should in time be understandable in broad principle by *everyone*, not just a few scientists. Then we shall all, philosophers, scientists, and just ordinary people, be able to take part in the discussion of the question of *why it is that we and the universe exist*" (p. 175, emphasis added).

He concludes: "If we find the answer to that, it would be the ultimate triumph of human reason—for *then we would know the mind of God*" (*ibid.*, emphasis added).

## A question of consequence

British historian Paul Johnson recently wrote *A History of the Jews*. Within its pages he, too, asks some of humanity's most important questions: "What are we on earth for? Is history merely a series of events whose sum is meaningless? . . . Or is there a providential plan of which we are, however humbly, the agents?" (1997, p. 2).

Is this life all there is, or is there something more? If there is something more, how should awareness of that something impact your life? Are we missing a vital perspective when we review the pages of human history?

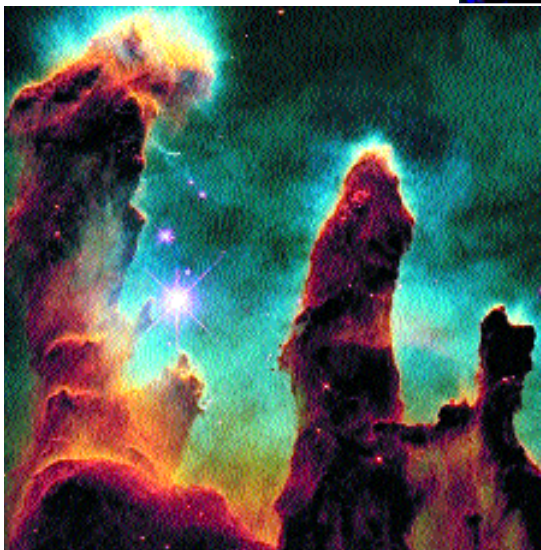
These are fundamental questions indeed. Have you squarely faced them? Why are we here? Is there a purpose for our lives? What is our destiny, and is that destiny inextricably linked with the existence of God? We need to ask and seek answers to these questions. Their answers have serious consequences that should profoundly affect the way we live.

But where do we begin? How do we answer that most basic of all questions: Does God exist? Is He real; does He live? If so, what is He like? Does He have a plan for you?

We can find the answers to these questions. Evidence of God's existence is available. Let's look at some of the evidence, asking and answering questions so basic to our search for meaning and purpose.

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**The Hubble Space Telescope** (above right) has captured astounding images of the universe. The photo at right, discussed in the introduction, shows galaxies 10 billion light years from our own. The gaseous "pillars of creation," below, are thought to be a birthplace for newly forming stars.



# Evidence in Plain Sight

In recent centuries philosophers have tried to answer the major questions about mankind's existence and place in the universe. What approach have they taken?

Their fundamental premise has been that there is no God. Leaving no room for anything we cannot see, hear or feel, or measure through scientific methods, they have believed the answers could be found through human reason. Using man's ability to reason, with its natural prejudice against God (see "Man's Natural Hostility Toward God," page 24), they concluded that the universe came from nothing, life evolved from inert matter, and reason itself is our best guide to finding our way.

In his recent book *A Quest for God*, historian Paul Johnson observes: "*The existence or non-existence of God is the most important question we humans are ever asked to answer. If God does exist, and if in consequence we are called to another life when this one ends, a momentous set of consequences follows, which should affect every day, every moment almost, of our earthly existence. Our life then becomes a mere preparation for eternity and must be conducted throughout with our future in view*" (1996, p. 1, emphasis added).

Can we really understand the answers to the most important questions of life without at least being willing to examine the question of the existence of God, who is described in the Bible as having given us life and having created us in His own image? (Genesis 1:26-27). Human reason, however, automatically dismisses the idea of God as the Creator who has a purpose for man and the universe. With that utter disregard for God have come unforeseen—and tragic—consequences.

Can we find solid evidence of God's existence? If so, where do we look for it, and what is the nature of that evidence? What is our attitude toward the evidence, and how does that influence the way we live?

## Evaluating the evidence

How does the evidence for God's existence measure up to the evidence presented

against it? How any evidence is weighed and evaluated is critical to the validity of any conclusions we reach on this most important matter. We must look at arguments for and against God's existence without resorting to prejudiced premises or illogical conclusions.



*Why do we live in a universe of such precision and order? Why is the universe not random, chaotic and unpredictable, as we would expect to find if we are nothing more than the result of blind chance and lucky accidents?*

Prejudice works both ways. Many people who believe in God's existence feel compelled to defend their point of view in irrational ways. They hurt their cause by doing so. In like manner, many who believe there is no God refuse to give the evidence of His existence a fair hearing. In both instances, shallow prejudice is the real enemy.

Richard Dawkins, professor of zoology at Oxford University and an aggressive proponent of the theory of evolution, wrote *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe Without Design*. He sums up the atheistic view toward human origins and existence:

"Natural selection, the blind, unconscious, automatic process which Darwin discovered, and which we now know is the explanation for the existence and apparently purposeful form of all life, has no purpose in mind. It has no mind and no mind's eye. It does not plan for the future. It has no vision, nor foresight, no sight at all. If it can be said to play the role of watchmaker in nature, it is the *blind* watchmaker" (1986, p. 5, emphasis in original).

However, to avoid accepting uncomfortable evidence of God's existence, he

reasons, "Biology is the study of complicated things that give the *appearance* of having been designed for a purpose" (Dawkins, p. 1, emphasis added).

While admitting that living things give the appearance of purposeful design, Professor Dawkins does not consider the obvious—that, if they *appear* to have been designed, maybe they *were* designed.

## Denying or recognizing the obvious?

Professor Dawkins' backhanded acknowledgment that living organisms "overwhelmingly impress us with the appearance of design as if by a master watchmaker," as he put it (p. 21), is not dismissed so lightly by many other scientists. They see the overwhelming presence of intricate design in the universe as a powerful indicator of an intelligent Designer.

A growing trend among researchers in biology, physics, astronomy, botany, chemistry and other major disciplines is study and debate over the complexity and orderliness they find at every level throughout the universe. Writers and scientists use the term *anthropic principle* to describe what, from all observations and appearances, are a universe and planet finely tuned for life—human life in particular.

Paul Davies, professor of mathematical physics at Australia's University of Adelaide, summarizes the growing findings of scientists from many fields: "A long list of additional 'lucky accidents' and 'coincidences' has been compiled . . . Taken together, they provide impressive evidence that life as we know it depends very sensitively on the form of the laws of physics, and on some seemingly fortuitous accidents in the actual values that nature has chosen for various particle masses, force strengths, and so on . . ."

"Suffice it to say that, if we could play God, and select values for these quantities at whim by twiddling a set of knobs, we would find that *almost all knob settings would render the universe uninhabitable*. In some cases it seems as if the different knobs have to be *fine-tuned to enormous*

precision if the universe is to be such that life will flourish” (*The Mind of God: The Scientific Basis for a Rational World*, 1992, pp. 199-200, emphasis added).

### A world of design and purpose

Is our complex universe really the work of a blind watchmaker, as some contend? Is that what we view about us every day? Is life on earth simply the product of chance, with no purpose and planning, no control or consequences?

Accumulating evidence to the contrary is leading more and more scientists to question assumptions popular in scientific circles for years. Although few are willing to admit compelling evidence of God’s existence, many are admitting that everywhere they look they see evidence of a world that gives the appearance of intricate design down to the tiniest details (see “A Planet Perfect for Life,” page 6).

The Bible acknowledges the obvious when it presents us with an explanation of life quite different from that espoused by Professor Dawkins. It presents the universe as *the handiwork of a Creator*.

“Whence arises all the order and beauty we see in the world?” asked Sir Isaac Newton. The question is natural, and it was asked by a believing scientist who recognized the necessity of a cause for every effect. Actions have consequences. An intricately crafted universe points to an intelligent Designer.

Albert Einstein also marveled at the order and harmony he and his fellow scientists observed throughout the universe. He noted that the religious feeling of the scientist “takes the form of a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural law, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection” (*The Quotable Einstein*, Alice Calaprice, editor, 1996, p. 151).

Martin Rees, professor of astronomy at Cambridge University, and science writer John Gribbin, discussing how finely tuned scientists have found the universe to be, note that “the conditions in our Universe really do seem to be uniquely suitable for life forms like ourselves, and perhaps even for any form of organic complexity . . . Is the Universe tailor-made for man?” (*Cosmic Coincidences: Dark Matter, Mankind, and Anthropic Cosmology*, 1989, p. 269, emphasis in original).

Professor Davies expressed it this way: “Through my scientific work I have come

to believe more and more strongly that the physical universe is put together with an ingenuity so astonishing that I cannot accept it merely as brute fact. There must, it seems to me, be a deeper level of explanation. Whether one wishes to call that deeper level ‘God’ is a matter of taste and definition . . . [I] believe that we human beings are built into the scheme of things in a very basic way” (*The Mind of God: The Scientific Basis for a Rational World*, p. 16).

No wonder British astrophysicist Sir Fred Hoyle says: “A common sense interpretation of the facts suggests that *a super-intellect has monkeyed with the physics*, as well as with chemistry and biology, and that there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature. The numbers one calculates from the facts seem to me *so overwhelming as to put this conclusion almost beyond question*” (Fred Heeren, *Show Me God: What the Message From Space Is Telling Us About God*, 1997, frontispiece, emphasis added).

### The persistence of unbelief

Yet the belief stubbornly persists that God is not needed. Harvard University paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould summarizes his atheistic viewpoint: “No intervening spirit watches lovingly over the affairs [of mankind]. No vital forces propel evolutionary change. And whatever we think of God, his existence is not manifest in the products of nature” (*Darwin’s Legacy*, Charles Hamrum, editor, 1983, pp. 6-7).

Supporters of evolution like to point out that acceptance of the idea of a divine Creator requires faith in someone or something we cannot see. Yet they are far from comfortable admitting that all who believe that life evolved from inert matter have faith in a theory that cannot be proven—and is founded on far more fragile evidence than that which supports the faith of believers in a Creator.

Evolutionists’ faith assumes that our unimaginably complex universe created itself or somehow came to exist from nothing. They firmly believe in a chain of circumstances that defies not only logic, but also fundamental laws of physics and biology. (For a closer look at the creation-evolution controversy, be sure to request your free copy of the booklet *Creation or Evolution: Does It Really Matter What You Believe?*)

Evolution has become, in a real sense, another religion. The faith of its followers is rooted in an unsubstantiated belief that the incredible universe, including the world

around us teeming with an intricate variety of life, is the result of blind, random chance. It can offer no rational explanation for where the matter came from that made possible the universe and the supposed evolution of life.

Sidestepping the issue of where matter



**Is life on earth the product of chance?** Evolutionists would have us believe that the beauty and orderliness we see all around us are unplanned and accidental.

and the universe originated, proponents of evolution begin with an existing universe operating according to harmonious and predictable laws. They recognize that those laws exist and function flawlessly. Yet they haven’t the slightest idea of their origin. They choose to ignore the overwhelming evidence that a great intelligence is behind these orderly and harmonious laws.

Our universe works like a giant watch. The last 40 years of space exploration has shown the precision of the universe. It is because of this predictability that NASA can rely on split-second timing when launching men into space and sending spacecraft to explore planets so far away that it sometimes takes years to reach them even at speeds of thousands of miles per hour.

### Evidence of natural laws

Astonishingly precise physical laws govern the universe. As Einstein put it: “My religion consists of a humble admiration of the illimitable superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble minds. That deeply emotional conviction of the presence of a superior reasoning power, which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms my idea of God” (*The Quotable Einstein*, p. 161).

Astronomers can predict with amazing precision when a comet will return to our sky. Scientists can send spacecraft to land on other planets or orbit bodies millions of

# A Planet Perfect for Life

Could life on earth be the product of a blind watchmaker or no watchmaker at all? Could it be strictly the result of blind chance?

Some scientists have concluded that earth may be the only planet in the universe that harbors life because the conditions necessary for life are so exacting that the possibility of life on other planets is infinitesimal.

## Earth's atmosphere

Earth's atmosphere is one way our planet is finely tuned for life. No other planet in our solar system has anything remotely like it. High in the atmosphere, ozone blocks cancer-causing radiation emanating from the sun. The atmosphere shields us from meteors, burning up the overwhelming majority long before they reach earth. Otherwise they would cause great damage and loss of life.

Our atmosphere contains a mixture of gases in perfect proportions to sustain life. Oxygen makes up 21 percent of our air. Without oxygen, all animate life—including humans—would die in minutes. But too

much oxygen is toxic and makes combustible materials more flammable. If the proportion of oxygen in the air increased to only 24 percent, destructive fires would frequently break out and be much harder to bring under control. Objects around us could literally burst into flame.

Nitrogen, making up 78 percent of earth's atmosphere, dilutes the oxygen and serves a vital function as a fertilizer for plants. During thunderstorms millions of lightning bolts around the earth each day combine some nitrogen with oxygen, creating compounds that are then washed to earth by rain, where they can be utilized by plants.

Carbon dioxide makes up much of the rest of our atmosphere. Without it plant life would be impossible. Plants require carbon dioxide, which they take in while giving off oxygen. Animals and humans are the oppo-

site, breathing in oxygen and exhaling carbon dioxide. Plant life sustains human and animal life and vice versa in a magnificent, precise, self-sustaining cycle.

Even the thickness of the earth's crust plays a part in regulating our atmosphere. If earth's crust were much thicker, it would hoard oxygen below the surface as oxides. But a thinner crust would leave us suscepti-

making its gravity slightly stronger, hydrogen, a light gas, would be unable to escape earth's gravity and would collect in our atmosphere, making it inhospitable to life. Yet, if earth were only slightly smaller, oxygen—necessary for life—would escape, and water would evaporate. Thus, if earth were slightly larger or smaller, human life could not have existed on earth.



*Unlike every other planet yet discovered, earth is a shimmering blue ball finely tuned for life to exist and thrive. Is this fine tuning accidental?*

ble to frequent earthquakes and devastating volcanoes that would permeate our atmosphere with volcanic ash.

How important is the precise balance in our atmosphere? Our neighboring planet Venus suffers from what is thought to be a runaway greenhouse effect in which heat is trapped and cannot escape. One NASA astronomer noted that our sterile, lifeless moon "is a friendly place compared to Venus, where, from skies forty kilometers high a rain of concentrated sulfuric acid falls toward a surface that is as hot as boiling lead" (Robert Jastrow, *God and the Astronomers*, 1992, p. 117).

## Earth's size and position

Another condition that makes the earth hospitable for life is its size, which determines its gravity and in turn affects its atmosphere. If earth were only a little larger,

The earth travels through space at 66,600 miles an hour as it orbits the sun. That speed perfectly offsets the sun's gravitational pull and keeps earth's orbit the proper distance from the sun. If earth's speed were less, it would be gradually pulled toward the sun, eventually scorching and extinguishing life. Mercury, the planet closest to the sun, has a daytime temperature of about 600 degrees Fahrenheit.

On the other hand, if earth's speed were greater, it would in time move farther away from the sun to become a frozen wasteland like Pluto, with a temperature of about minus-300 degrees, also eliminating all life.

As earth rotates in its orbit, it is tilted at a 23.5-degree angle relative to the sun. Although not a direct factor in whether life is possible, the angle creates the change of seasons we are able to enjoy. Were the earth not tilted, our climate would always be the same, with no change of seasons. If the tilt were greater, summers would be considerably hotter and winters much colder, wreaking havoc on plant cycles and agriculture.

## Life-sustaining water

So many of earth's forms of life are dependent on an environment in which liquid water is stable. This means that earth must not be too close or too far from the sun. Astronomers estimate that, if the distance from earth to the sun changed by as little as 2 percent, all life would be extinguished as water either froze or evaporated.

Another factor making life on earth pos-



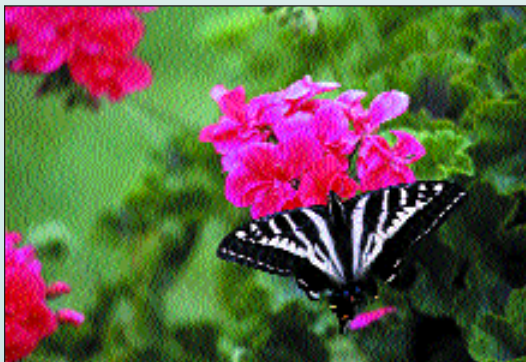
*Alone among the planets in our solar system, earth has an abundance of life-sustaining water.*

sible is frozen water's set of unusual characteristics. Ice is such a common substance that most of us do not stop to consider that the balance of life depends on the simple chemical properties of ice.

Ice is one of the few substances that expands when frozen. Most substances when frozen become more dense and sink when placed in a container of the same substance in liquid form. But not ice. Since water expands by one tenth its volume when frozen, frozen water has the unusual characteristic of floating on top of liquid water. When rivers and lakes freeze in the winter, they freeze from the top down. If ice acted like almost all other compounds, it would sink, and rivers and lakes would freeze from the bottom up. All bodies of water would eventually become solid bodies of ice, eliminating most life as we know it.

Astronomer Hugh Ross points out some of the other ways earth is perfectly balanced for life to exist: "As biochemists now

*The remarkable and intricate relationships between earth's plants and animals should lead us to question how they could have developed by chance.*



concede, for life molecules to operate so that organisms can live requires an environment where liquid water is stable. This means that a planet cannot be too close to its star or too far away. In the case of planet Earth, a change in the distance from the sun as small as 2 percent would rid the planet of all life . . .

"The rotation period of a life-supporting planet cannot be changed by more than a few percent. If the planet takes too long to rotate, temperature differences between day and night will be too great. On the other hand, if the planet rotates too rapidly, wind velocities will rise to catastrophic levels. A quiet day on Jupiter (rotation period of ten hours), for example, generates thousand mph winds . . ." (*The Creator and the Cosmos*, 1993, pp. 135-136).

In contrast to Jupiter's 10-hour rotation, our neighboring planet Venus rotates once every 243 days. If earth's rotation took as long, plant life would be impossible because of the extended darkness and extremes of heat and cold from such long days and nights.

#### **Our amazing solar system**

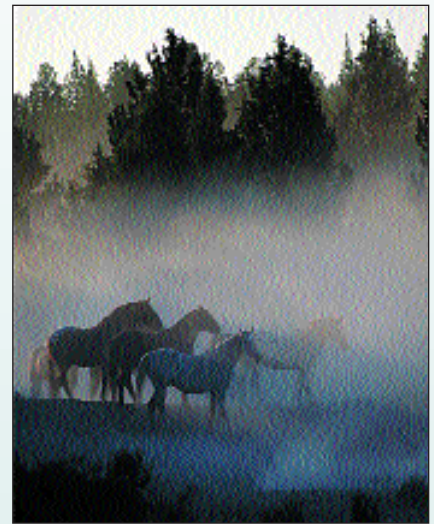
Dr. Ross describes how other planets in our solar system play a vital role in preserving life on earth: "Late in 1993, planetary scientists George Wetherell, of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, D.C., made an exciting discovery about our solar system. In observing computer simulations of our solar system, he found that without a Jupiter-sized planet positioned just where it is, Earth would be struck about a thousand times more frequently than it is already by comets and comet debris. In other words, without Jupiter, impacts such as the one that wiped out the dinosaurs would be common.

"Here is how the protection system works. Jupiter is two and a half times more massive than all the other planets combined. Because of its huge mass, thus huge gravity, and its location between the earth and the cloud of comets surrounding the solar system, Jupiter either draws comets (by gravity) to collide with itself, as it did in July 1994, or, more commonly, it deflects comets (again by gravity) right out of the solar system. In Wetherell's words, if it were not for Jupiter, 'we wouldn't be around to study the origin of the solar system.'

"Neither would we be

around if it were not for the very high regularity in the orbits of both Jupiter and Saturn. Also in July 1994, French astrophysicist Jacques Laskar determined that if the outer planets were less [orbitally] regular, then the inner planets' motions would be chaotic, and Earth would suffer orbital changes so extreme as to disrupt its climatic stability. In other words, Earth's climate would be unsuitable for life . . . Thus even the characteristics of Jupiter and Saturn's orbits must fit within certain narrowly defined ranges for life on Earth to be possible . . .

"The moon plays a critical role for life as well. Our moon is unique among solar system bodies in that it is so large relative to its planet. As a result, our moon exerts a significant gravitational pull on Earth. Thanks to this pull, coastal sea waters are cleansed and their nutrients replenished, also the obliq-



*Earth's plant and animal life doesn't just exist; it is a source of great beauty to us.*

uity (tilt of the rotation axis relative to the orbital plane) of Earth is stabilized (a critical factor for avoiding climatic extremes) . . . So we see that Earth is prepared for life through a variety of finely tuned characteristics of our galaxy, star, planet, and moon.

"This discussion by no means exhausts the list of characteristics that must be fine tuned for life to exist. The astronomical literature now includes discussions on more than forty different characteristics that must take on narrowly defined values. And this list grows longer with every new year of research" (ibid., pp. 137-138).

No wonder the Genesis creation account concludes with this summary of God's handiwork: "Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good" (Genesis 1:31).

miles away. The heavenly bodies move in a thoroughly predictable fashion.

On earth we can chart the position of stars and planets for any given day, month and year, forward or backward, with incredible accuracy. Calendars are useful because of the universe's immutable laws. We can rely on the timing and position of the heavenly bod-



*Whether we gaze at the heavens through a telescope, the unseen world through a microscope or at the natural world around us, everywhere we see beauty and design.*

ies because of the laws that govern their relationship. In a sense, the story of mankind is a story of our *discovery* of more and more of the laws that govern the cosmos.

For example, we experience the effects of the law of gravity. Though gravity is something we can't see, we know it exists. We know that it functions consistently. It is one of the fundamental laws of the universe. Similar laws govern every aspect of the universe—laws of energy, motion, mass, matter and life itself.

What about evolution? Evolutionary theory holds that life arose from nonliving matter and over countless eons changed to form the astounding variety of life on earth.

That very concept is contrary to one of the most basic of all natural laws: the *law of biogenesis*. Throughout nature biogenesis is abundantly evident: Life can come only from *existing life*, just as your life was conceived by *living* parents. Evolutionists, of course, argue against this principle but can produce no concrete evidence to the contrary.

### Evidence of a Grand Designer

Let's get to the crux of the matter: Why do we find so many dependable, predictable, finely tuned laws governing our existence? What is their origin? Did life arise by chance, or is something larger at work? There must be an explanation for the existence of everything. The number,

precision and perfection of natural laws cannot be explained away as an accident. Such reasoning is irrational.

Common sense tells us that the existence of an unimaginably magnificent universe structured on and sustained by innumerable laws of physics requires the existence of a Creator of those laws, a Designer of those structures.

Some of the clearest evidence of God's existence is in the awesome presence of design in the universe. Australian scientist Paul Davies put it well in his book *The Mind of God: The Scientific Basis for a Rational World*: "Human beings have always been awestruck by the subtlety, majesty, and intricate organization of the physical world. The march of the heavenly bodies across the sky, the rhythms of the seasons, the pattern of a snowflake, the myriads

of living creatures so well adapted to their environment—all these things seem too well arranged to be a mindless accident. There is a natural tendency to attribute the elaborate order of the universe to the purposeful workings of a Deity" (p. 194).

Another writer who saw clear proof of creation all around him was King David. Looking into the heavens 3,000 years ago, he discerned that he was viewing the handiwork of the Creator and that we can discern much about Him by that handiwork: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world" (Psalm 19:1-4, New International Version).

The splendor of the night sky still moves us to wonder and awe. What are those tiny specks of light sparkling in the darkness of space? How did they get there? *Why* are they there? What lies beyond them in the unimaginable reaches of the universe? The grandeur of the shimmering heavens raises questions not just about the universe but about *our part in it*.

The same is true of the intricate patterns in all things on earth, not just the world we see around us but the unseen world we can explore only through microscopes.

A thousand years after King David

expressed his awe at these marvels, the apostle Paul told Christians in Rome that "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 1:20, NIV).

The writers of the Bible recognized in the creation much evidence of a great, all-wise Creator. They understood that the wonders we see around us shout the same message: Such astonishing design *demand*s a Master Designer! Whether we are moved by the power of the sea, the grandeur of a mountain range, the delicate beauty of the first spring flowers or the birth of a child, as we look at the world around us we naturally conclude: *This is the handiwork of a great Designer.*

### Creation reveals the Creator

Wrote theoretical physicist John Polkinghorne, president of Queens College, Cambridge, and a member of Britain's Royal Society: "The intellectual beauty of the order discovered by science is consistent with the physical world's having behind it the mind of the divine Creator . . . The finely tuned balance built into the laws determining the very physical fabric of the universe is consistent with its fruitful history being the expression of divine purpose" (*Serious Talk: Science and Religion in Dialogue*, 1995, p. viii).

Michael Behe, associate professor of biochemistry at Pennsylvania's Lehigh University, concluded from his intensive study of the cell, the basic building block of life, that such tremendous complexity can be explained only by the existence of an intelligent Designer:

"To a person who does not feel obliged to restrict his search to unintelligent causes, the straightforward conclusion is that many biochemical systems were designed. They were designed not by the laws of nature, not by chance and necessity; rather they were *planned*. The designer knew what the systems would look like when they were completed, then took steps to bring the systems about" (*Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution*, 1996, p. 193, emphasis in original).

His conclusion: "Life on earth at its most fundamental level, in its most critical components, is the product of intelligent design" (*ibid.*).

The precision of our universe is not the result of an accident. It is the product of a meticulous Creator and Lawgiver, the universe's Master Watchmaker.



# The Beginning of the Universe

**H**as the universe always existed, or, at some definite point in time, did it have a beginning? It is on this question that much of the argument of a Creator God rests. After all, if the universe has always existed there clearly is no need for a being or outside intelligence to design and create it. On the other hand, if the universe came into being at a precise, specific time, something must have caused it to come into being.

Scientists are not in accord as to whether the universe had a beginning. A few still believe it is possible it has always existed. British physicist Stephen Hawking explains why. “So long as the universe had a beginning, we could suppose it had a creator. But if the universe is really completely self-contained, having no boundary or edge, it would have neither beginning nor end: it would simply be” (*A Brief History of Time*, pp. 140-141).

But this concept is no longer the dominant scientific view. Most scientists now accept that the universe began suddenly and at a specific point in time.

## Discovery of a beginning

In the early 1900s astronomers discovered a phenomenon known as red shift—that light from distant galaxies is shifted toward the red end of the color spectrum. Astronomer Edwin Hubble realized this meant that the universe is expanding. He discovered that galaxies and clusters of galaxies are moving away from each other *in all directions*.

To envision this revolutionary discovery, imagine dots of ink on the surface of a balloon you are blowing up. As you inflate the balloon, the spots move further from each other in all directions. Hubble and other astronomers found that galaxies throughout the universe are speeding away from each other in the same way. They also found that, the farther a galaxy or cluster of galaxies is from us, the faster it is retreating.

What Hubble had discovered was that the universe is expanding outward everywhere he looked. The discovery was revolutionary, since up until this time most astronomers assumed that any motion by galaxies was simply random drift. Other astronomers and physicists subsequently



*How did our universe come to exist? Which takes greater faith: to believe it created itself from nothing or that a Creator was involved?*

confirmed Hubble’s observations and conclusions. What could this mean?

John D. Barrow, professor of astronomy at the University of Sussex, England, explores in his book *The Origin of the Universe* the fascinating question of how space, matter and even time began. Of the expansion of the universe, Barrow writes: “This was the greatest discovery of twentieth-century science, and it confirmed what Einstein’s general theory of relativity had predicted about the universe: that it cannot be static. The gravitational attraction between the galaxies would bring them all together if they were not rushing away from each other. The universe can’t stand still.

“If the universe is expanding, then when we reverse the direction of history and look in the past we should find evidence that it emerged from a smaller, denser state—a state that appears to have once had zero size. It is this apparent beginning that has become known as the big bang” (1994, pp. 3-5).

In other words, what astronomers concluded they were seeing was the aftermath of an unimaginably powerful event that hurled matter and energy outward in all directions to form the known universe—thus the name “big bang.” In reality, what they were observing was the fact that the universe *had to have a beginning*.

## The moment of creation

This discovery shook the scientific establishment. Writes Robert Jastrow, founder of NASA’s Goddard Institute for Space Studies and former professor of astronomy and geology at New York’s Columbia University: “Few astronomers could have anticipated that this event—the *sudden birth of the Universe*—would become a proven scientific fact, but observations of the heavens through telescopes have forced them into that conclusion” (*The Enchanted*

*Loom: Mind in the Universe*, 1981, p. 15, emphasis added).

He exclaims: “The seed of everything that has happened since in the Universe was planted in the first instant . . . It was literally the moment of creation” (*Journey to the Stars: Space Exploration—Tomorrow and Beyond*, 1989, p. 47).

Scientists had made a major scientific discovery that was first recorded in the Bible some 3,500 years ago: The universe was not eternal; it had a beginning. Other discoveries, such as the radioactive decay of certain elements, confirmed that these elements could not be infinitely old or they would long since have turned to lead.

As long as scientists and philosophers assumed the universe had infinitely existed—that it had no beginning and thus no need for a Creator to create it—they could easily leave God out of the picture. Few scientists persist in believing in an infinitely old earth and universe. There is simply too much evidence against it. They have

been forced to acknowledge that we live in a universe that had a beginning.

That admission raises questions discomfiting for many scientists. What force, power or laws existed before the beginning of the universe to make it come into existence? Since the universe exists, what was the cause? Our rational minds tell us the universe could not have come from nothing. That defies not only logic but the laws of physics. What—or who—caused the universe? *Why* was it brought into being?

### The point where science stops

It is at this point that science stops in its tracks. As Professor Jastrow explains: “A sound explanation may exist for the explosive birth of our Universe; but if it does, science cannot find out what the explanation is. The scientist’s pursuit of the past ends in the moment of creation . . . We would like to pursue that inquiry farther back in time, but the barrier to further progress seems insurmountable. It is not a matter of another year, another decade of work, another measurement, or another theory; at this moment it seems as though science will never be able to raise the

curtain on the mystery of creation” (*God and the Astronomers*, 1978, pp. 114-116).

Professor Jastrow acknowledges that everything scientists know breaks down at the moment of creation. The known laws of the universe simply no longer apply when the universe leaps into existence *from nothing*. Science can offer no rational explanation, no means to record, measure or reconstruct an event that defies all scientific understanding.

Some scientists draw incorrect conclusions from these facts, assuming that, since science can’t discover what took place before the universe was formed, *nothing* could have happened before it was formed. This tells us nothing about God’s existence or nonexistence, but it does say a lot about the limitations of the traditional scientific approach. We must seek a source other than science to understand who or what existed before the origin of the universe. And only one source offers a truly believable and rational explanation—the Bible.

There is only one alternative to the biblical claim. Atheists must assert that the entire universe came from nothing without a cause. They must insist on this

unfounded, insupportable assertion because there is no other way to avoid the existence of a First Cause.

Yet their most basic assertion is fundamentally flawed. The beginning of the universe has been proven to be a specific event. We all know from years and years of experience that one of the most fundamental truths is that *events have causes*. This fundamental truth underlies the laws that govern energy and matter. Nothing happens without a cause. The beginning of the universe is an event that *had a specific cause*.

### The Bible’s claims

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” says the Bible (Genesis 1:1). This is a simple statement, but it answers the most basic and scientific of all questions: Where did we come from?

This verse describes the beginning of the universe. The universe had a beginning caused by a timeless, changeless force *outside* of this physical universe. When matter came into existence, this was the beginning of time as we measure it. For the origin of the universe, this verse answers the questions of who, what and

## How Big is Big?

**T**he size of our solar system alone—not to mention the Milky Way galaxy—is so large that it defies imagination. Let’s try to visualize it on a scale we can begin to comprehend.

Let’s first envision our sun as the size of an orange. On that scale, the earth is a grain of sand orbiting the sun 30 feet away. The gigantic planet Jupiter, many times larger than earth, is a cherry pit circling 200 feet away. Saturn, also the size of a cherry pit, orbits *two blocks* away from the sun. Pluto, the outermost known planet in our solar system, is another speck of sand almost *half a mile* from our orange-sized sun.

How does that compare with distances within our galaxy? On that scale the sun’s nearest neighbor, the star Alpha Centauri, is *1,300 miles* away. Our galaxy, on that scale, could be compared to a group of 200 billion

oranges, each an average of *2,000 miles* apart, with the entire group forming

astronomers estimate that some 100 billion or more galaxies exist in the universe. They haven’t yet found an end or edge to the universe; this is simply all we can detect using our most advanced instruments to peer 10 billion light years into space. Such distances make human space travel beyond our solar system impossible. (Adapted from Robert Jastrow, *Red Giants and White Dwarfs*, 1990, p. 15).

The amount of matter and energy in the universe is unfathomable to the human mind. We describe distances and space in terms of light years—the distance light travels in one year (almost six trillion miles)—as though we comprehend it.

But we cannot begin to understand these kinds of figures. Once again we must face the question: Did this come from nothing?



**The universe is unimaginably huge.** Even when we try to put it in terms we can understand, such attempts soon break down. How did such an incomprehensible universe come to exist?

a cluster *20 million miles* in diameter. Based on research using their most advanced telescopes and other tools,

when. The *why* comes a little later.

Hebrews 11:3 adds another detail: “By faith [by trusting what God has revealed] we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible” (New Revised Standard Version).

Two things should be noted in this explanation. First, the universe did have a cause; it came from something. What it came from was not visible; that is, it was not preexisting matter. Scripture tells us our universe had a cause—truly a scientific statement.

Second, it tells us that by faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the Word of God. But this is not blind faith. We are not asked to believe that it popped into existence without a cause and without a purpose—the tenets of the faith of an atheist. We are asked to believe that the world had its beginning as the free act of a Being who is timeless and powerful enough to bring the universe into being.

### Understanding Genesis 1:1-2

During the last 150 years or so, no part of the Bible has come under more rigorous attack than the creation account in Genesis 1. Darwinists have made much of certain indications that the earth may be between five and 15 billion years old. Yet some Bible believers contend the earth has existed for only 6,000 years, based on a careful genealogical study of the scriptural record combined with history. The first two verses of the Bible are critical to this discussion.

This controversy leads to an important question. If the earth should be billions of years old, and if the Bible’s direct statements about creation are flawed, then how can you believe the Bible’s other claims? This question is valid, and the controversy over it has set the stage for the science-vs.-religion approach prevailing in our educational systems. The claims of science are impressive. But how does the biblical account stack up, and what does the Bible really say?

Several Bible versions, including the New International Version, the Scofield Reference Bible and the Companion Bible, note that the phrase “the earth was without form and void” (verse 2) can be rightly translated “the earth *became* without form and void.” The Hebrew word *hayah*, translated “was,” means “to become, occur, come to pass, be” (*Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, 1985, “To Be”).

In other words, God created the earth, but the original Hebrew can just as easily

indicate that it later *became* “without form, and void.” It can indicate that something spoiled the original creation described in Genesis 1:1 and caused God to restore order out of chaos—which would have happened during six days of restoration followed by a Sabbath rest day.

(For a detailed account of the rationale and reference sources that support this view of Genesis 1:1-2, please request our free booklets *Is the Bible True?* and *Creation or Evolution: Does It Really Matter What You Believe?*)

Suffice it to say here that God does *not* create by first creating chaos (Isaiah 45:18; 1 Corinthians 14:33). God told the powerful angelic being Lucifer, “You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity [lawlessness] was found in you” (Ezekiel 28:15). God is a being of perfection, order and beauty. Chaos and disorder result from rejection of or rebellion against Him. Scripture reveals that angels already existed before earth’s creation (Job 38:4-7). Angelic beings were the first to introduce disharmony and confusion into God’s perfect creation.

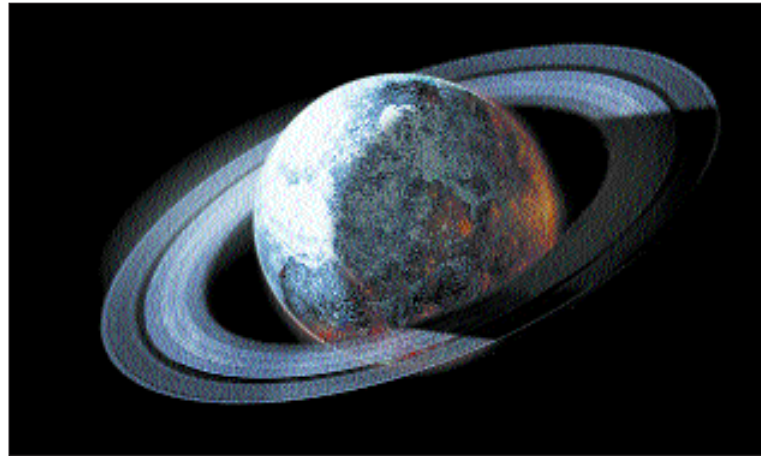
Other scriptures indicate that an original, earlier creation (Genesis 1:1) preceded the earth being “without form, and void” (Hebrew *tohu* and *bohu*, meaning a condition of chaotic disorder and confusion) in verse 2. Isaiah 45:18 tells us specifically that God “did not create it [the earth] in vain [*tohu*].” The chaotic condition described in Genesis 1:2 came later.

This chaos apparently resulted from a rebellion against God by Satan and a third of the angels (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:12-17; Revelation 12:4). Later, after an unspecified interval, during six days followed by the seventh-day Sabbath, God could have accomplished a full restoration of what had become chaotic (Genesis 1; Exodus 20:11).

In other words, a time gap seems to be indicated between the original creation described in Genesis 1:1 and earth’s restoration in verse 2. This unspecified period could have encompassed billions of years,

accounting for the “deep time” that geologists and other scientists seem to have discovered in the last two centuries.

Therefore the Bible itself, when correctly understood, offers a logical solution to this supposed creation enigma and has



*Scientists continually discover new wonders throughout the universe. Yet each is governed by the precise laws of nature.*

no inherent conflict with the possibility that the universe may be 15 billion years old. The Bible itself simply doesn’t say how old the universe, or earth, is. But it does plainly say: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

### A universe governed by laws

What have scientists discovered about the fundamental laws that existed at the origin of our universe? Far from having a chaotic, random structure—as one might assume if no intelligence were involved—the general scientific conclusion now is that the universe has been expanding in an orderly way since its inception. However, no one should be misled as to the simplicity or randomness of that expansion.

Writes Keith Ward, professor of history and professor of philosophy of religion at King’s College, London University: “The universe began to expand in a very *precisely ordered manner, in accordance with a set of basic mathematical constants and laws* which govern its subsequent development into a universe of the sort we see today. *There already existed a very complex array of quantum laws* describing possible interactions of elementary particles, and the universe, according to one main theory, originated by the operation of fluctuations in a quantum field *in accordance with those laws*” (*God, Chance & Necessity*, 1996, p. 17, emphasis added).

Such scientific discoveries and conclusions again bring us back to fundamental questions: Who created the original laws of astrophysics? Did they emerge by chance or accident? Or were they set in motion by a divine Creator?

### Laws without a Lawgiver?

Scientists acknowledge that our astounding universe is governed by precise, exact laws. Professor Davies sums up findings about these laws this way: “Each [scientific]



*We have made remarkable strides in discovering the laws that govern how the universe works. Yet scientists cannot answer how either those laws or the universe came to exist.*

advance brings new and unexpected discoveries, and challenges our minds with unusual and sometimes difficult concepts. But through it all runs the familiar thread of rationality and order . . . This cosmic order is underpinned by definite mathematical laws that interweave each other to form a subtle and harmonious unity. The laws are possessed of an elegant simplicity, and have often commended themselves to scientists on grounds of beauty alone” (*The Mind of God: The Scientific Basis for a Rational World*, p. 21).

As Einstein put it: “Everyone who is seriously involved in the pursuit of science becomes convinced that a spirit is manifest in the laws of the Universe—a spirit vastly superior to that of man” (*The Quotable Einstein*, p. 152).

Does the preexistence of the elaborate, intricate system of natural law in the universe mean there had to be a Lawgiver? Or can science demonstrate that the origin of the universe is solely the result of natural causes?

Biochemist Michael Behe writes: “It is commonplace, almost banal, to say that science has made great strides in understanding nature. The laws of physics are now so

well understood that space probes fly unerringly to photograph worlds billions of miles from earth. Computers, telephones, electric lights, and untold other examples testify to the mastery of science and technology over the forces of nature . . .

“Yet understanding *how something works* is not the same as understanding *how it came to be*. For example, the motions of the planets in the solar system can be predicted with tremendous accuracy; however, the origin of the solar system (the question of how the sun, planets, and their moons formed in the first place) is still controversial. Science may eventually solve the riddle. Still, the point remains that understanding the origin of something is different from understanding its day-to-day workings” (*Darwin’s Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution*, 1996, p. ix, emphasis added).

Many intelligent and learned people believe—and have a religionlike faith—that the complex laws governing the universe came into existence purely by accident or chance. But is this view credible? We know for certain it is not supported with demonstrable evidence. So here is the real question: Does it make sense to believe that a universe governed by a precise system of well-ordered laws came into existence by itself?

### The scriptural viewpoint

Here is where we again need to pay much closer attention to what the Scriptures tell us. They present an altogether different viewpoint. “. . . For *He commanded* and [the heavens] were created. He also established them forever and ever; *He made a decree* [a law or ordinance] *which shall not pass away*” (Psalm 148:4-6).

The Scriptures explain that God created laws in the “heavens” that cannot be suspended. “Yes, by my hand was the earth placed on its base, and by my right hand the heavens were stretched out; at my word they take up their places” (Isaiah 48:13, Bible in Basic English).

Some great truths are expressed in these verses. When compared to all other

alternatives, this point of view makes sense. It is the only point of view that reconciles all difficulties.

Notice astronomer Hugh Ross’s reaction on first reading the biblical account of creation: “The [Genesis account’s] distinctives struck me immediately. It was simple, direct, and specific. I was amazed with the quantity of historical and scientific references and with the detail in them.

“It took me a whole evening just to investigate the first chapter. Instead of another bizarre creation myth, here was a journal-like record of the earth’s initial conditions—correctly described from the standpoint of astrophysics and geophysics—followed by a summary of the sequence of changes through which Earth came to be inhabited by living things and ultimately by humans.

“The account was simple, elegant, and scientifically accurate. From what I understood to be the stated viewpoint of an observer on Earth’s surface, both the order and the description of creation events perfectly matched the established record of nature. I was amazed” (*The Creator and the Cosmos*, 1993, p. 15).

The evidence that the earth had a definite beginning, with preexisting laws governing all of its functions, is a powerful indication that God is the Creator and Sustainer of this marvelous universe.

Many modern books by scientists are filled with the evolutionary point of view. Most of modern education is grounded in evolutionary theory. But what about other views? Consider this admission from *The Columbia History of the World*: “Indeed, our best current knowledge, lacking the poetic magic of scripture, seems in a way less believable than the account in the Bible . . .” (John Garraty and Peter Gay, editors, 1972, p. 3).

Science writer Fred Heeren notes that “the actual trend in 20th-century cosmology . . . has been to turn from a view that was inconsistent with the Genesis creation account to one that follows the old scenario very well. In fact . . . Hebrew revelation is the only religious source coming to us from ancient times that fits the modern cosmological picture. And in many cases, 20th-century archaeology and myth experts have also been forced to turn from older views that treated the Bible as myth to ones that treat it as history” (*Show Me God*, 1997, preface).

It is high time we gave the book of Genesis equal billing.

## Science and *Discomfiting Discoveries*

**R**obert Jastrow is the founder and former director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies and former professor of astronomy and geology at Columbia University, New York, and professor of earth sciences at Dartmouth College. He was a recipient of the Arthur Flemming Award for Outstanding Service in the U.S. Government, the Columbia University Medal for Excellence and the NASA Medal for Exceptional Scientific Achievement.

He is a prolific science writer, particularly in astronomy, cosmology and space exploration. He doesn't hesitate to speak his mind, particularly when it comes to discoveries that discomfit his fellow scientists and their not-too-objective reactions to such findings.

His comments speak volumes about the attitudes—and at times outright bias—some scientists hold against the possibility of a Creator. Although personally an agnostic, he notes that scientific discoveries and the book of Genesis have much more in common than many of his colleagues are willing to admit (emphasis added throughout the following quotes).

"The astronomical proof of a Beginning places scientists in an awkward position, for they believe that every effect has a natural cause, and every event in the Universe can be explained by natural forces, working in accordance with physical law. Yet *science can find no force in nature that might account for the beginning of the Universe*; and it can find no evidence that the Universe even existed before that first moment. The British astronomer E.A. Milne wrote, 'We can make no proposition about the state of affairs [in the beginning]; in the Divine act of creation God is unobserved and unwitnessed'" (*The Enchanted Loom: Mind in the Universe*, 1981, p. 17).

"Scientists have no proof that life was *not* the result of an act of creation, but they are driven by the nature of their profession to seek explanations for the origin of life that lie within the boundaries of natural law. They ask themselves, 'How did life arise out of inanimate matter? And what is the probability of that happening?' And to their chagrin *they have no clear-cut answer*, because chemists have never succeeded in reproducing nature's experiments on the creation of life out of nonliving matter.

"Scientists do not know how that happened, and, furthermore, they do not know the chance of its happening. Perhaps the chance is very small, and the appearance of life on a planet is *an event of miraculously low probability*. Perhaps life on the earth is unique in this Universe. No scientific evidence precludes that possibility" (*Ibid.*, p. 19).

"The idea that the Universe exploded into being . . . is often called the Big Bang theory . . . It was literally *the moment of creation*. This is a *curiously biblical view of the origin of the world*. The details of the astronomer's story differ greatly from those in the Bible; in particular, the age of the Universe appears to be far greater than the 6,000 years of the biblical account [as noted in this chapter, this 6,000-year figure is a common misunderstanding; the Bible actually allows for a creation much older than that]; but the astronomical and biblical accounts of Genesis are alike in one essential respect. *There was a beginning, and all things in the Universe can be traced back to it*" (*Journey to the Stars: Space Exploration: Tomorrow and Beyond*, 1989, p. 47).

"Now we see how the astronomical evidence leads to a biblical view of the origin of the world. The details differ, but *the essential elements in the astronomical and biblical accounts of Genesis are the same*: The chain of events leading to man commenced suddenly and sharply at a definite moment in time, in a flash of light and energy. Some scientists are unhappy with the idea that the world began this way" (*God and the Astronomers*, 1978, p. 14).

"Theologians generally are delighted with the proof that the Universe had a beginning, but astronomers are curiously upset. Their reactions provide an interesting demonstration of the response of the scientific mind—supposedly a very objective mind—when evidence uncovered by science itself leads to a conflict with the articles of faith in our profession. It turns out that the scientist behaves the way the rest of us do when our beliefs are in conflict with the evidence. We become irritated, we pretend the conflict does not exist, or we paper it over with meaningless phrases" (*ibid.*, p. 16).

"There is a strange ring of feeling and emotion in these reactions [of scientists to evidence that the universe had a sudden

beginning]. They come from the heart, whereas you would expect the judgments to come from the brain. Why?

"I think part of the answer is that scientists cannot bear the thought of a natural phenomenon which cannot be explained, even with unlimited time and money. There is a kind of religion in science; it is the religion of a person who believes there is order and harmony in the Universe, and every event can be explained in a rational way as the product of some previous event; every effect must have its cause; there is no First Cause . . .

"This religious faith of the scientist is violated by the discovery that the world had a beginning under conditions in which the known laws of physics are not valid, and as a product of forces or circumstances we cannot discover. When that happens, the scientist has lost control . . .

"Consider the enormity of the problem. Science has proven that the Universe exploded into being at a certain moment. It asks, What cause produced this effect? Who or what put the matter and energy into the Universe? Was the Universe created out of nothing, or was it gathered together out of pre-existing materials? And science cannot answer these questions . . ." (*ibid.*, pp. 113-114).

"A sound explanation may exist for the explosive birth of our Universe; but if it does, *science cannot find out what the explanation is*. The scientist's pursuit of the past ends in the moment of creation. This is an exceedingly strange development, unexpected by all but the theologians. They have always accepted the word of the Bible: In the beginning God created heaven and earth . . .

"Now we would like to pursue that inquiry farther back in time, but the barrier to further progress seems insurmountable. It is not a matter of another year, another decade of work, another measurement, or another theory; at this moment it seems as though *science will never be able to raise the curtain on the mystery of creation*. For the scientist who has lived in his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries" (*ibid.*, pp. 114-116).

# The Giver of Life

**H**ow did life begin? Did earth's vast array of life evolve from nothing? How does inert, lifeless matter become living tissue? What chemical processes transform nonliving substances into living organisms? Can these processes begin spontaneously, or do they require miraculous intervention? Can life be convincingly attributed to a supernatural cause—a Giver of life?

These are fundamental questions for which we need believable answers.

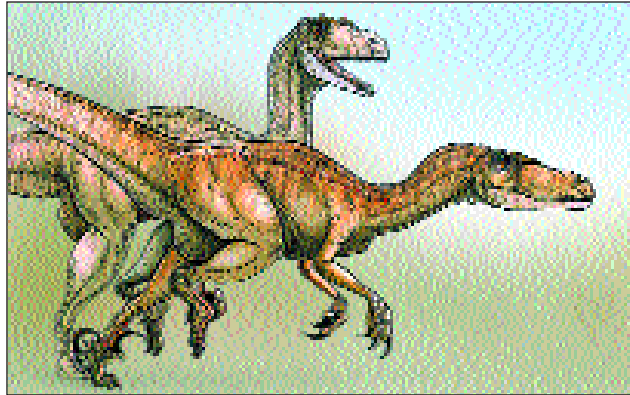
This area is particularly troublesome for those who accept the atheistic, evolutionary explanation for life. Even Richard Dawkins, the diehard evolutionist, admits that “the essence of life is *statistical improbability on a colossal scale*. Whatever is the explanation for life, therefore, *it cannot be chance*. The true explanation for the existence of life must embody the very antithesis of chance” (Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker*, p. 317, emphasis added).

Science falls short in providing convincing support for the theory of evolution. In spite of years of concerted attempts, solid evidence for the spontaneous generation of life simply does not exist. The theory of evolution remains just that—an unproven theory.

The fact remains that there is no scientific evidence that life came from nonliving matter. Attempts to show that life can spontaneously generate from nonlife have instead demonstrated the opposite. In spite of much-hyped headlines to the contrary, when scientists have tried to create the most favorable conditions in controlled laboratory experiments they haven't come anywhere close. They have managed only to confirm the astronomical odds against life arising spontaneously. It hasn't happened, nor will it ever happen. Life must come from *preexisting life*.

After the question of the origin of the universe itself, this is the next big question we must face: How did life get here? Once you establish that the universe had a beginning and did not arise on its own from nothing, it should be obvious that life also did not arise on its own from nonlife.

Evolutionists, however, insist on proceeding with the idea that life originated by a lucky accident and evolved through purely physical processes of random mutation and natural selection without the aid of an intelligent creator and designer. Their assumed progression from simple life forms evolving to complex life over billions of years seems to ignore the first



*Is the traditional evolutionary picture true? What does the fossil record reveal? Does it support or contradict Darwinism?*

issue: How did life generate from nonlife?

## The prebiotic-soup theory

Many have attempted to show how life began by describing a hypothetical distant past. The scene is a description of the newly formed earth gradually cooling, with an atmosphere of simple gases like hydrogen, nitrogen, ammonia and carbon dioxide, with little or no oxygen.

This kind of atmosphere, they say, was subject to forms of energy such as electrical discharges from lightning and reacted to form elementary amino acids. They theorize that compounds must have accumulated until the primitive oceans reached the consistency of a hot diluted soup. A reaction took place, and elementary amino acids—the building blocks of proteins—formed. In time they developed into DNA chains and finally cells. Somehow life emerged from this prebiotic soup.

Researchers have produced a variety of amino acids and other complex compounds by sending a spark through a mixture of gases. However, try as researchers may, they have not been able to create life. All they have demonstrated is that the chemical components were present on earth. They

have nowhere remotely shown that life can emerge from chemicals, even the right chemicals, mixing for an indeterminate period under predetermined conditions.

Intelligent man, with advanced technology, has produced only a tiny handful of the components organisms need to live. But never have we been able to create an organism, much less a living one. Even cloning, a remarkable scientific achievement that regularly makes headlines, utilizes already-existing life. No form of life—not even one living cell, much less something as infinitely complicated as a bacterium—has ever been created by concerted human experimentation.

The scientific approach has been backwards. Scientists know life exists, but they assume there was no Creator, Designer or outside intelligence involved. They then have tried to recreate the most likely scenario under which life, according to their thinking,

might have arisen spontaneously. So far they have managed only to rearrange inert, nonliving matter into other inert, nonliving matter.

That hasn't stopped many in the scientific community from concluding that life spontaneously arose from a prebiotic soup. But they still have not—and cannot—generate live matter from nonliving matter.

## Life from outer space?

Not all scientists are comfortable basing the origin of life on mere assumptions. Many scientists are deeply troubled by the prebiotic-soup theory for the origin of life. Some admit it is nothing more than a wishful fantasy.

Biophysicist Francis Crick, who won the Nobel Prize for helping determine the molecular structure of DNA, is one eminent scientist who rejects this scenario. He writes: “An honest man, armed with all the knowledge available to us now, could only state that in some sense, the origin of life appears at the moment to be almost a miracle, so many are the conditions which would have had to have been satisfied to get it going” (*Life Itself: Its Origin and Nature*, 1981, p. 88).

Admitting that the odds against life arising on earth by chance make it a sheer impossibility, he and other noted scientists have adopted a belief in *panspermia*—that life could not have arisen spontaneously on earth, but sprouted only when microorganisms or spores drifted or were carried to earth from elsewhere in the universe.

Sir Fred Hoyle is one of Britain's most famous astrophysicists. He and his colleague, Chandra Wickramasinghe, professor of applied mathematics and astronomy at University College, Cardiff, Wales, computed the odds for all the proteins necessary for life to form by chance in one place, as scientists assume happened on earth. The odds, they determined, were one chance in  $10^{40,000}$ —the number 1 followed by 40,000 zeroes (enough zeroes to fill about seven pages of this publication).

To put that number in perspective, there are only about  $10^{80}$  subatomic particles in the entire visible universe. A probability of less than 1 in  $10^{50}$  is considered by mathematicians to be a complete impossibility. The possibility of life arising according to the traditional scientific scenario, they concluded, is “an outrageously small probability that could not be faced even if the whole universe consisted of organic soup” (*Evolution From Space*, 1981, p. 24).

Professor Hoyle concludes that “life could not have originated here on the Earth. Nor does it look as though biological evolution can be explained from within an earth-bound theory of life . . . This much can be consolidated by strictly scientific means, by experiment, observation and calculation” (*The Intelligent Universe*, 1983, p. 242).

Like Francis Crick, Professors Hoyle and Wickramasinghe concede the impossibility of the traditional scientific explanation of the origin of life on our planet. Unwilling to accept the idea of a life-giving Creator, they also have turned to panspermia as the most acceptable explanation for the origin of life on earth. Of course, the notion of panspermia doesn't explain how life arose in the first place; it merely removes the question of the ultimate origin of life to some other far-off corner of the universe.

That such respected and honored scientists—including a Nobel laureate—embrace such near-unimaginable speculations emphasizes the impossibility of life's thousands of intricate building blocks emerging through random, undirected processes according to the traditional evolutionary view.

### Darwin's explanation for new species

If science cannot explain how life originated, can it explain how new life *forms* originated? Charles Darwin simply sidestepped the issue of life's origin by adopting the attitude that “it is mere rubbish thinking at present of the origin of life; one might as well think of the origin of matter” (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edition, Macropaedia Vol. 10, p. 900, “Life”).

The theory of evolution is widely spoken of as fact—fact based on two earlier assumptions: that the universe came from nothing and that life spontaneously generated from lifeless chemicals. Assuming these two are true, evolution then states the case for complex and varied life forms developing from the cells that sprang to life in a presumed prebiotic soup.

This is where Charles Darwin comes in. Darwin gave life to the idea of evolution by proposing that species continually transform themselves with small changes through the mechanism of natural selection of individual organisms. These small variations, he said, arose by chance and spread by chance. These small changes ultimately influenced reproductive success, and natural selection then was able to pass on the newly crafted advantages to the descendants.

There are several problems with this scenario. In keeping with the “survival of the fittest” idea that underpins evolution, there must have been pressure for these advantages to be developed. If the particular change (for example, a leg to help a creature move about better on land or a wing to keep it from breaking its neck in a fall) were necessary for survival, then it had to come about rather quickly or else the change could not benefit the creature in question. Under most circumstances a half-developed leg on an amphibian or half a wing on a dinosaur puts the animal at a distinct *disadvantage* in the struggle for survival.

### Darwin's greatest challenge

The fossil record we find outlined in textbooks depicts the varied life forms, many of which are extinct, that have existed throughout the history of the earth.

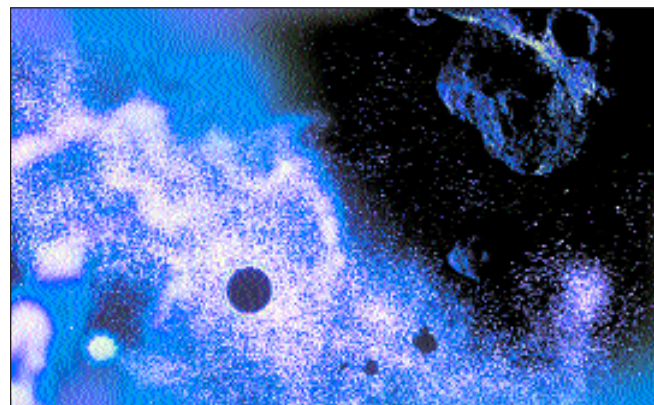
The common interpretation of the fossil record is largely a human construct that is used to support Darwin's theory that life

developed naturally from simple to complex forms without the assistance of a supernatural cause. You can find charts and pictures in almost any biology book depicting a gradual transition of one species to another: fish to amphibians, amphibians to reptiles, reptiles to mammals, and so on.

These pictures and charts describe a consistent pattern of simple to complex fossil forms in the earth's strata. But in real-life geology that pattern is not so consistent. The inconsistency between the charts and pictures and what is actually found in the strata is rarely acknowledged in textbooks or popular writings on evolution. So convinced are evolutionists that all life developed from its most simple forms to complex living creatures that they tend to exclude evidence that contradicts their conclusions.

If evolution were the explanation for the teeming variety of life on earth, we would surely find abundant evidence of the incalculable number of intermediary varieties that must have existed. Charles Darwin himself struggled with the fact that the fossil record failed to support his conclusions. “. . . Why, if species have descended from other species by fine gradations, do we not everywhere see innumerable transitional forms? . . . Why do we not find them imbedded in countless numbers in the crust of the earth?” (*The Origin of Species*, 1958 Masterpieces of Science edition, pp. 136-137).

“. . . The number of intermediate varieties, which have formerly existed, [must]

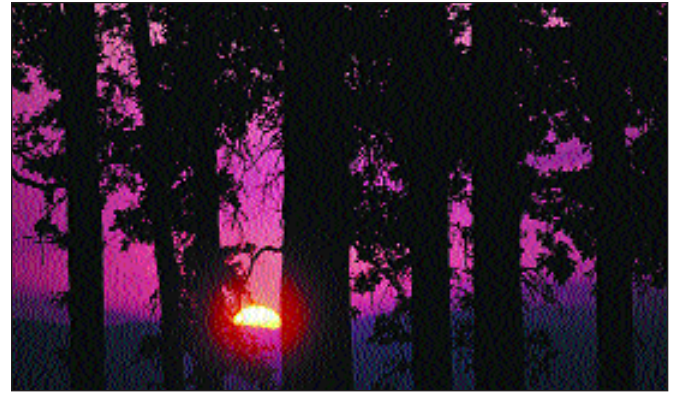


**Some scientists acknowledge that the odds of life spontaneously arising on earth are so infinitesimally small as to be an impossibility. They turn to other theories such as the belief that life was sent or drifted here from an unknown source elsewhere in the universe.**

be truly enormous,” he wrote. “Why then is not every geological formation and every stratum full of such intermediate links?



**Can Darwin's theory of evolution explain the astounding variety and intricate relationships among earth's teeming species of life?**



**And, if Darwin's theory is true, why is the fossil record so glaringly deficient in intermediate transitional forms between species?**

Geology assuredly does not reveal any such finely graduated organic chain; and this, perhaps, is the most obvious and serious objection which can be urged against the theory [of evolution]. The explanation lies, I believe, in the extreme imperfection of the geological record" (ibid., pp. 260-261).

Darwin was convinced that later discoveries and explorations would fill in the abundant gaps where the transitional species on which his theory was based were missing. But now, a century and a half later, with few corners of the globe unexplored, what does the fossil record show?

### What the fossil record reveals

Niles Eldredge, curator in the department of invertebrates at the American Museum of Natural History and adjunct professor at the City University of New York, is a vigorous supporter of evolution. But he admits that the fossil record fails to support the traditional evolutionary view.

"No wonder paleontologists shied away from evolution for so long," he writes. "*It seems never to happen.* Assiduous collecting up cliff faces yields zigzags, minor oscillations, and the very occasional slight accumulation of change—over millions of years, at a rate too slow to really account for all the prodigious change that has occurred in evolutionary history.

"When we do see the introduction of evolutionary novelty, it usually shows up with a bang, and often with no firm evidence that the organisms did not evolve elsewhere! *Evolution cannot forever be going on someplace else.* Yet that's how the fossil record has struck many a forlorn paleontologist looking to learn something about evolution" (*Reinventing Darwin: The Great Debate at the High Table of Evolutionary Theory*, 1995, p. 95, emphasis added).

Harvard University paleontologist

Stephen Jay Gould is perhaps today's best-known popular writer on evolution. An ardent evolutionist, he collaborated with Professor Eldredge in proposing alternatives to the traditional view of Darwinism. Like Eldredge, he recognizes that the fossil record fundamentally conflicts with Darwin's idea of gradualism.

"The history of most fossil species," he writes, "includes two features particularly inconsistent with gradualism: [1] *Stasis*. Most species exhibit no directional change during their tenure on earth. They appear in the fossil record looking pretty much the same as when they disappear; morphological change is usually limited and directionless.

"[2] *Sudden appearance*. In any local area, a species does not arise gradually by the steady transformation of its ancestors: it appears all at once and 'fully formed'" (Gould, "Evolution's Erratic Pace," *Natural History*, May 1977, pp. 13-14).

### Fossils missing in crucial places

Francis Hitching, member of the Royal Archaeological Institute, the Prehistoric Society and the Society for Physical Research, also sees problems in using the fossil record to support Darwinism.

"There are about 250,000 different species of fossil plants and animals in the world's museums," he writes. "This compares with about 1.5 million species known to be alive on Earth today. Given the known rates of evolutionary turnover, it has been estimated that at least 100 times more fossil species have lived than have been discovered . . . But the curious thing is that there is a consistency about the fossil gaps: *the fossils go missing in all the important places.*

"When you look for links between major groups of animals, *they simply aren't there*; at least, not in enough numbers to put their

status beyond doubt. Either *they don't exist at all*, or they are *so rare* that endless argument goes on about whether a particular fossil is, or isn't, or might be, transitional between this group and that.

" . . . There ought to be cabinets full of intermediates—indeed, one would expect the fossils to blend so gently into one another that it would be difficult to tell where the invertebrates ended and the vertebrates began. *But this isn't the case.* Instead, groups of well-defined, easily classifiable fish jump into the fossil record *seemingly from nowhere*: mysteriously, suddenly, full-formed, and *in a most un-Darwinian way*. And before them are maddening, illogical gaps where their ancestors should be" (*The Neck of the Giraffe: Darwin, Evolution and the New Biology*, 1982, pp. 9-10, emphasis added).

### Paleontology's well-kept secret

What does all this mean? In plain language, if evolution means the gradual change of one kind of organism into another kind, the outstanding characteristic of the fossil record is the *absence* of evidence for evolution—and *abundant evidence to the contrary*. Evolution is a theory, and the only logical place to find proof for that theory is in the fossil record. But, rather than proof of slow, gradual change over eons of time, the fossils show *the opposite*.

Professor Eldredge touched on the magnitude of the problem when he admitted that Darwin "essentially invented a new field of scientific inquiry—what is now called 'taphonomy'—to explain why the fossil record is *so deficient, so full of gaps*, that the predicted patterns of gradual change *simply do not emerge*" (Eldredge, pp. 95-96, emphasis added).

Professor Gould similarly admits that the "extreme rarity" of evidence for evolution



in the fossil record is “the *trade secret of paleontology*.” He goes on to acknowledge that “the evolutionary trees that adorn our textbooks have data only at the tips and nodes of their branches; the rest is *inference*, however reasonable, *not the evidence of fossils*” (“Evolution’s Erratic Pace,” *Natural History*, May 1977, p. 14, emphasis added).

But do paleontologists share this “trade secret” with others? Hardly. “Reading popular or even textbook introductions to evolution, . . . you might hardly guess that they [fossil gaps] exist, so glibly and confidently do most authors slide through them. In the absence of fossil evidence, they write what have been termed ‘just so’ stories. A suitable mutation just happened to take place at the crucial moment, and hey presto, a new stage of evolution was reached” (Hitching, pp. 12-13).

University of California law professor Phillip Johnson approaches the evidence for and against evolution as he would approach evidence in a legal proceeding. Regarding the misrepresentation of that evidence, he writes:

“Just about everyone who took a college biology course during the last sixty years or so has been led to believe that the fossil record was a bulwark of support for the classic Darwinian thesis, not a liability that had to be explained away . . . The fossil record shows a consistent pattern of sudden appearance followed by a stasis, that life’s history is more a story of variation around a set of basic designs than one of accumulating improvement, that extinction has been

predominantly by catastrophe rather than gradual obsolescence, and that orthodox interpretation of the fossil record often owe more to Darwinist preconception than to the evidence itself. Paleontologists seem to have thought it their duty to protect the rest of us from the erroneous conclusions we might have drawn if we had known the actual state of the evidence” (*Darwin on Trial*, 1993, pp. 58-59).

The secret evolutionists don’t want revealed is that, even by their own interpretations, the fossil record shows fully formed species appearing for a time and then disappearing. Other species appeared at other times before they, too, disappeared with little or no change. The fossil record simply does not support the central thesis of Darwinism, that species slowly and gradually changed from one form to another.

#### Fact or interesting observations?

Professor Johnson notes that “Darwinists consider evolution to be a fact, not just a theory, because it provides a satisfying explanation for the pattern of relationship linking all living creatures—a pattern so identified in their minds with what they consider to be the necessary *cause* of the pattern—descent with modification—that, to them, biological relationship *means* evolutionary relationship” (Johnson, p. 63, emphasis in original).

The deceptive, smoke-and-mirror language of evolution revolves largely around the classification of living species. Darwinists attempt to explain natural relationships

they observe in the animal and plant world by categorizing animal and plant life according to physical similarities. It could be said that Darwin’s theory is nothing more than educated observance of the obvious: that is, the conclusion that most animals appear to be related to one another because most animals have one or more characteristics in common.

For instance, you might have a superficial classification of whales, penguins and sharks in a group together as aquatic animals. You might also have birds, bats and bees grouped as flying creatures. These are not the final classifications because there are many other obvious differences. The Darwinist approach, however, is to use the obvious general similarities to show, not that animals were alike in many ways, but that they were *related to one another* by common ancestors.

Professor Johnson expresses it this way: “Darwin proposed a naturalistic explanation for the essentialist features of the living world that was so stunning in its logical appeal that it conquered the scientific world even while doubts remained about some important parts of his theory. He theorized that the discontinuous groups of the living world were the descendants of long-extinct common ancestors. Relatively closely related groups (like reptiles, birds, and mammals) shared a relatively recent common ancestor; all vertebrates shared a more ancient common ancestor; and all animals shared a still more ancient common ancestor. He then proposed that the ancestors

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## The Case for a Creator

In this publication we have only briefly discussed some of the mounds of evidence for an intelligent Designer, Lawgiver and Creator of the universe. Many excellent books have been published in recent years detailing scientific findings and conclusions that point to a Creator.

If you would like to dig more deeply into the case for a Creator and against evolution, we recommend the following books, all written by authors with backgrounds in the physical sciences:

- *Show Me God: What the Message From Space Is Telling Us About God*, Fred Heeren, 1997. Examines how the latest discoveries from space are consistent with the Bible and point to an intelligent, personal Creator; includes

comments and interviews with scientists.

- *Darwin’s Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution*, Michael Behe, associate professor of biochemistry, Lehigh University, Pennsylvania, 1996. Demonstrates that the minute building blocks of life—cells and their myriad components—are far too complex for their codependent parts and processes to have evolved without an outside, intelligent design at work.

- *The Creator and the Cosmos*, Hugh Ross, Ph.D. in astronomy, University of Toronto, 1993. Examines scientific evidence supporting design in the universe and the existence of the God of the Bible.

- *Creation and Evolution: Rethinking the Evidence From Science and the Bible*,

Alan Hayward, 1985. Written by an eminent British physicist, an insightful book on the pros and cons of the evolution-vs.-science controversy.

- *Mere Creation: Science, Faith & Intelligent Design*, edited by William Dembski, 1998. A collection of academic writings from physics, astrophysics, biology, anthropology, biology, mechanical engineering and mathematics that challenge Darwinism and offer evidence supporting intelligent design in the universe.

Although the publishers of this booklet do not agree with every conclusion presented in these books, we think they present a persuasive and compelling case that the universe and life on earth offer abundant evidence for a Creator.

must have been linked to their descendants by long chains of transitional intermediates, also extinct” (Johnson, p. 64).

Evolutionists choose to dwell on similarities rather than differences. By doing so they lead you away from the truth of the matter: that similarities are evidence of a *common Designer* behind the structure and function of the life forms. Each species of animal was created and designed to exist and thrive in a particular way. Darwin and the subsequent proponents of the evolutionary view of life focused on similarities within the major classifications of animals and drew the assumption that those similarities prove that all animals are related to one another through common ancestors.

However, there are major differences in the life forms on earth. If, as evolution supposes, all life forms had common ancestors and chains of intermediates linking those ancestors, the fossil record should overflow with many such intermediate forms between species. But, as we have seen earlier, paleontologists themselves admit it shows no such thing.

### The biblical creation epic

As noted earlier, life demands a lifegiver. We call this the law of biogenesis, that life can come only from life. Evolution asserts that we and our world are the result of random, mindless chance, the culmination of a series of lucky accidents. The Bible presents a different picture: A Lifegiver created life on earth in a way and for a purpose that is vastly different from the scenario espoused by evolutionists. Who is the Lifegiver? What is His purpose?

In this booklet we pay particular attention to the biblical side of the story on these crucial subjects. The problem isn't that scientists cannot discover the answer. The problem is that most have simply been unwilling to seriously consider that the Bible might be a reliable foundation for basic human knowledge and a dependable source of answers for the enormously important questions of life.

Let's start at the beginning of the book of Genesis. Chapter 1 first briefly describes the creation of the heavens and the earth along with the appearance of light and of dry land.

The Bible next records the creation of biological life on our planet. From the beginning, living things were divided into broad classifications, each after its own *kind* (or, broadly speaking, species), with reproductive potential only within its kind.

Here we see a scientific fact that scien-

tists acknowledge: Animals reproduce only within their own species, or kind. Species, in fact, are defined by whether the animals can successfully interbreed with each other. According to the Bible, the major species were all created after their own kind. They did not evolve one into another.

God certainly allowed broad genetic potential within the biblically defined kinds or species, as anyone can see by looking at the sizes, shapes, colors and other characteristics of dogs, cats, cattle, chickens and even our fellow human beings. For centuries people have used species' genetic diversity to breed animals that produce more meat, milk or wool and strains of wheat, corn and rice that yield more food. But the genetic potential for those variations was built into the original Genesis "kind."

"Then God said, 'Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit *according to its kind*, whose seed [potential for life] is in itself, on the earth'; and it was so" (verse 11). Clearly the biblical point of view is that God is the Creator of life. He set in motion a process by which life produces yet more life.

Verse 21 plainly tells us that "God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves" in the waters of the sea. In verse 24 the Creator says, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature *according to its kind*." Then verses 26-27 tell us of the origin of human life.

We should pay special attention to the creation of the first man. Genesis 2:7 says, "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground [from nonliving matter], and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being." So the biblical explanation is that human life came directly from God. Genesis explains that God is, in fact, the source of all life.

### The life of God

The Bible reveals much more about the Giver of Life. It attests that He "has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see . . ." (1 Timothy 6:16). Jesus Christ tells us, "For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself" (John 5:26).

Here and in the book of Genesis we find verification of the most basic law of biogenesis: Life can come only from preexisting life. Life comes only from something already living, not from inert, dead matter. God, having eternal life in Himself, is the original Lifegiver.

The Bible also reveals that God has always existed. He "inhabits eternity" (Isaiah 57:15). Humanly, we find it difficult to grasp this concept. To us it seems natural for everything to have a beginning and an end. But there are some things that are simply beyond our grasp. Here is where God wants us to rely on His Word, to accept what He reveals and reflect on how incredibly limited we are in comparison to Him (Isaiah 40:25-26, 28; 46:9-10; 55:8-9).

The Scriptures tell us, "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible" (Hebrews 11:3). The materials at hand that are taken for granted in evolutionary theory were simply not present. God does not explain *how* He created the heavens and earth, only that *He did*. He gives us ample evidence in other areas that His Word, the Bible, is true. He wants us to take Him at His word.

### Imparting spirit life to humans

Again, only God, who possesses life everlasting, can create new forms of life, whether they be physical or something far greater. He is the source of life.

From God's vantage point, far more important than His creation of biological life is that He is in the process of creating new spirit life—among His called and chosen human servants. John wrote that "He who has the Son has [eternal] life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have [eternal] life" (1 John 5:12).

The apostle Paul reminded a young evangelist that Jesus Christ "has abolished death and brought [eternal] life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Timothy 1:10). Humans, who have a physical life averaging about 70 years (Psalm 90:10), have the opportunity *to live forever*. Paul wrote about the "hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began" (Titus 1:2). He taught that faithful students of Christ have "become heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:7).

The Giver of Life first gave man physical life, as we read in the first two chapters of Genesis. Like the animals, man can and does die (Hebrews 9:27). But, unlike animals, man was created with the potential to attain eternal life. When you understand that God is the Lifegiver who created man for His own special purpose, with the potential of immortality, life takes on meaning far greater than the empty purposelessness inherent in a faith in evolution.

# Scientists' Thundering Silence

The more deeply scientists delve into the mysteries of the universe, the more their discoveries support the existence of God. But all too often they are remarkably silent about this aspect of their findings.

Recent breakthroughs in understanding the cell, the basic building block of life, are a case in point. Michael Behe, associate professor of biochemistry at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania, after analyzing extensive research at the molecular level, decided to go public with its far-reaching implications. His recent book *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution* (1996) is packed with supporting scientific data, in clear layman's language, that substantiates his stunning conclusion. Here are several excerpts:

"In some ways, grown-up scientists are . . . prone to wishful thinking . . . For example, centuries ago it was thought that insects and other small animals arose directly from spoiled food. This was easy to believe, because small animals were thought to be very simple (before the invention of the microscope

living organisms could arise spontaneously from liquids.

"The key to persuading people was the portrayal of the cells as 'simple.' One of the chief advocates of the theory of spontaneous generation during the middle of the nineteenth century was Ernst Haeckel,



**Science has made remarkable strides in understanding not only outer space, but inner space. Research into cells, such as the nerve cell at left, has revealed great complexity and unmistakable evidence of design and a Designer.**

a great admirer of Darwin and an eager popularizer of Darwin's theory.

"From the limited view of cells that microscopes provided, Haeckel believed that a cell was a 'simple little lump of albuminous combination of carbon,' not much different from a piece of microscopic Jell-O. So it seemed to Haeckel that such simple life, with no internal organs, could be produced from inanimate material. Now, of course, we know better" (pp. 23-24).

How complex is the cell? Zoology professor and evolutionist Richard Dawkins notes that the cell nucleus "contains a digitally coded database larger, in information content, than all 30 volumes of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* put together. And this figure is for *each* cell . . . The total number of cells in the body (of a human)

is about 10 trillion" (*The Blind Watchmaker*, pp. 17-18, emphasis in original).

Later in his book Dr. Behe discusses the complexity and intricacy scientists have discovered. "Over the past four decades modern biochemistry has uncovered the secrets of the cell. The progress has been hard won. It has required tens of thousands of people to dedicate the better parts of their lives to the tedious work of the laboratory . . .

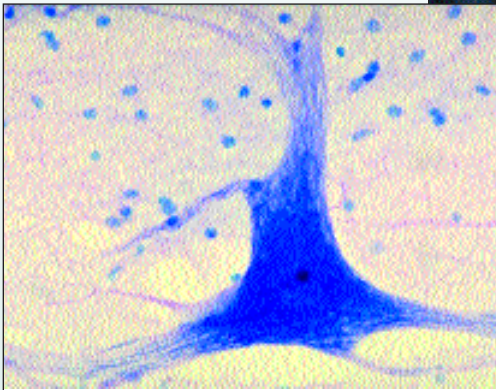
"The results of these cumulative efforts to investigate the cell—to investigate life at the molecular level—is a loud, clear, piercing cry of 'design!' The result is so unambiguous and so significant that it must be ranked as one of the greatest achievements in the history of science. The discovery rivals those of Newton and Einstein, Lavoisier and Schrödinger, Pasteur, and Darwin. The observation of the intelligent design of life is as momentous as the observation that the earth goes around the sun or that disease is caused by bacteria or that radiation is emitted in quanta.

"The magnitude of the victory, gained at such great cost through sustained effort over the course of decades, would be expected to send champagne corks flying in labs around the world. This triumph of science should evoke cries of 'Eureka!' from ten thousand throats, should occasion much hand-slapping and high-living, and perhaps even be an excuse to take the day off.

"But no bottles have been uncorked, no hands slapped. Instead a curious, embarrassed silence surrounds the stark complexity of the cell. When the subject comes up in public, feet start to shuffle, and breathing gets a bit labored. In private people are a bit more relaxed; many explicitly admit the obvious but then stare at the ground, shake their heads, and let it go at that.

"Why does the scientific community not greedily embrace its startling discovery? Why is the observation of design handled with intellectual gloves? The dilemma is that while one side of the elephant is labeled intelligent design, the other side might be labeled God" (Behe, pp. 232-233, original emphasis).

These discoveries reveal that the simplest living cell is so intricate, complex and marvelous in its design that even the possibility of its coming into existence accidentally is unthinkable. The evidence of an intelligent Designer is overwhelming.



naturalists thought that insects had no internal organs).

"But as biology progressed and careful experiments showed that protected food did not breed life, the theory of spontaneous generation retreated to the limits beyond which science could not detect what was really happening. In the nineteenth century that meant the cell. When beer, milk, or urine were allowed to sit for several days in containers, even closed ones, they always became cloudy from something growing in them.

"The microscopes of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries showed the growth was very small, apparently living cells. So it seemed reasonable that simple

# What Is Life's Meaning and Purpose?

Does life have meaning without God in the picture? Is there a purpose for the earth and those who dwell on it? If so, what is the purpose?

When Stephen Hawking wrote his book *A Brief History of Time*, after explaining his view of the nature of the universe, he concluded: "If we find the answer to that [the question of why we and the universe exist], it would be the ultimate triumph of human reason—for then we would know the mind of God" (Hawking, p. 175).

The answer to that question will not come from human intelligence or reason but only from the One who transcends our material universe. If we remove God from the equation, we lose all sense of purpose for man and the universe.

The meaning of life has been a question mark from the beginning of mankind. It is in our nature to ask such questions as "Why am I here?" and "What is the purpose of life?"

God has a purpose for man, but few grasp what it is. Knowing that transcendent purpose, and really believing it, can infuse meaning into our lives. But we can understand our purpose only if we seek answers from the One who created life.

## Purpose without God

Let us first consider the meaning of life if evolution were true and if there were no Creator God who has had any involvement with mankind.

If there were no God, there would be no possibility of life beyond the grave and certainly no possibility of immortality. Life would end in the finality of the grave. There would be no transcendent purpose to give meaning to our lives. Our lives would have no more significance than any animal or insect straining for survival until the moment of death. All the achievements, the sacrifices, the good and wonderful things men and women do would ultimately

be futile efforts in a universe awaiting its own ruin.

The late astronomer and author Carl Sagan didn't believe in God. After the death of his wife of 20 years, he believed he would never see her again. As his own death



*What is our purpose in life? Is life only a brief, passing span bounded by an eternity of nothingness before and beyond?*

approached, he expressed a common human longing mixed with the futility inherent in atheism. "I would love to believe that when I die I will live again, that some thinking, feeling, remembering part of me will continue. But, much as I want to believe that, and despite the ancient and worldwide cultural traditions that assert an afterlife, I know of nothing to suggest that it is more than wishful thinking" ("In the Valley of the Shadow," *Parade*, March 10, 1996).

When you remove the prospect and hope of an afterlife, your life is without value and without purpose. What difference would it ultimately make whether we lived like a Mother Teresa or an Adolf Hitler? Everyone's fate would be the same. The good contributions of people would make no difference to their fate or the fate of the universe.

This is the bleak outlook of those who base their beliefs on atheism, evolution and

the assumption that this life is all there is.

But, if God exists, our lives have an eternal significance because our hope is not death but eternal life (see "Why Were You Born?," p. 21). If God exists, we have a standard of absolute right and wrong residing in

the nature of God Himself. This makes our moral choices profoundly significant.

Broadly speaking, man has developed three views that attempt to explain the meaning of life without God and deny any possibility of life beyond its earthly existence. These have had an enormous impact on the world and the way people live.

## The nihilistic view

The first conclusion that springs from an atheistic approach to life is that human existence, laws and institutions are meaningless. This view is *nihilism*—a conviction that,

since God does not exist, the universe and anything in it has no goal or purpose. We are merely the product of matter, time and chance. There is no life beyond our temporary existence. We are the sole masters of our earthly life, and what we make of ourselves in its short duration is within our own power.

This view denies that values exist. It denies the existence of any objective basis for the establishment of ethics, morals or truth. It claims you are free to adopt any set of likes or dislikes rather than adhere to a system of moral absolutes.

Your standards and choices are determined by what seems best for you, by what gives you personal satisfaction or pleasure. It provides no rational justification for living a moral life. It may be to your advantage to conform to the moral values of society if that it is in your best interests, but you have no obligation to be a moral person if doing so would go against your personal interests. In this sense

an atheist may have morals and be a moral person, but we should understand that an atheist or existentialist appeals to no authority for those morals.

This nihilistic view led to the pronouncement in the 1960s that “God is dead.” That slogan implied that God and His laws are irrelevant and should not be used to influence man to a higher moral standard. It implied you can do whatever you please.

That philosophy led to a generation that did whatever it pleased. It ushered in a time of rebellion against long-held values. Drug use, violence and promiscuity skyrocketed upward. Moral standards and the number of stable marriages and families plummeted.

Although we rarely see such open displays of rebellion and anarchy in our

streets and universities as we saw then, the damage has been done. Whole societies were—and remain—permanently corrupted by this rejection of Bible-based standards and values. It has exacted a terrible toll. Ideas have consequences. People who promulgated this philosophy didn’t realize the extent of those consequences.

### The humanistic approach

The next view is similar. Humanism also holds that the universe exists for no purpose. We are the result of a blind process that does not necessitate any kind of meaning.

Humanism differs from nihilism, however, in that life can have a meaning if we *assign* a meaning to life. Life can have as much meaning as we put into it. Life is worth

living because we ourselves make it worthwhile and enjoyable. As with nihilism, however, no objective values are acknowledged. This view holds that a person may be moral because it gives him personal satisfaction to create values and live according to those values.

There isn’t much difference between the humanistic view and nihilism. The humanistic view acknowledges that values exist, but values are neither objective, universal nor permanent—and no one is obligated to be moral; no absolute values exist.

Humanism fails to provide moral objections to immoral behavior. In other words, if no moral absolutes exist, you can’t demonstrate that anything is wrong or evil. Thus no one is in a position to judge or condemn the choices or actions of others.

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## Why Were You Born?

**T**he atheistic, evolutionary approach holds that life evolved by chance, with no ultimate purpose or plan. The Bible, however, tells us God created the earth and man with a specific—and awe-inspiring—purpose in mind.

What is that purpose? King David, when viewing the expanse of the night sky long ago, asked, “What are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?” (Psalm 8:4, NRSV). Unlike all other creatures, God created man in His own image and likeness (Genesis 1:26). He gave man the ability to have a relationship with Him. Man had the capacity to understand and live by the same spiritual laws that God Himself lives by and that are part of His character. Man could grow to become more like God through an intimate relationship with Him.

Our first human parent, Adam, made a fateful choice for the rest of the human race when he tried to find a way of life for himself apart from the intimate relationship God was offering him. We have been groping for meaning ever since.

The awe-inspiring truth is that God is creating a family—the *God family*. He is the Father of that family. How did Jesus Christ reveal God to His disciples? As “our Father in heaven” (Matthew 6:9). Jesus tells us to follow the ways of God “that you may be sons of your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:45).

God invites us into a father-child relationship with Himself and gives us His Spirit

so we can become His children: “. . . But you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit [itself] bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ . . .” (Romans 8:15-17).

After this life, those to whom God gives



**According to evolution, man is but one species in a large family of animals. According to the Bible, our destiny lies in another family, the family of God.**

His Spirit receive eternal life through a resurrection from the dead. “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the

last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:51-53).

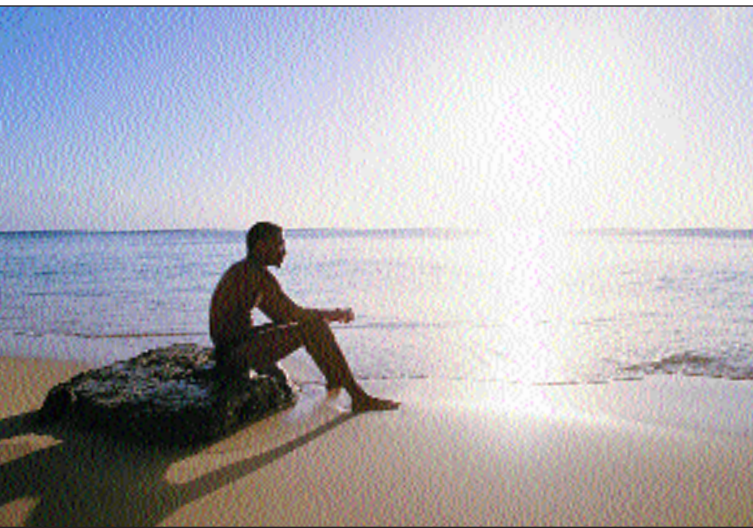
It is through the resurrection to eternal life that God transforms us into glorified and immortal beings, as God Himself is. As 1 John 3:2 tells us, “we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

God is in the process of creating His own family. He will give humans eternal life, which we will share with Him for eternity. He desires to share His eternal existence with others in a way of life of love toward others. Because of His love, God brought the universe into existence in the first place. It is because of God’s love that He gave us a part in it. Life is the result of God’s love and His desire to share His love with His immortal family for eternity.

The Bible’s revelation of our destiny is far removed from the dark, meaningless view of life offered by atheism and evolution. Life with God in the picture is not something we should rationally oppose. Rather, we should regard it as a cause for rejoicing. Life without God—and without His promise of eternal life—is empty and hopeless. Life with God is exciting, fulfilling and ultimately rewarding beyond our wildest imagination. (For a deeper understanding of our future as revealed in the Bible, be sure to request your free copies of the booklets *What Is Your Destiny?* and *The Gospel of the Kingdom*.)

## Immanent purpose

A third view is that objective values do exist, but they exist independently of God; they do not need Him to exist. This view is different from the first two because it recognizes the existence of objective values.



*Philosophies of life rooted in evolution ultimately offer no hope or purpose in life. When we understand the truth of God's plan as revealed in the Bible, life becomes infused with meaning.*

However, according to this view man has sufficient moral intuition to become aware of the moral values that exist. Here again man is the discoverer of morals and has within himself the ability to live by morals if he chooses. He does not need God to tell him of absolutes or what the moral absolutes are. Therefore there is no need for God. The meaningfulness of life does not depend on the existence of God or something outside human life.

All three of these perspectives have something in common: They remove God from consideration and offer no hope of life beyond death. All three views proclaim, in essence, that man came from nothing, we have evolved to find ourselves the highest order of life, and we are in a position to order our own values and define ourselves and our destiny.

These views also hold that there is no life after death, that this life is all there is. Life may or may not have meaning, depending on one's view. The result is that we achieve nothing more than passing on our genes and philosophies to our progeny in hopes that they will further develop into superior beings. All this, of course, says that evolution is not finished and we are in an ongoing process of ever-higher development.

## The major issues of life

Can we have a real purpose and absolute values without God? People can fathom some meaning in life with these philosophies—if you define meaning as a sense of temporary happiness and enjoying life at

the moment. It is sad that far too many have come to define meaning this way. But these views fail to answer the real questions concerning meaning. Only when you put God in the picture can you find a complete answer that not only gives meaning to this life now but satisfies our longing for purpose beyond this life.

Of all the creatures we see around us, man is the only part of the creation

that can even address the subject of meaning, worship God and can express a belief in life after death. Unlike animals, humans can conceive of eternity and immortality.

Why are we different? Could it be that our faculty of imagining the future, hoping for life beyond our temporal hour, was thoughtfully placed within us by a Creator who Himself has assigned an eternal purpose for humans?

Some 3,000 years ago wise King Solomon wrote that God "has put eternity in [men's] hearts" (Ecclesiastes 3:11). God gave us the longing to ask the questions, but not the ability to know the answers unless we come to sincerely seek and rely on Him.

If we choose not to believe that God created the universe, then we must believe that all hope in the future and desire for meaning beyond our physical life are futile. Ironically, if the principles by which evolution is assumed to operate were true, man wouldn't need to develop this aspect of his intellect.

But the fact is that we do think about it.

Humans are God's creation. He had His reasons for putting us here. Our worth is not in ourselves but that God created us in His image. It is God who gives value to human

life.

The problem is that, since we have removed God from consideration, we have been desperately searching elsewhere to try to find self-worth. We have developed psychologies that emphasize our self-importance. A virtual priesthood of psychologists tells us we can rise above the problems we have created for ourselves by pulling ourselves up by our own bootstraps.

Most of our system of psychology was designed to accommodate a godless view of creation. It rejects the concept that our worth comes from a Creator who assigned a purpose to man before He created any of us.

The moral principles of God are embodied in the laws He gave man. Contrary to the predominantly secular views of psychology, how we should live should not be determined by how our actions make us feel. God's laws were meant to work for man's own good. When we follow them, they lead not only to happiness and fulfillment in this life, but they give us a picture of what God Himself is all about. God's law is, in a sense, what He is. His laws reflect His character and nature.

## Priceless privilege or cheap substitute?

Of all the creation, God gave us alone the ability to choose whether we will live by His laws or by whatever values we assign to ourselves for our own satisfaction. God's laws are not mere duties, but He designed us so we will become most happy, satisfied and fulfilled by doing what He says. Since God made us, He knows what is best for us. He gives us instructions that will benefit us.

Man is not a mere puppet in God's hands. We have the choice of whether to do what He says or not (Deuteronomy 30:19). We can either recognize Him as the Creator and Lawgiver of the cosmos, or we can deny that He exists. We can choose to live a meaningless life or a life with purpose.

If we exalt ourselves by imagining that we are the highest form of life in the evolutionary process, we in reality are robbing ourselves of the priceless value God places on us. Our existence and future are devalued from being sons of God to being only one of many species of animals. It is tragic that man has substituted the cheap feeling of self-importance for the priceless privilege of becoming God's own children, of sharing the awesome universe with Him in glory and immortality.

# Consequences of Ideas

Nothing has a more direct impact on our moral choices than whether we believe in God. The moral choices we make determine the outcome of our lives and, collectively, of society. Our attitude toward law, respect for and acknowledgment of authority, respect for the unborn and even our sexual practices are determined largely by our belief or lack of belief in God. Our conduct toward others, as well as the love and commitment in our relationships, usually boils down to one issue: Do we believe God when He speaks?

Over the past few centuries we have come through a supposed age of enlightenment in which philosophers and other thinkers sent the clear message that we don't need God to tell us what is right or wrong. As a result, atheism and materialism are increasingly accepted as the norm. Those who believe in God and the truthfulness of the Bible often are seen as uneducated, unenlightened, superstitious and archaic—if not downright dangerous.

Says Richard Dawkins, the staunch defender of evolution introduced earlier in this booklet: "It is absolutely safe to say that, if you meet somebody who claims not to believe in evolution, that person is ignorant, stupid or insane (or wicked, but I'd rather not consider that)" (Richard Dawkins, *The New York Times* review of *Blueprints*, April 9, 1989).

Academic and government institutions most responsible for determining society's thinking and behavior have for the most part banned God from their halls. Most philosophy, psychology, science and history classes begin with an evolutionary premise, that there is no God and life came into being spontaneously and by chance. Thus they include no universal purpose or ultimate meaning for human life in their courses of study.

So where does that leave us?

## An underlying motive

What are the fruits of denying the existence of the Creator? Does it distort

one's reasoning? The Bible tells us: "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Psalm 14:1). The same verse describes the consequences of such thinking: "They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none who does good." Their entire outlook is defiled.

God understands the motivations of people who deny the possibility that God is real. When they convince themselves that God doesn't exist, what is right and wrong



*What happens to man's moral outlook when we remove God from the picture? Do some reject God so they can have freedom to do as they choose—regardless of the consequences?*

no longer matters to them. They have no objective standard for behavior. They see no reason they shouldn't do as they wish.

The author Aldous Huxley (1894-1963), member of one of England's intellectually distinguished families, admitted: "I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning; consequently I assumed that it had none, and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption. . . . Those who detect no meaning in the world generally do so because, for one reason or another, it suits their [purpose] that the world should be meaningless" (*Ends and Means*, 1946, p. 273).

Where does such thinking lead? Huxley explains: "For myself, as, no doubt, for most of my contemporaries, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation. The liberation we desired was simultaneously liberation from a certain political and economic system and liberation

from a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom. . . . There was one admirably simple method of confuting these people and at the same time justifying ourselves in our political and erotic revolt: We could deny that the world had any meaning whatsoever" (*ibid.*, p. 270).

Huxley confessed it was his desire to be free from moral standards that propelled him and others who shared his thinking to devise a rational basis for dismissing the idea of any innate moral obligations.

How many students in our academic institutions have any idea such motives shaped the theories and philosophies they are taught as fact? Probably few indeed. But, startling as it may be, the theory that life evolved spontaneously was spawned and fueled by hostility toward God's standards and values.

## Exhilaration from denying God

Huxley's brother Julian (1887-1975) was even more blunt: "The sense of spiritual relief which comes from rejecting the idea of God as a superhuman being is enormous" (*Essays of a Humanist*, 1966, p. 223).

Aldous and Julian Huxley were grandsons of Thomas Huxley (1825-1895), a close friend of Charles Darwin and vigorous promoter of evolution. Early in the debate over evolution, Thomas Huxley revealed his antireligious bias to a biologist friend: "I am very glad that you see the importance of doing battle with the clericals. . . . I desire that the next generation may be less fettered by the gross and stupid superstitions of [religious] orthodoxy than mine has been. And I shall be well satisfied if I can succeed to however small an extent in bringing about that result" (Thomas Huxley, quoted in *The Columbia History of the World*, John Garraty and Peter Gay, editors, 1972, p. 957).

More recently, paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould asserted: "We are here because one odd group of fishes had a peculiar fin anatomy that could transform into legs for

terrestrial creatures; because comets struck the earth and wiped out dinosaurs, thereby giving mammals a chance not otherwise available (so thank your lucky stars in a literal sense); because the earth never froze entirely during an ice age; because a small and tenuous species, arising in Africa a quarter of a million years ago, has managed, so far, to survive by hook and by crook.

“We may yearn for a ‘higher’ answer—but none exists. This explanation, though superficially troubling, if not terrifying, is ultimately liberating and exhilarating” (David Friend, *The Meaning of Life*, 1991, p. 33, emphasis added).

What a frank and candid admission! But why would anyone feel exhilarated and liberated by convincing himself that God does not exist?

The problem lies *with the heart*. The prophet Jeremiah explained, “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?” (Jere-

miah 17:9, New American Standard Bible).

God exposes the dark intent of those who deliberately set themselves against Him. “For when they [those who despise God’s authority] speak great swelling words of emptiness, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through lewdness, the ones who have actually escaped from those who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage” (2 Peter 2:18-19).

We must guard our minds against those “great swelling words of emptiness” that bombard us with unsubstantiated evolutionary thought. Such thinking has a gradual and insidious effect on us and on our society that the Bible equates with slavery.

### Analyzing the motive

God’s Word pulls no punches in identifying the motivation for denying His

existence. The apostle Paul explains that some people disregard God to satisfy their own passions.

Notice the process and tragic results: “. . . What may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened” (Romans 1:19-21).

Paul explains that, when we look into the skies and examine the world around us, the creative hand of God should be self-evident. A reasonable person will recognize God exists because of the evidence he can see with his own eyes. Paul says a person should conclude there is a Creator God and recognize many of His attributes by

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## Man’s Natural Hostility Toward God

**W**hy does man reject the idea of God and divine laws that define His standards? God’s laws call on us to meet a personally demanding standard that few are willing to consider. Man rejects God principally because God’s laws embody a morality that is outwardly focused and shows concern for others rather than oneself. We, however, are primarily motivated by selfish concerns—what is best for us, what we can get, how we can be viewed as better than others.

Why do we have such a selfish nature? How did it originate? The Bible tells us the origin of the hostile and suspicious nature inherent in humans. Genesis 3 explains that the devil, in the guise of the serpent, first planted this suspicion and rebellion toward God in the mind of the first man and woman. He told them God was not acting in their best interest and convinced them they could do just as well, if not better, without God.

When Eve was taken in by the devil’s seductive reasoning and Adam then rebelled with her, God did not force Himself on them. He allowed them to live without the benefit of His revealed knowledge. Adam quickly blamed his wife, and his wife blamed the serpent. Man has been blaming everyone else for his troubles ever since.

Things quickly degenerated. In a fit of

jealousy, the firstborn son of Adam and Eve killed his younger brother (Genesis 4). Envy, jealousy and greed have become entrenched human motivations just as violence has become a common way of dealing with conflict.

The descendants of Adam have seldom freely returned to God and willingly trusted in Him.

Notice the apostle Paul’s description of mankind’s motivation: “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh . . .” (Romans 8:5). Their fleshly desires prejudice their minds against God and the morality of His laws. Therefore, Paul continues, “for this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law—indeed it cannot” (verse 7, NRSV).

It’s little wonder that most people reject anything that doesn’t reflect their own point of view (Jeremiah 10:23). They think they have a better, more enlightened way, one far superior to the presumed crude and oppressive morality of the Bible. Nevertheless, God’s law far excels alternative moral values of man. As the apostle Paul wrote, “the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God” (1 Corinthians 3:19).

Historically no nations or peoples have wanted to be governed by all of the Ten Commandments, because they go

against the grain of human nature. Some can see benefits in keeping several of the commandments, such as not lying to, stealing from or killing one’s fellowman. But, at best, people generally pick and choose among God’s laws or embrace them only superficially.

Even when they keep the letter of those laws, they often miss their spirit and intent, which Jesus Christ defined as love toward God and love toward our fellowman (Matthew 22:37-40).

In rejecting God’s revealed way of life, people unknowingly cut themselves off from blessings and sentence themselves to suffering. “See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you . . .” (Deuteronomy 30:15-16).

It is sad that most people choose not to accept God’s offer of a way that will lead to an abundant and fulfilled life. There is much more to learn about this vital subject, and we have only scratched the surface here. Please request your free copies of the booklets *The Ten Commandments* and *The Road to Eternal Life*, which discuss these topics in much greater depth.



observing the wonders He has made. To conclude otherwise—that the sun, moon, earth and stars came into existence on their own from nothing—is utterly illogical.

Some, however, carry such a passionate anti-God prejudice they conclude the opposite—that the physical universe doesn't require God. Paul continues his description of the process that takes place in their thinking: "Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things" (verses 22-23). They attribute godlike powers to the physical creation and reject the Creator.

Have you been misled by this false reasoning into assuming that the thinkers of this world are wise just because they can observe similarities in animal and plant life on this planet and elaborately hypothesize that they originated from a common ancestor? This reasoning is one of the basic foundations of the evolutionary concept.

Paul continues: "Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever" (verses 23-25).

Where does such thinking lead?

Paul analyzes the fruits of the thinking that leaves God out of the picture. "For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due" (verses 26-27).

Paul gets to the crux of the matter: People don't want God to stop them from gratifying their selfish lusts. "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things that are not fitting; being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; they are whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful" (verses 28-31).

These are the predictable results of

removing God from our thinking (verse 28). They describe a society that does not recognize God and moral law, nor does it acknowledge absolute principles of right and wrong.

### **The God-is-dead movement**

One of the acclaimed philosophers of the modern world, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), was influential in the attack on God as the source of moral standards. His ideas had a radical impact on some of the most influential men of the 20th century, particularly Adolf Hitler.

Nietzsche sought to replace the religion of Christianity, with its belief and reliance on God, with a new world built on a godless foundation. He sought to redefine human life without God. He claimed that Christian ideas weakened man and prevented him from rising to the true greatness that lay within him. Christianity with its concepts of morality, repentance and humility were self-debasing ideas that had to be discarded before humanity could break free, soar to greater heights and scale the mountains of individual accomplishment.

Nietzsche strongly espoused the idea that, as he put it, "God is dead." He wrote his philosophy in a style that stirred the emotion and imagination. He argued that since God is dead we humans must be worthy to take His place. However, he wrote that man was not ready for such an exalted position, and until man was able he must live through a temporary time of upheaval and revolution. The day would come, nevertheless, when this godless world would be welcomed into the arms of a philosophical deliverer.

### **Enter the superman**

Nietzsche's predictions in part came true. His nihilistic teachings were ready to be taken seriously by a rapidly changing world already influenced by the philosophers who preceded him—David Hume the skeptic; Immanuel Kant, who exalted the authority of human reason; Søren Kierkegaard the existentialist. There arose great men, atheists and despisers of religion who sought to become what the world was waiting for—the new superman. Men like Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Mao Tse-Tung and Pol Pot were products of that experimental philosophy.

Historian Paul Johnson writes: "Friedrich Nietzsche . . . saw God not as an invention but as a casualty, and his demise as in some important sense an historical

event, which would have dramatic consequences. He wrote in 1886: "The greatest event of recent times—that "God is Dead," that the belief in the Christian God is no longer tenable—is beginning to cast its first shadows over Europe."

"Among the advanced races, the decline and ultimately the collapse of the religious impulse would leave a huge vacuum. The history of modern times is in great part the history of how that vacuum had been filled. Nietzsche rightly perceived that the most likely candidate would be what he called the 'Will to Power' . . .

"In place of religious belief, there would be secular ideology. Those who had once filled the ranks of the totalitarian clergy would become totalitarian politicians. And above all, the Will to Power would produce a new kind of messiah, uninhibited by any religious sanctions whatever, and with an unappeasable appetite for controlling mankind. The end of the old order, with an unguided world adrift in a relativistic universe, was a summons to such gangster-statesmen to emerge. They were not slow to make their appearance" (*A History of the Modern World From 1917 to the 1980s*, 1983, p. 48).

Looking back on the 20th century, Paul Johnson observed: "We have lived through a terrible century of war and destruction precisely because powerful men did usurp God's prerogatives. I call the 20th century the Century of Physics, inaugurated by Einstein's special and general theories. During this period, physics became the dominant science, producing nuclear energy and space travel.

"The century also brought forth social engineering, the practice of shoving large numbers of human beings around as though they were earth or concrete. Social engineering was a key feature in the Nazi and Communist totalitarian regimes, where it combined with moral relativism—the belief that right and wrong can be changed for the convenience of human societies—and the denial of God's rights.

"To Hitler the higher law of the party took precedence over the Ten Commandments. Lenin praised the Revolutionary conscience as a surer guide for mankind than the conscience implanted by religion" (*Reader's Digest*, "The Real Message of the Millennium," December 1999, p. 65).

### **Social engineering**

It was Charles Darwin who gave the philosophers what they wanted to hear.

Before Darwin the ideas were abstract, perhaps reactions to earlier abusive and corrupt institutions and governments. Darwin gave life to the nihilistic, existentialist, rationalist philosophy. With his theory of

at the desks and in lecture halls of nihilistic scientists and philosophers” (*The Doctor and the Soul: Introduction to Logotherapy*, 1982, p. xxi).

The words of Hitler, posted in Auschwitz in hope that the human race would never again descend to such savagery, are a sobering reminder of what happens when we reject God’s moral absolutes: “I freed Germany from the stupid and degrading fallacies of conscience and morality . . . We will train young people before whom the world will tremble. I want young people capable of violence—imperious, relentless and cruel” (Ravi Zacharias, *Can Man Live*

“Of course the application of Darwinian survival of the fittest to human affairs by unscrupulous men has no direct bearing on the question of whether human beings and other creatures evolved from simple forms of life. But these abuses have been sanctioned and abetted with evolution as an excuse, and if evolution is not true it seems all the more tragic” (Bolton Davidheiser, *Evolution and Christian Faith*, 1969, p. 354).

### The future of evolution

The evolutionary principle, having produced its deadly fruit throughout much of the 20th century, will no doubt flourish in the 21st. The emphasis now is on improving mankind genetically. Researchers speak of extending lifespans and eradicating diseases with gene therapy and genetic implants. There is common talk of improving physical and mental abilities and bestowing individual natural talents through genetic manipulation. At the moment we struggle with the ethical, emotional and legal issues involved with such practices.

In short, many think man is able to direct his own evolution.

Maybe that’s not such a strange thought. It is the natural outcome of man trying to find his own way to a superior life without God—and maybe even the notion that through artificial evolution humanity can overcome death and at last attain immortality.

It would be much simpler and surer to believe God in the first place. Man can achieve everything that is good for him now—a happy and fulfilled life—and, in the future, immortality. But man tries to achieve it on his own terms, without acknowledging or obeying his Creator. His naturally selfish nature leads him to satisfy his cravings, thus bringing on himself the physical, mental and emotional penalties that result from breaking God’s laws—but he turns around and uses the intellect God gave him to try to circumvent paying the price.

It is ironic how firmly man holds to belief in absolute physical and natural laws but vigorously objects to the very idea that the spiritual laws of God are just as immutable and absolute. When it comes to his behavior, somehow he finds a way to explain that God doesn’t exist, thinking that will remove the consequences. Make no mistake: When mankind breaks any of God’s law, denying that God exists in no way removes the price that must be paid.



*The anti-God movement that took root in the 19th century bore its bitter fruit in the 20th with two world wars, the rise of atheistic communism and gruesome savagery against other human beings.*

the mechanism of natural selection, he could explain scientifically—at least in theory—that there didn’t have to be a Creator God after all. Life could have come about on its own and then evolved without God.

Science and philosophy now teamed up to shatter the hold religion had on the populace. With the theory of evolution—and the ramifications of that thinking—would come the bloodiest century in human history.

The great moralist Victor Frankl, a survivor of Auschwitz, wrote: “If we present man with a concept of man which is not true, we may well corrupt him. When we present him as . . . a bundle of instincts, as a pawn of drive and reactions, as a mere product of heredity and environment, we feed the nihilism to which modern man is, in any case, prone.

“I became acquainted with the last stage of corruption in my second concentration camp, Auschwitz. The gas chambers of Auschwitz were the ultimate consequence of the theory that man is nothing but the product of heredity and environment . . . I am absolutely convinced that the gas chambers of Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Maidanek were ultimately prepared not in some ministry or other in Berlin, but rather

*Without God?*, 1994, p. 23).

### Survival of the fittest

Looking back on recent history, we can understand how the ideas of a godless universe, that the human species survived by running the gauntlet of the survival of the fittest, that humans can rise to exalted levels of power, led inevitably to the shameful fact that in the first half of the 20th century more people were killed by other people than in all history up until that time. The justification for a greater part of this carnage was the idea of natural selection inherent in Darwin’s theory of evolution.

The application of the survival-of-the-fittest principle to human affairs came to be known as social Darwinism. Although Darwin apparently did not condone the extrapolation of his natural-selection theory into social relationships, he did argue that human evolution proceeded through warfare and struggle.

“There are few evolutionists who have been embarrassed by the social implications of evolution and who have stressed cooperation (instead of struggle) as a factor in evolution. Others have said that it has been improperly applied when it is used to defend militarism and social abuses.

# Meet God

**C**an you really come to know God, who claims to be Creator, Life-giver, Sustainer of the universe, the One who does nothing without a reason?

Evolution claims that life exists because of a series of lucky accidents, that the laws governing the cosmos and life itself came into existence by chance, that the universe came from nothing and that everything we see has no purpose or meaning. When you look at the evidence of the origin of the universe and the supposed evolution of life, you cannot honestly say that science and human rationale have provided acceptable alternatives to the existence of God.

The answers to life's major questions have been available from ancient times, answered by the Bible. The Bible claims to be the Word of God Himself. This is where He has revealed Himself as the Creator and shown the purpose for His creation. (Be sure to request your free copy of the booklet *Is the Bible True?*)

## Is God silent?

The skeptic asks, "If there is a God, why doesn't He reveal Himself?"—as though this would resolve all debate about God's existence. God, however, knows better. He knows that no amount of evidence will convince those who are determined *not* to acknowledge and accept Him.

That is exactly what God tells us repeatedly in the Bible. Not only did He reveal Himself to the writers of the Bible to pass on to us what we need to know, but He has revealed Himself to *everyone* through His creation.

Yet we often draw incorrect conclusions from the ample evidence He has provided. As we noted earlier, people hold underlying motives for refusing to believe in a Creator God or a higher purpose. This all too conveniently allows us to live however we want without interference from any divine authority.

The fallacy of that reasoning is that God won't simply go away so we can satisfy our selfish cravings. Denying the law of gravity just because we can't see, touch or handle it doesn't mean gravity doesn't exist. In the same way, denying the equally real and binding *spiritual* laws and principles God set in motion doesn't mean He and they

magically go away. We remain ultimately accountable to the Creator, who has left us with abundant evidence of His existence.

Paul, an apostle who powerfully preached about the true God in a superstitious, polytheistic world, spoke unambiguously of the consequences of ignoring the evidence of the Creator. "Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20, NRSV).

Paul is saying here that we can see ample evidence of a Creator, and we can understand His character and nature, by observing the physical creation. He asserts that the evidence is so unmistakable that a rational human has no excuse to conclude there is no God. Men have no excuse to conclude God is anything other than what He is: eternal, supreme, all powerful and infinitely good. A person who asks the right questions and honestly wants to know the answers will come to the same logical conclusion.

So powerful is the evidence for God that Paul declares: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, *because God has shown it to them*" (verses 18-19, NRSV).

Although God clearly reveals His existence, He acknowledges that some men *suppress* the truth about Him. Why would anyone do that? Paul answers that "since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind and to things that should not be done" (verse 28, NRSV). Some simply don't want to acknowledge the existence of God so they can live as they want to live and do whatever they want to do. This explains why man has used his God-given abilities of observation and logic to reason *incorrectly* and draw *false* conclusions.

## God's claim of Creator

The first statement in the Bible is clear as to our ultimate origin: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). God here establishes the premise for everything else that will follow.

Later, through the prophet Isaiah, He

summarizes His creation of earth and everything in it: "Thus says God the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it, and spirit to those who walk on it" (Isaiah 42:5).

Through Isaiah God tells us to look at His handiwork in the heavens: "Lift up your eyes on high and see: Who created these? He who brings out their host and numbers them, calling them all by name; because he is great in strength, mighty in power, not one is missing . . . Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable" (Isaiah 40:26-28, NRSV).

On a clear night we can see about 2,000 stars with the naked eye. A century ago astronomers thought our Milky Way galaxy, with its billions of stars, was the entire universe. Now they estimate there are at least 100 billion galaxies, and possibly far more, each with billions of stars. The estimated number of galaxies continues to grow as new technological breakthroughs allow us to expand our view of the cosmos.

It would require supercomputers just to list the names or assigned numbers of a significant fraction of these stars. Yet God claims to have created every star and that He can account for each of them.

## Where did God come from?

God anticipated the skeptics' often-asked question: "If God made everything, then who made God?" Notice His answer: "Before Me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after Me" (Isaiah 43:10).

God is not bound by time as we are. He is "the High and Lofty One who *inhabits eternity*" (Isaiah 57:15). Paul tells us that God "has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see" (1 Timothy 6:16).

The name most often used to refer to God in the Old Testament, Yahweh (translated "LORD"), means "the Eternal" or "He who was, and is, and is to come" (The Companion Bible, 1990, Appendix 4).

This name conveys that God is eternal and immortal. Jesus Christ also refers to Himself as "the Alpha and the Omega, the

Beginning and the End . . . who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty” (Revelation 1:8). The universe had a beginning, and God existed before that time. He has always existed. Nothing—and no one—brought Him into being.

### The Creator comes to earth

The Bible plainly says that God created all things through Jesus Christ, who is also called the Word (John 1:1-3; see also Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2). “And the

Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

The One who actually performed the act of forming the earth, created life on it and brought the universe into being out of nothing came to earth and lived among men as a human being. He “stripped Himself of His glory, and took on Him the nature of a bondservant by becoming a man like other men”

(Philippians 2:7, Weymouth Translation).

The Creator of the universe came to the world and lived and died like any ordinary human being. But He was no ordinary human. He represented the Father, teaching exactly the laws and principles that are embodied in the Father Himself. “. . . As My Father taught Me, I speak these things. And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him” (John 8:28-29).

Jesus lived His life on earth just as the

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## How Does God Reveal Himself?

If God is real, why doesn't He reveal Himself to us in a manner that should erase any doubt of His existence?

In reality, He has done this many times. Eyewitness accounts of human interaction and conversations with Him have been duly recorded and preserved for us in the Bible. But does such documented testimony satisfy skeptics and scoffers? It never has, and it never will.

If God accepted the challenge of always having to prove His existence, what would it take? Would it have been necessary for Him to personally appear to and perform miracles to every human being ever born? But even that might not be enough to satisfy everyone.

Instead, God long ago decided to provide solid evidence—in the form of His handiwork, human testimony and fulfilled prophecy—that He is the living, intelligent Creator of the universe. This evidence is compelling, powerful and reasonable to those with an ear to hear and an eye to see. But everyone has a choice. He can face the evidence, or he can scoff at it.

### God's revelation of Himself

Let's examine the record of the Creator God's revelations of Himself to mankind.

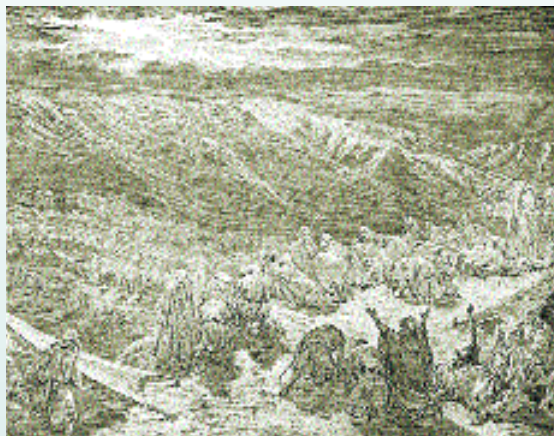
God walked and talked with Adam and Eve. During their close relationship with Him, He gave them specific instructions (Genesis 2:15-17; 3:2-3). Yet they chose to disobey and then attempted to hide themselves from Him (Genesis 3:8-10).

Later God took the time to reason with their son Cain about his selfish and unreasonable anger (Genesis 4:5-7). Cain rejected God's advice and murdered his brother Abel (verse 8). Instead of being truly sorry for what he had done, Cain “went out from the

presence of the LORD” (verses 9-16).

God talked with faithful Noah (Genesis 6:13). Noah was different from others to whom God appeared. He followed God's instructions (Genesis 7:5). The same was true of Abraham. God personally appeared to Abraham and had conversations with him on several occasions (Genesis 12:1, 7; 13:14; 17:1-3).

God's willingness to reveal Himself to



*God offered a direct relationship with ancient Israel, but the Israelites refused. At Mount Sinai they pleaded for more distance between them and God.*

Moses and the people of ancient Israel is especially important to understand. “So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend” (Exodus 33:11). God attempted to establish a similarly direct relationship with the Israelites. Moses recorded what happened. “The LORD talked with you face to face on the mountain from the midst of the fire. I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD; for you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up the mountain” (Deuteronomy 5:4-5).

But they begged for more distance. They didn't even want to hear His voice. “When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance and said to Moses, ‘Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die!’” (Exodus 20:18-19, NIV).

God wanted to impress the people with His greatness so they would know His laws should be obeyed. But they perceived Him as a threat. They requested that in the future God reveal Himself to them only through His prophet.

From that time forward God has honored that request. He revealed Himself to ancient Israel through His called and chosen prophets. He sent them to warn His people and encourage them to be faithful to Him. But their messages went unheeded. The people cruelly martyred many of the prophets.

### God allows man to choose

It was not God's idea to remove Himself and be seemingly unapproachable. It was mankind's choice.

From the beginning of human existence God has given people freedom of choice. He allows us to choose whether we will believe in Him, accept the knowledge He reveals to us and obey Him—or not.

God didn't force Adam and Eve to follow His instructions. They freely chose not to. Humanity has felt the repercussions of that fateful decision ever since.

Neither did God force ancient Israel to obey Him. He clearly offered the Israelites a choice: “This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses,” He told them. “Now choose life, so that you

Father would if He were here on earth. He perfectly personified the Father so that He could say, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (John 14:9).

Jesus taught a specific message: the gospel, or good news, of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:14-15). He taught that we can become a part of God’s family and that we can attain immortality in that family (Matthew 5:9, 45; Luke 6:35; 20:36). But this requires obedience to the laws of the Kingdom of God and faith in the

King of that Kingdom (Matthew 19:16-21; Hebrews 11:6).

### The Creator cares

Did God create the world and then leave it and us alone? Does He simply let the world run on, never intervening in human history, like a watchmaker who made the watch, wound it up and left it alone to eventually run down?

God indeed cares about His creation. He had in mind His purpose of creating the

earth and human life, and giving humans the opportunity for immortality, well before He started—in fact, “before time began” (2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2). This is completely contrary to the theory of meaningless evolution.

The Bible reveals God as one who cares enough about those He has created to intervene on their behalf. He says: “. . . For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like me, declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times

and your children may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19, NIV).

With their own ears they had heard God recite the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai. They had witnessed miracle after miracle in their trek out of Egypt. Yet the Israelites quickly forgot that evidence and chose to disregard the way of life and blessings God offered (see also Deuteronomy 31:27).

Mankind has consistently chosen to turn away from God’s revelation, preferring the way that ultimately leads to curses and death (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25). Nothing has changed. We are faced with the same two choices: Believe God and obey His laws, or disobey.

Centuries after ancient Israel went astray, God did not force Jesus’ countrymen to accept Him as the promised Messiah and Son of God. Even in the face of incredible miracles demonstrating His power, most still didn’t believe Him. They repeated the response of their forefathers.

After several years of seeing Christ perform many dramatic miracles, including the feeding of thousands (Matthew 14:13-21; 15:30-38), only 120 people had been sufficiently convicted to form the core of His Church (Acts 1:15)—though He would later add many more.

Another revealing incident was the response to Jesus’ raising of Lazarus from the dead (John 11). Did the leaders rejoice that Jesus had raised a man to life again? Not at all! They “plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus” (John 12:10-11).

Refusing to acknowledge that this miraculous resurrection was a sign from God, Christ’s enemies determined to destroy the evidence by plotting to murder the innocent Lazarus. Within a few days they did manage to have Jesus of Nazareth executed.

Most people like to think they are open-minded, that they wouldn’t be antagonistic

or prejudiced against the truth. Yet some of those same people who knew of Christ’s miracles later shouted for His blood. Jesus pointed out that some were so hardened toward God they wouldn’t be persuaded even if someone were raised from the dead (Luke 16:31).

Human nature hasn’t changed. The same bias and prejudice remain just as deeply entrenched in our modern era. It’s not a pretty thought to consider that a significant part of humanity willingly hardens its thinking against God. Yet it happens (2 Peter 3:5). And the reason is simple to explain. The natural human way of thinking is fundamentally *hostile* toward God (Romans 8:7). Therefore a mind influenced by that attitude is more than eager to find ways of reasoning around evidence for His existence.

### Absolute proof of God

Has God ever provided human beings with absolute, indisputable proof of His existence? Will He ever provide such proof in the future? The answer to both questions is an emphatic yes.

At the time God brought ancient Israel out of Egypt, He performed many awesome miracles that demonstrated His existence, power and control over the laws of nature. “Now the LORD said to Moses, ‘Go in to Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his servants, that I may show these signs of Mine before him, and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and your son’s son the mighty things I have done in Egypt, and My signs which I have done among them, that you may know that I am the LORD’” (Exodus 10:1-2).

They had their proof, but it quickly faded from their memory. “They made a calf in Horeb, and worshiped the molded image . . . They forgot God their Savior, who had done great things . . .” (Psalm 106:19-22).

Later God gave them proof that He was God through the words of His prophets.

Fulfilled prophecy powerfully demonstrates the reality of God. He proclaimed: “. . . I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done . . .” (Isaiah 46:9-10). Only God can accurately foretell great calamities, the rise and fall of empires, and even the end of the age—and then bring them to pass.

Bible prophecy is one proof of God that can be easily verified. One of the simplest ways to check its truthfulness is to examine the accuracy of prophecies pertaining to the birth, life and death of Jesus Christ. Many centuries before He was born amazing details about those aspects of His life were revealed to the Hebrew prophets. The exactness and precision of those details powerfully confirm both the truth of Bible prophecy and the existence of the One who inspired it.

The already fulfilled prophecies of Daniel are so detailed and specific that the confirmation of their accuracy also provides us with irrefutable proof of God’s existence and truthfulness. Although it is beyond the scope of this publication to explain the many precise details of these and other fulfilled prophecies, this information is readily available to you in our free booklet *Is the Bible True?*

### More absolute proof on the way

God has promised that the time is coming—at a time most people don’t expect—when the whole world will witness the same type of miraculous evidence of His existence that He displayed in ancient Egypt.

This coming intervention in world affairs will be unmistakable. Every eye will see Jesus Christ when He returns (Revelation 1:7; compare Matthew 24:27-30). You can read a clear explanation of how God plans to reveal His great power and glory by requesting your free copies of the booklets *Are We Living in the Time of the End?* and *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy*.

things not yet done, saying, ‘My purpose shall stand, and I will fulfill my intention’” (Isaiah 46:9-10, NRSV).

God has intervened in history before, as recorded in the Bible. He will do so again, but this time to bring the human experience to the point where men will come to recognize Him for who He is and accept His revealed knowledge and His purpose for them.

John 3:16-17, perhaps the best-known passage in the Bible, tells us: “. . . God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”

What is more fantastic is that God is involved to the point that He *will* bring His purpose to its desired end. Humans made in the image of God will have every opportunity to know the true God and make clear choices, whether they will take Him up on His offer of eternal life or not.

### Freedom to choose

God has given us freedom of choice. Speaking through Moses to His chosen nation, ancient Israel, He said: “I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore *choose life*, that both you and your descendants may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19). For more on why God gives us freedom of choice, be sure to read “How Does God Reveal Himself?,” page 28.

Adam and Eve made the fateful decision to reject God’s revelation and rely on their own reason to determine right and wrong. God has allowed mankind to reject His revealed knowledge. He has given us freedom to formulate our own philosophies about the origin and meaning of life and to experiment with ways of life, governments and institutions through which we hope to find lasting peace and contentment.

But it has been an experiment that has failed to give us what we’re longing and searching for. Thousands of years of experimenting with philosophies and governments have failed to bring peace. History is littered with bloodshed, oppression and shattered hopes.

The experiment will continue to fail. Only with God’s revealed knowledge can we find abundant life and bounteous blessings—the real reasons God created us and the way we can fulfill our purpose.

### The logical conclusion

We see around us a world that has departed from the knowledge of God. Mankind has fashioned many societies, philosophies and ideas of human destiny without the help of God’s revealed knowledge. Although God is involved in His creation, for now He has limited His involvement because He is allowing mankind to learn from its own mistakes.

Most people assume that if this is God’s world He must be desperately trying to enforce His will and convert humanity to His way of thinking. But they also observe that, if this is the case, God’s efforts are a miserable failure because the forces of evil are having much greater effect.

The simple truth of the matter is that God *isn’t* trying to convert the world to His way of life now. He is permitting the human experience to play itself out to its logical, inevitable conclusion.

Like children who sometimes will come to understand that the stove is hot only after they insist on touching it, we adults often must learn lessons the hard way, through painful experience. Time and time again biblical history records God warning people of the consequences of rejecting Him and His ways. “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live,” says God. “Turn, turn from your evil ways! For *why should you die . . . ?*” (Ezekiel 33:11).

Where will mankind’s collective decisions lead us? Just as forsaking the knowledge of the Creator God and His laws brings suffering and anguish on an individual, it brings similar results on a national, and even a worldwide, level.

Jesus Christ foretold the inevitable outcome of human civilization apart from God: “For *then shall be great tribulation*, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. *And unless those days should be shortened, no flesh would be saved . . .*” (Matthew 24:21-22).

We should be sobered by Jesus’ words. It is in God’s plan to allow man to come to the end of his rope, to *the brink of annihilation*, in the centuries-long human experiment. Only then will mankind will learn the lesson—the hard way.

(To better understand these major themes and how they will play out according to Bible prophecy, be sure to request your free booklets *The Gospel of the Kingdom, Are We Living in the Time of the End?* and *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy*.)

### Direct divine intervention

The news isn’t all bad. The good news is that Jesus Christ will intervene powerfully to prevent us from annihilating ourselves. Although Bible prophecy warns us the human race will face extinction, and a large portion of humanity will perish, our headlong race toward disaster will be cut short. Mankind will be spared, but it won’t be because we have somehow found a way to solve our problems. It will be only because Christ will return to earth and finally bring an end to what the Bible calls “this present evil age” (Galatians 1:4).

It is at this prophesied time of great tribulation—of unparalleled global turmoil and danger—that Jesus will return. Literally and figuratively, it will be humankind’s darkest days: “Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the [peoples] of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” (Matthew 24:29-30).

For those who view the world from a godless perspective, the scene leading up to that time will be contradictory and confusing. They will see man wanting to be considered good, but still struggling with a nature that finds it all too easy to oppress and inflict suffering on fellow human beings. They will see frightening natural disasters taking the lives of tens of thousands of people and bringing immeasurable pain and loss to countless thousands of others, all the while failing to perceive God’s concern.

If one problem is solved, several more will spring up to take its place. People will cry out to God, wondering where He is. But the simple truth of the matter is that humanity will reap the tragic results of removing God from the picture. They will have to learn the lesson that there are no answers without turning to God, seeking His instruction on how to live and how to fulfill His purpose for living.

God is now giving some the opportunity to fulfill their destiny. If you have the courage to reject the philosophy of meaninglessness and turn to your Creator to seek His will in your life, you can become a part of those who overcome this present evil world and share in Christ’s reign after He returns to establish His Kingdom (Revelation 3:21; 20:4, 6).

The good news is that God will powerfully answer the question of whether He exists. All the world will know the true God, worshipping Him and learning His holy and righteous laws. “None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them” (Hebrews 8:11; Jeremiah 31:34). Mankind will at last find the peace and contentment we have sought for so long.

### A relationship with the Creator

Can you really know God? The first step is to be willing to recognize the evidence He provides of His existence. As we have discussed in this publication, He provides plenty of evidence if we are willing to see

and acknowledge it. We can draw many conclusions about Him from what we see in the universe and the world around us. We can then take the next step, to search for a relationship with the Creator.

King David reasoned correctly when he observed the marvels of God’s creation. He came to at least two important conclusions in his observations. First, he concluded that a being who created the universe and gave us life must have a great purpose for us. “When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit [care for] him?” (Psalm 8:3-4).

Second, he concluded that a being who presided over such a creation would be right

in everything He does, and that He is One who can be trusted. Psalm 19 shows that David understood this. “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world” (verses 1-4, NIV).

David understood that when we look into the heavens we can perceive this self-evident truth speaking to us as surely as though another person were speaking to us face to face. That message is available to every person everywhere and is understandable by anyone regardless of language: There is a great Creator, and He is infinitely

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## A God Not Bound by Space and Time

If there is a God, why don’t we see, hear or touch Him? It’s a simple and fair question. But the answer defies human logic, reasoning and experience.

We experience things through our physical senses. Our eyes capture the light reflected from physical objects. Our ears pick up the vibrations from sound waves. Our fingertips gauge the texture and hardness of the things we touch.

We live in a physical world with its four space-time dimensions of length, width, height and time. The God of the Bible, however, dwells in a different dimension—the *spirit* realm—beyond the reach of our physical senses. It’s not that God isn’t real; it’s a matter that He is not limited by the physical laws and dimensions that govern our world (Isaiah 57:15). He is *spirit* (John 4:24).

Notice what the Scriptures reveal about this God who is not bound by space and time.

Jesus Christ had a physical body. Like ours, His was subject to injury, pain and death. The four Gospels record that He was scourged and crucified. Several of His followers took His brutalized body, wrapped it in strips of linen and sealed it in a tomb. There was no doubt Jesus of Nazareth was dead. His body lay in the tomb for three days and three nights, watched over by a detachment of guards.

But it was not to remain so. A minor uproar ensued three days later when some of His followers came to the tomb—only to find it empty. They would be in for an even greater surprise.

That evening His disciples gathered in a room, with the doors firmly shut because they feared for their lives, when “Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, ‘Peace be with you’” (John 20:19). Their beloved teacher, whom they had seen killed and entombed, suddenly materialized inside a locked room and greeted them! Lest they think He was an impostor, He showed them the nail punctures in His hands and spear wound in His side.

The resurrected Jesus was no longer bound by physical factors. He effortlessly entered a closed room and revealed Himself to His disciples. They recognized the impossibility of a physical body passing through physical walls. Eight days later He repeated the miracle for the benefit of the disciple Thomas, who hadn’t witnessed the earlier appearance (John 20:26). Days later, in another miracle, He defied the laws of gravity, ascending into the sky in the sight of all His disciples (Acts 1:9).

Scripture reveals that God lives outside the bounds of time as we know it (Isaiah 57:15). We read that our awesome destiny was planned “before time began” (2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2) and “before the creation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:20, NIV).

“By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible” (Hebrews 11:3, NIV). In other words, the physical universe we see, hear, feel and experience was created not from existing matter, but from a source

independent of the physical dimensions of length, width, height and time.

This does not mean that God the Father and Jesus Christ never reveal Themselves to humans. The Scriptures are a chronicle of God’s interaction with—and care and concern for—men, women and children through the centuries.

Many people reject the Bible, and the Gospels in particular, because it describes many miraculous occurrences: dramatic healings, resurrections, fire from heaven and spectacular visions, to name a few. They believe these things are impossible because they defy human experience and the laws that govern our physical existence. They thus conclude that biblical accounts of such things cannot be true.

Regrettably, they fail to consider Scriptures such as those we have just read that testify that God the Father and Jesus Christ can operate beyond the bounds of the physical laws that govern the universe. The miracles recorded in the Bible were acts of God temporarily overriding the effects of physical laws. A God who can bring the universe into existence can certainly perform miracles such as those found in the Scriptures.

Where does this leave us? Will we believe the many witnesses God has provided, or will we insist on some kind of proof He provides us personally before we believe? Jesus’ words to Thomas are also clearly intended for us: “. . . Because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those *who have not seen* and yet have believed” (John 20:29).

# Our Window of Opportunity

Closer than ever to the end of this present evil age, we have an unusual window of opportunity to search out the hidden purpose of our existence, to find our way back to God.

In short, mankind desperately needs to be reconciled to God (Isaiah 59:1-14). It is our sins, our abandonment of God's laws, that stand in the way. Only when we repent of doing things contrary to God's instruction can we experience a true relationship with our Creator. We need to learn what He expects of us. We should not distance ourselves from the presence of God as did the Israelites at Mount Sinai.

What does He advise us to do? The answer is straightforward: "Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to

our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55:6-7).

The Bible refers to the advice given here as *repentance*—as turning from our ways of doing things, and the bitter fruit those ways bring, and surrendering to God to begin living according to His ways. God "now commands all men everywhere to repent" and forsake our self-induced ignorance (Acts 17:30). (To better understand what it means to repent, be sure to request your free copy of the booklet *The Road to Eternal Life*.)

God wants to show us the way out of our hardships and miseries and grant us understanding of the awesome knowledge of His plan for us. "Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know" (Jeremiah 33:3). He will reward those who seek Him with their whole heart.

In our information age we sadly lack

the most vital information of all, the knowledge of God. He wants to reveal it to us, but we must be willing to accept it and do some digging ourselves.

In the final analysis, "he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

God offers the help of His Church, the spiritual Body He describes as "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy 3:15). He encourages us to "grow in the grace and knowledge" of the wonderful truths of the Bible (2 Peter 3:18). The members of the United Church of God, publishers of this booklet, are committed to fulfilling Christ's admonition to carry the message of God's truth to the world and teaching people His way of life (Matthew 24:14; 28:18-20). We welcome you to share in its work and to discover the truth in mankind's age-old search for God.

greater than anything we can imagine. We are without excuse if we refuse to believe it (Romans 1:20).

David speaks of God's greatness, that "the law of the LORD is perfect . . . The testimony of the LORD is sure . . . The statutes of the LORD are right . . . The commandment of the LORD is pure . . . The fear of the LORD is clean . . . The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether" (Psalm 19:7-9).

On many occasions David marveled at the vast array of the Milky Way galaxy sparkling in the night sky. During his years

as a shepherd he had time to study and wonder about the intricacies of nature. He drew on his early experiences to reach profound conclusions about his Creator.

You can ponder the same questions, look at the same evidence and reach the same logical conclusions. You can be moved by what you see with your own eyes and make a decision to accept God's offer to establish a personal relationship with you. If you do, you will be taking the first step toward inhabiting eternity with Him. We would like to assist you in this quest.

We are happy to send you further information on these vital subjects. To start, we recommend that you request your free copies of the booklets *What Is Your Destiny?*, *The Road to Eternal Life* and *The Ten Commandments*. To better understand the Bible, and to prove that it is the inspired Word of God, request *Is the Bible True?* and *How to Understand the Bible*. We also recommend that you enroll in our free, 12-lesson *Bible Study Course* so you can learn more about the Creator God and His purpose for you.

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