

DOES GOD EXIST?

Second Quarter 2023
Volume 50 Number 2

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

We the People

of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do hereby constitute and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Article I

Section 1. All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

HOLY
BIBLE

FREEDOM!

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Does God Exist? Lectureships

No Lectures are scheduled,
but **visit us** at
doesgodexist.org, where
many materials are available
free of charge.

If you hold to my
teaching, you are
really my disciples.
Then you will know
the truth, and the
truth will set you
free. ... Everyone
who sins is a slave
to sin.

— John 8: 31–35.

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Correspondence should be addressed to John Clayton
1555 Echo Valley Dr., Niles, MI 49120-8738
e-mail: jncdge@aol.com
Home phone: 269-687-9426

Does God Exist? websites: <http://www.doesgodexist.org>;
dandydesigns.org; doesgodexist.today; doesgodexist.tv;
grandpajohn.club; scienceterrific.com; whypain.org

Send subscription requests, orders, or address changes to:

Does God Exist?, PO Box 2704, South Bend, IN 46680-2704
Phone: 574-514-1400 or by e-mail: marcusen@michiana.org

DOES GOD EXIST? (USPS 011-010) is published quarterly (January/February/March, April/May/June, July/August/September, and October/November/December) by **Does God Exist?**, 814 S. Main St., South Bend, IN 46601-3008. Subscription is free upon request. Periodicals postage paid at South Bend, IN. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: **DOES GOD EXIST?**, PO Box 2704, South Bend, IN 46680-2704.



One of the significant challenges to humanity throughout time has been the question of freedom. In biblical times, freedom meant not being a slave. However, people became enslaved by several different methods. If one nation militarily conquered another, all of the surviving citizens of the conquered nation became slaves. Because slaves had no rights in the Roman system, the slave owner could do anything to them, including putting them to death.

Under Jewish law, when a Jew owed a debt, one way to pay it was to become a slave voluntarily. This was also a way to escape poverty. The law limited enslavement to six years, and upon release, the slave received enough assets to make a new start (Exodus 21:2–6 and Deuteronomy 15:12–18). There were elaborate rules about female slaves, but in any situation, a person gave up physical freedom when they entered servitude.

In the ancient Roman system, slaves could buy their freedom.



This was a frequent way of getting out of servitude for a person seized in a Roman military operation. In Acts 22:24–29, Paul was about to be scourged, but when the Roman captain learned that Paul was born as a Roman citizen, he backed off the scourging. In the discussion between the captain and Paul, the captain said he had paid “a great sum to obtain my freedom,” and Paul replied that he was born free.

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In America today, we have a major conflict between those who would restrict a person's freedom and those who want to be free to do as they wish. At issue in this battle is what a person can say and not say, what sexual rules they must follow, and what rights a person has and does not have. Women's rights to abortion conflict with the fact that the unborn child is a human. The use of specific pronouns has become another freedom issue.

There are no easy answers to these issues, and it reminds us of the story of an immigrant who had heard that America was the land of the free. He stepped off the boat that brought him to New York City, saw a man he did not like, and walked up and punched him in the nose. As a result, he was arrested and brought before a judge. "I thought America was the land of the free," he said. The judge responded, "Yes, it is, but your freedom ends where the other man's nose begins."



Christianity brought a new understanding to the issue of freedom. Jesus taught his followers to respect and obey the government, even the Roman government. He told his followers to "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto

God the things that are God's." The things that are God's are not the material things of this world (see Matthew 22:21). The apostles made it clear that Christians are not concerned about the things the world holds dear. Peter said, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or to governors ... for this is the will of God that with well doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not using your liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as servants of God. Honor all men, Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king ..." (1 Peter 2:13–17). The Bible repeats this message over and over (see Galatians 3:28, Colossians 3:11, and Romans 13:1–8).

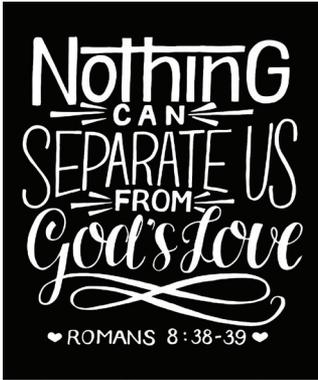
The Christian biblical concept of freedom is spiritual freedom.

In John 8:31–36, Jesus spells out what spiritual freedom means: "If you continue in my word then you are my disciples, and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free ... Whoever sins is the servant of sin." Galatians 5:1 repeats this concept: "Stand fast in the liberty by which Christ has made us free and do not get entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Romans 6 elaborates on spiritual freedom from



allowing sin to have dominion over us and summarizes in this way: “And now being made free from sin and having become servants to God you are set apart [have holiness] and have everlasting life, for the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

This is not just meaningless theological rhetoric. A careful



reading of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5–7 details what it means to have spiritual freedom. The concept of *agapao* is a love for all people, believing that every human being is a creation of God and has infinite value. That eliminates war, conflict, hypocrisy, religious division, materialism, selfishness, hate, racism, and ritualism. Galatians 5 tells us the importance of spiritual freedom (verse 1), and the results of being enslaved by sin compared to being spiritually free. Verses 19–21 list the effects of being enslaved

to sin: “sexual vice, impurity, indecency, idolatry, sorcery, quarrels, a contentious temper, envy, fits of rage, selfish ambitions, dissensions, party intrigues, envy, drunkenness, carousing.” How much of the pain and suffering in the world today are rooted in people being enslaved by those things?

Galatians then lists the benefits of spiritual freedom: “love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, benevolence, meekness, temperance, tolerance, self-control.” Everyone can be free spiritually because God’s Spirit makes it available to us. In Acts 2:38, when Peter talked about becoming a Christian, he spoke explicitly about the freedom it brings: “Each of you must turn from sin (repent) and be baptized for the remission (forgiveness) of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

If every person on the planet embraced this freedom, life on Earth would be free from war, prisons, and the conflicts tearing our world apart. Unfortunately, because evil is attractive, some will embrace it and sacrifice their spiritual freedom by selling themselves to spiritual slavery. This, in turn, brings physical slavery, and its collateral damage hurts us all. Jesus came to offer true freedom, and his message gives meaning and purpose to life. Eventually, spiritual freedom will win out, and Matthew 25:31–46 describes the final complete freedom given to those who choose to strive for it in life. In the words of Joshua, “Choose you this day whom you will serve” (Joshua 24:15). Understand that choosing spiritual enslavement is a choice with horrible consequences today and in eternity.

— John N. Clayton



Collateral Benefits of Worship

When dealing with people with no church affiliation, we often hear, “I don’t need to go to church to be good.” This frequently comes from someone who has had a bad experience with the hypocrisy of a churchgoer. However, new research data shows collateral benefits of worship and involvement in a church. The study by Johns Hopkins researchers shows a connection between being socially isolated and dementia.

The study involved 5,022 dementia-free U.S. adults aged 65 or older with an average age of 76 and not living in a residential care facility. The data showed that socially isolated adults have a 27% higher chance of developing dementia than those who are not socially isolated. The study defined social isolation as “having few relationships and few people to interact with regularly.” That included whether the person attended religious services or participated in social events. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also report that social isolation is responsible for other serious health conditions, including heart disease and depression.



These studies are not designed to validate attendance at worship or involvement in church activities.

However, they show the collateral benefits of worship in a corporate setting. Meeting together in a church setting meets the criteria for preventing social isolation. Worship and Bible study are always on a regular schedule, so participation is not sporadic and allows a person to associate with the same group of people regularly. If the group is following the instructions of Jesus and the example of the first century church, participation provides the ideal environment to avoid social isolation.

Galatians 6:2 tells Christians to “Carry one another’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” In Acts 2:42–47, we read that the early Christians were together daily (verse 46)



and shared food and fellowship. The acts of worship encourage people not be to socially isolated. Singing together (not listening to someone else) is a recognized tool for avoiding social isolation. Who has not enjoyed singing with others around a campfire?

The communion service is vertical with Christ and horizontal as we join in a common act of spiritual oneness.

Tragically, many churches have fallen into the same trap as the Corinthian church did by letting human power struggles produce social isolation (see 1 Corinthians 11:17–34). According to the Bible, true worship provides a way to be at peace with God while living with others and avoiding isolation. God has given us many ways to improve our lives, and we should not overlook the collateral benefits of worship and avoiding social isolation.

—JNC



*visit the Clayton Museum of Ancient History
at York University, York, Nebraska*

Toward a Positive Relationship Between Science and Faith



Our mission is to show that science and faith in God are not enemies but exist in a symbiotic relationship. Unfortunately, it is an uphill battle because both those who promote naturalism and promoters of religious fundamentalism are unwilling to think and work toward a positive relationship between science and faith. This is an old problem that has been detrimental to both science and faith in the past.

The ignorance of science in America today continues to be appalling. Here are some examples (according to *Skeptic* magazine):

- *26% of Americans believe the Sun revolves around the Earth.
- *60% believe that dinosaurs died out sometime in the last 10,000 years.
- *33% believe dinosaurs were on Earth 100 years ago.

I had a brilliant student with great aptitude in science in my high school physics classes. He was the son of a religious figure in South Bend, Indiana, where I taught for 41 years. At the end of the school year, I asked him where he would go to college and what would be his science major. Of course, I hoped it would be physics. Instead, he smiled and told me he would not attend college because he did not want to give up his faith.

We want to work toward a positive relationship between science and faith. We encourage Christians to go into



science because science needs a moral compass. Ninety-five Nobel Laureates were recognized between 1901 and 1930, but only four were Americans. Europeans dominated the winners of the Nobel Science awards. In the

1930s Americans did somewhat better, taking 28% of the Nobel prizes in science. From 1943 to 1958, Americans won 46% of the Nobel prizes, and since 1959 the number has risen to 57%.



The dictionary defines science as

knowledge, and God is the source of all knowledge. Not only has the war between science and faith eroded great talent from the growth of science, but the collateral damage of the war between science and faith has damaged the church. In 1940, 96% of Americans believed in God, and 75% were church members. Today, 62% of Americans believe in God, and only 47% are members of a church. Thirty percent say they have no religion at all.

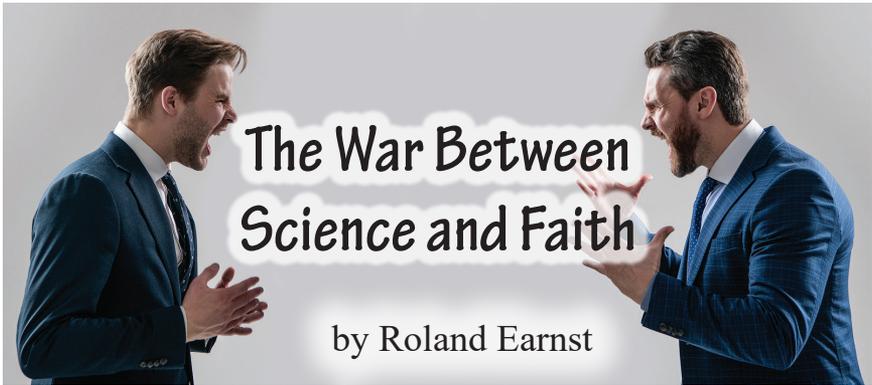
If you believe in God and his Word, true science (knowledge) cannot be in conflict with your religious beliefs. If you have a conflict, you either have bad science or bad theology, or both. The lesson of history is that there has been a lot of both. We must work toward a positive relationship between science and faith to advance knowledge for everyone's benefit. Join us as we work toward that goal. Scientific naturalism cannot tell us why we exist, how we should live, or what our future will be. God's Word answers those vital questions.



—JNC

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





The War Between Science and Faith

by Roland Earnst

How could a man living over 2,000 years ago accurately calculate Earth's circumference? How could he even know that Earth is spherical? How can some people today believe that our planet is flat when everyone has seen pictures of Earth taken by satellites in space? How can people believe that the universe and life came about by accidental circumstances?

Those may be too many questions at once. Let us try looking at them one at a time. The first man to accurately calculate Earth's circumference in about 240 B.C. was a Greek mathematician, geographer, astronomer, music theorist, and poet, and his calculations were amazingly accurate.

THE MYTH AND THE FACTS

A myth originated from a fiction work by nineteenth-century American author Washington Irving and other authors. Irving wrote a less-than-accurate "biography" of Christopher Columbus. In it, the Spanish authorities questioned Columbus' plan to sail west to Asia by going east because they thought the ships would drop off the edge of a flat Earth. The truth is that European scholars at that time knew that our planet is a sphere. In fact, Columbus did too, but he believed it was 25% smaller than it actually is. He should have paid more attention to Eratosthenes.

Ancient Greek scholars, as early as the fifth century B.C., recognized the spherical nature of the planet based on observations such as lunar eclipses and ships sailing across the ocean. So Eratosthenes set out to accurately calculate Earth's



Replica of Columbus' ship, the Santa Maria

circumference using mathematics and the shadow cast by two similar rods placed in the ground in two locations at noon on the summer solstice.

MANUFACTURING THE WAR

That answers the first two questions, but what about people today who believe the Earth is flat when there is plenty of evidence otherwise? That is an example of people believing what they want to believe and refusing to accept the evidence. There is a connection here to the so-called war between science and faith.

Scientist and philosopher John William Draper was instrumental in starting the war with his book *History of the Conflict Between Religion and Science*, published in 1874. He claimed that the church was hostile to the advancement of science and that the early church fathers believed that scripture said the Earth is flat. That concept of a war between science and theology was further advanced and popularized by historian Andrew Dickson White in his book *The Warfare of Science* (1876). Darwin had published his work *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, and the war was on.



Creating a war between science and faith seems to have been a goal of Draper and White and many advocates of Darwin's theory, such as Thomas Henry Huxley. The lack of scholarship on the part of Draper and White has been demonstrated. Meanwhile, Darwin's theory has had to be revised to what is now known as neo-Darwinism. Darwin thought that living cells were just globs of protoplasm. He had no idea that they are more like cities with factories, machines, and transportation systems operating on complex information contained in DNA. As biological science advances, Darwinian naturalism faces more challenges.

Historians of science David Lindberg and Ronald Numbers wrote in *Beyond War and Peace: A Reappraisal of the Encounter between Christianity and Science* (1986) that "there was scarcely a Christian scholar of the Middle Ages who did not acknowledge [Earth's] sphericity and even know its approximate circumference." What many writers, including Draper and White, had overlooked was that the leading early scientists were all believers in God. In fact, their faith motivated their desire to know God through his creation.

SCIENCE GIVES EVIDENCE FOR FAITH

We can still know God through his creation, so the idea of a war between science and theology is incorrect. "For his invisible

attributes, that is, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world being understood through what he has made” (Romans 1:20 CSB).

Many physical constants determine the universe’s structure, and one of the most mysterious is the fine-structure constant represented by the Greek letter alpha (α). The fine-structure constant has been called the most mysterious number in physics. American theoretical physicist Richard Feynman called it “a magic number that comes to us with no understanding by humans.”

The fine-structure constant shows the strength of the interaction between electrons and photons. It also shows up in many other ratios in physics. The value is approximately 0.007,297,352,569 or 1/137. Physicists consider it mysterious because they do not know where it came from or why it has that value. They cannot explain why it exists at all.

If you are not a physicist, why should you care about the most mysterious number in physics? If the fine-structure constant had any other value, life as we know it would not be possible. If you changed that number, you would change the universe. A different value for the fine-structure constant would change the size of atoms and alter chemistry and nuclear reactions. No stable matter, no life, and no intelligent beings would exist. We would not be here.

$$\alpha = \frac{1}{4\pi\epsilon_0} \frac{e^2}{\hbar c} \approx \frac{1}{137}$$

Richard Feynman wrote that “all good theoretical physicists put this number up on their wall and worry about it.” Apparently, they worry about where it came from and why it is what it is. Feynman further wrote, “You might say the ‘hand of God’ wrote that number, and ‘we don’t know how He pushed His pencil.” Feynman was joking about the fine-structure constant, but we think it was written by the “hand of God.” We also believe “He pushed His pencil” so that he could create humans for a purpose.

PURPOSE IN THE UNIVERSE

“In a certain sense, you might say that the universe has a purpose, but I’m not sure what the purpose is. I don’t believe in any religion I’ve seen. So in that sense, I am an atheist.” That statement by the British mathematician, mathematical physicist, philosopher of science, and Nobel Laureate in physics Roger Penrose appeared in an interview in *New Scientist* magazine. Penrose has won many awards and honors for his brilliant achievements. One of his endeavors has been to explore the origin of consciousness. He believes that the known laws of physics cannot explain the phenomenon of consciousness.

In the *New Scientist* interview, Penrose said, “whatever consciousness is, it must be beyond computable physics.” Penrose does not think that consciousness is accidental. He said, “I think the presence of consciousness, if I can put it like that, is not an accident.” If consciousness is not an accident, then it must be intentional. How can something be intentional without a mind that intends for it to be? How can it have a purpose without a purpose giver? Penrose stated in the interview that “nobody knows where the fundamental constants of nature come from.” He suggests that if those fundamental constants did not have the specific values they have, then the chemistry of life could not exist, and we would not be here. If those constants have the precise values for life, how could that happen without a conscious Designer?



Roger Penrose

Roger Penrose clearly states that he does not believe the universe and consciousness are accidents but seeks to explain them by quantum mechanics. However, he admits, “I would say that there is something going on that might resonate with a religious perspective.”

We agree with Penrose that the universe has a purpose. Purpose in the universe and purpose in consciousness can best be explained by a conscious Mind outside of the universe and beyond the reach of scientific analysis. This is not a “god-of-the-gaps” concept but logically seeking the best explanation. Following through with that understanding means that you, like everyone else, also have a purpose.

WORKING OUT THE DETAILS

In his book *The Meaning of Evolution* (1949), George Gaylord Simpson wrote, “It is already evident that all the objective phenomena of the history of life can be explained by purely naturalistic ... materialistic factors.” In other words, neo-Darwinism explains life. With that in mind, he writes, “Therefore, man is the result of a purposeless and natural process that did not have him in mind.” Despite Simpson’s confidence, does naturalistic evolution explain life?



George Gaylord Simpson

It is worth noting that Simpson began the paragraph from which I took the above quotes with these words, “Although many details remain to be worked out” That is an understatement! Those who insist that

naturalistic, materialistic evolution explains life completely and purposely overlooking “many details.” Does naturalistic evolution explain life? Here are a few of the problems with that explanation:

- * *The origin of life*
- * *The source of the genetic code*
- * *The origin of sexual reproduction*
- * *The lack of transitional fossils*
- * *The development of complex organ systems*
- * *The development of irreducibly complex molecular machines*
- * *Barriers between the types of life forms*
- * *Mathematical difficulties based on the number of evolutionary steps and the time required for each step, limited by the total time available*

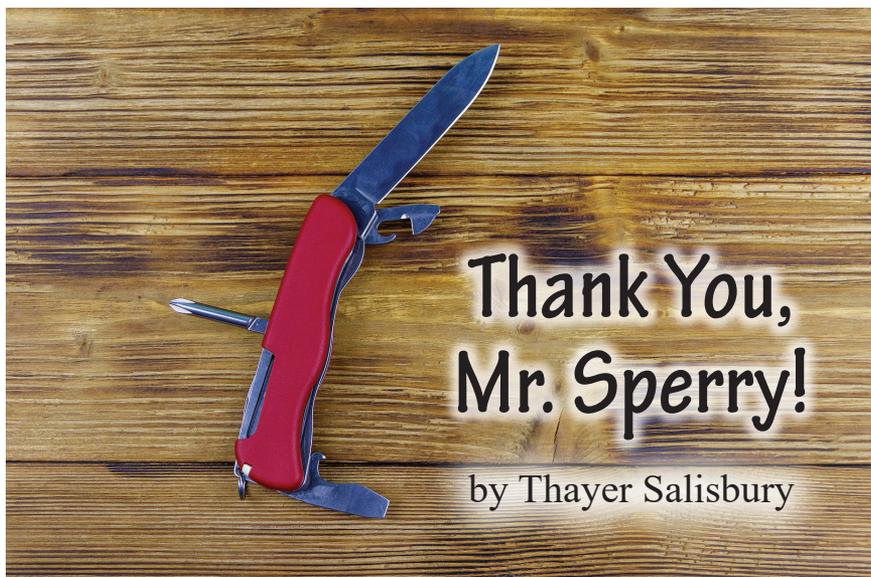
Those are just a few of the details that “remain to be worked out.” Darwin recognized some of them, such as the biological big bang of the Cambrian era and the lack of intermediate fossils. He expected those details would be resolved in the future. More than a century and a half later, there is still no resolution to those problems, and science has added many more to the list.

IS THE WAR REAL?

Are science and faith at war with each other? Does naturalistic evolution explain life and eliminate the need for God? Many scientists fully accept naturalism because the scientific community would shun them if they did not. Others accept it not because of its explanatory power but because they see no acceptable alternative. So when someone says that evolution has disproven the need for God, remind them that these are only a few of the reasons why naturalistic evolution falls short of explaining why we are here. We do have a purpose, and that purpose comes from our Creator.



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When I was 16, my family moved to a city 40 miles from my hometown. I had to attend a new school. After 11 years of school with the same kids, it was disconcerting to start all over. I had no previous experience with any of my classmates or any of my teachers.

A couple of the teachers and a few students tried to help me feel welcome. One that stands out in my mind was my shop teacher, Mr. Sperry. He was fighting a loneliness battle of his own that year. Early in September, his wife was diagnosed with cancer. She was in treatment most of the year and died shortly before the school year ended.

Things were a lot different in school in those days. Discipline was not what it had been in my parent's day, but it was far different from what it is like now, I suspect. Teachers could still give a student a good swatting if the student asked for it clearly enough. In fact, Coach Gilcrest (who substituted on days when Mr. Sperry took his wife for treatment) is reputed to have pulled off a very unusual form of corporal punishment. A student with very long hair wanted to work in the shop but refused to tie up his hair to keep it safe around the equipment. Coach Gilcrest put him on the floor, sat on him, and gave him a quick haircut using the tin snips. I guess you can do that if the local football stadium is named after you. Or at least you could in those days.

I cannot imagine Mr. Sperry doing that. But he did some other things that would not pass muster today.

Mr. Sperry was advising me one day (I was building a "grandmother clock") when another student approached and asked if we had a pair of scissors in the shop. Mr. Sperry replied, "What is the

matter with you? Where is your pocketknife? How will you ever be a man if you always run to the women and borrow their scissors? You ought to have a knife. A knife is better for what you are doing than any scissors.”

Yes, we carried knives in school in those days. Up until that day, I didn't always carry a knife. But after I heard what Mr. Sperry said, I made it a point to always have a knife. That was 48 years ago.

I thought of Mr. Sperry today. I was in an agriculture supply store to get some potting soil. The clerk tried to persuade me to take composted manure instead.

Why? She had not unwrapped the skid of potting soil, and she did not want to take the time to unwrap it. So I pulled out a knife (the smallest of three I had on me) and slit the wrapping in less time than it took to type this sentence.

For me (as for Mr. Sperry and most people of earlier generations), a knife is a tool, not a weapon. Sure, one can be used as a weapon if needed, but primarily knives are valuable tools.

Should knives be allowed in school today? In many places, probably not. But what has changed? Why could knives not only be allowed but even encouraged



today like in the old days?

It is attitudes that have changed, not knives.

When my dad was a boy, everyone on “the ridge” had a gun. Most had several. But they did not shoot anyone. Dad sometimes helped his grandfather blast rocks using dynamite purchased at the local hardware store. But no one went around blowing up buildings.

Knives, guns, and explosives were more common in the past than they are today. Yet there is more violence today. Has someone developed knives, guns, and explosives with minds of their own and the desire to kill?

Our problem is with what people have in their hearts, not the knives in their pockets.



We have allowed violent entertainment—claiming it has something to do with freedom of speech. That is hogwash. In context, the promise of freedom of speech is the freedom to criticize the government. It is not freedom to corrupt people’s souls so Hollywood can make a bigger profit.

We have allowed human life to be devalued in people’s minds. Fifty years of justifying the killing of unwanted children has led people to think they should be able to kill unwanted adults. The conclusion



is perfectly logical. If we can kill a child who has never done anything wrong, surely it cannot be wrong to eliminate some people who have done wrongs that we particularly dislike.

We have devalued life by treating crimes against human life as no worse than crimes against property. What punishment is handed out

for simple theft or tax evasion? Typically, repayment of what was taken, plus a prison term. What sentence is handed out for taking a human life? Normally, a prison term, and that is all.

The problem is not knives in pockets. It is corruption in the heart.

Thank you, Mr. Sperry! For the last 48 years, I have rarely been without a knife. Your excellent advice has often saved me from difficulty. I got my potting soil today.



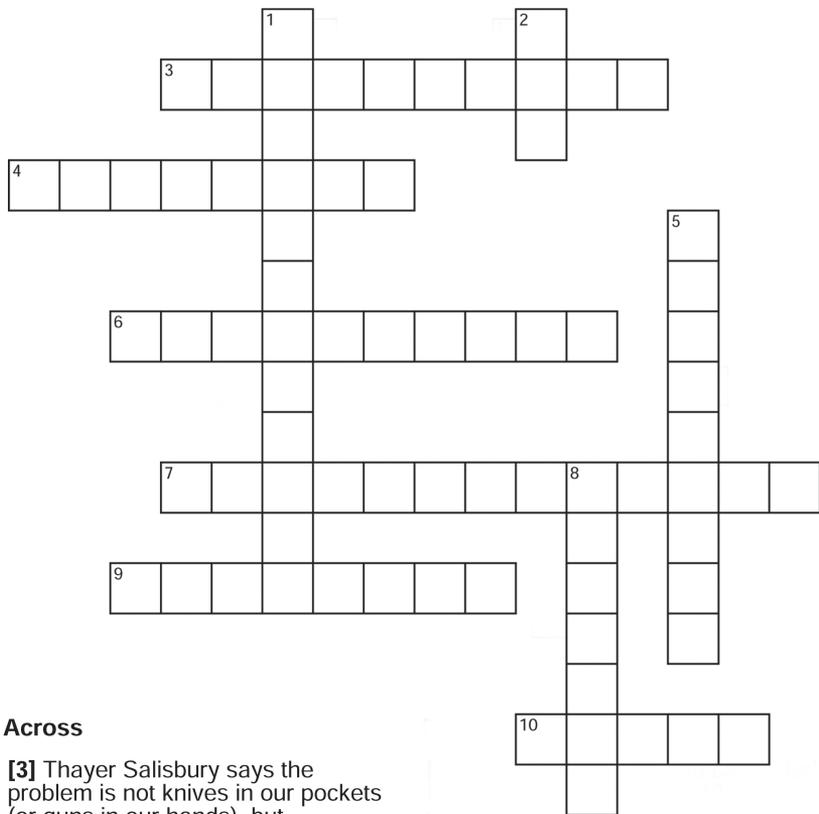
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ADDRESS CHANGE? To remain on our mailing list, please give us both your old and new addresses with both zip codes at least six to eight weeks before the move, if at all possible. Thanks!



Does God Exist? 2nd Quarter 2023 Crossword

Solve the following puzzle based on the articles on pages 3-17



Across

[3] Thayer Salisbury says the problem is not knives in our pockets (or guns in our hands), but _____ in the heart.

[4] Socially isolated adults have a 27% greater chance of developing _____.

[6] Darwin thought that living cells were just globs of _____.

[7] Roger Penrose believes the known laws of physics cannot explain _____.

[9] Change the fine-structure _____, and you would not be here.

[10] The wages of sin is _____, but the gift of God is eternal life.

Down

[1] The Greek scholar who calculated Earth's circumference in 240 B.C. was _____.

[2] Old Testament Law limited enslavement to _____ years,

[5] Science can be simply defined as _____.

[8] Columbus knew that Earth is spherical, but he thought it was 25% _____ than it is.

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

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AND SUPPORT!

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.

DEREK BARTON
1918 – 1998



*English Organic Chemist
renowned for his
discoveries of the
Barton reaction,
Barton decarboxylation,
Barton-McCombie deoxygenation
Barton-Zard synthesis
Barton vinyl iodine procedure.
Won 1969 Nobel Prize in
Chemistry
for Conformational Analysis.*

“God is Truth. There is no incompatibility between science and religion. Both are seeking the same truth. Science shows that God exists.”

“The observations and experiments of science are so wonderful that the truth that they establish can surely be accepted as another manifestation of God. God shows himself by allowing man to establish truth.”

Sources: <https://www.azquotes.com/quote/587265>; <https://quotefancy.com/quote/1645244/Derek-Barton-The-observations-and-experiments-of-science-are-so-wonderful-that-the-truth>

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Cynthia's Corner

FREEDOM!



The theme for this quarter's issue of the *Does God Exist?* journal is Freedom. Some of my acquaintances have complained that being a Christian is too restrictive. My experience is that being a Christian is the best way possible to experience meaningful freedom. We are not talking about physical freedom, although following God's rules for living is the basis for staying out of physical trouble. In Romans 13:1–5, Paul talks about rulers being ordained of God and says that civil rulers are ministers of God against those who do evil. If we live as God directs us to, we have a better chance of avoiding the loss of our physical freedom.

More important than that is spiritual freedom. In John 8:31–32, Jesus told his disciples that if they continued in him, they would “know the truth and the truth shall make you free.” In verse 34, he says sinning makes one a slave of sin. In Romans 6:6, Paul continues this discussion by talking about being freed from serving sin. In verses 13–23, he speaks of sin controlling those who have not been baptized and thus do not have the Holy Spirit's help in dying to sin. In Romans 8:1, Paul speaks of Christians having no condemnation if they walk after the Spirit. Verse 2 summarizes this by saying, “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.”

Galatians 5:1 encourages Christians to “Stand fast in the liberty in which Christ has made us free and do not get entangled again in the yoke of bondage.” The true freedom that Christianity offers is described in Romans 5:15–17 as a free gift given by the grace of God. The spiritual freedom God gives all who will accept it is absolutely without strings or cost. It is real and gives us a chance to be truly free. Furthermore, Christianity is a guilt-relieving faith, making it unique among the religious alternatives.

The **Does God Exist?** ministry is designed to offer evidence that God is real and that he is active in today's world. The freedom we have in Christianity gives evidence for the truth of the Christian message and the validity of the teachings of Jesus Christ.

—Cynthia Clayton



See our videos at www.doesgodexist.tv



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

The 400 Silent Years

by H. A. Ironside, CrossReach Publications, © 2014
Kindle, 122 pages, \$0.99, ASIN: B00NSBHLNM



**THE 400
SILENT YEARS**
H. A. IRONSIDE



This book was originally written in 1914 by H.A. Ironside, pastor of Moody Church in Chicago and revised in modern English by CrossReach Publishers. It summarizes the culture and history of God's people from the time of Malachi to Matthew. This book gives an historically credible explanation of the events between the testaments, helping us to understand the culture of the time when Jesus ministered.

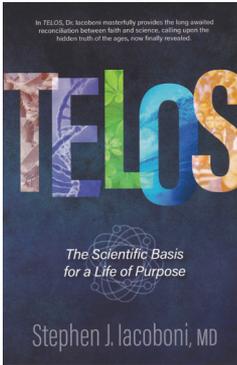
The book is divided into five sections. The first is the history of the Jews from the times of Darius the Persian (Nehemiah 12:22) to the fall of the Persian Empire followed by the Macedonian or Greek Empire. The second section is the history of the Maccabees and their revolt against Greek control. The third section covers the Asmonean Dynasty starting with Hyrcanus and going through the Roman and Greek conflict. In all of these periods, the book describes the position of the Jews and the violation of the sacred things of Judaism.

The fourth section is titled the "Edomite Ascendancy," which is the last half-century before the birth of Jesus. First, Caesar returns to Rome and becomes Dictator of the World. Next, Herod becomes ruler in Judea and rebuilds the Temple. Then the book explains the conflict between the remaining Maccabees, Greeks, and Romans and how they affected the life of Jesus. The book's last section is titled "The Literature of the Jews," which briefly reviews the Apocrypha.

We recommend this book to those wanting to know more about the time between Malachi and Matthew. This book contains evidence that will challenge any skeptic. We recommend it highly.

Telos

by Stephen J. Jacoboni, Broadstreet Publishing, © 2022
\$16.99 paperback, 256 pages, ISBN-13: 978-1-4245-6396-8



One of the most significant weaknesses of atheistic naturalism is that it gives no purpose for existence. Why do we exist, or why is there something instead of nothing? We have approached the question of purpose by asking people to consider where that belief takes our lives. If we have no purpose and there is no reason for our existence, why should we live? The accelerated use of drugs and suicide is certainly related to those who believe they have no reason to exist.

Dr. Stephen J. Jacoboni, MD, is a well-known oncologist who has been the medical director of three cancer centers in the Pacific Northwest and wrote this outstanding book subtitled “The Scientific Basis for a Life of Purpose.” Jacoboni discusses the modern promoters of naturalism and atheism. He also goes back to Aristotle, who clearly stated that an innate force of nature organizes all things for a purpose he called “telos.” Jacoboni shows that even the great minds of science, like Newton and Darwin, failed to understand the purpose that is clear in the things they discovered. Jacoboni points out that this “deceived and misled the scientific world, which blindly followed, making a need for a new paradigm” (page 106). This book is serious, but Jacoboni writes with humor, sensitivity, and even poetry.

This book is heavily documented and contains many quotes proving Jacoboni’s point. He shows that the refusal to see purpose in nature inhibited science and severely affected philosophy, resulting in existentialism. Jacoboni takes to task modern philosophers who have based their theories on the erroneous assumption that there is no purpose in the natural world. He heavily quotes and refutes materialistic atheists like Russell, Wilson, and Monod.

This is not a “religious” book. The idea of purpose agrees with the Bible, but Jacoboni does not use the Bible as a source. Instead, he bases his argument on science and philosophy and challenges the reader to think. We recommend this book highly. It makes the same point we have tried to make, but Jacoboni does it on a more academic level, which makes the book very useful for college-educated readers and for those who are active in science and medicine. Much of Jacoboni’s evidence is from accounts of his work with patients suffering from cancer. Students interested in biology and medicine will find this material to have an eye-opening message.

DANDY DESIGNS

Glass Frogs Become Translucent

One of the most compelling examples of design in natural things is a frog that escapes predators by making itself practically invisible.



During the day, glass frogs (*Hyalinobatrachium fleischmanni*) can be up to 61% transparent while sleeping on green leaves in their native Central and South America. At night, they regain their color and become active. Medical researchers want to know how they do this because it might give

a clue about how to avoid blood clotting in humans.

Somehow, glass frogs separate their red blood cells from the blood plasma. The plasma is still circulating, and if you look closely, you can see the heart beating. But the red blood cells are temporarily stored in the liver, making the frog transparent enough to avoid notice by predators. When the frog becomes active, its color returns, and, like most frogs, it can evade predators.

Jesse Delia, a researcher at the Museum of Natural History in New York, and Carlos Taboada of Duke University have used ultrasound imaging technology to understand what the glass frogs are doing. They found that the frogs store their red blood cells in the liver, enlarging it by 40%.

The challenges the glass frogs are able to overcome include having little or no oxygen while avoiding blood clotting. That is what the medical researchers want to understand because the application to anti-blood-clotting medications could be significant.

God has built many techniques for survival into living things, and this is one of the most interesting. We continue to learn from the things God has made.

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Sand Scorpions and Earthquakes

An environmental design feature we often overlook is the need to control insect populations. Insects do many good things, but if their numbers are not controlled, they can wipe out other forms of life—especially plants. Giant sand scorpions (*Smeringurus mesaensis*) help control insects in the Mohave Desert using a method similar to how geologists locate earthquake epicenters.



Earthquakes generate longitudinal and transverse waves. Longitudinal waves travel slower than transverse waves. Close to the earthquake epicenters, the two wave types arrive at about

the same time, but the time difference between the two waves becomes greater farther from the epicenter. Geologists can accurately compute the earthquake's epicenter by measuring the difference at various locations.

Sand scorpions use a similar technique to locate their prey. The scorpion has eight legs that can detect vibrations of one angstrom (which is the size of a hydrogen atom). An insect traveling either under the surface or on the surface of the ground creates tiny vibrations. The scorpion detects the direction of the prey by comparing when its legs receive the signal from the prey's movement. Legs closer to the prey detect the signal before legs further away, and the time difference between the two types of waves is a few microseconds.

The scorpion can compute the distance and direction to the prey by comparing the time difference. It then moves in that direction and stops at the distance indicated by the arrival times of the vibration. Then, stabbing with its pincers at that point, it gets its meal without seeing its prey.

Using a method similar to how geologists locate earthquake epicenters, sand scorpions, hunting primarily at night, can control insect populations in the Mohave Desert. The many ways the natural system maintains balance is an excellent testimony for design. The creation is not an accident but the product of a Supreme Intelligence that has built these systems into our world.

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

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)).

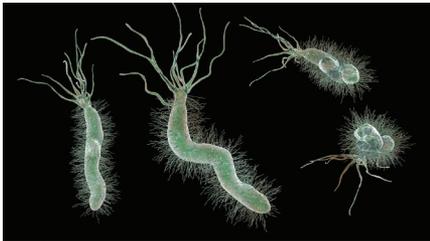
BACTERIA—GOOD OR BAD? Trillions of bacteria live in the intestines of every person. But, perhaps more disturbing is the suggestion that there are ten times as many bacterial cells in the human body as there are human cells. Even though that may sound shocking, the truth is we couldn't live without them. The collection

of microbes inside you is called the microbiome, and it makes food digestion possible and plays an essential role in our immune system.

People often refer to “good bacteria” and “bad bacteria.” That distinction may be misleading

because the helpful or harmful ways of those microbes may depend on the circumstances. For example, gut bacteria work in the breakdown of carbohydrates. On the other hand, when gut bacteria digest foods such as eggs and beef, they produce a compound that can boost heart-disease risk. Some germs can make you sick, while others keep you healthy. Sometimes the same bacterial cells in the human body can do either, depending on circumstances.

Helicobacter pylori bacteria are known for causing ulcers in the digestive tract. They are present in the microbiome of half the world's population, but most people do not have a problem with stomach ulcers. However, researchers have found that the absence of *Helicobacter* bacteria in the gut may lead to diseases of the esophagus, such



as reflux and cancers. Other research has shown that *Helicobacter* species may help the immune system, even though they may lead to inflammation and ulcers.

So bacteria considered “bad” might be neutral or even helpful in certain situations. A person’s health status, stress, diet, and genetics all influence how we react to various bacterial cells in the human body. As we learn more about life’s complexity, we see God’s wisdom in all of creation.



SETI: In 1960 radio astronomer Frank Drake began research to find alien civilizations in deep space by aiming an 85-foot radio telescope at some sun-like stars. He found nothing, but it was the beginning of a program known as Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI). The program has continued for 63 years, with many radio telescopes listening for messages from space. Researchers have spent thousands of hours and millions of dollars with zero results. They have detected no deep-space radio signals containing any intelligence—only noise.

How do the SETI scientists know it is just noise and not intelligence? Intelligence has a pattern. They may not understand the language, but they can tell language from random noise. They can distinguish random, accidental, chance blips from something created by an intelligent being.



How about when examining the DNA within living cells? Does the complex pattern of information that creates the blueprint within each living cell show

intelligence behind it—or is it random noise? Does it resemble a computer program written by a super-intelligence, or does it display random, accidental chance? If we can tell the difference between intelligence and randomness in space, why we cannot tell the difference in our own bodies?

Is it possible that there really is an intelligent Being out there listening and waiting to hear from us? Is it possible that Being is not limited by time and space? Is it possible that the Being has already communicated with us by coming to Earth and taking on human form? Is it possible that while spending time and money listening for messages from space, we are not listening to him?



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BRAINS IN THEIR ARMS: What does it take to enable an octopus to use all eight arms efficiently? Each arm may be in contact with a different substance, and they are soft and pliable, so they can bend and twist in response to whatever stimuli they receive. As a result, each octopus arm moves as if it has its own brain.



Researchers recently discovered that the arms gather data and move independently or with other arms without consulting the octopus's brain. In addition to the arms' connections to the central brain, a nerve connects each arm to another, located two arms

away. The arm's connections to other arms allow rapid communication to function quickly and efficiently. Researchers are still studying how the octopus puts all this together to move eight arms in a well-coordinated way.

God's design of every form of life is amazing and offers much for science to study and learn. Each octopus arm moves as if it has its own brain, making the octopus a very complex and intelligent animal. We see God's wisdom and creative ability displayed in every form of life.



IS YOUR HEART IN THE RIGHT PLACE: A recent study led by Harvard Medical School researchers shows how the internal organs end up in their proper place in early embryonic development. A cluster of cells called the left-right organizer contains hair-like structures called motile cilia. They sense the biomechanical forces that shape the body plan. The cilia beat rapidly, moving extracellular fluid in the correct direction to move organs to the proper place to function most efficiently. They are the reason why your heart is on the left side.

Incorrect left-right placement of the internal organs can result in various disorders, including heterotaxy syndrome and primary ciliary dyskinesia. These disorders can cause recurring respiratory infections and congenital heart disease.

In Psalm 139:10–14, David speaks of God's right hand forming him in the womb. Then, in verse 14, David says, "I will praise you, God, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" The more we learn about how our bodies are designed and formed, the more we understand the truth of that statement.



ELEPHANT ECOLOGY: People are concerned about atmospheric carbon (carbon dioxide and methane) increasing the “greenhouse effect” and causing global warming. That makes capturing carbon an essential service of ecosystems to protect our survival. Trees play a significant role in capturing carbon from the atmosphere, and new research shows that elephants have a “profound” effect on forest ecosystems. Scientists from Sweden, France, and the United States say elephants are “ecosystem engineers” that “significantly influence the structure and functioning of ecosystems” such as tropical rainforests in Africa.



African forest elephants prefer to eat the leaves of trees with low wood density because they contain more protein and less fiber than the ones with high wood density. They also prefer to eat fruit from trees with higher wood density. By eating those fruits, the elephants disperse the seeds of the trees that sequester the most carbon. The elephant’s diet enables the survival and spread of the trees that store more carbon, keeping it out of the atmosphere. At the same time, elephants reduce overcrowding by the lower-density plants, allowing the larger trees to grow.

The study concludes that elephant conservation will significantly affect global climate by controlling the amount of atmospheric carbon. God has designed a worldwide system of many ecosystems that make Earth suitable for advanced life to thrive. Our job is to protect the blessings God has given us to enjoy. Who does not enjoy watching elephants?



AYAHUASCA CHURCH: As our culture turns away from God and the Christian system of living, we have a vast void that many people fill by turning to recreational drugs. We now see “churches” that advertise a quick way to have a spiritual experience using a psychedelic brew known as ayahuasca. The promoters claim it will give spiritual enlightenment and bring the user closer to God.

The government of New Mexico permits the ayahuasca church to use the drug as a sacrament even though the main ingredient is illegal under U.S. federal law. In Oregon, a U.S. District Court ruled that a church is free from prosecution for using ayahuasca because of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act. The Hummingbird Church, with locations in California and Utah, conducts ayahuasca services.

The risk factor for ayahuasca is very high and similar to LSD. It raises the heart rate and blood pressure. Many users experience seizures, and most lose muscle coordination resulting in falls.

Respiratory arrests have happened, especially with people who have had the COVID virus. One complication is HPPD (hallucinogen persisting perception disorder), which, along with persistent psychosis, results in flashbacks long after discontinued use. New data also links serotonin syndrome disorder to the drug. A person who throws God out of their life will desperately seek something to fill the void. Ayahuasca, like LSD, is a bad choice.



UNIQUE PLANET EARTH: One of the positive things about science is that its methodology allows change. When new data becomes available, theories are either supported or discarded, resulting in the constant evolution of what scientists believe to be true. This applies to our understanding of the uniqueness of planet Earth.

Experts from NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Centre have announced that a widespread assumption about life on other planets is not valid. Science has assumed that other stars similar to our Sun in size and type also have similar stability. The Sun has not changed significantly in brightness and temperature in the hundreds of years that scientists have observed and measured it. Recent measurements of similar stars show that three-quarters of them go through changes in both brightness and temperature. Dr. Noah Tuchow of NASA says that the number of alien worlds that could contain life has been “vastly overestimated.”

Every discovery scientists make shows that Earth is an extraordinary place and our Sun is an exceptional star. Psalm 19:1 is more meaningful today than when it was written thousands of years ago.



The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

EXHIBIT ON THE SCIENCE/FAITH CONFLICT: A new “Scripture and Science” exhibition has opened at The Museum of the Bible in Washington, D.C. The exhibit shows that the Bible has encouraged and nourished science. Curator of the exhibition Dr. Anthony Schmidt, explained, “While there is this persistent myth that there is this ongoing conflict between faith and science, we highlight the ways that the Bible has left an impact on some of history’s greatest thinkers — scientists [and] natural philosophers.” The exhibition points out that the Bible has not been an impediment to science but has encouraged and nourished science.



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The exhibit is organized around six key questions: (1) How did it all begin? (2) What keeps the universe running? (3) How did life begin? (4) What makes me human? (5) What can we accomplish? (6) How will it all end? These are all questions that swarm around the supposed conflict between faith and science.

In the section on “What makes me human?” Nancy Pearcey, the author of the book *Total Truth*, explains how our concept of human dignity stems from the biblical concept that we are created in the image of God. Also in that section, a display shows how that biblical understanding challenged scientific racism. This exhibition debunks the myth of the conflict between faith and science. It will continue at the Museum of the Bible until January 15, 2024.



POOL OF SILOAM: The Israel Antiquities Authority, the Israel National Parks Authority, and the City of David Foundation celebrated the new year by announcing that in 2023, the Pool of Siloam will be open to the public for the first time in 2,000 years. The Pool of Siloam is where Jesus healed the blind man in John 9:1–7 using the pool to test the man’s faith and demonstrate Christ’s power to restore his sight. Skeptics have challenged the biblical account on several levels, but the Pool of Siloam affirms scripture.



The archeological excavation of the pool and its location in the southern portion of the City of David verifies the accuracy of the biblical account. It was built as part of Jerusalem’s water system in the 8th century B.C. This construction is related to the work of King Hezekiah, described in 2 Kings 20:20. Archeological work and further excavation of the site will continue.



**ANSWERS TO
CROSSWORD PUZZLE ON
PAGE 18**

- ACROSS: 3-Corruption;
4-Dementia; 6-Protoplasm;
7-Consciousness; 9-Constant;
10-Death
DOWN: 1-Eratosthenes; 2-Six;
5-Knowledge; 8-Smaller

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



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

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*It's scientists vs. preachers,
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