

# DOES GOD EXIST?

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

May/June 2013  
Volume 40 Number 3

## A VISIT TO THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS



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So God created mankind in his  
own image,  
in the image of God he created  
them;  
male and female he created them.  
Genesis 1:27, NIV

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# A VISIT TO THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

There are many famous places throughout the world, where the location provided mankind with conditions that led to major discoveries. Yellowstone National Park has given us an opportunity to study and understand how volcanic areas can have water moving in and around the magmas that produce the heat, and this has led to many understandings of how mineral resources are produced. Okefenokee Swamp in southern Georgia has let us understand how anaerobic conditions (without oxygen) could produce coal and peat. Death Valley in California and the Great Salt Lake in Utah have taught us



John and Cynthia Clayton at the Darwin Research Station in Puerto Ayora

how evaporate deposits can form such as the ones under Detroit, Michigan. Perhaps no area is more famous however, than the Galapagos Islands.

The Galapagos Islands are located some 600 miles west of the coast of Ecuador. They were made famous

Galapagos  
Islands



by the studies and work of Charles Darwin who visited the islands in 1835 at the age of 26 and did exhaustive studies of the flora and fauna of the area. His studies led him to some understandings which violated the religious traditions of his day. They also were seized upon by some philosophers to justify a belief system that rejected God and depended on naturalism as the faith upon which they lived their lives.

Our visit to the Galapagos Islands was made possible by a wonderful medical missions program called “Operation Ecuador” (see [www.operationecuador.org](http://www.operationecuador.org)) directed by Kent and Joshua Marcum. They send medical mission teams into the bush to address the physical needs of indigenous people living in the interior of Ecuador. They also operate The Quito School of Biblical Studies, minister to a large congregation in Quito, and operate a school and care facility for children called The Hacienda of Hope and Camp Bellevue. My reason to visit was to teach in all of these works, and then to accompany returning medical mission workers to the Galapagos, where they could recover from their work and we would learn together and see the basis of the work of Charles Darwin.



In 1959 the Galapagos National Park was created, and the Charles Darwin Foundation was formed under the sponsorship of UNESCO. In 1964 the Charles Darwin Research Station was established, and in 1978 the Galapagos Islands were declared a World Heritage Site, and seven years later a World Biosphere Reserve. What that means is that

the islands are being protected and a strong effort is being made to keep them unchanged by human invasion. This has been quite successful as there is very little trash or destruction by humans visible in the areas we visited.

The reason that I have always wanted to visit the Galapagos Islands is because



Sally Lightfoot crab (*Grapsus grapsus*)

evolution has been used as a club by so many skeptics and atheists against belief in God and acceptance of the Bible as his Word. In our ministry, we have maintained that science and faith are friends and not enemies and that science supports the biblical record. We have also maintained that since the same God who created all living things also gave us the biblical record, no scientific fact can conflict with what the Bible says. If there is a conflict, I believe it is because we

have bad science or bad theology or both. Going to the Galapagos, and seeing what Darwin saw, and studying what Darwin actually said and believed is a critical part of answering challenges to the biblical account.

One of the first points that becomes apparent to any visitor to the Galapagos Islands who looks at the night sky is that the astronomy of the Galapagos is as interesting as the biology. In the Galapagos, away from city lights and pollution, one can get a full picture of the majesty of God's creation in the heavens. You can see the Milky Way clearly. We could see Jupiter, Mars, and Saturn clearly. We could observe the Magellanic Clouds



Sea lions on a Galapagos beach

(dwarf galaxies visible from the southern hemisphere) and spot the area where Supernova 1987A exploded in 1987. That was the first such sighting since the Chinese saw the Crab Nebula explosion in AD 1054. God's crucible to produce the heavier elements of which life is made is very clear when you are fortunate enough to have a totally cloudless sky.

Darwin's discussions were about biology, not the creation of the cosmos. The Galapagos are located on the equator. While we were in Quito we went to "Museo De Sitio Intinian" in which exhibits and demonstrations teach the uniqueness of being at the equator. We watched water go straight down the drain instead of spiraling down, and talked about the Coriolis effect which affects how the water behaves. We tried to balance an egg on a nail and talked about why that is possible at the equator. We talked about how much less we weigh at the equator than we do at the poles (due to increased centrifugal force). Even though there was some trickery involved in some of the exhibits, the fact that the earth is unique in its design is apparent. The message is that nothing Darwin did has anything to do with the actual creation of the earth. The creation of time, space, and matter/energy is not what Darwin was studying.

What Darwin WAS studying was the question of how animals came to be as we see them today. There are 13 species of finches scattered throughout the 13 main islands, six small islands, and 42 islets, where detailed studies of the finches have been conducted. One species also exists in Costa Rica. Bible teachers in Darwin's time

maintained that God created each of the 13 species independently, and placed them where they live today. In addition to the finches there are



There are 14 different varieties of *Opuntia* (prickly pear) cacti on the Galapagos Islands. The tall varieties are found on the islands with giant tortoises.

tortoises, which can weigh over 500 pounds, are different on each island and infertile with the tortoises on other islands. There was much conversation when we were there because “Lonesome George,” a giant male from one island had recently died. His body was being shipped out to be preserved by a taxidermist because he was the last one of his species of tortoises to survive, being incapable of producing offspring with the other tortoises. Today our studies of DNA and the genomes of living things have shown how close these animals are to each other genetically. The incredible wisdom built into their DNA allows them to adapt and become unique for a particular environment. The research being done at the Charles Darwin Research Center is helping mankind understand how to control and protect all forms of life on this planet.

Again, in Darwin’s day the claim of most theologians would have been that God created each tortoise separately, and placed each one on its island, and that they were unchanged to this day. What Darwin maintained was that there was a design system built into the animals which allowed them to change to fit the physical conditions in which

iguanas which are not only found in the Galapagos, but also in Mexico, Fiji, Tonga, South Africa, and the Cayman Islands (just to name a few). These various iguanas are separate species because they cannot interbreed. Since they are members of the Saurian clade (ancestor and descendents) they are reptiles and must maintain their body temperature by exposure to the sun. The Galapagos Island iguanas which grow to be three feet long are infertile with the Galapagos marine iguanas. The marine iguanas feed on algae on the floor of the ocean and have a gland in their respiratory system that collects excess salt in their bodies and “sneezes” it away.

Even the huge Galapagos

they found themselves. Since genetics was not a functional science at that time, Darwin had no idea what the design feature was that allowed this natural change, but he maintained it was the explanation for the finches, iguanas, and tortoises.

What was going on theologically in Darwin's day is essentially what is going on today. People had decided that the Bible was too radical to be believed. Not only did people not want to follow the Bible's teachings, but they considered it to be primitive ignorance to suggest that Genesis was true. If they had investigated the word "kind" in the Hebrew of Genesis they would have seen that it is a very broad term. Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:39 spells out what "kind" means: "there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds." This same breakdown is used in Genesis 1



Land iguana

when the flesh of fish (verse 21a), the flesh of birds (verse 21b), the flesh of beasts (verse 24), and the flesh of man (verses 26–27) are used. We now know that the genome of the iguanas contains enough stored information to allow the iguanas to live in a marine or land environment. The design of the genome is a fantastic demonstration of God's wisdom and design allowing the finches to live in every ecological niche the Galapagos has to offer. Even the tortoises have subtle physical characteristics that enable them to reproduce and live in particular habitats.

What impressed me about the work going on in the research stations we visited was that it was good science and not speculative



Blue-footed boobies

and the Bible. We had a guide assigned to our boat by the governmental agencies. He was very knowledgeable, and expressed some wonderment that anyone would even suggest that somehow this area that he knew so well would be considered an area contributing to doubts about God and the Bible.

As we traveled from island to island we were able to see incredible numbers of birds — blue-footed boobies (which could dive at incredible speeds to get fish), cormorants (which cannot fly), flamingos, frigatebirds (who would steal fish from other birds), stilts, pelicans, hawks, and gulls. Each had special equipment ideally suited for the islands where they live. We got to scuba dive and see some of the 307 fish species plus sea lions and rays. On our last day we visited a bay nestled in the mangroves where dozens of giant sea turtles were grouped for mating. It is still a mystery as to what happens to the baby



Male frigatebird with inflated red gular pouch

theories and philosophies. Researchers were not looking for a link between the finches and the iguanas. They were concerned with understanding how the natural history of the Galapagos had shaped and was being shaped by the forms of life that exist there. In talking with researchers, I encountered no one who felt there was a conflict between what they were doing and faith in God

turtles from the time when they hatch to when they become large enough to safely swim in the open sea.

We have much to learn about how God has designed and created the earth and its living creatures. I recommend the Galapagos highly for those who wish to see what it was like when God



The Galapagos Islands are famous for their giant tortoises. Tortoises on different islands are infertile with those of other islands.

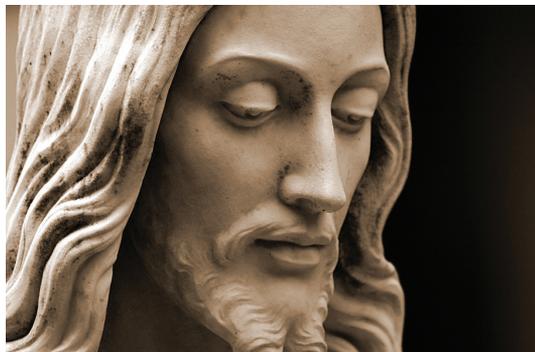
said “It is good.” There is no reason to fear that one’s faith will be destroyed, because the beauty and wisdom of God shines as brightly in the Galapagos as any place on this planet. Darwin’s findings conflicted with the theology of organized religion in his day, but not with what God’s word actually says. It is sad that in our day people have taken Darwin’s work and attempted to exclude God from our thought processes as we study life on earth.

— John N. Clayton



# WAS JESUS MARRIED?

In September 2012 an announcement was made that a fragment of an ancient papyrus had been found by Dr. Karen King, Hollis professor of divinity at Harvard, proving that Jesus Christ had a wife. The story was on the front page of the *Denver Post* on September 20, 2012, was promoted by Diane Sawyer the same night, and run on Yahoo by Erin McLaughlin. Our interest in this claim is not so much whether the claim is true or not (although we will explore that question), but



more concerned with how we approach claims like this and how we answer people who are disturbed by such media presentations.

There have been several reactions from church members when a claim like this is given wide publicity. Some function from a position

of denial. They either ignore the stories completely, or assume it is a liberal plot to destroy Christianity and if it is ignored it will just go away. For others the reaction is out and out apathy. “Nothing can change my mind” is the verbal response, and it is assumed that this is all that is needed. A third reaction by church members is fear. When this story came out I had a call from a woman who was in tears and cried out in a loud voice, “What are we going to do?” as if the world was ending with this announcement. Actually, this last reaction is more constructive than the other two. In 1 Peter 3:15 we read, “... be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” Christians have to be concerned not only about their own understanding of issues like this, but also concerned about how these issues affect others — their families (their children especially), their friends, and their neighbors.

There are two major approaches to this situation. One approach is fideism, which is belief without examining evidence. Many atheists practice fideism in that they will accept anything that discredits religion or especially that discredits the church. Many atheists, including some masquerading as church members, really do not want to believe in God because they know it will mean a change in their lives, and so they summarily reject anything that might support the validity of the church or of religion in general. Many people in the church have

an inherited faith. They believe, or at least participate, because their parents or maybe their grandparents believed and practiced a certain set of beliefs. They really do not have faith; they have acceptance. This means their involvement with the work of the church will be minimal at best.

Let me just give you a hypothetical picture of this belief system and how illogical it is. Let us assume a man is brought before a judge for a crime. The dialogue between the judge and the defense lawyer goes something like this:

- Lawyer.* My client is innocent.  
*Judge.* Why is he innocent?  
*Lawyer.* Because I believe he is innocent.  
*Judge.* What evidence do you have that he is innocent.  
*Lawyer.* I don't need any evidence, I just know it in my heart.

Who would accept such a defense? Certainly the bright young people in our high schools and colleges would not accept it.

The second major approach to this issue is evidentialism. In the words of Antony Flew, the famous atheist who left atheism after being a spokesman for atheism for years, "You have to follow the evidence, wherever it leads" (see our November/December 2010 issue, page 12). In the words of Jesus Christ, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened." (Matthew 7:7, 8). This is not talking about material wealth. The context of the passage is finding answers and making good judgments. In John 15:26 Jesus promised, "When the [Counselor] comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me." In 2 Timothy 3:16–17 we are told that Scripture was given "so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." Jesus always referred his listeners to evidence, both in his parables and in references from the Bible. Notice passages like Matthew 21:42 "Have you never read the Scriptures?" and Matthew 22:29 "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures." Luke 24:27 says, "... he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself."

Christians should welcome evidence and equip themselves to deal with it to the best of their ability. Let us take this story about Jesus being married and talk about how we approach the claim and what answer we give about it. We first of all go back to the original article written by Dr. King. The article is 52 pages long and is a factual statement of a papyrus which she has studied. Dr. King says, "This find provides no reliable historical information about the historical

Jesus.” It is called a “gospel” by the press because it appears to be a page from a book. Dr. Elaine Pagels of Princeton, who is an expert in this area of study, said she could find no reason to call it a gospel except to make it sound more important. The fragment under question is written in ancient Coptic—an Egyptian language. The papyrus is very old, dating back to AD 300 and contains grammar like the Coptic people used in the 200s and 300s. It is written on both sides of a papyrus that is about the size of a business card and contains fragments of eight lines on the front as follows:

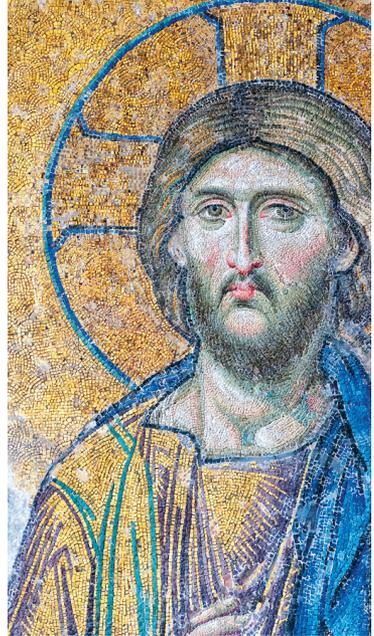
- 1) “not [to] me my mother gave to me li[fe] ...”
- 2) The disciples said to Jesus, “
- 3) deny. Mary is worthy of it
- 4) ” Jesus said to them, “My wife
- 5) she will be able to be my disciple
- 6) Let wicked people swell up
- 7) As for me, I dwell with her in order to
- 8) an image

If the document were written in modern ink or made references to modern things, we could summarily reject it. This has been the case in some claims, but is not the case here. To evaluate this claim we have to look to the situation in the world at the time the fragment was written as a starting point for our evaluation. At that time the Gnostic teaching had grown with all of its false claims. The so-called Gospel of Thomas was written about that time and has the same style as this fragment. The Gnostics believed that Jesus married Mary Magdalene, and the book of Thomas has all kinds of statements about it. For example, that document says, “Every woman who makes herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven.” So Gnostics believed women had to become men in order to be saved. The line in question in the King fragment says, “Jesus said to them ‘My wife ...’ and then ‘She will be able to be my disciple.’” The rest of the lines are not present. Assuming that being the wife of Jesus in order to be a disciple was the issue does not fit well with the teachings of Jesus, but it does fit well with the tradition of the Gnostics.

There are many professors in the academic world who are convinced the document has no credibility. Dr. Wolf-Peter Funk who is an authority on early Christian manuscripts says, “Some guy in the first or second century decided to write the words ‘my wife’ and put them in Jesus’ mouth.” King admits that her first reaction to the fragment was, “This is highly likely to be a forgery.” There are lot of people in the academic world who do not believe this discovery will stand up under closer examination.

That brings us to the point of how well this fragment fits with the rest of the New Testament. First of all, the Bible is silent on

whether Jesus had a wife. The Roman Catholic church has always maintained that Jesus was celibate, so the reaction from the Vatican was fairly predictable. When Jesus was near death on the cross it was his mother that he expressed concern for and committed to the care of John (John 19:26–27). If he was married, his wife’s situation would have been even more critical than his mother since he did have brothers and sisters who could care for Mary. Being the oldest son however, gave him a special responsibility, and if he had a wife that would have been true of his care for his wife as well. The concept of Jesus being God who came to earth and dwelt among men (John 1:14) does not fit well with Jesus having a wife. The mission that Jesus had was all-consuming. Luke 19:10 tells us that “The son of man came to seek and to save the lost.” Putting that together with “I am the way and the truth and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me” (John 14:6) and “Salvation is found in ... no other name under heaven” (Acts 4:12) it is difficult to justify Jesus living with a woman and being involved in the day-to-day work and care for a family. Also, the Scriptures indicate that the church is the bride of Christ. (Revelation 19:7; 21:2, 9, as well as other passages.) The evidence is that Jesus did not have a wife.



We take this current media sensationalism as an example of what happens daily to young people on the Web. Individually, we may not have the time to research every claim that is made, but there are journals like this one that do analyze the claims. Working together we can “give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have” (1 Peter 3:15). We can also encourage our young people to be evidentialists and go where the evidence leads them. Source: *Smithsonian* magazine, November 2012, page 74.

—JNC

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# WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM GENESIS 1 AND 2

by Phillip Eichman, Ph.D.

In the first two chapters of Genesis we find two accounts of God’s creative activity (Genesis 1:26–31 and 2:4–25). The first account describes the creation of the universe, life on earth, and human beings from a broad, “cosmic” perspective. The second account is more personal and adds additional details about the creation of human beings. The accounts are brief and there is so much more that we would like to know, but there is still important information in these chapters about God and his creation.

## SOME PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS ON GENESIS 1–2

When we approach the Genesis account of creation it is good to keep several thoughts in mind. Some of these include the following:

### 1. GENESIS IS A VERY ANCIENT DOCUMENT.



Genesis is thousands of years old and comes from a very different time and place. For this reason it is important to take into consideration the historical and cultural background, language, and literary style when interpreting the book.

### 2. THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF THE GENESIS ACCOUNT WAS THEOLOGICAL.

Genesis was originally written to the Hebrew people and gave them a theological foundation for their faith and basis for their religion. Genesis set God apart from the pagan gods of polytheism and explained God’s role in the universe. The accounts also explained the relationship between God and human beings and the place of humans in the world that God had created.

### **3. GENESIS WAS WRITTEN TO BE UNDERSTOOD BY PEOPLE OF MANY DIFFERENT SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND TECHNOLOGICAL BACKGROUNDS.**

Genesis was written in simple, straightforward language that could be understood by people of many different backgrounds living over a period of thousands of years.

### **4. GENESIS CONTAINS ONLY A SUMMARY OF GOD'S CREATIVE ACTIVITIES.**

Genesis was not intended to be an exhaustive account. What we do have is an outline or sketch of the actual events. Genesis may not give us all the details, but there is enough information upon which to base our faith in God as the Creator.

### **5. THERE IS MORE THAN ONE POSSIBLE INTERPRETATION OF THE GENESIS ACCOUNT.**

Several interpretations of the Genesis account have been proposed. This reminds us that interpreting a passage like Genesis is not an easy task and we need to be patient in trying to come to the best and most reasonable interpretation.

## **WHAT DOES GENESIS 1–2 TELL US ABOUT CREATION?**

Volumes have been written in an attempt to answer this question, but only a few brief comments will be given here. In doing so, we need to allow Genesis to speak to us rather than forcing our own personal opinions on the text. This is necessary for properly interpreting any biblical passage, and Genesis is no exception.

If we allow Genesis to speak to us, we will see several important points about the creation. Here are some of them:



### **1. THERE WAS A BEGINNING.**

Science cannot explain the existence of matter, but most scientists will affirm that the universe had a beginning. This agrees

with the first verse in Genesis that describes the beginning of the physical universe.

## **2. THERE IS NO TIME REFERENCE IN GENESIS 1–2.**



Exactly when the “beginning” occurred was not specified. Therefore, the age of the universe, or the date of creation, was not given in the Genesis account. In the past some individuals have tried to calculate a date for the

creation from genealogies, but this method is questionable.

Scientists have given an age for the universe in the range of billions of years, and this has worried some who believe in the Genesis account. The God described in the Bible, however, is eternal and exists outside of time. Such a Creator could have formed the universe either billions of years ago, or last week. It does not matter because God is not limited by time.

## **3. THERE WERE AT LEAST TWO TYPES OF CREATIVE ACTIVITY BY GOD.**

One of the original Hebrew words used in Genesis (*bara*) was used to describe the direct creation of something. This word is used in the Old Testament only in reference to God and is translated as “create” or “created.” The word is found in Genesis 1:1, 21, 27; and 5:1–2 where it refers to the creation of matter, creation of conscious life, and the creation of human beings.

There are other words or phrases that describe further creative acts. Genesis 1:2 seems to suggest that the initial creation was not complete and required further creative activity by God. These additional creative acts can be identified usually by the phrase “let there be” or simply the word “let” (see for example: 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, and 20). In each of these examples God is further shaping and forming the basic created matter after the initial creation.

## **4. THERE WERE SPECIFIC PERIODS (“DAYS”) OF CREATIVE ACTIVITY.**

These creative periods provide a basic outline of God’s activities. Are these literal 24-hour days, or could they have been longer periods of time? The Hebrew word for day (*yom*) can have several

meanings. These include: a 24-hour day, a period of light during the 24-hour day, or a time period of undetermined length. Some Hebrew scholars have pointed out that it is not possible to determine from the context of Genesis whether the word *yom* refers to a 24-hour day or to a very long period of time.

Some believe that the phrase “evening and morning” indicates a 24-hour day. In Hebrew, however, this is an idiomatic expression meaning the beginning and ending of a period of time and can refer to a period of time other than a literal 24-hour day.

Thus, the exact length of these periods is really a matter of interpretation.

## **5. GOD CREATED VARIOUS “KINDS” OF LIVING THINGS.**

Historically, there have been problems when the biblical term



“kind” was interpreted as a type of biological classification. The word “kind” is not the same as species. “Species” is a word that is defined by science and was not used at the time that Genesis was written. “Kind” is a much less specific term used in Hebrew to describe a small or a large group of living things (see for example: 1:11, 21,

and 24). For this reason it is probably best to think of “kinds” as groups of organisms that God created.

## **6. HUMAN BEINGS ARE A PART OF GOD’S CREATION.**

Both accounts in Genesis indicate that human beings were created separately from the other animals and were fully human and possessing all of the characteristics that we associate with human

beings (Genesis 1: 26–27; 2:7, 18–24). There is no indication that humans evolved from lower life forms, or that the man and woman were created in a less than human form.





## **7. HUMAN BEINGS ARE A PART OF THE BIOLOGICAL WORLD. (GENESIS 2:7).**

Genesis tells us that human beings were formed from the dust (Genesis 2:7). For this reason, our physical bodies are made up of the same elements that make up other living things as well as nonliving things such as air, water, rocks, stars, and planets.

Because humans are made of the elements of the earth and were a part of the creation of all life on earth, there are certain characteristics that we share with other living things. Genesis tells us that God “breathed the breath of life” into the man that he had created (Genesis 2:7). The term “breath of life” is used in reference to other animals as well as human beings (Genesis 7:21–22). This can perhaps be thought of as “biological life” and is something that we share with other living things. This is why many of the chemical processes that take place within the cells of our bodies are similar to those found in other living things. Also, like other animals, humans have a “biological life” that ends in death and a physical body that returns to the earth.

## 8. HUMAN BEINGS BEAR THE IMAGE AND LIKENESS OF GOD.

Unlike the other creatures that God formed, humans alone were made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26–27; see also 5:1–2; and 9:6). It is this God-likeness that sets humans apart from the biological world and gives humans a distinction and status in the creation.

The image of God that we possess gives us our spiritual dimension and makes each human being a person similar to the way in which God is a person. Humans are personal creatures and have personality because God is a personal Being and has personality.

Human beings were also created by God with the capacity and responsibility to act morally (Genesis 2:16–17). This is a part of the image and likeness of God, which each human being possesses.

Humans are free moral agents and must make decisions and act according to moral principles. Some may choose to deny this and live as if there is no such thing as right or wrong, but that is a choice that they must make.

## CONCLUSION

The Genesis account tells us that when God had finished with his creation, he “saw that it was good.” This phrase was repeated several times in Genesis 1 and each time it is used in reference to some aspect of God’s creation (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31). The phrase, “God saw that it was good,” tells us something about God’s creative acts. The original creation was in a state of well-being and there were natural laws in place that maintained and sustained the universe that God had made.

Modern science began with the assumption that the universe and the laws governing it were created by God and most of the early scientists were Christians, or at least held a theistic worldview with God as the Creator in the center. For many today, the theistic worldview has been replaced with a naturalistic worldview in which man is the center and natural processes the dominant force in the universe. For these individuals the universe is no longer seen as a product of God’s creation, but rather the result of unguided natural processes. For Christians, however, the first two chapters of Genesis continue to provide information about the universe and a basis for faith in God as its Creator.



# GREAT SCIENTISTS AND GOD

Editor's Note: There are many writers who claimed that good scientists and intelligent, well-educated people do not believe in God. This simply is not true. Tihomir Dimitrov (<http://nobelists.net>) has been researching the statements of the greatest scientists of all time, and we are reproducing some of their statements in this column.

## MICHAEL FARADAY (1791-1867) Founder of Electronics and Electromagnetics



“The book of nature which we have to read is written by the finger of God.” “I bow before Him who is Lord of all, and hope to be kept waiting patiently for His timer and mode of releasing me according to His Divine Word and the great and precious promises whereby His people are made partakers of the Divine nature.” “Think for a moment, brethren, of the Church of Christ, what it means and what it ought to be. Where the Word of God has sounded, there His people are drawn together; in small companies (and we may consider there are many such scattered over the world of whom we know nothing),

gathered out of the world, to the obedience of all things that Christ has commanded.”

“And though the thought of death brings the thought of judgment, which is far above all the trouble that arises from the breaking of mere earthly ties, it also brings to the Christian the thought of Him who died, was judged and who rose again for the justification of those who believe in Him.” “And therefore, brethren, we ought to value the privilege of knowing God’s truth far beyond anything we can have in this world. The more we see the perfection of God’s law fulfilled in Christ, the more we ought to thank God for His unspeakable gift.”

## *Cynthia's Corner*



Our trip to Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands was a faith-building experience we will always treasure. The congregation in Quito operates an accredited biblical studies program training preachers and Christian workers from all over South America. John was honored to teach classes for them and to speak to the congregation on Sunday morning. In addition to their community work in Quito and beyond, the congregation operates an orphanage and a Christian school in the northern province. The school is changing many young lives by giving them a good education, a stable and loving home life, and a foundation of faith in God and the Bible. To our delight, John was asked to speak to the school children, too. We were impressed with their intelligence, enthusiasm, and desire to learn. The school is located at just over 11,000 feet above sea level, and the drive to the school gave us a chance to see the beauty of the Andes mountains and countryside.

Our next adventure was to rendezvous with the medical missions team that had just come out of the Ecuadorian jungle and go to the Galapagos Islands for rest and relaxation with fellow Christians. The medical missions team had just spent two arduous weeks in the interior jungle treating the sick, helping the poor, and ministering to all who had physical and/or spiritual needs. It was physically and emotionally draining, but they did it with joy and gratitude because of their convictions about obeying God and serving others.

It was inspiring and motivating to be with them and all the Christians working in Ecuador to serve families and communities and to teach people about God and Jesus and his Word. These Christians were living their convictions and it was a joy to be with them. We listened to John's discussions about the islands, and in the evenings gathered on the top deck of the ship to sing hymns and spiritual songs, pray together, and share lessons about all the things we had seen during the day that spoke of God's wisdom and design in the world around us (Romans 1:19–20). On top of that, we had above us the most awe-inspiring, magnificent star-studded sky you have ever seen (Psalm 19:1)!

How blessed we are to have experienced spiritual and sensual feasts like this. We are thankful to God and to all Christians who are putting their faith into practice (Matthew 7:24) and making this a better world to live in. (For more about this ministry in Ecuador go to [www.operationecuador.org](http://www.operationecuador.org).)

—Cynthia Clayton

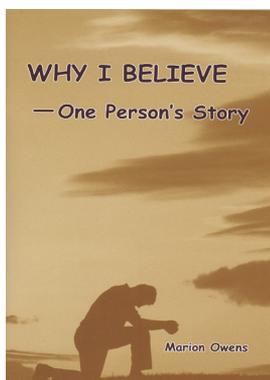


The books that are reviewed in the Book Review section are not available through us, but can be obtained from a local bookstore or through many online bookstores.

### Why I Believe—One Person's Story

by Marion Owens, **Does God Exist?** publisher,

© 2013, 15 pages, \$2.50 (paperback), ISBN-13: 978-0-9840596-4-5



From time to time the **Does God Exist?** ministry prints a book or booklet that we feel would be of interest to our readers. In this case we are offering a different testimony on how a person has acquired faith. John Clayton's story is well known and is available in his booklet *Why I Left Atheism* which has been in print for over 40 years. His story was coming from a family that did not believe in God and never went to any kind of church. Marion Owens grew up in a religious, Bible-believing home with strong family and church relationships.

As a youth he did not know anyone who did not believe in God. He went to a four-year Christian college and left home to teach English. He rented a room from a family in which the husband was an atheist who taught Sunday School. This sent Mr. Owens "back to the drawing board" regarding his faith, both in the existence of God and in belief that this God is the God of the Bible.

The 15-page booklet is not an in-depth or scientific apologetic on the existence of God, but deals with the things that compelled Mr. Owens to believe that the Bible was not of human origin. This is a theological approach using the Bible's internal evidence, not external evidence. Mr. Owens is an English teacher with a knowledge of history and hermeneutics. For people struggling with belief in the Christian system and integrity of the Bible, this booklet will be very useful.

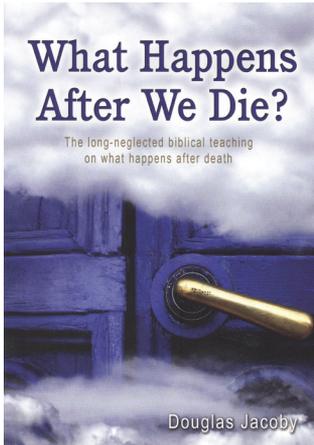
Because we have printed this booklet, we can offer it at our cost. We are including our own story *Why I Left Atheism* to offer a very different approach to coming to faith. The two booklets are available

together for \$2.00 postage paid from **Does God Exist?** PO Box 2704, South Bend, IN 46680-2704, or online through [doesgodexist.tv](http://doesgodexist.tv).

## What Happens After We Die?

by Douglas Jacoby, Illumination Publishers, 6010 Pinecreek Ridge Ct, Spring, TX 77379-2513, or [www.ipibooks.com](http://www.ipibooks.com)

©2013, 143 pages, \$12.00 (paperback), ISBN-13: 978-1939086068



We have reviewed several of Douglas Jacoby's books in this journal, and have always had a favorable response from readers who have perused his writings. Dr. Jacoby has degrees from Duke, Harvard, Kings College, London, and got his doctorate from Drew University. He is a very capable writer with a vast knowledge of Hebrew and Greek and has done a great deal of work in apologetics.

This is a small book (5 x 7 inches) with 143 pages of material. In that 143 pages is a massive amount of word study. Heaven, Hell, Paradise, Hades, Sheol, Gehenna, and Tartarus are discussed and explained.

Dr. Jacoby points out that the King James translation made a major error in translating "Hades" as "Hell." He maintains that the sequence for all of us is Death, Hades, the Second Coming, the Resurrection, Judgment, Final Destiny. In the first chapter he builds his case for that view coming strictly from the Hebrew and Greek of the Bible.

There is an exhaustive discussion of the history of understanding the afterlife. Dr. Jacoby starts with what the early church leaders believed. He uses quotes from early Christians and from Gnostic beliefs. Then he follows with anticipated questions to Dr. Jacoby's beliefs. In chapter four there is a discussion of end times theology. In chapters 5 through 7 related questions are explored. There is an appendix that explores the question of whether Hell (and Heaven) are eternal punishment or eternal punishing. In other words, do people in Hell suffer torture forever (eternal punishing) or does the soul die (eternal punishment.) We reviewed Edward Fudge's book *The Fire That Consumes* some years ago, in which Fudge maintains that the soul dies. It is a very long book that is hard to read. Jacoby takes a similar position calling it "The Terminal View," but does so in a more brief and understandable way.

We recommend this book. You may not agree with Jacoby on everything, but he makes a great case for his position, he is very biblical in his approach, and he explains himself very well.

# DANDY DESIGNS

## HOW DO PLANTS "SEE"?



One of the more fascinating areas of study in botany is how plants “think” and “see.” We normally associate thinking and seeing with a brain. While there are people who talk to their plants and believe the plants can respond to what they say, research does not support such claims. What research does show, however, is that plants do seem to sense the presence of other plants, and they seem to know when to germinate and when to flower. Studies have shown that if a

plant is being shaded by another plant it will restrict its development of new shoots and will accelerate stem growth so it can get an upper hand in securing more light. Another major mystery is how plants know when to flower. Not all plants flower in the spring. The timing of when a plant flowers always seems to be when it can best produce seeds for successful production of new plants.

Research has shown that plants do all these things by dissecting light. Sunlight has all of the colors of the rainbow in it, and plants break the light up into these colors. What the plant does not use it reflects, and since green is the highest energy reaching the surface of the earth, reflecting green protects the plant from too much radiation. That is why plants look green to us. Plants absorb the very long wavelengths of light, including infrared, which our eyes cannot see. The infrared penetrates leaves, so by detecting the fact that red does not get to the plant and infrared does, the plant “knows” it is in the shade and sends up more stem material to get to the sunlight.

This same technique allows seeds to know when to germinate and tells the plant when to flower. This over-simplified explanation shows us clearly that even though the plant does not have a brain, the system is highly designed, fine-tuned, and incredibly complex, indicating that Intelligence was involved in producing it. There is remarkable design in plants, and that design requires a Designer to not only understand the system but be able to use it to the best possible extent. Source: *Natural History* magazine, September 2004, page 32.

# PLANT SMELLS

The more science learns about plants, the more we are amazed at what we see designed into them. One of those things is the use of smell. We may not have thought about it too much, but smell depends upon chemicals. When you smell something, whether it is pleasant or noxious, it is actually chemicals in the air secreted by the plant or animal that you are detecting. The way plants use chemicals and the sense of smell is incredible.



Humans have used perfumes as attractants for a long time, and plants do that as well. Smell is more efficient than color for attracting bees, wasps, flies, butterflies, beetles, moths, birds, bats, and

even mice. A plant has a fragrance because that smell attracts pollinators that allow the plant to fertilize and produce seeds. Each plant has a different chemical compound it uses as its attractant. In some cases only one kind of insect or moth is attracted to that chemical, so the smell becomes very specific as to what the pollinator will be.

Another plant smell that is rather incredible is the smell that is used as what researchers call “negative communicators.” A good example is the lima bean. Lima bean plants are attacked by spider mites. Spider mites are eaten by carnivorous mites. When the lima bean is attacked by spider mites, it floods the area with a chemical signal which attracts the carnivorous mites and causes other lima bean plants to emit the same chemical. When the spider mites have all been eaten, the plant ceases secreting the chemical. Squash plants have a similar system.

As we work towards being able to feed the human population on this planet, we have to be aware of the special properties of plants, and the design and intelligence that is built into these living systems. Truly we can “know there is a God through the things he has made.” (Romans 1:20). Source: *National Geographic*, February 2004.



# News and Notes

**ASTERIODS AND METEORS.** We have been reminded of how carefully God has designed the earth when astronomical incidents occur such as the meteor explosion over Russia on February 15, 2013, the same day that an asteroid made a near-pass of earth. In late 2013, a comet will make a major appearance in the night sky and this will start the publicity of astronomical collisions all over again. These objects are all debris left over from the formation of the solar system and changes that have happened within it. The huge magnitude of these forces was emphasized when the shock wave of the meteor caused massive glass breakage in Russia which injured people. The meteor was just a chunk of rock measured in feet, not an asteroid measured in miles. Most asteroids are between Mars and Jupiter, and our atmosphere burns up virtually all of the objects that are near us. The still larger objects like comets coming from outer space are swept away from us by the gravity of our large planets — Jupiter, Saturn, Neptune, and Uranus. Life on earth is special and tenuous, and without the careful design of our solar system and the earth within it, we could not survive.



Comet-like Asteroid P/2010 A2

**THE COMET IS COMING!** A newly discovered comet named C/2012 S1 (ISON) will swing by the earth in November 2013. This appears to be brighter than any comet that has been seen since 1680, being as bright as a full moon. The last time we had a bright comet was when Marshall Applewhite led his Heaven's Gate cult group to commit mass suicide in 1997 — supposedly so they could catch a ride on it. A comet is simply debris left over from the production of the solar system. What will be unique about this one is its brightness, but an ignorant public is likely to attach all kinds of weirdness to its appearance. Source: *The Week*, January 25, 2013.

**PLANET COUNT UP TO 2,740.** Using the Kepler telescope, astronomers now have evidence that 2,740 planet-like objects orbit other stars in our galaxy. Only a small section of the sky has been surveyed, but the ratio seems to be that one sixth of the stars we can see have planets in orbit around them. That number will certainly be reduced as new analysis is done, but the fact remains that the process that produced the galaxy produced a variety of planets around many stars. It is possible that life could exist on some of them, if God saw fit to create life there. The Bible does not say that this is the only place God created life. Like most of science, this is an interesting and practical area of research that may influence our future, but it is not a concern to those interested in the existence of God or the validity of the Christian system. Source: *The Week*, January 25, 2013, page 17.

**LAMARCK VS. DARWIN, AGAIN.** In the 18th century a French naturalist named Jean-Baptiste Lamarck proposed that organisms could pass along biological traits they had acquired during their lifetimes. At the start of the 20th century an experiment was done that involved cutting off the tails of mice to show that their offspring were not tailless as Lamarck suggested. Larmarckian evolution was pretty much discarded. Now a new field called epigenetics is being developed which is the study of how individual genes may be activated or deactivated by life experiences and how one percent of these changes get passed on to offspring. This is a far cry from Lamarck's theory, but it has significance in understanding cancer, autism, and diabetes. In a related report a project titled "Encode" has 442 scientists studying the genetic activity in 147 different types of human cells to provide a comprehensive look at the roles played by genes not involved in protein building. Project leader Ewan Birney says "I think it's going to take this century to fill in all the details." The complexity built into the genetic make-up of life is astounding, and we have so much more to learn about its design and function that one has to marvel at the Intelligence that structured it to begin with. Source: *Discover—The Year in Science 2012* and *The Week*, January 25, 2013, page 9.

**HUMAN EVOLUTION COMPLEXITY.** Scientists trying to put together a workable model of the physical evolution of man are starting "to question whether it will ever be possible to identify our last common ancestor." (*Scientific American*, February 2013, page 42). In the same issue is a chart titled "Our Tangled Family Tree" (page 46) which shows all the problems involved in the fossils that have been found and how they are interpreted. When you assume a naturalistic origin to man, you automatically put yourself in the position of having to consider the implications of every fossil that is found, and new

fossils are found every day. If you study the chart, the individuals listed are apes with characteristics suited for their habitat at the time. The author (Katherine Harmon) says “This jumble of fossil features emphasizes that evolution is a messy business.” In contrast to this highly complex puzzle of how physical features may have changed, the Bible identifies what really makes us human, which is not how we look physically, but our having been created in the image of God.

### **TEACHER FIRED FOR GIVING STUDENT A BIBLE.**

In Phillipsburg, New Jersey, a teacher named Walter Tutka made an off-hand comment to a student leaving his classroom in which he said, “So the last shall be first, and the first shall be last.” The student asked where the statement came from, and later asked again so Tutka showed him the statement in his personal Bible. The student said he did not own a Bible, so Tutka gave him his. The school district says that Tutka violated a rule that prohibits employees from distributing religious literature on school grounds, and also violated a rule saying teachers must remain neutral while discussing religious materials. The school system fired Tutka. The story has been on the web in several places. We saw it on [www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/15/walter-tutka-new-jersey-t\\_n\\_2481643.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/15/walter-tutka-new-jersey-t_n_2481643.html). Apparently Tutka was a substitute teacher, and there might be other issues involved but the message this sends is all too common.

### **ATHEISTS GO TO COURT TO CHALLENGE TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR RELIGIOUS GROUPS.**

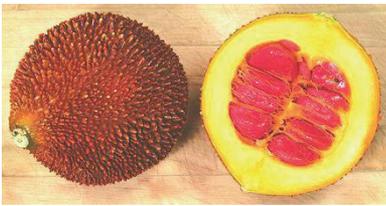
David Silverman has announced in a public letter to members of the American Atheists (dated December 21, 2012), that his group has filed a lawsuit “challenging the preferential treatment of religious nonprofit organizations by the United States Tax Code.” Claiming that churches being tax exempt violates the first and 14th Amendments. Silverman says they plan to make churches lose tax exemption status. We expect this to be successful sooner or later, and when it happens and churches have to start paying taxes on their income and their property, it will make huge changes in this country. Religious groups are the ones that handle the homeless shelters, relief agencies, food pantries and kitchens, counseling services, nursing homes, hospitals, care facilities, and transportation services. Imagine the domino effect of religious groups having to close all of their services. Atheists are not the ones who do this work. We would suggest that Silverman and his ilk have not thought this out very well.

In a related issue the Center for Inquiry which publishes the magazine *Skeptical Inquirer* has complained about President Obama’s failure “to reform the federal government’s faith-based funding programs as he promised in 2008, but he has actually increased the

money being expended on such programs.” (From a public letter by Ronald A. Lindsay, President and CEO, dated 12/11/2012.)

**ALCOHOLISM IN WOMEN INCREASES.** The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) say their data shows that one in eight women in the U.S. drinks excessively. Because women tend to be smaller and therefore are more susceptible to the harm of alcohol, their data defines excessive as more than three drinks daily or seven per week, less than the accepted value for men. The CDC reports that 23,000 women die every year from causes related to the use of alcohol. We continue to maintain that alcohol is the most destructive recreational drug on the planet, and that the use of alcohol as such violates the biblical concept of viewing the body as the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16–17 and 6:15–17.) Source: *The Week*, January 25, 2013, page 17.

**“SUPERFRUIT” AND HUNGER.** One of the unnecessary tragedies of planet earth right now is the number of people who go to bed hungry every night. It is unnecessary because the food is available. Not only do we waste a huge amount of food, but we fail to use foods that are available. In *Time* magazine (January 11, 2013, page 20) is a discussion of exotic fruits that have greater nutritional value than what we tend



Gac fruit

to use. The gac fruit of Southeast Asia for example, has 70 times as much lycopene (an antioxidant good for heart health) as a tomato. The golden berry of South America has two grams of protein per serving. The mangosteen of Indonesia is high in vitamins A and C. The foods are there, but we have to use what is available and avoid wasting what we have been given.

**FASTEST GROWING RELIGION IS “NONE.”** The Pew Research Center reports that between 1972 and 1989 seven percent of Americans identified themselves as having no religious affiliation. Between 1990 and 2012 that figure jumped to 19.6 percent and among people under the age of 30 that figure jumped to just over 30 percent. This does not mean that all of these are atheists, but it does mean that a growing number of people are not impressed with what churches are doing. In Houston a former “pastor” named Mike Aus has started an atheist church called The Houston Oasis. The group says “We are a secular alternative to traditional churches, where people can find that same sense of community and involvement without requiring anyone to believe in supernatural concepts

or entities.” The need for people to see the evidence for God’s existence and the validity of the Christian system continues to grow.

**THE DRUG ISSUE IN MENTAL ILLNESS.** Every day in the United States 850 adults and 250 children are added to the federal government’s disability-benefit rolls because of mental illness. That is 365,000 per year. Ten percent of American kids are now taking psychiatric drugs. Between 1985 and 2007 spending on antidepressants and antipsychotics alone multiplied some 50 times, going from \$503 million to more than 24 billion. This data and material is from the blue book of the American Psychiatric Association titled: *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Illness 5, Anatomy of an Epidemic* by Robert Whitaker, and *Mad Science: The Disorders of American Psychiatry* by Stuart Kirk. There are all kinds of explanations for this, but the main problem is that our society tends to create disorders by its diagnostic techniques and definitions. The instability produced by our failure as a people to live as God has called us to live has multiple side effects. An interesting article on this subject is in the November 2012 issue of *Citizen* magazine (page 19).

**ODDS AND NUMBERS.** In the *Astronomy* magazine (January 2013, page 11) there is an interesting article by Bob Berman on numbers and probability. Berman starts out with the old question of how long it would take for a million monkeys pounding on a million typewriters to type the phrase from Moby Dick, “Call Me Ishmael.” Berman comes up



with 2,100 trillion years or roughly 150,000 times longer than the most liberal estimate of the age of the universe. He also gives the number of atoms in the entire visible universe as ten to the 80th power. Our point is that when you look at the calculations of chance producing the things we see in the cosmos the numbers are always vastly beyond ten to the 80th power. The nature of chance and statistics says we are not the product of chance, but of an Intelligence that had a reason for creating the creation.

**CONFIRMATION OF THE SPEED OF LIGHT.** In September of 2011 an experiment on the Swiss-French border seemed to indicate that neutrinos were traveling faster than the speed of light. There was a lot of media attention to this announcement, and we even had some detractors send us some pointed messages since we have

used Einstein's work in many of our presentations. It has now been confirmed that last February physicists found a faulty cable that has produced mistimed measurements, and the speed of light has not been exceeded. Had the speed of light been exceeded, the question would have been, "What do we learn from this, and how does it change our understandings?" It seems that Einstein was right after all. Source: *Discover*, January 2, 2013, page 51.

**EXODUS FROM EXODUS.** For the past 37 years or more Exodus International has led in the struggle between Christianity and homosexuality. Members of Exodus, at least in the beginning, were former homosexuals and the program attempted to help people who were gay become straight. One of the ways this was done was by "reparative therapy" in which people were told that by following a particular program they could change their sexual orientation. Professional psychiatric organizations have opposed all reparative therapy claiming it does not work and can do damage. Alan Chambers who is the president of Exodus International disavowed reparative therapy at the annual Gay Christian Network Conference in January of 2012 claiming to focus on discipleship rather than change. This has caused a large number of supporters of Exodus International to leave. John Warren who has been a supporter of Exodus says that this has changed Exodus to have an ambiguous message. There has been some abuse involved in reparative therapy, and while there are many different versions of it, none has been consistently effective. This is a complex issue, and there is a difference between living a destructive gay lifestyle and choosing to use one's energy constructively outside of any sexual relationship. Source: *Christianity Today*, December 2012, page 17.

### **A READER COMMENTS ABOUT BIG BANG ARTICLE.**

The following was received from reader Calvin Hoggard. "Reading your article titled 'God and the Big Bang' (May/June 2012) brought to mind something I have thought about for many years. I started my engineering career operating satellite tracking stations for the Physical Science Laboratory of New Mexico State under contract to the U.S. Navy. Timing was critical to accurate, quality data. We used atomic clocks to calibrate our double oven crystal oscillator frequency generators. The atomic clocks were ultimately timed by the stars. As I understand it, physics tells us that explosions from a lady finger firecracker to a hydrogen bomb create chaos, not order.

"So the big bang theory wants us to believe that the largest explosion in history eventually organized itself (without outside influence) into order so precise that we can adjust our most accurate time-keeping devices using its order. FANTASTIC!"

This journal is a part of a program of service titled **Does God Exist?** The purpose of the program is to provide thinking, seeking people with scientific evidence that God does exist and that the Bible is His Word. It is our conviction that all men can logically and rationally believe in God. In addition to this bimonthly journal, the **Does God Exist?** program offers DVDs and video tapes, CDs and audio tapes, courses, books, and other materials. These materials are offered on a loan basis or at our cost. We also are more than willing to correspond with you and answer any specific question(s) you might have. If you would like further information on borrowing or purchasing these materials, we would be glad to send it to you. Check the boxes below to describe what you would like and mail it to us. We will get it right out to you.

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