

# DOES GOD EXIST?

**Second Quarter 2024  
Volume 51 Number 2**

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



# WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE COSMOS?

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“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord.

“As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Isaiah 55:8–9 NIV

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# What Is the Purpose of the Cosmos?



One of the modern discussions of philosophers and theologians is, “Why is there something instead of nothing?” In other words, “Why does the universe exist?” That leads to the question, “Why does our solar system exist?” There are countless other galaxies besides our Milky Way. “Why?” These are questions no one can answer, at least not at the present time.

We know other galaxies, solar systems, planets, and moons exist. In the past 25 years, our improvements in Earth-based telescopes and the production of the Webb space telescope have provided evidence of the vastness of creation. Does intelligent life exist in any of these other galaxies? We cannot answer that question yet.

Since God created the physical world in which we live to carry out the battle between good and evil, would he also do that in other places? Isaiah 55:8–9 challenges us to understand that God is not limited to our capacity to think and understand. In that passage, God says, “My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, ... For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”



Science fiction writers have created a whole industry on the assumption that the war between good and evil is ongoing and not limited to the planet on which we live. Theologians will object, saying, “Do you think Jesus died more than once and experienced more than one resurrection?” The answer to that is “no.” The biblical account is limited to planet Earth, so life elsewhere is purely speculation.

Many years ago, I was on a Larry King radio talk show with an atheist. A caller asked the atheist, “What would you do if a spaceship landed on the White House lawn and a little green man jumped out with a Bible in his hand and said, ‘Has Jesus been here yet?’” My atheist opponent smiled and said, “Punt.”



More to the point is that God may provide a different means for the battle between good and evil than what we see on Earth. God has a purpose for our existence and may see fit to use other places and methods for his purposes. The earth-bound atheist can see no purpose for existence on a cosmic level.

Another point we must consider about the reason for the universe’s existence is that everything we see may be the result of the creation of time, space, and matter/energy in the beginning. We now understand that the “big bang” singularity was not just a physical process. Time and space were created, and with space, matter/energy was ingrained in the fabric of space. For us humans limited to our five senses to comprehend the physical world in which we live, this is beyond our current understanding.

Recent advances in quantum mechanics have shown that time had a beginning and that the fabric of space contains all the residual matter and energy the creation process produced. God was not concerned only about people in the days of Moses and Christ. God knew that humans, as his ultimate creation, would eventually study the creation process and see evidence of God’s hand in the cosmos.

We suggest that what makes humans unique is our creation in God’s image—our spiritual makeup. Our physical qualities are of secondary importance. The message of the cosmos is that God is a creator with incredible power, wisdom, and purpose. The universe radiates that, and the more we see of creation, the more we understand its Creator.

—John N. Clayton





# What Do We Learn from the Webb Telescope?

With all the distractions going on in the world, it is easy to miss perhaps the most remarkable engineering accomplishment of human history. A telescope launched on Christmas Day 2021 is now much further from Earth than the Moon. The Webb Space Telescope consists of 18 hexagonal mirrors with a total area of 273 square feet (69.54 x 46.46 feet). It can see things in space that we cannot see from Earth's surface. The cost to build the telescope and place it in space was \$10 billion. Is it worth the price? Yes, it is! What we learn from the Webb telescope tells us more about God.

The first thing we learned from the Webb telescope is that the cosmos is much larger than we can imagine. The telescope can see things that no optical device on Earth can. We live in a galaxy containing roughly 100 billion stars, and we know that space contains many other galaxies. Webb has shown us vast numbers of distant galaxies, and as we measure how far away they are, we see what the creation looked like billions of years ago.

Let me give you a simple explanation of what that means. If you travel to a place 100 miles away at 50 miles per hour, how long will it take to get there? The answer is two hours. When we measure how far away these galaxies are, we can tell when the light we see left them. Light travels at 186,000 miles per second. By doing the same calculation, we know the light reaching the Webb telescope left those galaxies some 13 billion years ago. We are looking backward in time to near the beginning of creation.

The latest pictures from the Webb telescope show that these old galaxies were long and flat rather than disk-shaped or spherical. That tells us the Creator was molding and shaping galaxies into a form that would allow planets and, ultimately, life to exist. As we understand the creation process, we see power beyond what we can imagine. Like all scientific discoveries, that raises many new and exciting questions for us to study and understand. It further tells us how unique Earth is and raises an old question the psalmist asked about God, "What is man that you are mindful of him?" (Psalm 8:4).

—JNC

# Star and Planet Formation



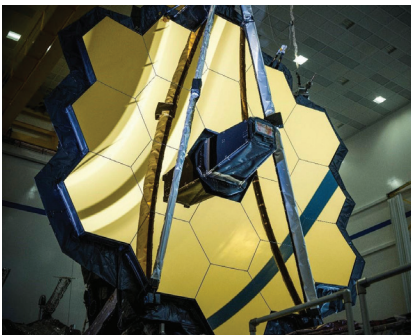
"Pillars of Creation" photographed by the Webb Telescope

The James Webb space telescope is giving us new information about the construction and size of the cosmos. NASA continues to release discoveries that give us a better understanding of star and planet formation.

The recent Webb telescope data tells us what it takes to make a planet like Earth. The conventional understanding of planet formation is that as stars formed, they threw off material that gravity pulled together, forming planets. The Webb telescope has the resolving power and the infrared light-gathering ability to observe planet formation in different stages.

The first step in planet formation is for the star to actively produce elements a terrestrial planet requires. Quiet stars do not make the necessary elements since heavier elements will move toward the star's center, not outwards. The star must spin fast enough to throw out the required heavy materials. That means gaseous planets like Jupiter are much more common in the cosmos than terrestrial planets like Earth.

The heaviest elements in a planet come from exploding stars called supernovas. That means planets are more likely to be in certain types of galaxies, and galaxies have an evolutionary history, changing with time. The



Webb Telescope before launch

Webb telescope actually observes the changes in galaxies and star and planet formation. The creation process is still active, and new planets are being formed as we watch.

In manufacturing, we know that a machine is designed to take raw materials and mold and shape them into the desired final product. Years ago, I worked for a man who designed and built such machines, and his wisdom and creativity were incredible to watch. This designer did not use a blueprint or follow a manual. He had the



skill to comprehend what the final machine would look like and what it would do.

We see God’s wisdom and creativity as we watch star and planet formation. The writer of Proverbs wrote, “O you simple ones, understand prudence [wisdom], and you fools, be of an understanding heart”

(Proverbs 8:5 NKJV). The Webb telescope allows us to see the wisdom of the Creator in ways we have never imagined.

—JNC

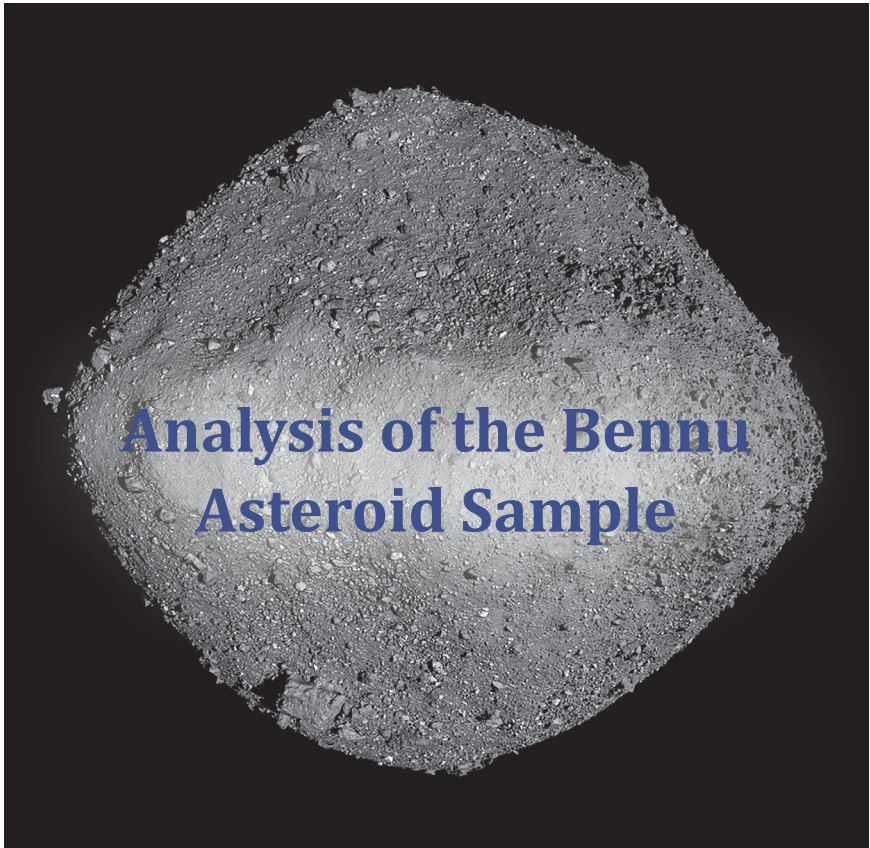


Webb Telescope image of the Tarantula Nebula star-forming region

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of Ancient History at  
York University, York, Neb.







Asteroid 101955 Benu

In 2016, NASA launched a spacecraft to the asteroid Benu with the goal of collecting a sample and returning it to Earth for analysis. The name of the mission was Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, and Security-Regolith Explorer (OSIRIS-REx). The canister containing the sample material arrived back on Earth in September 2023. Everything worked fine until scientists tried to open the canister. Thirty-two screws held the container closed, and two of them were stuck. Scientists were cautious not to contaminate the asteroid material with Earth molecules, so they had to develop a new tool to remove the stuck screws. On January 10, 2024, they succeeded in opening the canister to analyze the contents. Analysis of the Benu asteroid sample gave interesting results.

Some people have suggested that creation occurred in various regions of the universe with different materials. Those who promote that idea have maintained that chance, not creative design, formed the cosmos. They predicted that material from outer space would contain different elements arranged differently from what we see on

Earth. The Genesis account maintains that creation is a singular act of God, and Proverbs 8:22–30 indicates that he used wisdom in the creation.

The Bennu minerals contain no elements that do not exist on Earth, and the rocks formed by those elements contain no surprises. They contain serpentinite formed from olivine and pyroxene. Those minerals are familiar to anyone who has taken a petrology course. Analysis of the Bennu asteroid sample shows evidence of being formed by ice made of carbon monoxide and ammonia. That requires extremely cold conditions, which could only exist far from the Sun. Temperatures needed to form carbon monoxide and ammonia ice do not exist on any of the inner planets. So, Bennu was formed in the outer solar system beyond Mars.

We still have much to learn about the solar system's formation, and this research may be more critical as humans venture beyond the Moon into outer space. Even the possibility of establishing human colonies on other planets will depend on what materials are available there. Analysis of the Bennu asteroid sample is only the beginning. The more we learn about the solar system, the more we realize the importance of Earth's unique features. It also reminds us of how essential it is to care for the planet God has given us.

—JNC



Sample capsule from NASA's OSIRIS-REx mission after touching down in the Utah desert on September 24, 2023

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Many things in the creation do not lend themselves to conventional science. Gravity is an excellent example. What is gravity, and where did it come from? Isaac Newton suggested that gravity is a property of mass because the more mass something has, the more it weighs. A physics equation describes gravity, saying that if you have two masses, there will be a force of attraction between them.

In a high school physics experiment, we hung two large bags of sand near each other. Gravity would pull them toward each other, and if you increased the amount of sand, it would draw them closer. Using a group of levers, the students could measure the force between the two bags. We can measure gravity, but what is it?

Instead of bags of sand, scientists measure the gravity force between the Earth, Moon, and Sun. What keeps Earth orbiting the Sun and the Moon orbiting the Earth? Isaac Newton proposed that the distance between objects affected the amount of gravitational force between them. An equation describing the attraction between masses 1 and 2 must include the masses, the distance between them, and a number known as the gravitational constant. The equation is  $F = G(m_1 m_2) / r^2$ .  $G$  is the gravitational constant, and scientists have measured it to be





$6.67 \times 10^{-11}$ . If the value of the constant  $G$  differed from what it is, the Earth could not exist, and neither could we.

If you do not follow all of that, do not worry. The point is that gravity is a complex quantity that holds everything together, and it has to have precisely the strength it has. But that leaves questions unanswered. What is gravity? Is it a wave? How can it work over huge distances? How can mass cause gravity—or does it? Why does the gravity constant have precisely the value it has?

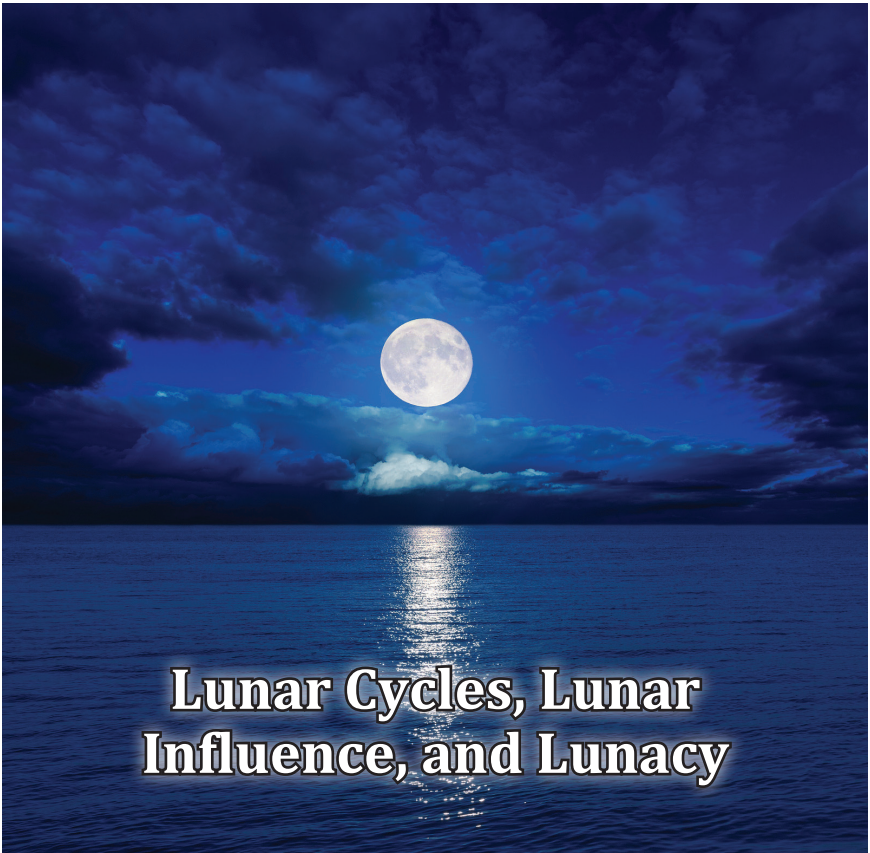
As science probes deeper into the nature of matter, time, space, and energy, it becomes increasingly evident that not everything physical has a physical cause. We cannot explain the creation of time, space, energy, or gravity by conventional science. As you read modern research reports, you see that our world was shaped from dimensions beyond the four we know. The laws that govern our world and the dimensions we live in do not fully describe the nature of gravity, time, or even space.

Ancient biblical writers guided by the Spirit of God understood that a wise Creator designed our world. The writer of Proverbs 8 personifies wisdom, giving it a feminine nature. Wisdom says, “O you simple, understand wisdom and have an understanding heart. . . . The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way before his works of old. I was set up from eternity, from the beginning and before the earth ever was.”

Open-minded contemplation of the creation leads to the recognition that an infinite intelligence beyond that of any human brought the physical creation into existence. The Bible teaches that God’s purpose was to allow the battle between good and evil to end once and forever and that we play an essential role in that war.

—JNC





## Lunar Cycles, Lunar Influence, and Lunacy

The Latin name for the Moon is *luna*. Many English words are derived from that root, including lunacy, lunatic, and even loon, as in “crazy as a loon.” Having grown up in the north, I know that hearing the loons cry could lead to thoughts of them being crazy. Lunar cycles occur naturally, but many people believe a “lunar influence”

is connected to abnormal behavior.

People have given unique names to certain full-moon appearances, such as blue moon, sturgeon moon, harvest moon, cold moon, snow moon, pink moon, flower moon, strawberry moon, hunter’s moon, beaver moon, worm moon, and wolf



Common Loon

moon. You can find those names in the Old Farmer's Almanac, so it should not be surprising that most of them have connections to agriculture or to a time when people did not have electric lights clouding their view of the sky. I have found that seeing the full moon in remote areas away from city lights is a moving experience. If you were fishing, harvesting, hunting, or plowing, you would have no problem with just the moon for illumination.

The moon is not just an accident, nor is its influence on life. Genesis 1:14 describes God clearing Earth's cloud cover to let the lights of the heavens (Sun and Moon) become visible "for signs and seasons and for days and years." Some birds use the moon for



migration journeys that coincide with specific lunar phases. Many animals respond to both circadian rhythms and a lunar clock.

So, how does the moon affect human activity? Studies show there are more animal bites from cats, rats, and horses during full moons. That is probably because more humans are doing more things outside at night during a full moon. Also, data show there are more crimes during full moons. Apparently, criminals can use the light of a full moon for their activities just as farmers can.

The Bible refers to lunar cycles for time and mentions lunar festivals (Colossians 2:16) but otherwise makes no particular connections to the Moon. All of the claims of abnormal human behavior during various lunar cycles are in the realm of what we call "folklore."

I hope you can find time to admire the full moon away from city lights and imagine how ancient people depended on it for nighttime light to carry on their lives. Meanwhile, do not worry about it affecting you psychologically or causing biological changes. The animals and insects may be altered by lunar cycles, but you are not a bug or a werewolf.

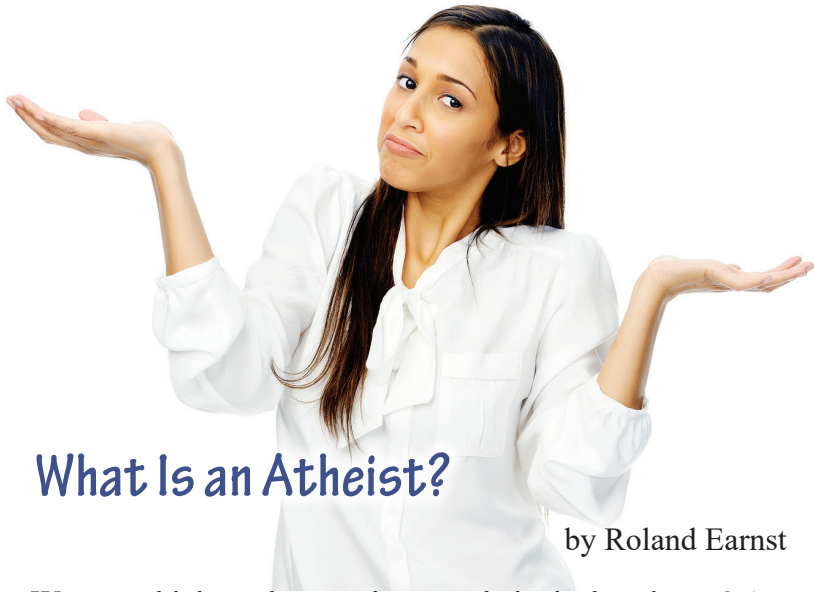
—JNC

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## What Is an Atheist?

by Roland Earnst

We may think we know what an atheist is, but do we? According to *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, an atheist is “a person who does not believe in the existence of a god or any gods.” Historically, Christians were called “atheists” for believing in only one God instead of the pantheon of pagan gods. Today, Pew Research Center data indicate that it is not easy to define what an atheist is.

Reading through the Pew Research Center report, I found some interesting facts. In 2009, 2% of Americans described themselves as atheists. In 2018 and 2019, that increased to 4%. However, 18% of those who self-described as atheists said that they “believe in some kind of higher power.” Even more surprising is that 54% of atheists say they “often feel a sense of wonder about the universe.” Apparently, even atheists have an innate spiritual sense. Could that be because humans are created in God’s image? When we ask, “What is an atheist?” perhaps we also should ask what keeps them from believing. Could it sometimes be the actions of believers?

Surprisingly, about a third of American atheists say they think about meaning and purpose in life at least once a week, and they “often feel a deep sense of spiritual peace and well-being.” Two-thirds (63%) listed family as a source of meaning. That compares to 73% of Christians finding meaning in the family. However, atheists placed much greater meaning



on money, hobbies, and travel than did Christians or Americans in general. Is that an attempt to fill the empty spiritual void?

When we ask, “What is an atheist?” we should keep in mind that most U.S. atheists are men (68%). They are also relatively young, with a median age of 34, compared to 46 for the general public. Of the American general public, only 27% have a college degree. Among those who identify as atheists, 43% have graduated from college. Can we blame the high percentage of college-educated atheists on atheistic professors in American higher education? Maybe some blame lies with the many churches that teach anti-scientific doctrines, which college students quickly learn cannot be accurate.

## What Makes an Atheist?

We often blame the fact that young people turn to atheism in college on the influence of American higher education. Educational institutions have become more liberal and atheistic, but perhaps the churches are partially to blame. We learn about God from two sources. In addition to the Bible, the world around us is filled with the life and wonder of God’s creation. “For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So, they have no excuse for not knowing God” (Romans 1:20 NLT).

Many young people who grow up in the church are taught Bible stories along with a distorted scientific perspective of creation. When they get to college, they face new freedoms and challenges to the scientific “facts” they learned in church. The earth and sky seem to be showing something that cannot fit into the man-made interpretations of the Bible chronology they have learned. They face a conflict that they must resolve. Too often, they resolve it by throwing out the truth of the Bible along with the scientific errors that have been falsely attached to it.



The bottom line is that the Bible does not tell us the age of the universe or planet Earth. Everything the Bible does tell us agrees with scientific facts. As we have said many times before, science and faith are friends. If there are apparent conflicts, it is because we have bad science or bad theology. The fact that there has been too much of both often turns our college students into atheists.

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## Why Do People Choose Atheism?

I think it is safe to say that some people choose atheism because they do not want to follow biblical moral standards. By rejecting God, they can reject his moral standards without pangs of conscience. Living immorally becomes easier when we can pretend that there is no higher authority who sets standards of moral conduct. According to Pew Research, less than half (42%) of Americans believe that it is necessary to believe in God to have good moral values. But that is much higher than in France, where only 15% think that belief in God is essential for good morals. Interestingly, in some Muslim-dominated countries such as Pakistan and Indonesia, 98% to 99% say that a person must believe in God to be moral.

Atheists not only refuse to believe in God, but they also think that faith is a negative factor in society. In the U.S., 71% of atheists say that the decline in religious influence in public life is a good thing. About the same amount (70%) say that churches and other religious institutions do more harm than good. They overlook how many hospitals, orphanages, and charitable organizations have been founded and are supported by Christians. Many Western European countries, such as Belgium, France, Sweden, Denmark, and the Netherlands, have high rates of atheism (14–16%). That contrasts with the percentage of atheists in many Eastern European countries, including Romania, Ukraine, Bosnia, Poland, and Lithuania (1–2%). Even in Russia, only 4% of the population claims atheism. Could that be because the people of those countries lived for years under atheism, and they understand its consequences?

Reading the atheism data on the Pew Research Center website brings many questions to my mind. Why do people choose atheism over faith in God? The answer is as complex and diverse as human beings. At **Does God Exist?** our mission is to share evidence for God's existence, the truth of the Bible, and Jesus Christ as the one who can restore us to a relationship with our Creator.





# Those Ugly Old Birds and God's Grace

by Buff Scott, Jr.



I was walking through town and saw a young boy carrying a rusty, bent, old birdcage. In the cage were three little wild birds, shivering with fright. I asked the lad, “What do you have there, son?” “Just some old ugly birds,” he replied. “What are you going to do with them?” I asked. “Take ’em home and have fun with ’em,” he answered. “I’m gonna tease ’em and pull out their feathers to make ’em fight. I’m gonna have a real good time.”

“But you’ll get tired of those birds sooner or later. What will you do then?” The youngster answered, “Oh, I got some cats. They like birds. I’ll feed ’em to them.” “How much do you want for those birds, son?” Startled, the boy replied, “Huh? Why, you don’t want them birds, mister. They’re just plain old ugly field birds. They don’t sing. They ain’t even pretty!” Again, I asked him, “How much?” The boy sized me up like I was crazy and said, “Ten dollars!”

I reached into my pocket, took out a ten-dollar bill, and placed it in the boy’s hand. In a flash, he was gone. I picked up the cage and gently carried it to the end of the alley where there was a tree and a grassy spot. Setting the cage down, I opened the door, and by softly tapping the bars, I persuaded the birds out, setting them free. Then, I began to do a little reflecting.

One day, Satan and Jesus were having a conversation. Satan had just come from the Garden of Eden, gloating and boasting. “Yes, sir, I just caught a world full of people down there. Set me a trap, used bait I knew they couldn’t resist, and got ’em all!”

“What are you going to do with them?” Jesus asked. Satan replied, “Oh, I’m gonna have fun! I’m gonna teach them how to marry and divorce each other, how to hate and abuse each other, how to drink and smoke and curse. I’m gonna teach them how to invent guns and bombs and kill each other. I’m really gonna have fun!”

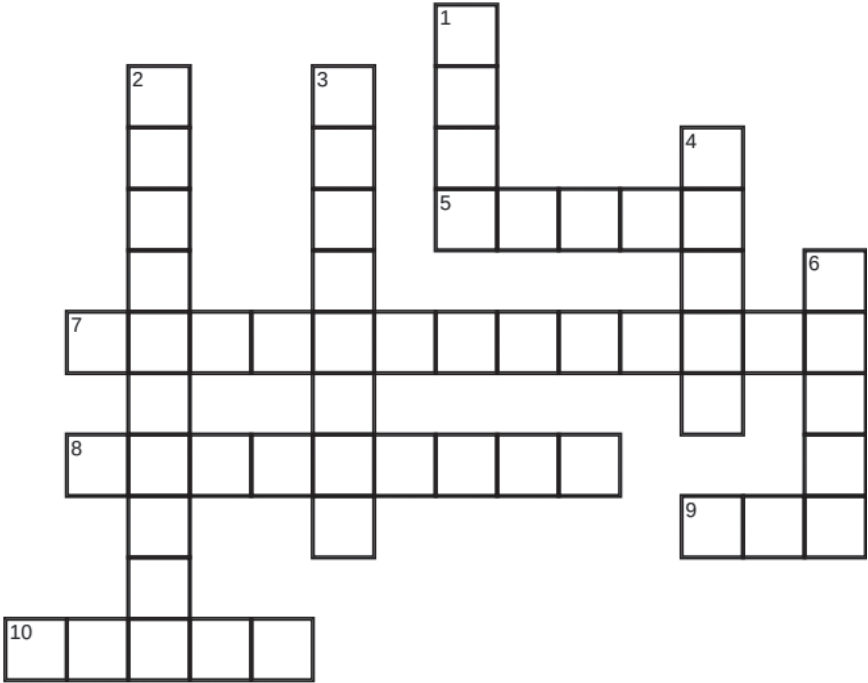
“And what will you do when you are done with them?” Jesus asked. “Oh, I’ll kill ’em,” Satan glared proudly. “How much do you want for them?” Jesus asked.” Satan retorted, “You don’t want those people. They’ll just hate you. They’ll spit on you, curse you, and kill you. You don’t want those people!”

“How much?” Jesus asked again. Satan looked at Jesus and sneered, “All of your blood, your tears, and your life.” Jesus answered, “Done!” Then he paid the price and set them free (John 19:30).

# Does God Exist?

## 2nd Quarter 2024 Crossword

Solve this puzzle based on the articles on pages 3–17



### Across

- [5] Besides the \_\_\_\_\_, we learn about God from the creation.
- [7] The \_\_\_\_\_ constant must be exactly what it is.
- [8] Why is there \_\_\_\_\_ instead of nothing.
- [9] Living immorally is easier when we pretend there is no \_\_\_\_\_.
- [10] \_\_\_\_\_ paid the price to set us free.

### Down

- [1] The \_\_\_\_\_ telescope teaches us more about God.
- [2] The heaviest elements come from exploding stars called \_\_\_\_\_.
- [3] Fifty-four percent of \_\_\_\_\_ “often feel a sense of wonder about the universe.”
- [4] Asteroid \_\_\_\_\_ contains the same elements we find on Earth.
- [6] Genesis 1:14 describe God clearing Earth’s \_\_\_\_\_ cover.

*(If you get stumped, the answers are on page 31.)*

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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.



**CARL LUDWIG SCHLEICH**  
(1859-1922)  
German surgeon who introduced local  
anesthesia into clinical practice and  
pioneered research on glial cells in the  
nervous system

Schleich's father was an atheist, and his uncle was a well-known pastor. As a child, he heard vigorous debates about God's existence, motivating him to write extensively about faith. One of his best-known works is *Fantasy About the Meaning of Life*. Schleich wrote:

He became a believer in his own way through the microscope and observation of nature, and he wanted to contribute, insofar as he can, to full harmony between science and religion.

It has always been my endeavor to compare intellectual processes with the action of an electrical apparatus of marvelous precision. But I have never denied that this is only one, and perhaps the most interesting mode of considering the most sacred miracle of the soul, and not an unveiling, by a theory of cognition, of its metaphysical home and its God-given function. ... What I passionately desire is to turn men away from the barren desert of materialism, and compel them to recognize the governance of quite other powers than capital, politics, the struggle for existence, and the laws of inheritance.

A critic once called me an enemy of science. Well I have become an enemy of the science that, with narrow-minded dogmatism, makes war upon all that lies beyond the hedge of its methodical self-circumscribed garden, which yields only those vegetables that feed the gardener but refuses to know anything of all the possibilities of the free and lovely virgin forest wherein one may indeed lose one's way.

Reference: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl\\_Ludwig\\_Schleich](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Ludwig_Schleich)

## *Cynthia's Corner*

### How Do We Explain the Existence/Purpose of the Universe?



It took many years of work and billions of dollars to send the Webb telescope into space. Why did we do it and what are the fruits of that labor and expense? What is the purpose of exploring space and learning about the universe? For one thing, it is our home, our reality. Learning more about our universe can help us appreciate our planet and the fact that it was designed especially for us. It is the only place in the universe where we can survive. When we compare Earth to other planets in our solar system, we easily see how we could not survive there. That begs the question of why and who designed it this way.

Exploring the universe beyond our solar system, initially with the Hubble space telescope and currently with the Webb telescope, expands our understanding and knowledge of the vastness of space and the design that makes our solar system and planet unique. When we look at the Sun, we see it as it was eight minutes ago because of its distance from us. Looking beyond our galaxy with the Webb telescope allows us to see things as they were millions of years ago. Seeing the process of star and planet formation shows us the complexities of creation and causes us to appreciate the power and intelligence necessary to create the solar system we live in. This leads us to ask who, what, how, and why our universe was designed like this.

For Christians, the revelations of the Webb telescope further strengthen our faith. Science has already verified that the universe had a beginning, and that beginning had to be caused. The causal agent we know as God demonstrates intelligence, design, and purpose. God's creative ability is not limited to Earth. We can see it continually at work in distant galaxies and solar systems other than our own.

Understanding that “in him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28) takes on a deeper meaning when we realize that it would still be true if we were to leave Earth and go to some distant galaxy. Over and over, the scriptures talk about the heavens being a declaration of God's glory (Psalm 19:1–3). Proverbs 8 speaks of God's wisdom in his creative processes. The more we learn of the creation, the more we understand the depth and complexity of God's nature. “For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made” (Romans 1:20).

—Cynthia Clayton



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.

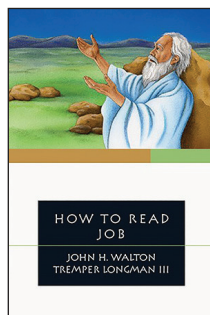
### How to Read Job

by John Walton and Temper Longman III, IVP Academic, © 2015,  
208 pages, \$25 (paperback), ISBN-13: 978-0-8308-4089-2

Job is one of the most interesting books in the Old Testament, because it gives a view of the purpose for human existence—the struggle between good and evil. Many people read the book of Job thinking that they will get an answer as to why pain and suffering exist, but the book does not answer that question. The authors point out that the Book of Job is about God, not about Job.

Walton is a professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College and Longman is a professor of Biblical Studies at Westmont College. The first of the book's four parts presents the author's view that Job is important as literature, not history. With that approach, the authors talk about the makeup of the ancient Middle East and explain much of the book in those terms. They refer to Satan as the "challenger" and behemoth and leviathan as the most powerful creatures imaginable. Part two deals with learning about God, and part three examines "the retribution principle," which implies that righteous people will prosper and the wicked will suffer. Part four is titled "Reading Job as a Christian." This section compares Job and Christ and then shows how understanding Job may help Christians answer the problems involved with suffering. The authors suggest that Job teaches acceptance rather than trying to manipulate God and even elevating ourselves above God.

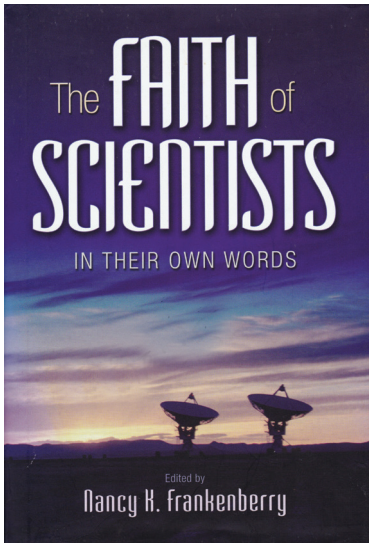
This book is challenging, with many good ideas and references to other books in both the Old and New Testaments. It would be a good book for college classes, with each chapter suggesting things to discuss. It is a well-written, deep discussion of a Bible book that many of us have not studied deeply enough.





## The Faith of Scientists

by Nancy K. Frankenberry, Princeton University Press, © 2008,  
523 Pages, \$42 (hardcover), ISBN-13: 978-0-691-13487-1



This book is titled *The Faith of Scientists: In Their Own Words*. In our column on “Scientists and God” we publish a few statements by famous scientists who were believers in God. The problem is that we are taking just a few sentences or a paragraph from a paper or journal without having the full belief system of the scientist. Nancy H. Frankenberry is the John Phillips Professor of Religion at Dartmouth College, and her book examines the faith of famous scientists in more depth.

Frankenberry explains the history of these scientists, what they contributed to scientific knowledge, and what

they wrote about their faith. Some are believers in God, others are atheists or agnostics. This book is not an apologetic work, but it is worth reading if you want to know why various scientists believed what they believed.

The book is divided into two parts. Part one is the founders of modern science, and part two is scientists of our time. The founders of modern science presented are Galileo Galilei, Johannes Kepler, Francis Bacon, Blaise Pascal, Charles Darwin, Albert Einstein, and Alfred North Whitehead. The time period covered is from 1564 (Galileo) to 1947 (Whitehead).

The scientists of our time are Rachel Carson, Carl Sagan, Stephen Jay Gould, Richard Dawkins, Jane Goodall, Steven Weinberg, John Polkinghorne, Freeman Dyson, Stephen Hawking, Paul Davies, Edward Wilson, Stuart A. Kauffman, and Ursula Goodenough.

This book is very academic with complex comments and explanations. It will appeal to college or self-educated professionals, especially those with science backgrounds. Its greatest weakness is that many of these scientists changed their views during their lifetime, so Frankenberry had to choose articles that she feels contributed to the dialogue between science and faith, whether positive or negative.

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# DANDY DESIGNS

## Plants Use Frogs to Spread Their Seeds



One evidence that God and not chance created all living things is the varied ways plants get their seeds into new places. A recent study of frogs at the University of Newcastle in Australia has shown that plants use frogs to spread their seeds. This comes as a surprise since frogs are primarily carnivorous, but frog skins attract seeds and can carry them considerable distances.

The researchers found that tree frogs can carry as many as 14 seeds on their legs, feet, bellies, and backs. Some of the seeds found on the frogs they studied did not grow in the area where the frogs live, so they were picked up somewhere else. We have pointed out that birds spread seeds. Wading birds will have fish eggs stuck to their feet and legs, so fish will appear in recently dug ponds where humans have not placed them.

Studies in Australia have raised concerns over the loss of amphibians due to pollution and habitat destruction. It is not just the loss of frogs that is at issue, but also the function of frogs in supporting plant life. Everywhere we look, we see multiple designs offering complexity that cannot be produced by chance. There is intelligence in the creation, and one place we see it is in the role of all life on Earth.

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# The Beautiful Ugly Opossum



Perhaps you have seen this animal prowling your neighborhood and looked at the ugly opossum with disdain. When Captain John Smith of the Jamestown Colony in Virginia first saw an opossum in 1611, he described it as a cross between a pig, a rat, and a cat. Although people often consider them unattractive, we appreciate the beautiful, ugly opossum design as they serve a unique purpose as the only marsupials in North America. Like kangaroos and other Australian marsupials, opossums birth their young shortly after conception. The newborn must find its way into the pouch, where it will nurse for up to four months before emerging.

Opossums have 50 teeth, allowing them to eat just about anything. Their omnivorous diet includes rodents, frogs, birds, eggs, insects, fruit, and grain. They will eat dead animals, including the bones, and they remove pests from our gardens. They do not burrow, and unlike raccoons, they are not dexterous enough to get into trash bins or your house or garage by digging into a wall or roof.

Opossums are nocturnal, so we rarely see them except when they get hit by a car. They are not aggressive, and when frightened, they often play dead. Their low body temperature of 94 degrees (F) prevents them from getting rabies and other viruses, and they are not affected by snake venom. We often vilify opossums because of their appearance, but they are part of God's design for life on this planet.



# 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](http://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)).

**CLAYTON APOLOGETICS READING ROOM:** A recent ceremony at York University in York, Nebraska, dedicated a new facility for students of Christian apologetics. John Clayton accumulated a library of books and materials published by Christians and skeptics over the past fifty years. He was concerned about what to do with his apologetics library and wanted the books, magazines, and pamphlets to be available for reference and study by future students. John donated his entire library to York University, where it is now in the Clayton Apologetics Reading Room.

At the ceremony, York vice-president Jared Stark introduced John and revealed that he became a Christian due to one of John’s lectures. John Clayton has been speaking to people in public assemblies for over fifty years, showing evidence for God’s existence. During that time, many lives have been changed as a result of John’s message.

The new Clayton Apologetics Reading Room is adjacent to the Clayton Museum of Ancient History at York University. They are open to the public by appointment. You can watch a video of the dedication statements by Jared Stark and John Clayton on our website, [DoesGodExist.tv](http://DoesGodExist.tv), or use this QR code. Then scroll down to see that video and others with John Clayton and John Cooper.



**BLAMING GOD FOR HUMAN MISMANAGEMENT:** Wildfires have increased in number and ferocity, destroying massive numbers of trees, causing a shortage of wood and wood products,

destroying homes and businesses, and even entire towns. The Nature Conservancy reported that the average wildfire size today is 23,000 acres. In the 1980s, the average wildfire size was 7,000 acres. A wildfire in Texas destroyed more than one million acres.

In the natural world, lightning and spontaneous combustion produce small fires. When you allow leaves and dead wood to accumulate for decades, a lightning strike can cause a massive fire with lots of fuel for combustion. Even the amount of smoke these huge fires generate threatens people living thousands of miles away.

God has used fires in surprising ways. There are some trees whose seeds do not germinate unless they have been exposed to fire. Some animals depend on naturally burned-over areas to produce food such as berries and nuts. A major cause of today's catastrophic fires is human prevention of naturally occurring small fires. We need to recognize that the intelligence of design has kept woodlands healthy and stable in the past. We must work with that design intelligently to avoid the tragic pictures we see on the news.



**INCREASE IN ALCOHOL DEATHS IN THE U.S.:** The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reported that from 2016 to 2021, deaths from alcohol use in the United States increased 29.3% from 137,927 to 178,307. Deaths among males increased 26.8%, and among females, the increase was 34.7%. The CDC makes a point that their data is only for deaths that are 100% attributable to alcohol use.



The Bible distinguishes between “wine” and “strong drink.” We find wine mentioned 141 times in the Old Testament and 32 times in the New Testament—always referring to the juice from grapes. The difference between “old wine” and “new wine” was the aging and fermentation of the juice. The juice was mixed with water because the water was not fit to drink without it, so the alcohol content was at a maximum between 10 and 15%. The term “strong drink” is mentioned 23 times in the Old Testament and one time in the New Testament (Luke 1:15). Scholars tell us that this refers to any drink derived from sources other than grapes, and the alcohol content could be as high as 20%.

The wine at the wedding feast at Cana (John 2:1–11) was better than all other wines available, but it was not “strong drink.” Modern distillation did not happen until 1500 A.D., and that is when alcohol became a “recreational drug.” Death due to alcohol consumption was virtually unknown until several years later, but it is epidemic today.



**ANT ANTIBIOTIC TREATMENT:** Researchers at the University of Wurzburg in Germany have discovered that a species of African ants make antibiotics and treat the infections of their wounded comrades. The species studied is Matabele ants (*Megaponera analis*) in sub-Saharan Africa. Their diet consists of termites. The ants raid termite nests to get their food, but the termite soldiers fight back with their powerful mandibles. Many ants are wounded, and some wounds become infected and require antibiotic treatment.

Healthy ants pick up their wounded comrades and carry them back to the nest to treat their infected wounds. The ants create an antibiotic substance in a gland on the side of their thorax. Researchers found that the wound treatment reduced mortality rate by 90%. Can humans learn from this ant antibiotic treatment? Researchers say that the primary pathogen in the ant's wounds is a leading cause of human infections, so this study may lead to improved antibiotics. Every form of life has secrets to teach us. Learning what God has built into life is essential to answer major questions of medical science.



**STUDYING FISH SOUNDS:** *Science News* magazine reported that virtually all fish produce sounds that can be received and interpreted by other fish of their species. While researchers have cataloged over 1,000 fish sounds, the largest group of bony fish contains more than 34,000 species, so much more work is needed.



Fish generate sounds differently from humans. They can click bony structures together, contract specific muscles to drum a gas-filled swim bladder, vibrate stretched tendons in fins like a guitar, or even expel gas from their rear ends.

Fish hear through tiny stones in their heads that move in response to sound vibrations, triggering signals to the brain. They also have special cells running down their bodies that detect motion and sound waves in the water. Fish use sound to attract mates, indicate distress, warn other fish of danger, or scare a predator away.



Knowing how fish use sounds is essential to understanding how they are affected by human sounds in the water. This knowledge also helps us study fish migrations and determine fish populations.



Perhaps Jesus used fish sounds when he summoned fish for Peter to catch in John 21:5–6. Jesus created all things, including fish (see John 1:1–2, 14.) There were several instances in the life of Jesus when fish responded to his bidding, even for the payment of taxes (Matthew 17:27).

**MINISTERING TO THE NEEDY AND HOMELESS:** Across the United States, church officials are threatened with prison time for helping homeless people. Churches in Bryan, Ohio; Denver, Colorado; Tempe, Arizona; Houston, Texas; Santa Ana, California; Brookings, Oregon; and Pottstown, Pennsylvania, have been threatened with legal action by city authorities for ministering to the needy and homeless.

The problem in these cities is that zoning laws and codes prohibit churches from serving food or providing shelter for people who are in need. When churches



violate those rules, the police are required to shut down the services. In the cases cited, the cities offer no alternatives for churches ministering to the needy and homeless.

Jesus made it clear in Matthew 25:31–40 that his followers should provide people in need with food, water, clothing, and support for those in prison. This situation is only going to get worse as migrants are bused into cities and left to fend for themselves. The secular world is not going to help them, and, as is always the case, it will be up to churches to find a way to address their needs.



**EARTHQUAKE CATASTROPHE RISK:** The United States Geological Survey published a map showing the earthquake catastrophe risk in different parts of the country. This data comes from seismic records of 130,000 earthquakes of a magnitude on the Modified Mercalli intensity scale of six or higher, which is severe enough to frighten people, move furniture, and cause other damage, like falling plaster. Most of us know about some geologically unstable regions of the country, but other areas may be surprising.

The highest earthquake catastrophe risk within the next 100 years is essentially the whole western edge of California, the southern part of Alaska from Juneau through the Aleutians, and the eastern islands of Hawaii. Areas with a 75% to 95% chance of a damaging earth-

quake include virtually all of California, the Yellowstone National Park area, and the intersection of Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee, and Kentucky. The study says that 230 million people live in areas with a 95% chance of a damaging earthquake.

The point of this data is that there will be a massive earthquake sometime in the next 100 years, causing death and structural damage, and many people will blame it on God. The fact is that earthquakes are a natural product of the uplift of the land, and without that force, erosion would have brought all land masses to sea level. Despite the data, humans continue to build massive structures in high-risk areas. You can add this to a long list of situations where humans set themselves up for a catastrophe.



**SOCIAL ISOLATION AFFECTS THE HEART:** The church has a role in fighting loneliness, including anxiety, depression, dementia, and thoughts of suicide. Now, heart specialists and the United States Surgeon General, Vivek Murthy, have expanded the negative role of loneliness. Murthy says that “feeling disconnected from friends and family has the same impact as smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day.” According to the Cleveland Clinic, the physical effects of loneliness include a 29% higher risk of heart disease, a 32% higher risk of stroke, a 50% increased risk of developing dementia, and a 60% increase in premature death. The bottom line is that social isolation affects the heart.



The importance of being actively involved with people, such as in a church congregation, cannot be over-emphasized. “Going to church” for an hour once a week does not help much in dealing with this issue. The church described in Acts 2:41–47 was a group of believers who met together daily. Not only were they together sharing meals and times of worship, but they addressed each other’s needs.



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**FAITH IN GOD BRINGS HEALING:** The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released data showing that nearly 50,000 people died by suicide in the U.S. in 2022. That is a 3% increase over 2021 and the highest recorded number. In a CNN Opinion article, Carrie Sheffield reported that, along with other data, “scientific evidence suggests faith in God brings healing.”

For example, the Harvard University School of Public Health released data showing that 68% of women and 33% of men attending weekly religious services are less likely to die “deaths of despair,” which would include suicide, drug overdose, or alcohol poisoning. Also, the National Bureau of Economic Research found that states with decreased religious participation had increased deaths of despair.

Furthermore, the *Psychiatric Times* reported that two-thirds of 93 observational studies showed lower rates of depressive disorder symptoms in religious people. Boston University researcher Brian Grim reported that 84% of scientific studies show faith is a positive factor in addiction prevention or recovery. You cannot discount the fact that faith in God brings healing in overcoming dysfunctional family experiences. A biblical connection to God and understanding the teachings of Christ will help people cope with life and the collateral damage of their past.



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**ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD PUZZLE ON PAGE 18**  
ACROSS: 5-Bible; 7-gravitational; 8-something; 9-God; 10-Jesus  
DOWN: 1-Webb; 2-supernovas; 3-atheists; 4-Bennu; 6-cloud

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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