

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



THIS PUBLICATION IS NOT TO BE SOLD. It is a free educational service in the public interest, published by the United Church of God, *an International Association*.

Life's Ultimate Question:

Does God Exist?

© 2000, 2008 United Church of God, *an International Association*
All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A. Scriptures in this publication are quoted from the
New King James Version (© 1988 Thomas Nelson, Inc., publishers) unless otherwise noted.

Contents

3 Asking the Crucial Questions

Why are we here? What is our place in the universe? What is the purpose of life? The questions have been asked for centuries. But they all revolve around what is perhaps the most fundamental question of all: *Does God exist?*

6 Evidence All Around Us

Because God cannot be detected or measured by physical means, the scientific community has taken the position that He does not exist. Such a prejudiced and unwarranted view leads too many to ignore evidence in plain sight.

13 The Beginning of the Universe

Did our universe always exist, or did it have a beginning at a specific point in time? If it always existed, we have no need for a Creator. But if it came into being at a specific time, what was it that *caused* it to come into being?

23 Our Amazing Spaceship Earth

Scientists from many fields have discovered that our planet not only teems with life, but seems to be *expressly designed* for life. An amazing intelligence seems to be behind Earth's perfect conditions. What is that intelligence telling us?

32 The Giver of Life

How did life begin? How did our planet's amazing variety of animals and plants come into being? Evolution is touted as the answer, but it breaks down in the face of the scientific evidence. The creation itself reveals a far different story.

47 Life's Purpose and the Consequences of Ideas

Does your life have meaning and purpose? Evolution holds that we are here simply by chance, the result of a series of lucky accidents. If this is true, how does it affect how we live? History reveals the consequences of such thinking.

61 Meet God

If God exists, why doesn't He reveal Himself? In fact, He has—many times and in many ways. The issue isn't *lack* of evidence, but *how we choose to view it*. The time draws near when man can no longer deny God's existence.

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 minuscule points of light 4 billion times fainter than what can be detected by the human eye.



This Hubble Space Telescope photo, taken of a tiny portion of the sky near the Big Dipper, shows galaxies up to 10 billion light-years from our own. Based on the number of galaxies visible in this photo, astronomers estimated that the universe contains at least 100 billion galaxies.

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, it would take almost *32 years*

to reach 1 billion. You would spend almost *3,200 years* to reach 100 billion, and again that is only the estimated number of *galaxies* in the universe. When we consider the number of individual stars and planets making up all these galaxies, the mind reels. The average Milky Way–sized galaxy is thought to contain *200 billion stars* and untold numbers of planets.

Such amazing numbers quickly outgrow our limited comprehension and imagination (see also “Our Awesome Universe: How Big Is Big?” on page 15).

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 in knowledge about the universe, philosophers, scientists and other thinkers ask these same questions. The assumptions 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 (the study of the nature of the universe) and mathematics—he asks the right questions.

He is not the only scientist to ponder these fundamental questions. The late Carl Sagan (of the 1980 TV series *Cosmos*), also a brilliant scientist and best-selling author, wrote in his introduction to 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” (p. ix).

Sagan dedicated his life to bringing scientific thought to the general public. Notice another of his observations: “Except for children (who don’t know enough not to ask



Why were you born? Why do you exist? People have asked these crucial questions for centuries, but few have been able to find the answers.

Photos: Corbis Digital Stock



The gaseous “pillars of creation,” photographed by the Hubble Space Telescope, are thought to be a birthplace for newly forming stars.

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, thinking 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 seek out intelligible 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*.” 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*” (p. 175, emphasis added).

A question of consequence

Noted British historian Paul Johnson, in his book *A History of the Jews*, also 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? 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 both abundant and available. Let’s look at some of the evidence, asking and answering questions so basic to our search for meaning and purpose.

Evidence All Around Us

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 cannot be a God, a divine Creator. Leaving no room for anything we cannot see, hear or feel, or measure through scientific methods, they have believed the answers can be found through human reason. Using man's ability to reason, with its natural prejudice against God (see "Man's Natural Hostility Toward God" on page 58), they concluded that the universe came from nothing, life evolved from lifeless matter and human reason itself is our best guide to finding our way.

In his 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). With the utter disregard for God that so many have shown have come many 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 we weigh and evaluate any evidence is critical to the validity of any conclusions we reach on this crucial matter. We must look at arguments for and against God's existence without resorting to prejudiced premises or illogical conclusions.

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" (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 *actually were* designed!

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?

Denying the obvious?

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 see around us every day? Is life on earth simply the product of chance, with no purpose and planning, no control or consequences?

A growing body of evidence to the contrary is leading more and more scientists to question assumptions popular in scientific circles for years. Although few among them are willing to admit compelling evidence of God’s existence, an increasing number are admitting that everywhere they look they see evidence of a world that gives the appearance of intricate design down to the tiniest details.

The Bible acknowledges the obvious when it presents us with an explanation of life quite different from that espoused by Professor Dawkins and others. 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” (quoted in *The Quotable Einstein*, Alice Calaprice, editor, 1996, p. 151).

Cambridge University astronomy professor Martin Rees and science writer John Gribbin, discussing how finely tuned scientists have found the universe to be, noted 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]



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.

believe that we human beings are built into the scheme of things in a very basic way” (*The Mind of God*, p. 16).

No wonder the late renowned British astrophysicist and mathematician Sir Fred Hoyle, after examining the different settings that regulate our planet and the rest of the universe, marveled: “A common sense interpretation of the facts suggests that *a superintellect has monkeyed with the physics, as well as the chemistry and biology* [of the universe], 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*” (“The Universe: Past and Present Reflections,” *Engineering and Science*, November 1981, emphasis added).

The persistence of unbelief

Yet the belief stubbornly persists that God is not needed. The late Harvard University paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould summarized 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” (quoted in *Darwin’s Legacy*, Charles Hamrum, editor, 1983, pp. 6-7).

Some scientists acknowledge that they simply refuse to allow the existence of a divine Creator to enter their thinking. They argue that the discipline of science is limited to material or naturalistic explanations—that is, ones that deny even the possibility of the supernatural. “Even if all the data point to an intelligent designer,” immunologist Dr. Scott Todd once admitted, “*such a hypothesis is excluded from science because it is not naturalistic*” (*Nature*, Sept. 30, 1999, p. 423, emphasis added).

Biologist Richard Lewontin was similarly candid: “We take the side of science in spite of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, in spite of the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, *because we have a prior commitment, a commitment to materialism . . . we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door*” (“Billions and Billions of Demons,” *New York Review of Books*, Jan. 9, 1997, p. 31, emphasis added).

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 *also* 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. As occasionally admitted in statements such as those above, 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 download or request our free 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.

Conveniently sidestepping the issue of where matter and the universe originated, proponents of evolution begin with an existing universe operating according to precise 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, vast in scale and complexity yet precise in its mechanics. Several decades of space exploration have 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

Scientists understand that 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" (quoted in *The Quotable Einstein*, p. 161).

Astronomers can predict with amazing exactness when a comet will return to our sky. Scientists can send spacecraft to land on other planets or orbit bodies millions of 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. Our calendars are useful only because of the universe's immutable laws. We can rely on the timing and position of the heavenly bodies 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 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 asserts that life originated with a single cell and over countless eons of reproductive change gave rise to the astounding variety of life on earth. But from where did the first cell come? Materialism argues for naturalistic *abiogenesis*—that life arose from nonliving matter through undirected chemical processes.

But that very concept is contrary to one of the most basic of all natural laws—the law of biogenesis. Throughout nature the law of biogenesis is abundantly evident: *Life can come only from existing life*, just as your life was conceived

by *living* parents. Naturalistic evolutionists argue against the universality of biogenesis but can produce no concrete evidence of natural abiogenesis.

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



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

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 ancient Israel's King David. Looking into the heavens 3,000 years ago, he realized that he was viewing the handiwork of the Creator and that we can discern much about Him by observing 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

Theoretical physicist John Polkinghorne, president of Queens College, Cambridge, and a member of Britain’s Royal Society, wrote: “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 intricate patterns and design we see in the created world around us, whether in the spiral of a nautilus shell or the structure of the Whirlpool Galaxy, are powerful evidence of a Creator.

Photos, from left: NASA, iStockphoto

The Beginning of the Universe

Has the universe always existed? Or at some definite point in time, did it have a beginning? Much of the argument about the existence of a Creator God rests on this question. After all, if the universe has always existed, there would seem to have been no need for a being or outside intelligence to design and create it (though we would still be left with the mystery of why it exists). 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 complete agreement as to whether the universe had a beginning. A few still believe it is possible that it has always existed. But this concept is not the dominant scientific view. Most scientists now accept that the universe began suddenly and at a specific point in time.

Determination 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 saw this as evidence that the universe is expanding. He determined that galaxies and clusters of galaxies are moving away from each other *in all directions*.

To envision this revolutionary idea, 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 concluded that galaxies throughout the universe are speeding away from each other in the same way. They also determined that the farther a galaxy or cluster of galaxies is from us, the faster it is retreating.

As Hubble now saw it, the universe was expanding outward everywhere he looked. The concept was revolutionary, since up until this time most astronomers assumed that any motion by galaxies was simply random drift. Other astronomers and physicists subsequently concurred with Hubble’s observations and conclusions. What could this mean?

John Barrow, professor of astronomy at the University of Sussex, England, explored 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 wrote: “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.” This would mean that the universe *had to have a beginning*.

A universe of finite age

This determination shook the scientific establishment. Wrote the late 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 also exclaimed: “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, emphasis added).

Scientists had come to a conclusion in line with what was already recorded in the Bible some 3,500 years ago: The universe was not eternal; it had a beginning.

In fact, they should have already recognized this. Even without the Big Bang model, the scientific laws of thermodynamics still demand that the universe had a beginning. The first law states that the amount of mass-energy in the universe is constant. The second law states that the amount of energy available for work is running out. Taken together, they require that the universe had a beginning with much usable energy from which it is now running down. In any case, the vast majority of scientists did finally come to accept a universe of finite age.

As long as scientists and philosophers assumed the universe had eternally 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. Today only a few scientists persist in believing in an infinitely old earth and universe. There is simply too much evidence against it. The vast majority have come to acknowledge that we live in a universe that had a beginning.

That admission raises uncomfortable questions for many scientists. What force, power or laws existed before the beginning of the universe to bring it into existence? What was the cause of its existence? 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?

Where science stops

At this point science stops in its tracks. As 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*, 1992, pp. 106-107, emphasis added).

Professor Jastrow acknowledges that everything scientists know simply breaks down at the moment of creation. The known laws of the universe simply cannot be applied to the point when the universe leapt into existence *from nothing*. Science can offer no rational explanation, no means to record, measure or

Our Awesome Universe: How Big Is Big?

The 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, the size of a slightly smaller cherry pit, orbits two blocks away from the sun. Pluto 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 a cluster 20 million miles in diameter (more than 4½ times the actual distance from the earth to the sun).

Based on research using their most advanced telescopes and other tools, astronomers estimate that 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



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?

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. Still we must face the question: How did all this come to be?

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 of supernatural creation by a supreme Intelligence. Atheists must argue 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

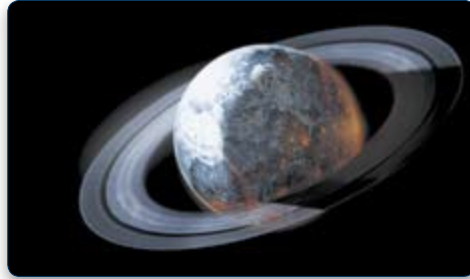
"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," says the Bible (Genesis 1:1). This is a simple statement, but it answers the most basic and scientific of all questions: Where did we come from?

This verse describes the beginning of the universe. The universe had a beginning caused by a timeless 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 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



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

photo illustration by Shaun Venishi/PhotoDisc

the Word of God. But this is not blind faith. We are not asked to believe that the cosmos popped into existence without a cause and without a purpose—the tenets of the faith of an atheist. Rather, we are asked to believe that it began as the act of a Being who is timeless and powerful enough to bring the universe into existence.

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 4 to 5 billion years old and the universe around 15 billion. This contradicts the belief of many Bible believers that the earth has existed for only around 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 and study Bibles, 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*, typically translated "was" here, 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 imply 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 download or request our free booklets *Creation or Evolution: Does It Really Matter What You Believe?* and *Is the Bible True?*)

We must realize that God is not the author of confusion and chaos (see 1 Corinthians 14:33). God is a being of perfection, order and beauty. Chaos and disorder result from rejection of or rebellion against Him. In Ezekiel 28:15, God told the powerful angelic being elsewhere called Lucifer, "You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity [lawlessness] was found in you."

Other scriptures indicate that an original, earlier creation (Genesis 1:1) preceded the earth's becoming in verse 2 "without form, and void" (Hebrew *tohu* and *bohu*, meaning a condition of chaotic disorder and confusion). 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 the rebellion against God by Lucifer,

Science and Discomfiting Discoveries

Robert Jastrow (1925-2008) was a scientist of impeccable credentials. He was the founder and former director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, professor of astronomy and geology at Columbia University (New York) professor of earth sciences at Dartmouth College and head of the Mount Wilson Institute, which runs California's world-famous Mount Wilson Observatory. 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.

Professor Jastrow was also a prolific science writer, particularly in astronomy, cosmology and space exploration. He didn't hesitate to speak his mind, particularly when it came to discoveries that discomfited 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 noted that scientific discoveries and the book of Genesis have much more in common than many of his colleagues have been willing to admit (emphasis added throughout in 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).

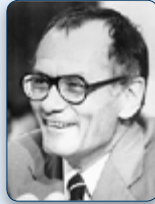
"Scientists have no proof that life was *not* the result of an act of creation, but they are driven by

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 typically misunderstood—the Bible actually allowing 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



Robert Jastrow

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 as-



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

tronomers 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. Every event can be explained in a ratio-

nal 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. 115-116).

now called Satan (meaning “Adversary”) and a third of the angels, now demons (see 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 restored the earth to a beautiful habitation for His new creation, mankind (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 starting in verse 3. 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, having 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 the earth, is. But it does plainly state, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

A universe governed by laws

What have scientists determined about the fundamental laws that existed at the origin of our universe? Far from having a chaotic, random structure—as one would expect 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.

Keith Ward, professor of history and professor of philosophy of religion at King’s College, London University, wrote: “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 conclusions again bring us back to fundamental questions: Who created the original laws that govern matter and energy? 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,



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.

Corbis Digital Stock

exact laws. Professor Davies summed up findings about these laws this way: “Each [scientific] 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*, 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” (quoted in *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*, p. ix, emphasis added).

Many intelligent and learned people believe—and have a religion-like 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 that it’s 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 Scripture tells us. It presents an altogether different viewpoint: “For *He commanded* and they [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” to perpetually govern them. “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 astounding 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 the reaction astronomer Hugh Ross had 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 universe had a definite beginning, with predetermined laws governing all of its aspects, is powerful proof that a Creator God made and sustains it. This very point is made often in Scripture.

Many modern books by scientists are filled with the naturalistic evolutionary point of view. Most of modern education is grounded in it. But this is not the only viewpoint even among academics. Consider this frank 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, emphasis added).

Science journalist 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: What the Message From Space Is Telling Us About God*, 1997, preface).

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



When we properly understand the biblical creation account, we see no conflict between it and scientific discoveries.

Scott Campbell

Our Amazing Spaceship Earth

Have you ever dreamed of traveling through space? The prospects sound exciting to most people.

Amazingly, we are *already* traveling through space—but without being aware of it! Our planet can rightly be compared to a giant spacecraft carrying more than 6 billion people and billions more animals and plants. American scientist Buckminster Fuller coined the fitting term “Spaceship Earth” to describe our planet.

We are truly hurtling through space on this giant spacecraft called Earth—at the incredible speed of 66,600 miles per hour! This is far faster than man’s speediest aircraft. At the same time, this space vehicle is spinning at 1,000 miles per hour at the equator. Every year we complete an entire circuit around the sun—a journey of more than *half a billion miles!*

Yet perhaps the most amazing aspect of our voyage is that *we don’t feel the trip at all*. Certainly as we travel in a car at 50 miles per hour, we can sense the velocity and see the scenery go by. But the paradox is, once we get out of the car and sit down, everything on the ground seems at rest—yet we are still traveling at an incredible speed through space.

If we finish our life’s journey with an average life span, we will have traveled around the sun some 76 times, and completed a trip of more than *38 billion miles*—the equivalent of traveling several times to Pluto and back! All of this happens without us ever feeling the velocity or being aware of the trip itself.

This is just one of the incredible features of our remarkable spaceship.

Our privileged planet

In the last 30 years scientific discoveries have undermined the idea, once popular among some scientists and scholars, that we live on an unexceptional planet. That idea was summarized in the view of astronomer Carl Sagan, who spoke of “the *delusion* that we have some *privileged* position in the Universe” (*Pale Blue Dot*, 1994, p. 7, emphasis added).

We have come quite far from the similar notion posed by philosopher Bertrand Russell that humanity is merely, as he put it, “a curious accident in a backwater” (*Religion and Science*, 1961, p. 222). As scientific discoveries have accumulated, planet Earth has turned out to be not a backwater region, but instead a *very privileged* planet.

Astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez and philosopher Jay Richards recently wrote a book about the latest scientific findings that refute Sagan’s assertion that we live on an insignificant planet. They aptly titled the book *The Privileged Planet*.

Instead of a universe once thought to be possibly teeming with life, more and more scientists are now realizing the rare qualities of our terrestrial globe. Cosmologists Peter Ward and Donald Brownlee wrote the 2003 book *Rare Earth: Why Complex Life Is Uncommon in the Universe* to explain some of our planet's unique features and how difficult it would be to duplicate these conditions on some other planet.

Similarly, the influential science textbook *Earth* begins its introduction with a section titled "the uniqueness of the planet Earth" (Frank Press and Raymond Siever, 1986, p. 3). So many factors have to be just right to duplicate the feats of our amazing Spaceship Earth that hope is slowly fading of ever finding intelligent life on other planets.

"From the seventeenth to the twentieth century," explain Drs. Gonzalez and Richards, "many expected to find intelligent, even superior life on the Moon, Mars, and other planets in the Solar System . . . Now, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, despite PR blitzes from Martian-life enthusiasts, the search has moved from the planets to a few obscure outlying moons. At the same time, the aspirations have been substantially downgraded" (*The Privileged Planet*, 2004, p. 253).

What are some of the remarkable features of our Spaceship Earth? Let's explore some of these characteristics so we can appreciate how carefully crafted it is. We can then ask, *Could all these precise conditions be only a lucky accident?* Hand-in-hand is another crucial question: *What is the ultimate purpose of our life's journey through space?*

A marvelous "window" to see out into the universe

As every spaceship has a porthole to view the outside, so our atmosphere acts in the same way.

In fact, we have a much better window than an ordinary spacecraft. Our "window" on this Spaceship Earth is not limited to a certain viewing area, but actually covers *the entire planet*. It is like having a porous crystal 430 miles thick that allows everyone aboard to have a full view of everything outside our planet and yet still blocks out the airless outer space.

Some planets are covered in thick clouds that make it impossible to see out. But our atmosphere enables us to *view and discover* the universe around us. Our earth is thus an exploration vessel.

The transparent canopy covering the planet also houses a renewable supply of oxygen for human beings and animal life, and carbon dioxide and nitrogen for plants. It also provides the proper air pressure for living things, and the outer edge of this translucent shell is composed of an ozone layer that protects life from harmful ultraviolet rays.

Strange as it may sound, this canopy even comes equipped with a protective force field! It sounds like something out of the TV series *Star Trek*, but it's true. We have a magnetic field generated by the spinning iron core at the center of our planet that deflects damaging cosmic rays and deadly solar winds. Without these features, life here would not be possible.

Last but not least, this marvelous canopy contains an automatically adjusting "curtain" to shade the terrestrial orb from too much light hitting its surface. This delicate shroud is formed by clouds, which act as moving shades that cover some 60 percent of the earth's surface at any given time.

What's in the cockpit?

What if we enter the cockpit of Spaceship Earth? What do we find?



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?

and omnipotent God, "*He hangs the earth on nothing*" (Job 26:7). That "nothing" is outer space, and the earth is able to "hang" suspended on nothing through the unseen force of gravity.

In this cockpit, although not seen, are the equivalent of hundreds of elaborate dials, each regulating an aspect of our planet's features. Each dial has been carefully calibrated to permit life to flourish on the planet. You can't see the great Engineer who set up the system, but you can measure the precision of each setting—and every one is just right!

Professor Robin Collins draws this comparison concerning the earth's precise settings: "I like to use the analogy of astronauts landing on Mars and finding an enclosed biosphere, sort of like the domed structure that was built in Arizona a few years ago. At the control panel they find that all the dials for its environment are set just right for life. The oxygen ratio is perfect; the temperature is seventy degrees; the humidity is fifty percent; there's a system for replenishing the air; there are systems for producing food, generating energy, and disposing of wastes.

"Each dial has a huge range of possible settings, and you can see if you were to adjust one or more of them just a little bit, the environment would go out of whack and life would be impossible" (quoted by Lee Strobel, *The Case for a Creator*, 2004, p. 130).

Everything—*everything down to the tiniest details*—is “adjusted” just right for us to live comfortably on this planet. We get a glimpse of the marvelous Designer who set up the whole system when the Bible speaks of “the LORD, who created the heavens, who is God, who *formed* the earth . . . who *did not create it in vain*, who formed it *to be inhabited*” (Isaiah 45:18).

Truly, our planet is not some lucky accident since the evidence shows it was carefully designed to be *inhabited* by mankind and all other forms of life.

The spaceship's engines

What drives this craft and propels it through space? There are “twin engines” aboard, one pushing the planet forward and the other keeping it spinning and fueling its interior heat.

The centripetal force caused by gravity keeps the globe in its orbit. When an object reaches a certain speed and is spun by centripetal forces, it stays in a stable circuit around the center. This is what the earth does when orbiting around the sun. And our planet's distance from the sun, though varying slightly, is perfect for life—not so close to the sun that we would all burn up, nor so far that we would freeze.



Earth's atmosphere is finely tuned with a mixture of gases in perfect proportions for life.

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 the earth's orbit the proper distance from the sun. If the 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 (316 Celsius).

On the other hand, if the 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 (minus 184 Celsius), also eliminating all life.

The second engine is deep inside the earth itself. There, the fuel is decaying radioactive elements that heat the planet and drive plate tectonics. Geologists Frank Press and Raymond Siever call this “a gigantic but delicately balanced heat engine fueled by radioactivity” (*Earth*, p. 4).

“Not only does plate tectonics help with the development of continents and mountains, which prevent a water world,” adds astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez, “but it also drives the Earth's carbon dioxide–rock cycle. This is critical in regulating the environment through the balancing of greenhouse gases and keeping the temperature of the planet at a livable level . . .

“This radioactive decay also helps drive the convection of the liquid iron

iStockphoto

surrounding the Earth's core, which results in an amazing phenomenon: the creation of a dynamo that actually generates the planet's magnetic field” (quoted by Strobel, pp. 182-183).

Surely, as Proverbs 3:19 says, “The LORD *by wisdom founded* the earth, *by understanding He established* the heavens.”

The passenger cabin

What about the passenger cabin of Spaceship Earth? How well designed is it? We find that our planet provides all the comforts a space traveler could desire—abundant and delicious food, plenty of water, gorgeous and entertaining scenery, a comfortable climate, challenging work and plenty of room to have a family.

Our planet is a veritable Noah's ark of animals and plants traveling on its timeless journey through space. It is a self-contained unit with renewable resources that can last, if properly taken care of, for potentially thousands of years into the future.

The atmosphere in the passenger cabin 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 also 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 all human life—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. Every day around our planet, millions of lightning bolts generated by thunderstorms combine some nitrogen with oxygen, creating compounds that are then washed to the 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 human beings are the opposite, breathing in oxygen and exhaling carbon dioxide. Plant life sustains human and animal life and vice versa in a magnificent, precise, self-sustaining cycle.

Another condition that makes Spaceship Earth hospitable for life is its size, which determines its gravity and in turn affects its atmosphere. If the earth were only a little larger, making its gravity slightly stronger, hydrogen, a light gas, would be unable to escape the earth's gravity and would collect in our atmosphere, making it inhospitable to life. Yet, if the earth were only slightly smaller, oxygen—necessary for life—would escape, and water would evaporate. Thus, if our planet were slightly larger or smaller, human life could not have existed here.

But that's not all. 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 susceptible 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. NASA planetary scientist John O'Keefe 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" (*God and the Astronomers*, 1992, p. 117).

To keep the temperature comfortable for the passengers, our planet remains in orbit at just the right distance from the sun and is designed with an optimum tilt of 23.5 degrees. As Fred Meldau points out in *Why We Believe in Creation Not in Evolution*, "If the earth had been tilted as much as 45 degrees instead of what it is, temperate zones would have torrid zone heat in the summer and frigid zone cold in the winter. On the other hand, if the axis of the earth were vertical to the plane of its orbit, January and July would have the same climate and ice would accumulate until much of the continents would be ice-covered six months and flooded the other six months" (1972, pp. 27-28).

Astronomer Hugh Ross points out some of the other ways our planet is perfectly balanced for life: "As biochemists now 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*, 2001, 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.

Psalm 104:24 says: "O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. The earth is full of your possessions."

A protector fleet of spaceships

Not only does our terrestrial vessel have a magnetic force field and renewable resources, but it also has a number of accompanying spacecraft to stabilize and protect it.

The first of these is our moon. It is a veritable workhorse. Not only does it shield

our planet from taking some meteor strikes (just look at its surface through a telescope!), but it stabilizes earth's vital tilt. Just as a clock has counterbalancing weights, so the moon acts as a counterbalance to the earth, keeping the planet's tilt carefully adjusted to allow the four seasons of the year. This tilt permits the sun's rays to uniformly heat the globe, much like a rotisserie slowly roasts a chicken.

The moon, along with the sun, also regulates our tides. The earth's tides help circulate the water in the oceans and sweep away waste products from the coasts. "If the moon were half as far away, or twice its present diameter," adds Fred Meldau, "great tides would wreck most of our harbors . . . If the moon were smaller and farther away, it would not have sufficient pull on our tides to cleanse our harbors or adequately rejuvenate (with oxygen) the waters of our oceans" (*Why We Believe in Creation Not in Evolution*, p. 31).

Also remarkable is the relative size and placement of the moon with respect to the sun. The sun's diameter is 400 times that of the moon, but it is also 400 times farther away—an arrangement that produces perfect solar eclipses when viewed from earth.

This extraordinary phenomenon has revealed crucial scientific facts about the composition of the sun and other stars, as well as providing concrete evidence of Einstein's theory of relativity (again illustrating how our earth is set

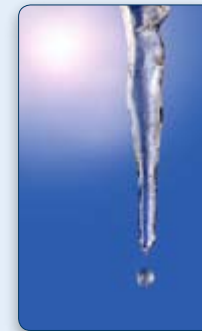
The Importance of Life-Sustaining Water

So many of our planet's forms of life are dependent on an environment in which liquid water is stable. This means that the earth must not be too close or too far from the sun. Astronomers estimate that if the distance from the 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 possible is an unusual characteristic of water when it freezes into ice. Water is such a common substance that most of us do not stop to consider that the balance of life depends on its simple physical properties.

Water is one of the few substances that expands when frozen. Most substances when frozen become denser and sink when placed in a container of the same substance in liquid form. But this isn't the case with ice in water. 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 at the surface, with the ice forming an insulating barrier that prevents the denser



Water's unique characteristics are crucial for life on earth. If our planet were only a little closer to or further from the sun, earth's water would be either evaporated away or frozen as ice.

water underneath from freezing and thereby preserving aquatic life during very cold weather. 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.

up to allow us to make scientific discoveries about the universe).

Yet the moon is only the first of Spaceship Earth's protector fleet. The two gas giants, Jupiter and Saturn with their strong gravitational pulls, also help shield the planet by functioning as giant vacuum cleaners, sweeping the solar system of dangerous comets and asteroids. Astronomers witnessed a stark example of such protection in 1994 when Jupiter took a hit as the Shoemaker-Levy 9 comet broke apart due to Jupiter's gravitational pull and smashed into its atmosphere.

Dr. Hugh Ross describes how these planets 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 is thought to have 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 Creator and the Cosmos*, pp. 137-138).

As the book *The Privileged Planet* notes: "The existence of a well-placed moon, of circular planetary orbits . . . of the outlying gas giants to sweep the Solar System of sterilizing comets . . . all these and more are profoundly important for the existence of complex life on our planet" (p. 256).



Our planet's plant and animal life doesn't simply exist; it is a source of great beauty and enjoyment to us.

PhotoDisc

Traveling in the right zone

Not only is Spaceship Earth just the right distance from the sun to have a temperate climate, but its solar system is in an excellent neighborhood of stars. It lies between two spiral arms of the Milky Way galaxy, far away from the dangerous galactic core or the spiral arms, and is in what astronomers call a "safe zone."

"Certainly, our type of galaxy optimizes habitability," explains Guillermo Gonzalez, "because it provides safe zones. And Earth happens to be located in a safe zone, which is why life has been able to flourish here . . .

"Places with active star formation are very dangerous, because that's where you have supernovae exploding at a fairly high rate. In our galaxy, those dangerous places are primarily in the spiral arms, where there are also hazardous giant molecular clouds. Fortunately, though, we happen to be situated safely between the [Milky Way's] Sagittarius and Perseus spiral arms" (quoted by Strobel, p. 169).

This clear zone is a good vantage point for viewing our own galaxy and the rest of the universe—once again demonstrating the way our exploratory spaceship is set up for cosmic discovery.

Asking some tough questions

We can learn a great deal from examining the universe with telescopes or viewing life through a microscope, but even with the best scientific instruments we will never find the ultimate purpose of *why* we are traveling through space or what the meaning of our existence is.

All we can infer from the precise natural laws and the fine-tuned features of our planet is that the earth was optimally designed for life and for scientific understanding. Even a skeptical astrophysicist such as Stephen Hawking admits as much on the matter of life. "Wheeler agrees with Hawking and Carter," writes John Boslough, "that our own universe is *uniquely fine-tuned to produce life*, even if in just one small, lost corner" (*Stephen Hawking's Universe*, 1985, p. 125).

After surveying the astronomical and biological evidence, biochemist Michael Denton comes to this conclusion: "Four centuries after the scientific revolution science has provided no significant evidence that any alternative life is possible . . . Scientific exploration has found no token of another life, no shred of evidence for something other than ourselves or of our type of life as it exists on earth.

"On the contrary, science has revealed a universe stamped in every corner, riven in every tiny detail, with an overwhelmingly and all-pervasive biocentric [life-centered] and anthropocentric [human-centered] *design*" (*Nature's Destiny: How the Laws of Biology Reveal Purpose in the Universe*, 1998, p. 380).

So here we are, traveling on this spaceship called Earth, and everything we see around us is carefully designed and calibrated to sustain our existence. 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).

The Giver of Life

How did life begin? Did the 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 embrace enthusiasm and the evolutionary explanation for life. Even Richard Dawkins, the die-hard atheistic 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*” (*The Blind Watchmaker*, p. 317, emphasis added).

Science falls short in providing convincing support for the theory of evolution and life arising from nonliving matter. In spite of years of concerted attempts, solid evidence for the spontaneous generation of life simply does not exist.

The fact remains that no scientific evidence shows 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*. *This is a proven law of science.*

After the question of the origin of the universe itself and the fine tuning of our planet for life, 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.

Atheistic 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. Their assumed progression from simple life-forms evolving into complex life over billions of years seems to ignore the first issue: How did life emerge 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 was subject to forms of energy such as electrical

discharges from lightning, they say, sparking reactions that formed elementary amino acids, the building blocks of protein. They theorize that compounds must have accumulated until the primitive oceans reached the consistency of a hot, diluted soup. In time, they contend, the compounds 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 they may,



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

researchers have not been able to create life. All they have demonstrated is that the chemical components may have been present on earth. They have not even 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 vastly 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 that no creator, designer or outside intelligence was 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 generated—and *cannot* generate—living 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.

The late biophysicist Francis Crick, an eminent scientist who won the Nobel Prize for helping determine the molecular structure of DNA, rejected this scenario. He wrote: “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 adopted, as have other noted scientists, a belief in *panspermia*—the idea that life could not have arisen spontaneously on earth, but sprouted only when microorganisms or spores drifted or were carried to our planet from elsewhere in the universe. Crick suggested that the seeds of life may have been deliberately spread by an extraterrestrial civilization.

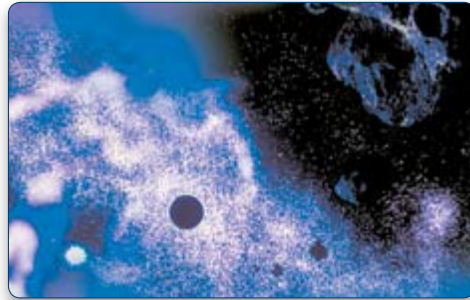
The late Sir Fred Hoyle was one of Britain's most famous astrophysicists. He and his colleague, Chandra Wickramasinghe, professor of applied mathematics and astronomy at University College, Cardiff, Wales, computed the odds for all the proteins necessary for life to form by chance in one place, as scientists 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 almost 15 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 was forced to conclude that “life could not have originated here on the Earth. Nor does it look as though biological evolution can be explained from within an earthbound theory of life . . . This much can be consolidated by strictly scientific means, by experiment, observation and calculation” (*The Intelligent Universe*, 1983, p. 242).

Hoyle and Wickramasinghe conceded the impossibility of the traditional scientific explanation of the origin of life, even writing, “There was no primeval soup, neither on this planet nor on any other, and if the beginnings of life were not random, they must therefore have been the product of purposeful intelligence” (*Evolution From Space*, p. 148).

Yet unwilling to accept the idea of a life-giving Creator God, they credited lesser superintelligences and also turned to panspermia as the most acceptable explanation for the origin of life on earth. Of course, by itself the notion of panspermia doesn't explain how life arose in the first place; it merely removes the question of the origin of life to some other far-off corner of the universe. Hoyle and Wickramasinghe attribute life to lesser superintelligences, but what intelligent power less than God could



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.

PhotoDisc

devise life with all its complexities and interrelationships and shape the universe to suit life's development?

That such respected and honored scientists—including a Nobel laureate and a man knighted for his scientific accomplishments—would 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” (quoted by *The 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 cell 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.

Of course, this scenario has several serious problems. 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 almost any conceivable circumstance, 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. Thus that creature and partially developed feature would've been eliminated by Darwin's principle of natural selection and survival of the fittest and unable to pass that characteristic to future generations.

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 view of the fossil record is largely a *human interpretation* used to support Darwin's theory that life developed 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 from one species to another—fish to

The Tiny Miracle That's Toppling Evolution

In 1953 James Watson and Francis Crick achieved what appeared impossible—discovering the genetic structure deep inside the nucleus of our cells. We call this genetic material DNA, an abbreviation for deoxyribonucleic acid.

The discovery of DNA's double-helix structure opened the floodgates for scientists to examine the code embedded within it. Now, more than half a century after the initial discovery, the DNA code has been deciphered—although many of its elements are still not well understood.

What has been found has profound implications regarding Darwinian evolution, the theory that all living beings have evolved by natural processes through mutation and natural selection.

As scientists began to decode the human DNA molecule, they found something quite unexpected—an exquisite “language” composed of some *3 billion genetic letters*.

It's hard for us to fathom, but the amount of information in human DNA is roughly equivalent to 12 sets of *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*—an incredible *384 volumes'* worth of detailed information that would fill 48 feet of library shelves!

Yet in their actual size—which is only two millionths of a millimeter thick—a teaspoon of DNA, according to molecular biologist Michael Denton, could contain *all* the information needed to build the proteins for *all* the species of organisms that have ever lived on the earth, with “enough room left for all the information in every book ever written” (*Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, 1996, p. 334).

Who or what could miniaturize such information and place this enormous number of “letters” in their proper sequence as a genetic instruction manual? Could evolution have gradually come up with a system like this?

DNA contains a genetic language

Let's first consider some of the characteristics of this genetic “language.” For it to be rightly called a language, it must contain an alphabet or coding system, correct spelling, grammar

(a proper arrangement of the words), meaning (semantics) and an intended purpose.

Scientists have found the genetic code has all of these key elements. “The coding regions of DNA,” explains Dr. Stephen Meyer, “have *exactly* the same relevant properties as a computer code or language” (quoted by Lee Strobel, *The Case for a Creator*, 2004, p. 237, emphasis in original).

The only types of communication considered high-level are human languages, artificial languages such as computer and Morse codes, and the genetic code. No other communication



Discoveries about the complexity and intricate language of DNA raise many troubling questions for evolutionary theory.

system has been found to contain the basic characteristics of a language.

Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft, commented that “DNA is like a software program, only much more complex than anything we've ever devised.” Can you imagine something more intricate than the most complex program running on a supercomputer being devised *by accident* through evolution—no matter how much time, how many mutations and how much natural selection are taken into account?

DNA language is not the same as the DNA molecule

Recent studies in information theory have come up with some astounding conclusions—namely, that *information* cannot be considered in the same category as matter and energy. It's

true that matter or energy can *carry* information, but they are not the same as *information itself*.

For instance, a book such as Homer's *Iliad* contains information, but is the physical book itself information? No, the materials of the book—the paper, ink and glue contain the contents, but they are only a *means* of transporting it.

The same principle is found in the genetic code. The DNA molecule *carries* the genetic language, but the language itself is *independent* of its carrier. The same genetic information can be written in a book, stored on a compact disk or sent over the Internet, and yet the quality or content of the message is not changed by changing the means of conveying it.

As evolutionary biologist George Williams explains: “The gene is a package of information, not an object. The pattern of base pairs in a DNA molecule specifies the gene. But the DNA molecule is the medium, it's not the message” (quoted by Phillip Johnson, *Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds*, 1997, p. 70).

This type of high-level information has been found to originate only from an intelligent source. As Lee Strobel explains: “The data at the core of life is not disorganized, it's not simply orderly like salt crystals, but it's complex and specific information that can accomplish a bewildering task—the building of biological machines that far outstrip human technological capabilities” (p. 244).

The precision of this genetic language is such that the average mistake that is not caught turns out to be *one error per 10 billion letters*. If a mistake occurs in one of the most significant parts of the code, which is in the genes, it can cause a disease such as sickle-cell anemia. Yet even the best and most intelligent typist in the world couldn't come close to making only one mistake per 10 billion letters—far from it.

So to believe that the genetic code gradually evolved in Darwinian style would break all the known rules of how matter, energy and the laws of nature work. In fact, there has not been found in nature any example of one information system inside the cell gradually evolving into another

functional information program.

We therefore have in the genetic code an immensely complex instruction manual that has been majestically designed by a source far more intelligent than human beings.

Even one of the discoverers of the genetic code, the agnostic and recently deceased Francis Crick, after decades of work on deciphering it, admitted that “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, emphasis added).

Evolution fails to provide answers

It is good to remember that, in spite of all the efforts of all the scientific laboratories around the world working over many decades, they have not been able to produce so much as a single human hair. How much more difficult is it to produce an entire body consisting of some 100 trillion cells!

Dr. Meyer considers the recent discoveries about DNA to be the Achilles' heel of evolutionary theory. He observes: “Evolutionists are still trying to apply Darwin's nineteenth-century thinking to a twenty-first century reality, and it's not working . . . I think the information revolution taking place in biology is sounding the death knell for Darwinism and chemical evolutionary theories” (quoted by Strobel, p. 243).

Recently, one of the world's most famous atheists, Professor Antony Flew, admitted he couldn't explain how DNA was created and developed through evolution. He now accepts the need for an intelligent source to have been involved in the creation of the DNA code.

“What I think the DNA material has done is show that intelligence must have been involved in getting these extraordinary diverse elements together,” he said (quoted by Richard Ostling, “Leading Atheist Now Believes in God,” Associated Press report, Dec. 9, 2004).

amphibians, amphibians to reptiles, reptiles to birds and 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 simplest 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," he asked, "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*, 1859, Masterpieces of Science edition, 1958, pp. 136-137).

"The number of intermediate varieties, which have formerly existed, [must] be truly enormous," he wrote. "Why then is not every geological formation and every stratum full of such intermediate links? *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.* The explanation lies, I believe, in the extreme imperfection of the geological record" (*ibid.*, pp. 260-261, emphasis added).

Darwin knew his theory had a huge problem. But he was convinced that later discoveries would fill in the abundant gaps where the transitional species on which his theory was based were missing. But now, more than 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 admitted that the fossil record fails to support the traditional evolutionary view.

"No wonder paleontologists shied away from evolution for so long," he wrote. "*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).

The late 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 recognized that the fossil record fundamentally conflicts with Darwin's idea of gradualism.



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

formed" ("Evolution's Erratic Pace," *Natural History*, May 1977, pp. 13-14).

Fossils missing in crucial places

Francis Hitching, member of 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 wrote. "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*. The only logical place to find proof for evolutionary 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*” (pp. 95-96, emphasis added).

Professor Gould similarly admitted that the “extreme rarity” of evidence for evolution in the fossil record is “the *trade secret of paleontology*.” He went 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*” (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 has approached the evidence for and against evolution as he would approach evidence in a legal proceeding. Regarding evolutionists’ 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



Darwin's theory of evolution cannot explain the astounding variety and intricate relationships among earth's teeming species of life.

PhotoDisc

actual state of the evidence” (*Darwin on Trial*, 1993, pp. 58-59).

The secret that 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 without having changed in between. 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 noted 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” (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 merely alike in many ways, but that they were *related to one another* by common ancestors.

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

Evolutionists choose to dwell on similarities rather than differences. By doing so, they lead people 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, we see clear and 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 already seen, paleontologists themselves admit it shows no such thing.

The biblical creation epic

As noted earlier, life demands a lifegiver. Scientists call this the law of biogenesis, the scientifically verified fact 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 for a purpose in a way that is vastly different from the scenario espoused by evolutionists. Who is the Lifegiver? What is His purpose?

In this publication 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 reproducing according to its own *kind* (or, broadly speaking, species), with reproductive potential only within its kind.

Here we see a scientific fact that scientists 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. (However, it may be that a particular "kind" today is represented by more than one species according to modern classification—so that all the species of a particular genus or even family grouping could possibly constitute the same biblical "kind.")

God evidently 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

A Deeper Look at the Evidence

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

If you would like to dig more deeply, we recommend the following publications from your library or bookstore:

- *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*, Premise Media Corporation, 2008. This DVD features interviews with scholars who have lost jobs or been otherwise punished for questioning evolutionary dogma. Its comments from intelligent-design advocates and ardent evolutionists are particularly revealing and sometimes shocking.

- *There Is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind*, Antony Flew, 2007. The title sums up the content: Professor Flew, long regarded as one of the world's great evangelists of atheism, was compelled to admit that atheistic evolution simply did not explain scientific discoveries that inescapably point to an intelligent designer behind it all.

- *The Privileged Planet: How Our Place in the Cosmos Is Designed for Discovery*, Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay Richards, 2004. Also a DVD. The authors, one with a Ph.D. in astronomy and the other with a Ph.D. in philosophy and theology, examine how our planet is not only fine-tuned to support life, but also positioned to give us the best view of the universe and thus allow mankind to explore the structure and nature of the universe around us.

- *The Case for a Creator: A Journalist Investigates Scientific Evidence That Points Toward God*, Lee Strobel, 2004. Also a DVD. The author, a former investigative journalist and atheist, interviews experts from such fields as molecular biology, astronomy, physics and biochemistry in examining the growing body of evidence that undermines evolutionary beliefs and supports an intelligent Designer and Creator as the source for

our universe and the laws that govern it.

- *Unlocking the Mystery of Life*, Illustra Media, 2002. This DVD documentary examines the scientific case for intelligent design and, through computer animation, takes viewers into the interior of cells to explore systems and processes that bear the unmistakable hallmarks of design.

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

- *Show Me God: What the Message From Space Is Telling Us About God*, Fred Heeren, 1997. The author examines how the latest discoveries from space are consistent with the Bible and point to an intelligent Creator; he 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. Dr. Behe demonstrates that the building blocks of life—cells and their myriad components—are far too complex for their co-dependent parts and processes to have evolved without an outside, intelligent designer at work.

- *The Creator and the Cosmos*, Hugh Ross, Ph.D. in astronomy, University of Toronto, 1993. The book 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, this is an insightful book on the pros and cons of the evolution-vs.-science controversy.

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

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

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 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 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 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, 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 admits 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*, 1986, pp. 17-18, emphasis in original).

Dr. Behe later in his book discusses the significance of the complexity and intricacy scientists have discovered, explaining: "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

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.

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-fiving, 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 intellec-



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.

tual gloves? The dilemma is that while one side of the elephant is labeled intelligent design, the other side might be labeled God" (pp. 232-233, original emphasis).

Indeed, 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 to those willing to see!

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 some things 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 to start with. 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 others

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). Human beings, 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.

Life's Purpose and the Consequences of Ideas

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 and what are the ramifications of this? Or if there is no purpose, where does that leave us?

As was noted at the outset of this publication, when Stephen Hawking wrote his book *A Brief History of Time*, after explaining his view of the nature of the universe he concluded regarding the question of why we and the universe exist, “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” (p. 175).

Yet 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 indeed has a purpose for man, but few grasp what it is. Knowing that transcendent purpose, and really believing it, will 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 death. 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 it dies. 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 dark and dismal end.

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 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 atheistic evolution, assuming that this life is all there is.

Groping for Meaning and Morality

Broadly speaking, man has developed three views that attempt to explain the meaning of life without God. 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 mind-set is that human existence, laws and institutions are meaningless. This approach to life is called *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 within the limits that natural forces allow.

This worldview 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 since there are no moral absolutes. Your standards and choices are determined by what seems best for you, by what gives you personal satisfaction or pleasure.

The nihilistic approach 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 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 appeals to

no authority for those morals.

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

This philosophy led to a generation that did whatever it wanted. It ushered in a time of rebellion against long-held values. Drug use, violence and promiscuity skyrocketed. 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 biblically 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 humanist or existential approach

The next worldview is similar. Humanism also rests on the idea that the universe exists for no purpose. It too maintains that we are the result of blind processes that don't necessitate any kind of meaning.

Humanism differs from nihilism, however, in espousing that life *can* have a meaning if we *assign* a meaning to it. This idea is also called *existentialism*. Its adherents believe that life can have as much meaning as we put into it. Life

But if God exists, our lives have an eternal significance because our hope is not death but eternal life (see "Why Were You Born?" beginning on page 52). 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.

The major issues of life

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

is worth living, humanists argue, 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. Humanism acknowledges that values exist, but it sees values as neither objective, universal nor permanent—and no one, by this conception, is obligated to be moral, for 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.

The immanent compromise

A third worldview, that of immanence, is that objective values do exist, but they exist independently of a Creator God; they do not need Him to exist for they are intrinsic to the universe. This approach to life is common to pantheism, which sees all of nature as God or divine force. It does not require a Creator, since a permeating divine force can be deemed to have evolved with the natural realm (these being seen as one and the same). Immanence differs from the first two worldviews in that it recognizes the existence of objective values.

However, according to this view, man has sufficient moral intuition to become aware of the moral values that exist and influences the

moral order. 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.

Viable alternatives to God?

All three of these perspectives have elements in common: They remove a Sovereign God from consideration. They offer no hope of life beyond death (although some immanent philosophies give a semblance of that, seeing us reabsorbed into universal consciousness). All three views proclaim, in essence, that man came from nothing, that we have evolved to find ourselves the highest order of life and that we are in a position to order our own values and define ourselves and our meaning as we go. Of course we could not guarantee our chosen purpose, since we are subject to the choices of others and the vagaries of circumstance.

When it comes right down to it, 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.

even address the subject of meaning, worship God and express a belief in life after death. Unlike animals, human beings 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 human beings?

Some 3,000 years ago, Israel's 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 desire for meaning beyond our physical life is 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.

Human beings are God's creation. He had His reasons for putting us here. Our worth is not of ourselves but derives from the fact that 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 existence. 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.

Banning God

Nothing has a more direct impact on our moral choices than whether we believe



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

Corbis Digital Stock

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: "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)" (Review of *Blueprints: Solving the Mystery of Evolution*, *The New York Times*, 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.

What is really behind this societal shift, and what are the repercussions?

An underlying motive

What are the fruits of denying the existence of the Creator? Does it distort one's reasoning? The Bible tells us in two verses: "The *fool* has said in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Psalm 14:1; 53:1, emphasis added). The same verses describe the consequences of people thinking this way, the first declaring, "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 He is real. When they convince themselves that He doesn't exist, what is right and wrong no longer matters to them. They have no objective standard for behavior. They see no reason they shouldn't do as they wish.

The early 20th-century author and ardent evolutionist Aldous Huxley, 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*" (p. 270, emphasis added).

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.

Why Were You Born?

The atheistic theory of evolution argues that life evolved by chance with no ultimate purpose or plan. The Bible, however, tells us that God created the earth and man with a specific—and awe-inspiring—purpose in mind.

What is that purpose? Israel's 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 God Himself lives by, these being 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*. 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). The apostle Paul referred to God the Father as "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (Ephesians 3:14-15).

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 sonship . . ." (Romans 8:15, NIV). By this Spirit "we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (verses 15-17, King James Version). Jesus Himself is called "the firstborn among many brethren" (verse 29).

After this life, those to whom God gives 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).

Through the resurrection to eternal life God

Exhilaration from denying God

Huxley's brother Julian, writing later in the 20th century, 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 the 19th-century biologist Thomas Huxley, 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 colleague: "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" (quoted in *The Columbia History of the World*, 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

transforms us into glorified and immortal beings, as God Himself is. As 1 John 3:2 tells us, "we



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.

shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Just as human children are the same kind of beings as their human parents and older siblings, so will we ultimately be the same kind of beings

as the Father and Christ, sharing their level of existence. This is an astounding truth that very few understand.

God is in the process of creating His own literal family—with children in His very likeness. He will give human beings immortal, divine life, which we will share with Him for eternity. He desires to share with others His eternal existence in the way of life of outflowing love. Indeed, it is because of His love that God brought the universe into existence in the first place. It is because of His love that He gave us a part in it. Life, then, 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. Instead, 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 your future as revealed in the Bible, be sure to download or request our free booklets *What Is Your Destiny?* and *The Gospel of the Kingdom*.)

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*" (quoted by 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?" (Jeremiah 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—an effect 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 reject God so they will have no qualms when it comes to satisfying their selfish desires.

Notice the process and tragic results: "What can be known about God is plain to them; for God himself has made it plain. For ever since the creation of the universe God's invisible attributes—his everlasting power and divinity—are to be seen and studied in his works, so that men have no excuse; because, although they learned to know God, yet they did not offer him as God either praise or thanksgiving. Their speculations about him proved futile, and their undiscerning minds were darkened" (Romans 1:19-21, Twentieth Century New Testament).



Philosophies of life rooted in evolution 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.

PhotoDisc

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 that God exists because of the evidence he can see with his own eyes. Paul says a person should logically and naturally conclude that there is a Creator God and recognize many of His attributes by 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 nonsensical.

Some, however, carry such a passionate anti-God prejudice that 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 showed themselves fools; and they transformed the Glory of the immortal God into the likeness of mortal man, and of birds, and beasts, and reptiles" (verses 22-23, TCNT). 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 these originated from a common ancestor? This reasoning is one of the basic foundations of the evolutionary concept.

Paul continues: "Therefore God abandoned them to impurity, letting them follow the cravings of their hearts, till they dishonored their own bodies; for they had substituted a lie for the truth about God, and had revered and worshiped created things more than the Creator, who is to be praised for ever" (verses 24-25, TCNT).

Where does such thinking lead?

Paul analyzes the fruits of the thinking that leaves God out of the picture: "That, I say, is why God abandoned them to degrading passions. Even the women among them perverted the natural use of their bodies to the unnatural; while the men, disregarding that for which women were intended by nature, were consumed with passion for one another. Men indulged in vile practices with men, and incurred in their own persons the inevitable penalty for their perverseness" (verses 26-27, TCNT).

Paul gets to the crux of the matter: People don't want God to stop them from gratifying their selfish lusts. "Then, as they would not keep God before their minds, God abandoned them to depraved thoughts, so that they did all kinds of shameful things. They reveled in every form of wickedness, evil, greed, vice. Their lives were full of envy, murder, quarreling, treachery, malice. They became backbiters, slanderers, impious, insolent, boastful. They devised new sins. They disobeyed their parents. They were undiscerning, untrustworthy, without natural affection or pity" (verses 28-31, TCNT).

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, who wrote in the latter half of the 19th century, 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 men and women and prevented them from rising to the true greatness that lay within them. To him, Christianity's 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"—referring to the biblical conception of God as a source of meaning and morality. He wrote his philosophy in a style that stirred the emotion and imagination. He argued that since God is dead we human beings 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 18th- and 19th-century philosophers who preceded him: David Hume the skeptic; Immanuel Kant, who exalted the authority of human reason; Søren Kierkegaard the existentialist. There arose in the 20th century powerful 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 wrote: "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, 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.



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?

earlier abusive and corrupt institutions and governments. Darwin gave life to the nihilistic and existentialist philosophies. With his theory of the mechanism of natural selection, it was now possible to explain scientifically—at least in theory—that no Creator God was necessary 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 acceptance of 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,

"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" ("The Real Message of the Millennium," *Reader's Digest*, 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

Man's Natural Hostility Toward God

Why does man reject the God of the Bible and the 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 primarily 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 human beings. Genesis 3 explains that the devil, in the guise of the serpent in the Garden of Eden, first planted this suspicion and rebellion toward God in the mind of the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. 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 Satan'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 became entrenched human motivations just as violence became 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: "Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires" (Romans 8:5, NIV). Their selfish desires prejudice their minds against God and the morality of His laws. Therefore, Paul continues, "the mind-set of the

flesh is hostile to God because it does not submit itself to God's law, for it is unable to do so" (verse 7, Holman Christian Standard Bible).

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 fellow man. But, at best, people generally pick and choose among God's laws or embrace them only superficially.

Even when people 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 fellow man (Matthew 22:37-40).

In rejecting God's revealed way of life, people unknowingly cut themselves off from blessings and sentence themselves to suffering. As His Word tell us, "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 our booklets *The Ten Commandments* and *The Road to Eternal Life*, which discuss these topics in much greater depth.

Treblinka, and Maidanek were ultimately prepared not in some ministry or other in Berlin, but rather 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" (quoted by Ravi Zacharias, *Can Man Live Without God?* 1994, p. 23).

Survival of the fittest

Looking back on recent history, we can understand how the ideas of a godless universe, of the human species emerging and persisting by running the gauntlet of the survival of the fittest—evolving and rising 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 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.

One observer noted: "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.

"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 continue to flourish in the 21st. The emphasis now is on improving mankind genetically. Researchers speak of extending life-spans 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—perhaps even including 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 in the divine family of God. But man tries to achieve it on his own terms, without acknowledging or obeying his Creator. His 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's 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 human behavior, somehow humanity 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.

Priceless privilege or cheap substitute?

Of all His earthly creation, God gave human beings 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 be 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 or not to do what He says (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 we can choose 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 and daughters 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.



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.

Corbis Digital Stock

Meet God

Can you really come to know God, who claims to be Creator, Lifegiver, Sustainer of the universe, the One who does nothing without a reason?

Atheistic 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, revealed in 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. (To learn more, be sure to download or request your free copy of our booklet *Is the Bible True?*)

Is God silent?

The skeptic asks, "If God exists, 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 Scripture to pass on to us what we need to know, but He has revealed Himself to *everyone* through His creation.

Yet human beings 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 them to live however they want without interference from any divine authority.

The fallacy of that reasoning is that God won't simply go away so people can satisfy their 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.

In the previous chapter we saw that the apostle Paul, who preached powerfully about the true God in a superstitious, polytheistic world, spoke unambiguously of the consequences of ignoring the evidence of the Creator. Look again at what he said: "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).

Again, Paul is saying here that we can see ample evidence of a Creator, as well as His nature and character, by observing the physical creation. He asserts that the evidence is so unmistakable that a rational, thinking person has no excuse to conclude there is no God. People have no excuse to conclude God is anything other than what He is—eternal, supreme, all powerful and infinitely good. Anyone 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 don’t want to acknowledge the existence of God simply so they can live in whatever manner they choose and do whatever they want. This helps explain why man has used his God-given abilities of observation and logic to reason *incorrectly* and to 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 the 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 that 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 of God used most often in the Old Testament, typically transliterated as *Yahweh* (and usually represented by “LORD” in English Bibles), is essentially the third-person form of the name by which God revealed Himself to Moses in Exodus 3:14: “I AM WHO I AM.” This name signifies the Eternal or Self-Existent One—the “Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come” (Revelation 4:8).

Jesus Christ further 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).

Again, God is eternal. The universe had a beginning, yet God existed before that time. He has *always existed*. Nothing—and no one—brought Him into being. (To learn more, download or request our free booklet *Who Is God?*)

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 Ephesians 3:9; 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 man. He was God made flesh, the Son of God the Father, teaching and exemplifying the laws and principles that are embodied in the Father Himself, declaring: “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 Father would if He were here on earth. He perfectly represented 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 people 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 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, one of the best-known passages in the Bible, tells us: “For 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. Human beings 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 refuse it.

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?” beginning on page 66.)

Adam and Eve made the fateful decision to reject God’s revelation and rely on their own reasoning 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 the human race to learn from its own mistakes.

Most people assume that if there is a God, He must be desperately trying to enforce His will and convert humanity to His way of thinking. But they also observe that, if that 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, too, 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, so it brings similar results on a national, and even a worldwide, level.

Jesus Christ foretold the inevitable outcome of human civilization apart from God: “It will be *a time of great distress*, such as there has never been since the beginning of the world, and will never be again. *If that time of troubles were not cut short, no living thing could survive*” (Matthew 24:21-22, Revised English Bible).

We should be sobered by Jesus’ words. It is in God’s plan to allow the human

How Does God Reveal Himself?

If God is real, why doesn't He reveal Himself to us in a way that should erase any doubt of His existence? In reality, He *has* done this many times. Eyewitness accounts of human interaction with Him have been recorded and preserved for us in the Bible. But does such documented testimony satisfy skeptics? 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 and powerful to those with an ear to hear and an eye to see. But everyone has a choice. He can face the evidence or scoff at it.

Does God hide Himself?

Let's briefly 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 (Genesis 3:8-10).

Later God reasoned with their son Cain about his unreasonable anger (Genesis 4:5-7). Cain rejected God's advice and murdered his brother. Instead of being truly sorry for his deed, Cain "went out from the presence of the LORD" (verses 8-16).

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 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 . . . 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).

The Israelites begged for more distance. They didn't even want to hear God's voice (Exodus 20:18-19). They requested that in the future He reveal Himself to them only through His prophet.

From that time forward God honored that request. He revealed Himself to ancient Israel through His 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 those prophets.

God allows man to choose

It was not God's idea to remove Himself and be seemingly unapproachable. It was *mankind's choice*. Beginning with Adam and Eve, God gave humankind freedom of choice. He allows us to choose whether we will believe in Him, accept the knowledge He reveals 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 and your children may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19, NIV).

With their own ears they had heard God at Mount Sinai. They had witnessed miracle after miracle in their trek out of Egypt. Yet the Israelites quickly forgot that evidence and chose to disre-

gard 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 today. We are faced with the same two choices: Believe God and obey His laws, or disbelieve and disobey.

Most people like to think they are open-minded, that they wouldn't be antagonistic or prejudiced against the truth. Yet some of the same people who knew of Christ's miracles later



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

shouted for His blood. Jesus pointed out that some were so hardened toward God that they wouldn't accept Him and His ways 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). For the natural human way of thinking is fundamentally *hostile* toward God (Romans 8:7). So people look for ways to dismiss Him from their lives. For some, particularly intellectuals, this takes the form of reasoning around clear evidence for His existence (Romans 1:18-22). The heart is deceitful (Jeremiah 17:9) and convinces the mind of falsehood.

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*.

When 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 the future and bring it to pass.

Bible prophecy is one proof of God that can be easily verified. Although it is beyond the scope of this publication to explain the many precisely fulfilled prophecies, some examples are 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. You can read about how God plans to reveal His great power and glory in our free booklets *You Can Understand Bible Prophecy* and *Are We Living in the Time of the End?*

race to come to the end of its rope, to *the brink of annihilation*, in the centuries-long human experiment. Only then will mankind 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 download or request our 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 exterminating ourselves. Although Bible prophecy warns us that the human race will face extinction, and that a large portion of humanity will perish for the time being, our headlong race toward disaster will be cut short. Mankind will be spared, but it won't be because we will 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).

At this prophesied time of unparalleled global turmoil and danger, Jesus will return. Literally and figuratively, it will be humankind's darkest days:

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 known space-time dimensions of length, width, height (or depth) and time. The God of the Bible, however, dwells in a different dimension—the *spirit* realm—beyond the natural perception of our physical senses. It's not that God isn't real; it's a matter of Him not being 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 as a human being 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 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 at the end of the three days 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! Least they think He was an impostor, He showed them the nail punctures from His crucifixion and the spear wound in His side.

The resurrected Jesus was no longer bound by physical factors. He effortlessly entered a closed

"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 untold thousands of people and bringing immeasurable pain and loss to countless 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.

room and revealed Himself to His disciples. They recognized the physical impossibility of a fleshly body passing through 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 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 we can perceive.

This does not mean God the Father and Jesus Christ never reveal Themselves to people. 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, 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 that God the Father and Jesus Christ can operate beyond the bounds of the physical laws that govern the universe. 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 in John 20:29 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!"

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 part of those who overcome this present evil world and share in Christ's reign after He returns to establish His Kingdom over the earth (Revelation 3:21; 20:4, 6).

The good news is that God *will* powerfully answer the question of whether He exists. The whole 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 shown in this publication, God 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 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, proclaiming 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 young 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. Does God exist? Of course He does. And He cares about you! 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 in unending blessing and joy!

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 His 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 the Israelites did 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 elsewhere refers to what is advised here as *repentance*—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 download

or request your free copy of our 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," He says, "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 of believers 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, which publishes 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 take part in its work and to discover the truth in mankind's age-old search for God.

WORLDWIDE MAILING ADDRESSES

NORTH, SOUTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA

United States: United Church of God
P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027
Phone: (513) 576-9796 Fax (513) 576-9795
Web site: www.gnmagazine.org
E-mail: info@ucg.org

Canada: United Church of God—Canada
Box 144, Station D, Etobicoke, ON M9A 4X1, Canada
Phone: (905) 876-9966, (800) 338-7779
Fax: (905) 876-0569 Web site: www.ucg.ca

Bahamas: United Church of God
P.O. Box N8873, Nassau, Bahamas
Phone: (242) 324-3169 Fax: (242) 364-5566

Martinique: Église de Dieu Unie—France
127 rue Amelot, 75011 Paris, France

Spanish-speaking areas: Iglesia de Dios Unida
P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A.
Phone: (513) 576-9796 Fax (513) 576-9795
E-mail: info@ucg.org

EUROPE

Benelux countries (Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg):

P.O. Box 93, 2800 AB Gouda, Netherlands

British Isles: United Church of God
P.O. Box 705, Watford, Herts, WD19 6FZ, England
Phone: 020-8386-8467 Fax: 020-8386-1999
Web site: www.goodnews.org.uk

France: Église de Dieu Unie—France
127 rue Amelot, 75011 Paris, France

Germany: Vereinte Kirche Gottes/Gute Nachrichten
Postfach 30 15 09, D-53195 Bonn, Germany
Phone: 0228-9454636 Fax: 0228-9454637

Italy: La Buona Notizia, Chiesa di Dio Unita
Casella Postale 187, 24121 Bergamo Centro, Italy
Phone and Fax: (+39) 035 4523573
Web site: www.labuonannotizia.org

E-mail: info@labuonannotizia.org

Scandinavia: Guds Enade Kyrka

P.O. Box 3535, 111 74 Stockholm, Sweden
Phone: +44 20 8386-8467 E-mail: sverige@ucg.org

AFRICA

East Africa—Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda:

United Church of God—East Africa
P.O. Box 75261, Nairobi 00200, Kenya
E-mail: kenya@ucg.org
Web site: www.ucgeastafrica.org

Ghana: P.O. Box 3805, Kumasi, Ghana
E-mail: ghana@ucg.org

Malawi: P.O. Box 32257, Chichiri, Blantyre 3, Malawi
Phone: 261 01 687 022 E-mail: malawi@ucg.org

Mauritius: P.O. Box 53, Quatre Bornes, Mauritius
E-mail: mauritius@ucg.org

Nigeria: United Church of God—Nigeria
P.O. Box 2265 Somolu, Lagos, Nigeria
Phone: 01-8113644 Web site: www.ucgnigeria.org
E-mail: nigeria@ucg.org

South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland:

United Church of God—Southern Africa
P.O. Box 2209, Beacon Bay, East London 5205
South Africa

Phone and Fax: 043 748-1694

Web site: www.ucg-rsa.org

Zambia: P.O. Box 23076, Kitwe, Zambia
Phone: (02) 226076 E-mail: zambia@ucg.org

Zimbabwe: P.O. Box 928
Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe
Phone: 011716273 E-mail: zimbabwe@ucg.org

PACIFIC REGION

Australia and Papua New Guinea:

United Church of God—Australia
GPO Box 535, Brisbane, Qld. 4001, Australia
Phone: 07 55 202 111 Free call: 1800 356 202
Fax: 07 55 202 122 Web site: www.ucg.org.au
E-mail: info@ucg.org.au

Fiji: United Church of God
P.O. Box 11081, Laucala Beach Estate, Suva, Fiji

New Zealand: United Church of God
P.O. Box 22, Shortland St
Auckland 1140, New Zealand
Phone: Toll-free 0508-463-763

Web site: www.ucg.org.nz
E-mail: info@ucg.org.nz

Tonga: United Church of God—Tonga
P.O. Box 2617, Nuku'alofa, Tonga

ASIA

All except Philippines: United Church of God,
P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A.
Phone: (513) 576-9796 Fax (513) 576-9795
E-mail: info@ucg.org

Philippines: P.O. Box 81840
DCCPO, 8000 Davao City, Philippines
Phone and fax: +63 82 224-4444
Cell/text: +63 918-904-4444
Web site: www.ucg.org.ph E-mail: info@ucg.org.ph

ALL AREAS AND NATIONS NOT LISTED

United Church of God
P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A.
Phone: (513) 576-9796 Fax (513) 576-9795
E-mail: info@ucg.org

Authors: John Ross Schroeder, Bill Bradford, Mario Seiglie *Contributing writers:* Scott Ashley, Roger Foster
Editorial reviewers: John Bald, Jim Franks, Bruce Gore, Roy Holladay, Paul Kieffer, Paul Luecke,
Graemme Marshall, Burk McNair, Richard Thompson, David Treybig, Leon Walker, Donald Ward, Lyle Welty
Design: Shaun Venish Cover: Photo illustration by Shaun Venish/NASA

If You'd Like to Know More...

Who we are: This publication is provided free of charge by the United Church of God, an *International Association*, which has ministers and congregations throughout much of the world.

We trace our origins to the Church that Jesus founded in the early first century. We follow the same teachings, doctrines and practices established then. Our commission is to proclaim the gospel of the coming Kingdom of God to all the world as a witness and to teach all nations to observe what Christ commanded (Matthew 24:14; 28:19-20).



Free of charge: Jesus Christ said, "Freely you have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8). The United Church of God offers this and other publications free of charge as an educational service

in the public interest. We invite you to request your free subscription to *The Good News* magazine and to enroll in our 12-lesson *Bible Study Course*, also free of charge.



We are grateful for the generous tithes and offerings of the members of the Church and other supporters

who voluntarily contribute to support this work. We do not solicit the general public for funds. However, contributions to help us share this message of hope with others are welcomed. All funds are audited annually by an independent accounting firm.

Personal counsel available: Jesus commanded His followers to feed His sheep (John 21:15-17). To help fulfill this command, the United Church of God has congregations around the world. In these congregations believers assemble to be instructed from the Scriptures and to fellowship.

The United Church of God is committed to understanding and practicing New Testament Christianity. We desire to share God's way of life with those who earnestly seek to follow our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Our ministers are available to counsel, answer questions and explain the Bible. If you would like to contact a minister or visit one of our congregations, please feel free to contact our office nearest you.

For additional information: Visit our Web site www.gnmagazine.org to download or request any of our publications, including issues of *The Good News*, dozens of free booklets and much more.



