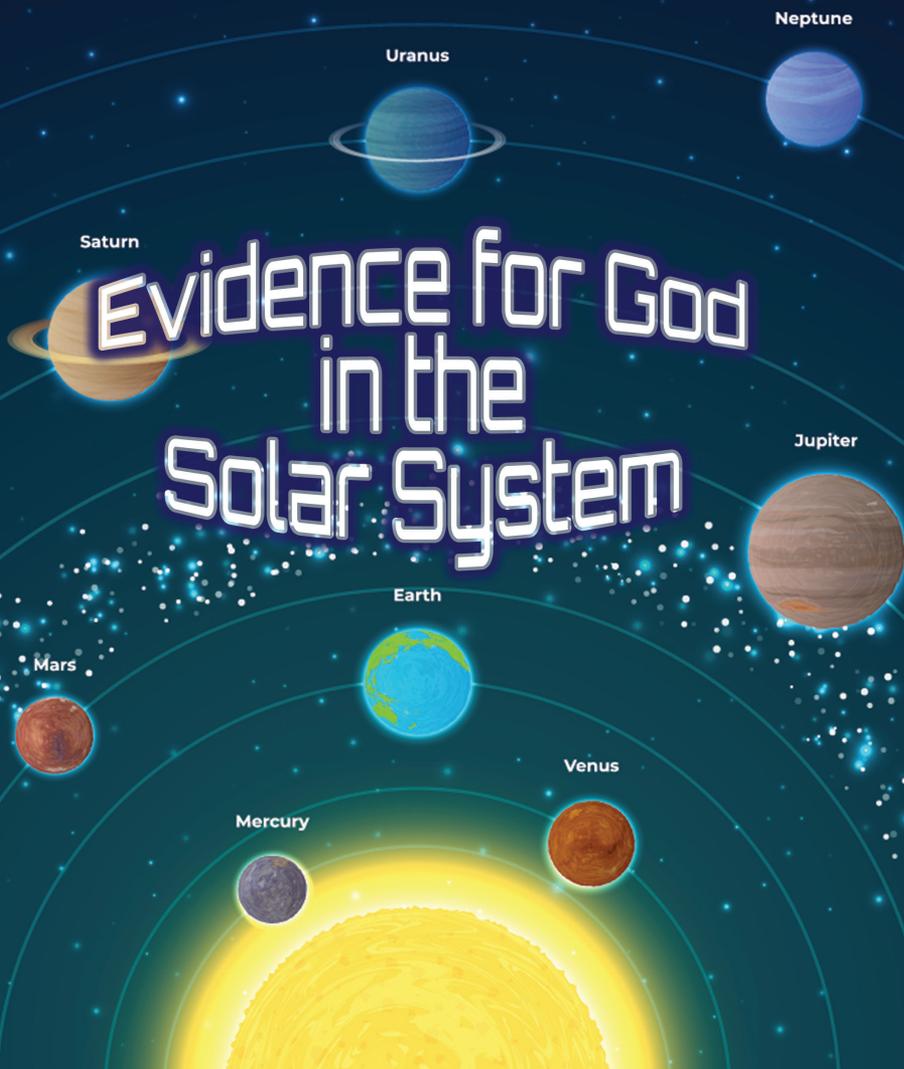


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**First Quarter 2022
Volume 49 Number 1**



Evidence for God in the Solar System

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Evidence for God in the Solar System

We live in an exciting time in science. Scientists are making discoveries at an amazing rate, and there is no area where that is more true than our understanding of the Solar System. New telescopes, new space vehicles, and new ways of using radiation other than visible light have opened a door of greater knowledge than at any time in human history. As a result, our understanding of the Sun and planets is vastly greater than even a decade ago. When I read of the new insights and facts discovered in recent years, I am amazed.

What has escaped many people's notice is how this new information has provided more evidence for God's existence. We knew that some of our previous understandings worked, but we did not know why. Others worked, but only up to a point. An excellent example of this is "Bode's Law," an early formula to predict the spacing between solar system planets. In 1772, Johann Elert Bode took Saturn, then the farthest known planet from the Sun, as a standard and gave it a value of 100. By that standard, Mercury would be four units out from the Sun. Then Venus would be $4 + 3 = 7$. From that point, every planet's distance from the Sun would be four plus a doubling of the previous distance. The Earth would be $4 + 6 = 10$. Mars would be $4 + 12 = 16$. But Jupiter was $4 + 48 = 52$, leaving a gap at $4 + 24 = 28$. Astronomers thought they had resolved that problem when they discovered Ceres.

The law seemed to work for the currently known planets, and it worked for the discovery of Uranus. However, when astronomers discovered Neptune, it did not fit the formula. Then, they learned that Ceres was not a planet but a giant asteroid.



J. E. Bode

Finally, when scientists discovered Pluto in 1930, it did not fit the formula. We now know that the distances result from the harmonic motions of these celestial bodies. The laws of celestial mechanics showed that the basis of Bode's Law was only a coincidence.

Our solar system studies have added many variables essential for life to exist on planet Earth. For example, we now know that our Sun is an extraordinary star. We know its size, its mass, the kind of radiation it emits, its stability, how far it is from Earth, and its chemical makeup. The more we look at other stars in our galaxy and other galaxies, the more we see the unique nature of our Sun.

Our studies of other planets in our solar system have shown us the importance of water in the liquid state and oxygen in the gaseous state. Water is present on many moons in the solar system and on a few planets. Still, planet Earth is in the "Goldilocks Zone," where



the temperatures are between zero and 100 degrees Celsius so that water can exist on the surface as a liquid, and life depends on that fact. Science disproves the claim that life could exist in some other ocean made of methane, nitrogen, or carbon dioxide.

Redefining life so that there could be rock people or gas people based on some different chemistry is fantasy, but it is not science. The scientific definition of life requires being able to breathe, move, respond to outside stimuli, and reproduce. Rock people, gas people, etc., do not fit that definition.

We have learned the importance of magnetism to life on our planet. Earth has a liquid internal structure, allowing the movement of continents, the recycling of rocks, and the activity of volcanos. We realize that these essential processes apply only to a planet with an internal structure like ours. We have learned that Earth's rate of spin, the size and makeup of its atmosphere, the presence of radioactive elements in its crust, its support by the other planets in our solar system, and many other variables are critical to life. (You can see a chart of 47 variables that are essential to life on planet Earth on our website at <https://www.doesgodexist.org/Charts/EvidenceForDesignInTheUniverse.html> or use the QR code.)

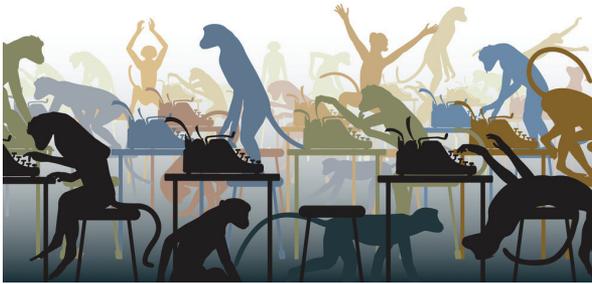


The typical response of skeptics and atheists is that if you have enough time and enough planets, all of those things will eventually come together by chance. Unfortunately, people who make that claim have a poor understanding of statistics. Let us take a look at a very old atheist claim. If one million monkeys were typing on one million typewriters for one million years, one of them would type an encyclopedia totally by chance. Is that true?

Let us assume that the monkeys only have to type, “God,-Jesus,Spirit.” That would be 16 characters, including the comas, no spaces. A typewriter keyboard has 58 keys so that would mean the number of attempts would be $58 \times 58 \times 58$ or 16.4 trillion quadrillion attempts. Let us assume that the million monkeys are working without a break and typing the equivalent of 45 16-character words per minute. The average time for each word would be four seconds. How much time would elapse before we have a 50/50 chance that one monkey

would finally, totally by chance, type “God,Jesus,Spirit”?

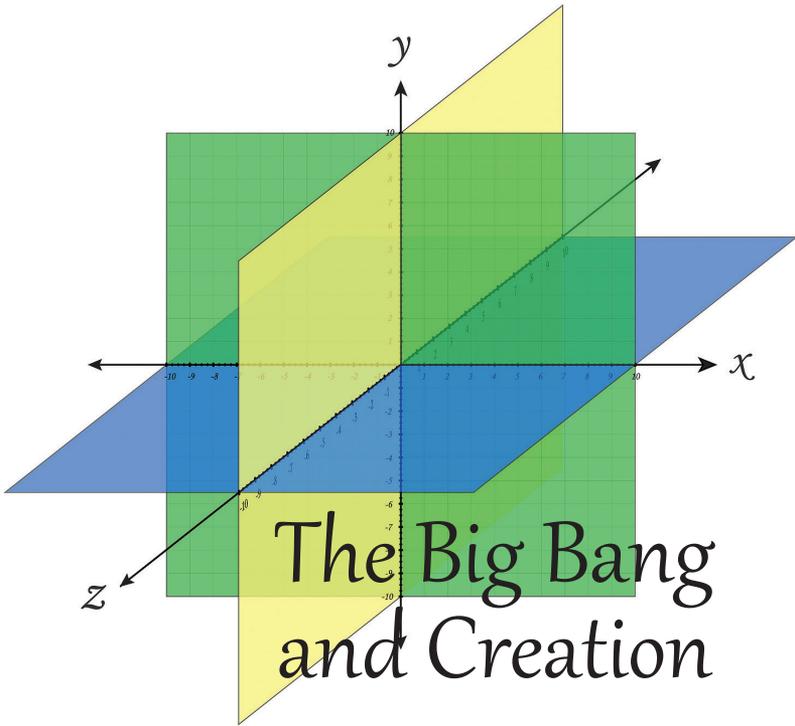
The answer is 2,100 trillion years, which is 153,000 times the proposed age of the universe! This calculation is based on Bob Berman’s article in *Astronomy*



magazine (December 2021, <https://www.astronomy.com/magazine/bob-berman/2021/12/chances-are>), titled “Chances Are.” Berman concludes his calculations by saying, “Count me among the many who, when contemplating this astounding universe, perceive Nature as exhibiting some sort of underlying intelligence.”

In the last 25 years, we have found proof that the cosmos had a beginning. People who know scientific evidence can no longer question the statement of Genesis 1:1 that there was a beginning. We also understand that the complexity of the cosmos eliminates chance as a valid mechanism for what we see. The only debate possible now is what was the cause of the beginning? We would argue that there is enough evidence from other fields of human endeavor to say that cause was God. Saying that we cannot know or that somehow future knowledge will answer this question is an evasion. Proverbs 8:22–36 finds Wisdom describing its role in the creative process, and that wisdom belongs to God. The more we know of the creation, the more we know of the Creator.

—John N. Clayton



We receive many interesting questions from our readers, and recently we received this one about the big bang and creation:

“Dr. John Mather, head of the new telescope project, explains that the ‘Big Bang’ is not correctly understood as the universe having one exact beginning point. Rather that its beginning was everywhere at once as evidenced by galaxies all moving away from each other, and residual heat of the ‘big bang’ being somewhat uniform everywhere we look.”

We could blame this misunderstanding on Dr. Fred Hoyle, who coined the term “big bang,” but as teachers of physics and astronomy, we are probably guilty of contributing to it. When we hear the term “big bang,” we think of an explosion. An explosion assumes some material existed, and it blew up like a bomb. That is a mistaken perspective. The big bang did not start with a singularity that already existed. The modern understanding of the big bang is that space and time came into existence in a form we call “space/time.”

We struggle with the concept of the big bang and creation because we cannot envision a condition where neither space nor time existed. We live in a three-dimensional universe and are familiar with X, Y,

and Z dimensions on a Cartesian graph. We know that we can plot any of those dimensions against time. If we move along the ground in direction X at a certain speed, we can plot the distance moved against the elapsed time. When a rocket goes straight up, you can plot Y against time. There is a third direction at right angles to both X and Y that we call Z, and we can plot it against time. But what is time? It is a fourth-dimensional quantity that you cannot define. You can say it is “what keeps everything from happening at once,” but that is not a definition. It is a consequence of time.

The big bang concept agrees with Genesis 1:1 that space and time began, but not as an explosion. When space was created, everything embedded in space was also created. Only action from dimensions beyond our own (X, Y, Z, and time) could do that. So as we consider the big bang and creation, we must ask what could be the source of creation? Whatever it is, it would have to exist outside of the space/time dimensions.

You can argue that it was not God, but that does not hold much water. We must account for the design we see in the cosmos, and chance does not even try to do it. The big bang is an excellent proof of creation by God. The Bible describes God as an intelligence outside of space and time who created space and time.

We do not need to understand everything about creation to have faith in God. However, science strongly reinforces the adage that “the more you know of the creation, the closer you get to God.” As science advances in its understanding of the design of the cosmos, the existence of God becomes more and more evident.

—JNC



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Our Essential Moon and Life on Earth

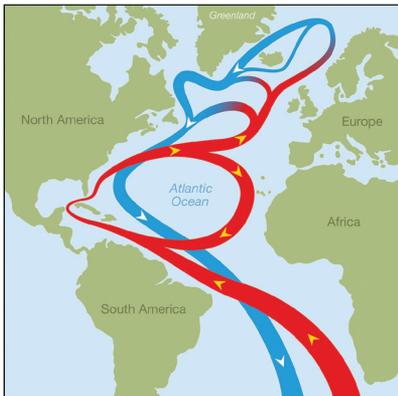
For most people, the Moon is just a light at night. The fact is that our moon is an essential part of Earth's fitness for life. Any change in the size, distance, or orbit of the Moon would be catastrophic for life on Earth.

Having just one moon of significant size is a very unusual situation. Venus has no moons, and the two tiny moons of Mars are apparently captured asteroids. Jupiter, Saturn, and Uranus each have multiple moons, many of which are of significant size. However, a single large moon is unique to planet Earth.

So what does our essential Moon do for us? Because of its size, it has a significant gravitational pull on the Earth. That pull is strong enough to cause our planet to flex as the Moon orbits it. That creates a disturbance in geologic activity on Earth when the Moon is over an area of unstable rock.

The Gulf Stream

 Warm surface flow  Cool subsurface flow



The Moon's pull on Earth's waters is even more significant. It stirs the oceans much like a person might stir a large saucepan of soup. Our Moon causes many ocean currents and tides, even in large lakes. Ocean currents not only move nutrients around but transport heat as well. For example, the Gulf Stream is critical to marine life along the east coast of North America and controls temperatures along the entire coast.

The Moon's gravitational pull is closely related to its mass. Therefore, a larger moon would cause massive flooding along the edges of continents. If it were smaller, the tides and currents would not be large enough to clean the estuaries or warm the landmasses, and many marine life-forms would not survive.

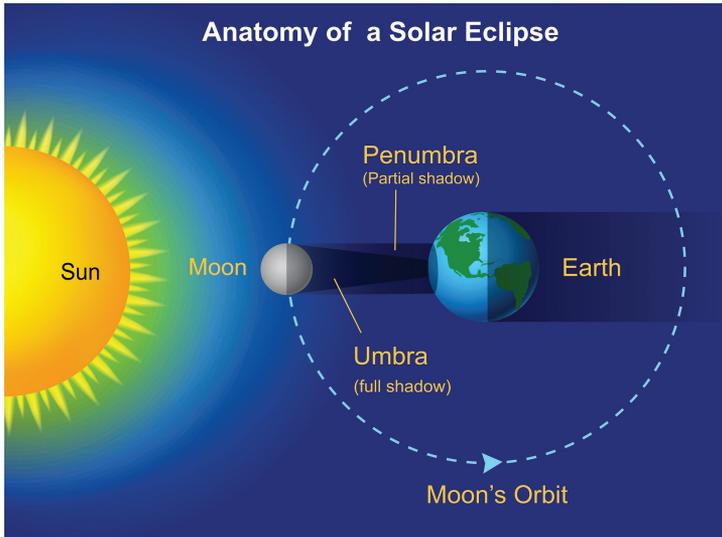


If we had more than one moon, they would affect each other. There are rock tides causing moonquakes on the Moon due to the pull of Earth's gravity. A second moon would amplify this effect, and if the two moons collided, the fragments would threaten life on Earth. Every total solar eclipse reminds us how precise the

Moon's size is. It can exactly cover our view of the Sun, allowing us to see and study the Sun's corona.

Most of us overlook how our essential Moon's size, mass, distance, and orbit shape seem to be carefully designed. Attributing that precision to blind chance requires faith as great as attributing life to chance. We would suggest that the Creator used his wisdom, described beautifully in Proverbs 8:1 – 5; 22 – 32, to design an Earth/Moon system that allows life to exist and prosper on planet Earth.

—JNC





DELIBERATE DENIAL OF EVIDENCE

One characteristic of many people today is the deliberate denial of evidence. In a recent discussion with a big-name pro-abortion politician, I asked when he believed a fetus became a human — conception, birth, or somewhere in between. He responded that he had not considered the question. I asked if he would be willing to consider scientific evidence that could answer the question. Again, he responded that he would not.

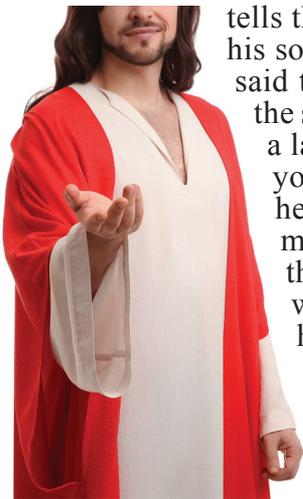
Some of my female friends who are loud proponents of “a woman’s right to choose” have given me a similar response. How can you make a decision about abortion if you do not know when a fetus is a human?



This deliberate denial of evidence is not new. People in Jesus’ day watched him perform miracles but still rejected and even killed him. I have presented many atheists with credible evidence that the God of the Bible is real. In a recent discussion with a young college student, she proudly declared she was an atheist. When I

presented a series of facts to show there is a God, she jumped up and screamed at me, “I just don’t want to believe!” There was a deafening silence, and I saw tears streaming down her face. She was desperate to justify her disbelief.

Jesus was aware of the human tendency toward deliberate denial of evidence that we do not want to accept. Mark 9:17–24



tells the story of a man who brought to Jesus, his son who had a convulsive spirit. The man said that Jesus' disciples could not drive out the spirit, and Jesus indicated the reason was a lack of faith. The father said to Jesus, "If you can do anything, take pity on us and help us." Jesus responded by repeating the man's words, "If you can?" Then he told the father that he needed to have faith, to which the father replied, "I do believe, help me overcome my unbelief."

Humans want to maintain control over what they believe, even if it requires a deliberate denial of evidence. Like the father who brought his son to Jesus, a person must be open to the evidence and willing to accept it, rather than denying the evidence and even refusing to hear or see it.

—JNC



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Earth's Atmosphere: Fine-Tuned for Life

Nitrogen and oxygen together make up about 99% of the air we breathe. The vast majority of our atmosphere is nitrogen. Oxygen is ten times as abundant as nitrogen in the universe, but it makes up only about 21 percent of our atmosphere. So, the less common element is the most abundant in our atmosphere. What does that mean to us? The bottom line is that the atmosphere is fine-tuned for life. Let us examine that more carefully.

An atom of oxygen and an atom of nitrogen differ by only one proton and one electron. That may not seem like much, but it makes a world of difference. Both of those elements form diatomic molecules, meaning that two atoms bond together to make one molecule of oxygen or nitrogen. Covalent bonding is the chemical bonding of atoms by equal sharing of electrons. That bond gives atoms stability in their outer, or valence, electron shells because atomic stability requires eight valence electrons. The only elements with that number are the so-called “noble gases”—helium, neon, argon, krypton, and radon. For that reason, they are inert, refusing to combine with other elements. All other elements need electrons to complete the octet in their valence shells.

An oxygen atom has six electrons in its valence shell, so it needs to share two electrons to become stable. When an oxygen atom shares two electrons with another oxygen atom, they both become stable. Nitrogen, on the other



hand, has only five valence electrons. Therefore, by forming a covalent bond with another nitrogen atom, sharing three electrons, both atoms complete their valence shell. In this way, our atmosphere is made up of stable diatomic oxygen and nitrogen molecules.

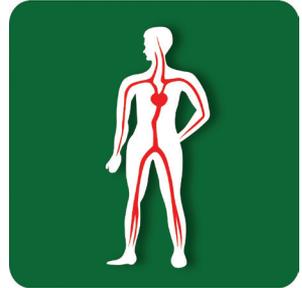
However, not all molecules are equally stable. That is where we see the atmosphere is fine-tuned for life. For example, oxygen molecules have a double bond sharing two electrons, but nitrogen atoms have a triple bond sharing three electrons for more stability. That difference may seem insignificant, but it is essential to make life possible.

For oxygen or nitrogen to combine with other elements to form new compounds essential for life, the covalent bond between them must be broken. It takes about double the energy to break the triple bond between two nitrogen atoms as to break the double bond between two oxygen atoms. That means oxygen can be released to form other compounds much more easily than nitrogen.

What does it take to break the oxygen bond and combine it with another element? Apply some heat to combustible material, and you will find out. You will get fire, which is a chemical reaction involving rapid oxidation of the burning material. Much slower oxidation occurs when oxygen in your blood combines with nutrients in your body, giving you energy and generating body heat. Another slow form of oxidation is when iron combines with



oxygen to form iron oxide, or rust. If it were not possible to release oxygen from its molecular bond with relative ease, we would not have combustion to heat our homes, run our vehicles,



or energize our bodies. Life would not be possible.



oxygen to form iron oxide, or rust. If it were not possible to release oxygen from its molecular bond with relative ease, we would not have combustion to heat our homes, run our vehicles,

or energize our bodies. Life would not be possible.

However, nitrogen bonds are much harder to break, and nitrogen is also essential for life. As we said previously, the triple bond of a nitrogen molecule requires almost twice as much

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energy to break as the double bond of an oxygen molecule. However, plants need nitrogen for photosynthesis and growth. What is the solution?

One way is that lightning breaks the nitrogen bond allowing rain to

wash nitrogen compounds to the ground. Another solution is plants such as beans, peas, and alfalfa, which we call legumes, have microorganisms on their roots

that extract nitrogen from the air. That enriches the soil with nitrogen while providing for the legumes. A third method is that more than a century ago, scientists found a way to extract nitrogen from the air to produce ammonia. That process enabled fertilizer production, which today allows farmers to produce enough food for the world's population.



Alfalfa

Although it is not easy to break the nitrogen bond so it can combine with other elements, since 78% of the atmosphere is nitrogen, there is no shortage. So why is our atmosphere mostly nitrogen? Since it is only about 21% oxygen, would it not be better to have more oxygen so we could breathe easier? The answer is that nitrogen stability is essential for our safety. Wildfires have been a significant problem in recent years. If the atmosphere consisted of a very high percentage of oxygen, fires would be more common and dangerous. If the atmosphere consisted of nearly 100% oxygen, all it would take is one lightning strike to set the whole planet on fire.

Remarkably, we have the correct percentage of elements in our atmosphere. We have the right amount of oxygen to allow respiration to power our bodies and combustion to power our vehicles and industry and heat our homes. At the same time, we have the right amount of nitrogen to prevent uncontrolled combustion leading to the destruction of life. We also have just a small amount of carbon dioxide, which plants need for photosynthesis. Plants use CO_2 and

generate oxygen to keep the gases in balance. The balance is amazingly precise as long as humans do not generate enough carbon dioxide to mess it up.

During the dinosaur age, the oxygen level was higher, on the order of around one-third of the atmosphere. That allowed the enormous animals to prepare the Earth for humans. Now we have the precise balance to sustain human life and advanced society. The question is, did the features of oxygen and nitrogen and the balance between them happen by accident, or was it part of an intelligent plan? We think the best explanation is that an intelligent Planner of life created it.



—JNC



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Look at the Birds

by Al Cornell

“Look at the birds of the air.” That is a simple imperative statement from the magnificent Sermon on the Mount. While some folks imagine themselves as being sensitive and responsive to all the commands from their Lord, they read over this one with no intention of obeying it. The good news is that Jesus never intended it to be another

command that demands obedience. However, it is a statement that can encourage people to orient their minds toward the incomprehensible splendor of what makes this universe tick.

If modern Christianity put more emphasis on looking at the birds of the air and less on an air of economic importance, atheism would be less appealing to some. Likewise, if the religious people tied a sense of the awesomeness of the fabric of the universe, from subatomic particles to billions of galaxies, into their personas, the word “religion” would not be so hollow and distasteful.

Few know that God, as understood from the Bible, said,



“... the land is mine, and you reside in my land as foreigners and strangers” (Leviticus 25:23). If you have ever loaned out any item of property that was disrespected and abused, that statement should cause you to look back at the footprint you have left upon the face of the sod you have trod. One prophet wrote, “Is it not enough for you to feed on good pasture? Must you trample the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clean water? Must you muddy the rest with your feet? Must my flock feed on what you have trampled and drink what you have muddied with your feet?” (Ezekiel 34:18–19). Do birds sing in the footprint you leave, or do you just leave a contribution to a “Superfund” site?

Fifty years ago, Sally and I lived in Butte, Montana. Huge trucks



Berkeley Pit

were hauling copper ore out of the massive Berkeley Pit. After the mining ended, the pit became a toxic lake. The hole covers nearly half a square mile of surface and is 1,780 feet deep. The water is now around 900 feet deep and laden with toxic chemicals. Normally during migration, birds are hazed from the lake, but in

2016, over 3,000 snow geese died after landing on the lake. While people thought that copper was expensive, they did not begin to pay the cost of one of our largest Superfund sites. Some of the water now goes through a treatment plant and is released into a creek. Hopefully, local groundwater will be spared contamination. That is an example of how we muddy the water.

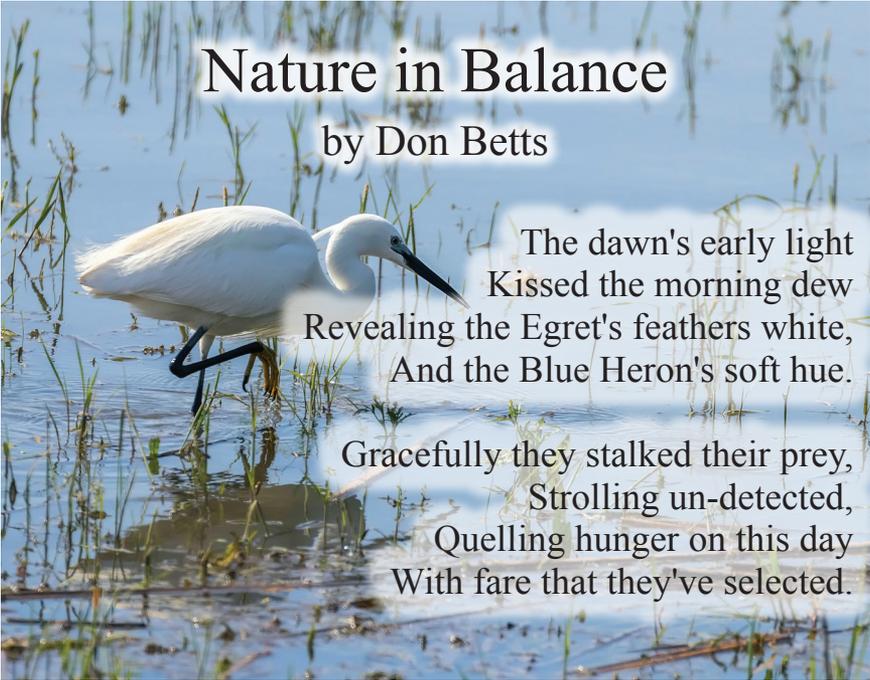


Snow Geese

“Look at the birds of the air” was never intended to recruit people to participate in a bird count, but it has heart and soul. It has a meaning that can bring together the sense of a spiritual God and a physical universe. It can stir our hearts to sing, “This Is My Father’s World.” Or at least, it should cause us to pause and wonder in awe. In his “Bird and the Machine” essay, agnostic Loren Eiseley penned, “... I’ll stick with the birds. It’s life I believe in, not machines.” So take a look, and you might even see a spiritual reality.

Nature in Balance

by Don Betts



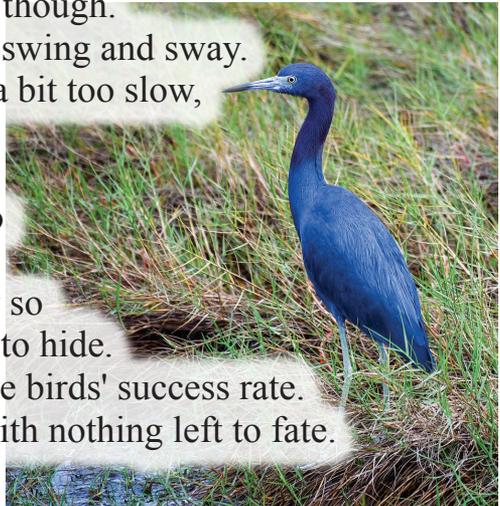
The dawn's early light
Kissed the morning dew
Revealing the Egret's feathers white,
And the Blue Heron's soft hue.

Gracefully they stalked their prey,
Strolling un-detected,
Quelling hunger on this day
With fare that they've selected.

It's God's design, how they stand so still
Stretching elongated necks
Patiently waiting with needle-sharp bill
To stab with lightning-fast pecks.

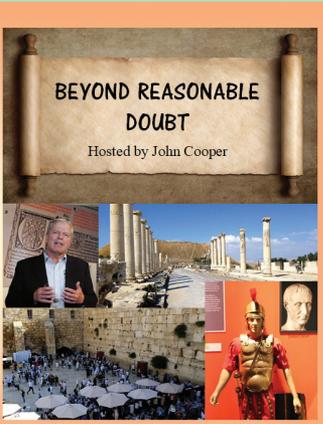
Their prey has a chance, though.
I've watched the hunters swing and sway.
If the thrusting dance is a bit too slow,
The prey just flits away.

There seems to be a ratio
The stalkers must abide.
But it's not because I say so
That their breakfast gets to hide.
One out of four seems the birds' success rate.
God's wonders galore, with nothing left to fate.



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SCIENTISTS AND GOD

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

*Melvin Calvin
(1911-1997)*

*University of Minnesota
Professor at University of California at Berkeley
Director of the Chemical Biodynamics Laboratory
at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory
Nobel prize in 1961 for the discovery of
the Calvin cycle in photosynthesis*

“As I try to discern the origin of the conviction about God, I seem to find it a basic notion ... enunciated first in the Western world by the ancient Hebrews: namely that the universe is governed by a single God, and is not the product of the whims of many gods, each governing his own province according to his own laws. This monotheistic view seems to be the historical foundation for modern science.”



From “Quotes About God to Consider ... if You Think Science leads to Atheism” posted on August 12, 2019, by GodEvidence.com.

<https://godevidence.com/2010/08/quotes-about-god-atheism/>

Cynthia's Corner

VACCINES AND FAITH



As I write this before Christmas 2021, I am looking forward to seeing my six-year-old grandson, whom I have not seen for two years because of COVID-19. John and I had our boosters, and my grandson has been vaccinated, so we plan to be together safely.

The practice of vaccinations and wearing masks is not only a medical issue, but it is also a religious one. Some reject good health practices, saying that “faith alone” will keep them well. That view of faith is not biblical. God tells us not to fear but trust his promises and act on what God’s Word tells us. In 2 Kings 5:1 – 14, Elisha told Naaman that his leprosy would be cured if he dipped seven times in the Jordan River. The prophet told Naaman what to do, but Naaman had to have enough faith to do it. In Joshua 6, God told the Israelites that the walls of Jericho would fall if they marched around the city seven times, blew ram’s horns, and shouted. That made no sense, but because of faith in God, they did what he said. In Matthew 9:20, a woman was healed when she touched the hem of Christ’s garment. In Matthew 14:36, a similar action brought healing.

God has given us the ability to understand how his design of the human body works and what we must do to keep it healthy. This knowledge has helped doctors know how to activate the designed antibodies to fight attacks from diseases. As a result, science can now make vaccines to keep us safe from many diseases, including COVID-19.

John’s son died of COVID-19 because an unmasked and unvaccinated health worker gave him the virus. Tim had solid faith, but not in the foolishness of humans. His faith was that a better place awaited him when this body could no longer function. Jesus calls us to a faith that accepts with gratitude the medical advancements that keep us well.

Religious leaders who encourage others to reject COVID-19 vaccines in the name of faith in God are rejecting the knowledge and methods God has given us to stay well. They are also advocating and encouraging behavior that adversely affects others. Unvaccinated people are about 90% of COVID-19 patients in hospitals. They are overwhelming hospitals and medical workers and infecting many others, too. God tells us to consider others better than ourselves (Philippians 2:3–5).

I pray that we will become more considerate and thoughtful of others.

—Cynthia Clayton

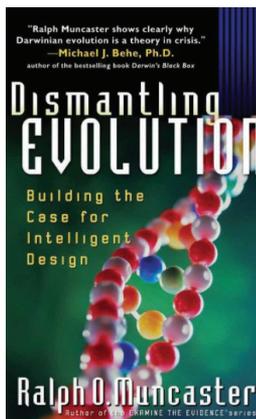
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Dismantling Evolution

by Ralph O. Muncaster, Harvest House Publishers, © 2003,
\$5.65 (paperback), 255 pages, ISBN-13: 978-0736904643



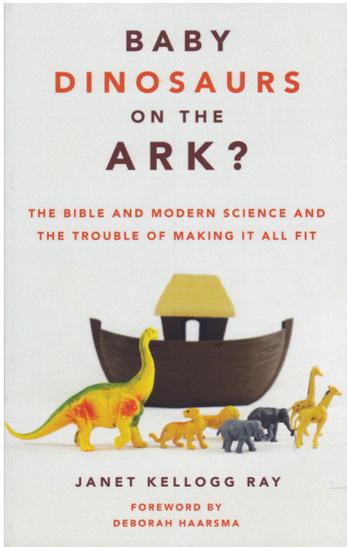
Ralph Muncaster uses his engineering background to explain the problems with modern evolutionary theory. For example, an engineer designing a bridge must be careful to build a foundation that includes materials, properties, structure design, a carefully constructed foundation, and a provision for whatever change may come to the bridge's location. He applies that to evolution, pointing out that it fails at fundamental facts and logical design, making it scientifically unacceptable.

Muncaster is a graduate of the University of Colorado and holds a B.S. in engineering and an MBA. He writes from an engineer's viewpoint and lets scientists explain their discoveries. He documents the book with eleven pages of notes and a bibliography of 36 books. Appendix B of the book is titled "How Old Are the Earth and the Universe?" Muncaster accepts scientific evidence of very ancient times for the creation and for life on Earth. He shows the errors in creationist explanations using flood geology, baby dinosaurs on Noah's ark, and young-earth theology.

The book's primary thrust is that neo-Darwinism is not supported by factual data in the fossil record and that statistics make evolutionary models impossible. Muncaster presents the alternatives of Intelligent Design and Information Theory. The book is endorsed by Michael Behe and William Dembski, scientists who have been instrumental in showing that evolution in its present form is inconsistent with the evidence. Muncaster contends that evolution is not a valid scientific explanation of the origin of all living things. We highly recommend this book.

Baby Dinosaurs on the Ark?

by Janet Kellogg Ray, William B. Eerdmans Publishing, © 2021,
\$13.88 paperback, 213 pages, ISBN-13: 978-0802879448



Janet Kellogg Ray is a biology teacher who was raised as a creationist and realized as she went through her educational experience that what she had been taught was scientifically and logically impossible. This book does an excellent job of exposing the problems of young-earth creationism. Ray explains why that interpretation of Genesis causes more problems than it solves.

However, Ray's most significant error is assuming that the creationist literature accurately interprets the original language of Genesis. She does not even discuss the fact that we cannot force the Hebrew word *yom* to mean a 24-hour day. She also does not distinguish the

difference between the Hebrew word *bara* (create) and *asah* (make). In Ray's mind, taking the Bible "literally" is the method of the groups she attacks. We have said that taking the Bible literally means looking at who wrote it, to whom and why it was written, and how the people it was written to would have understood it. The organized creationist groups do not do that, and neither does Ray.

Ray buys into the Biologos approach to evolution and faith. In fact, Deborah Haarsma, the president of Biologos, wrote the forward to the book. Ray accepts the current version of evolutionary theory and accurately conveys and promotes the modern understanding of neo-Darwinism. The problem is that, like any area of science, things are changing fast, and discoveries constantly change scientific insights. (See the book review on the previous page.)

Ray's understanding of biology is far beyond mine, but she is less informed on geology. For example, confusing clastic sedimentary rocks with chemical precipitates is the same mistake denominational creationists make. She also confuses stars with galaxies. However, her statement that scientism and materialism are not science is spot on.

This book shows what is wrong with the creationist material and how to bring modern evolutionary theory into harmony with faith. Of course, Ray and I do not agree on everything, but we do agree that there were no dinosaurs on Noah's Ark.

DANDY DESIGNS

DESIGNING PEARLS



When a grain of sand or a tiny bit of debris enters a mollusk's shell, such as an oyster or mussel, the creature goes into a defensive action to protect itself from the irritating particle. As a result, the oyster deposits a crystalline form of calcium carbonate known as aragonite. The smooth layers of

minerals and protein that the mollusk deposits on the foreign particle are called nacre (pronounced NAY-ker). The layers of nacre take on a beautiful, iridescent, and shiny appearance that gives pearls their beauty.

The question that has bothered scientists for more than a century is how the oyster can change a jagged or lopsided fragment of grit into a perfectly round and smooth pearl. Recently, a research team studied pearls from Akoya pearl oysters (*Pinctada imbricata fucata*) in Australia. First, they used a diamond wire saw to slice the pearls in half. Then they polished the cut surfaces and used various electron microscopes to study them more carefully than anyone had done before.

One pearl they studied had 2,615 layers of nacre deposited over 548 days. The pearl was only 2.5 mm in diameter, so the layers were extremely thin. They found that the mollusk modulates the thickness of the nacre layers according to “power-law decay across low to mid frequencies, colloquially called $1/f$ noise.” That means the mollusk uses math to adjust the thickness of the layers to compensate for irregularities.

One of the researchers, Laura Otter, a biogeochemist at the Australian National University, said: “These humble creatures are making a super light and super tough material so much more easily and better than we do with all our technology.” Using calcium carbonate and protein, oysters make nacre 3,000 times tougher than the raw materials. Understanding how mollusks make pearls could lead to a new generation of super materials for use in spacecraft or solar panels. Once again, design in nature gives us some valuable insights. Thanks to the Designer of nature, even lowly mollusks can teach humans some lessons.

ZEBRA STRIPES



A child said that a zebra is a horse in striped pajamas. Of course, zebras are not horses, and they do not wear pajamas. But have you ever wondered why zebras wear stripes?

There are at least five possible answers to that question. Probably the best known is so they can hide in the tall grass. But not all zebras live in areas with tall grass. Also, their main predators (lions and hyenas) are more likely to smell zebras before they see them.

Another possibility is that the stripes help to repel flies. In a study published in 2020, researchers tested that theory. They draped solid-color rugs on some horses and striped or checked rugs on others. They found that fewer flies landed on the horses with striped or checked rugs, and those biting African horseflies carry diseases that can be fatal for zebras.

Still, another idea is that stripes help zebras stay cool. The black and white areas create differences in heat exchange patterns causing air to move over the zebra's body.

Every zebra has a different stripe pattern, similar to every person having a different fingerprint. So maybe this allows the zebras to identify each other. We do not have to look at people's fingers to tell who they are. Instead, we look at their faces. However, zebra faces look pretty much the same except for those different stripe patterns.

Maybe those stripes work in another way to evade predators. Perhaps they fool predators by what is called "motion dazzle." A bunch of striped zebras moving around might confuse a predator in the way a person can become confused or dizzy watching striped objects in motion. So it makes sense that it would be hard to pick out one animal in a herd of moving zebras.

So if we wonder why zebras wear stripes, the answer is—we do not know for sure. But why are those light and dark hairs so nicely arranged in beautiful stripes instead of being mixed together, resulting in a dull gray appearance? People appreciate beauty, and since we are created in God's image, he must also be a fan of beauty. I want to suggest that God just likes to add a little extra flair to his creations. Perhaps that is why zebras wear stripes.

News and Notes

STAY UP-TO-DATE ON NEWS AND NOTES: The stories in News and Notes are condensed from articles previously published on our website www.DoesGodExist.today. You can use the QR codes with each of these articles to see the original posts for more details and references. There are also many other interesting and informative articles on that website each day. We encourage you to follow us daily on “Does God Exist? Today.” On that website, you can also subscribe to our free weekly e-mail update. We call it “The Best of the Week from DOES GOD EXIST?” It contains links to the most popular of our posts on DGE? Today and our Facebook page ([Facebook.com/evidence4god](https://www.facebook.com/evidence4god)).

LIFE UNDER THE ANTARCTIC ICE SHELF: German polar researchers drilled through the Antarctic ice shelf. After boring through 656 feet (200 m) of ice, they scooped up material from the seafloor another 328 feet (100 m) down.

A British marine biologist studying the sediment identified 77 different species of animal life, including tube-feeding worms and bryozoans, which are stationary filter feeders. This study was surprising because filter-feeders feed on algae which require sunlight to grow. However, there is no sunlight to provide photosynthetic life under the Antarctic ice shelf. The explanation is that these creatures are feasting on microorganisms that the ocean currents sweep under the ice shelf. You could say the food is delivered to their doorstep.

Life survives here in one of Earth’s least-known habitats despite the cold and dark conditions. Like the scientists who discovered and studied these life forms, we are amazed. But, more than that, we thank God for wisely creating life able to adapt and survive even in hostile environments.



Source: <https://www.livescience.com/antarctic-ice-shelf-life-forms-found>

ANIMAL TOOL USE: Years ago, people thought that only humans used tools, but recent studies have shown animals use tools if you define a tool as an instrument used to accomplish a given task.

Science News reported that polar bears sometimes kill walrus by bashing them with chunks of stone or ice. People have observed birds cracking nuts by dropping them from high altitudes onto rocks.



Elephants use tree trunks for a variety of purposes, and crows use sticks to pry off the lids of bottles. Chimpanzees use conchoidally fractured chert or flint to cut open a fruit.

There is a difference between a tool and a machine. A machine is an assembly of interconnected components arranged to transmit or modify force to perform useful work. A broader question here is whether intelligence is needed to fashion a machine? If that is the case, intelligent animals should be making machines, and mentally challenged humans would not be able to do so.

The design of all animals includes the equipment to secure food and shelter. Building into animals the ability to use objects in their environment to survive is another example of God's design in the natural world. However, what sets humans apart is not tools, machines, or intelligence. Instead, our spiritual nature is what makes humans different.



Source: <https://www.sciencenews.org/article/polar-bears-bludgeon-walrus-stones-tools-ice-inuit>

A GIANT MILLIPEDE: Researchers from the University of Cambridge have found the fossil of a giant millipede in England. This specimen is 8.6 feet long and would have weighed about 110 pounds. Named *Arthropleura*, this is the largest invertebrate ever found, replacing giant sea scorpions that previously held the record. This animal lived before the dinosaurs and was an omnivore eating plants, nuts, seeds, and other invertebrates.

The importance of a find like this is that it confirms that large animals, insects, and plants existed in the past. In addition, it reminds us that the ecology of the early Earth, as it was being prepared for later life forms, was very different from what we see today.

Genesis 1:1 simply tells us that God created the Earth, not how or when or what processes he used to prepare the planet for humans. But because God used a process, we can locate resources far underground. If he had simply “zapped” the planet into existence, we would have no clue about where to look for oil or coal or various minerals.



Source: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2021/12/21/giant-millipede-fossil-big-as-car/8984712002/>

A LARGER DINOSAUR: We are amazed by the enormous size of animals in the distant past. From a giant millipede to the Titanoboa and the Titanosaur, the size of ancient animals excites fossil hunters. Since 2017, Patagotitan has held the record for the largest dinosaur at 120 feet (36.5 m) long and weighing over 57 tons. However, paleontologists in Argentina recently found pieces of a larger dinosaur.

Unlike mammals, reptiles never stop growing, so there is virtually no limit to their size. A more significant issue is having environments warm enough for such animals to survive and enough plant material to sustain them, plus a high oxygen level.

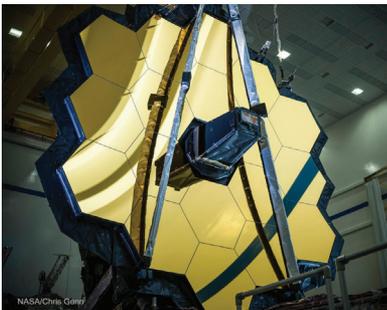
The environment that allowed a larger dinosaur to survive would not have been hospitable to mammals. Reptiles cannot only survive very hot conditions, but they require heat to sustain their bulk. A hot Earth with very wet conditions would also promote rapid plant growth. Accordingly, the plant fossils from the time of those animals indicate huge size and rapid growth.

God was not a magician miraculously zapping things into existence. God could do the creation any way he wished, but he wisely chose to make the resources humans would need in such a way that we could find them. He acted as an engineer, producing the coal, gas, oil, iron, salt, and other resources we would need by processes we can study and understand. Present-day processes on Earth could never produce them, but the enormous animals and plants of the past created enough resources to take us into the nuclear/solar age.

Source: <https://www.discovermagazine.com/the-sciences/have-scientists-found-the-biggest-dinosaur>



THE JAMES WEBB TELESCOPE: On Christmas Day, 2021, the European Space Agency launched a new space telescope designed by NASA. The James Webb Space Telescope (JWST or Webb) is a successor to the Hubble Space Telescope (HST or Hubble). However, it is intended to be a space observatory with capabilities far beyond HST, which was launched in 1990.



Scientists expect the JWST to revolutionize astronomy and expand our knowledge of the universe. It will observe the universe in infrared light, while HST is limited to visible light. Because galaxies farther away are retreating at increasing speeds, their light shifts toward the red or infrared spectrum.

Earth-based telescopes must always observe the universe through particles, pollution, and moisture in our atmosphere. That limits their ability to obtain sharp, precise images. Space-based telescopes eliminate that problem. Webb will give much sharper images with its mirror made of beryllium coated with gold and a diameter more than 2.5 times as wide as Hubble's.

Another thing that astronomers hope to study with JWST is dark matter, the stuff that is out there but cannot be seen or detected by any means science has discovered. The way they know dark matter exists is that it holds the galaxies together. Physics cannot explain why spinning, spiral galaxies, such as the Milky Way, do not fly apart because of centrifugal force.

We are excited to see the new images of the universe the James Webb Space Telescope will capture. As we learn about the formation of stars and galaxies, it opens the door to knowledge of God's handiwork, allowing us to say, "So that's how God did it!"



Source: <https://jwst.nasa.gov/content/about/faqs/faq.html#webb>

EXOPLANETS AND LIFE IN THE UNIVERSE: Movies and television shows featuring space travel and alien life have fascinated people for decades. Other galaxies are many light-years away, and the laws of physics will not allow us to travel even one percent of light speed. Nevertheless, people are still concerned about exoplanets and life in the universe. An exoplanet is any planet outside of our solar system, and scientists are trying to find one that could support life.



Scientists look for planets orbiting stars that are so far away we cannot even see the stars with our unaided eyes. Unlike in the movies, they are so far away that we could never go there. Even sending a radio signal to those possible planets would take thousands or even millions of years, traveling at the speed of light. Getting a message back would take an equal amount of time.

There are so many requirements for life that the chances of any of those planets supporting advanced life would be almost infinitely small. God could have created life elsewhere in the universe, but we have no evidence one way or the other. The Bible does not tell us, and science can only look and hope for a clue. Whether or not life exists on other planets or moons, we believe the fine-tuning of Earth for life is evidence for God's existence.



ELEPHANT TRUNKS AND ROBOTS: New research shows that using elephant trunks as a model for robots, engineer-designers may soon create machines capable of doing things that no current robot can do. For example, the elephant trunk has 40,000 muscles that work together to allow the animal to pick up a single leaf or lift and move a large log easily.



Researchers used motion capture technology similar to that used to create movies where the movement of animated characters is mapped to the motions of real actors in a studio. Studying elephant trunk movements by this method allowed the researchers to carefully examine the myriad ways an elephant uses its trunk.

Looking at the elephant's trunk design, it does not seem possible that this could be a product of chance. Yet, the elephant's survival is only possible because of this highly complex appendage.



Source: *Scientific American*, December 2021 (page 18)

THE “EGG-QUATION”: When you look at the eggs of different birds, you will notice that they have different shapes. Why is an egg's shape important? There is a need to know how to pack eggs to support them to prevent cracking. This is not just important for people who raise chickens and sell eggs at your local grocery store but also for conservationists protecting birds in the wild.

Scientists at Kent University in England came up with a mathematical formula with four essential inputs: (1) egg length, (2) maximum breadth, (3) diameter where the pointed end terminates, and (4) location of the egg's maximum diameter in relation to the midpoint of its length. The formula works for any egg shape.



This is a classic example of two things. One is that research that may seem pointless to a casual observer frequently provides needed information. People will use this equation to transport eggs safely, incubate eggs efficiently, and restore bird populations in areas where they have become extinct.

A second thing this research shows is the incredible design of eggs. An engineering equation allows the design of precise egg shape construction to fit all environments.



This complex engineering problem shows that even the ordinary egg speaks of the Creator’s wisdom and skill in providing for his creatures.

Source: *Science News*, 12/4/21 page 11

STUDY CHALLENGES NEO-DARWINISM: A long-term study of 27,224 mice over 26 years challenges a basic assumption of neo-Darwinism. The assumption is that natural selection guides evolution by removing “unfit” individuals. Therefore individuals that are more fit survive to pass on their genes.

Researchers identified mice with broken, missing, or deformed limbs, missing eyes, cataracts, and missing or mutilated tails. Evolution predicts that these unfit mice would be removed from a population, and the researchers set out to see how quickly that would happen. The data shows that the survival rate of the impaired mice was no different from that of mice who had no physical impairments.

This observation would be even more dramatic for humans because disabled humans live long lives supported by family members or group associates. That kind of support has never been observed in mice. The evidence is that physical impairments in the animal kingdom do not necessarily cause the demise of an individual. This challenges a basic assumption of neo-Darwinism which, like uniformitarianism, is not supported by the evidence.

Source: https://www.nsf.gov/discoveries/disc_summ.jsp?WT.mc_id=USNSF_1&cntn_id=303986&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery



HEZEKIAH’S WALL: The Israel Antiquities Authority announced a “groundbreaking discovery.” Archaeologists have uncovered the wall Hezekiah built around 701 B.C. Isaiah 22:9–10 describes the wall’s construction, and 2 Kings 25:10 tells of its destruction during the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem about a century later. In addition, the archaeologists found various objects, including seals, along the wall’s base to confirm its date.



To help people learn more about biblical archaeology, we have produced a video series titled “Beyond Reasonable Doubt” with John Cooper. The series is an introductory presentation of positive evidence for the reliability of the Bible and is recommended for class use and individual viewing. See page 19 for more details.

Source: <https://www.baslibrary.org/biblical-archaeology-review/47/4/9>

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

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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