

DOES GOD EXIST?

**Third Quarter 2024
Volume 51 Number 3**

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

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF LIFE?



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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.

... since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 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, so that people are without excuse.

Romans 1:19-20 NIV

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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

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A very old joke has been around since I was a campaigning atheist. It shows an excellent example of people's struggle with their existence. "No one is useless; you can always serve as a bad example." As an atheist, I thought that line had a lot of meaning. I had no real goal in life. My atheist family had raised me to believe that what you lived for was to make a lot of money and have the power that money could bring. With that in mind, my father encouraged me to become a medical doctor. At that time, medical doctors did not have all the restrictions that are placed on them today. A person could make a lot of money by being a doctor, especially if you had a specialty.

What happened to me was that many of my peers in premed courses had a completely different reason for wanting to become doctors. Several of them wanted to go to a country where there were no doctors, and others wanted to work with sick children and homeless people. Their view of becoming a doctor was totally different from mine. They were highly motivated to study because they saw an essential purpose in their plan for life.

Then, I came in contact with some people who had made it big financially. They drove fancy cars, lived in nice homes, wore stylish clothes, and constantly had people fawning over them. One of them committed suicide. At the visitation, his family talked about how unhappy his life had been. His mother told me, "___ never saw a purpose in his life. Once he had something, he lost interest in it and started looking for something else." I began to see that "things" did not give a person a life purpose, and I wondered what my purpose was.

Much to my father's disgust, I dropped out of premed, became a Christian, and decided to dedicate my life to serving children who needed someone to teach them. My father even had one of his friends, a professor in the university speech department, tell me that I could never be a teacher because I had a speech impediment. Students would not be able to understand me. During that time, I fell in love with a Christian girl I later married. She encouraged me to go into teaching and was willing to go with me to a high school that served kids in a ghetto in South Bend, Indiana. I taught there for 41 years. I had five



preparations every day, one or two of which were inner-city kids, some of whom could not read and had been in trouble with the law. One semester, I had 13 kids wearing ankle bracelets. They had been removed from other classes to avoid causing trouble for other teachers. As they came into class the first day, one kid asked me,

“What did you do that caused you to be stuck with us?”

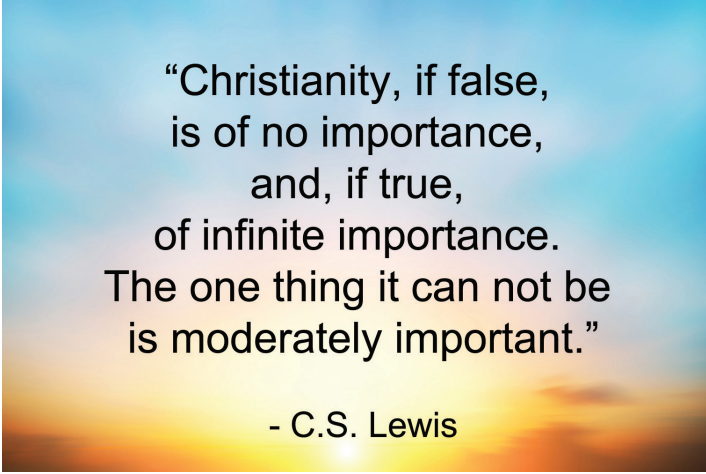
Working with The University of Notre Dame and the National Science Foundation, I helped develop an investigative method of teaching science that did not depend on reading. My class contained kids in trouble and others with severe learning disabilities. All of them did very well with this new approach to learning based on evidence.

As time passed, I saw that high-level kids with faith problems could profit from the same technique. I began a class on evidence-based religious beliefs. It worked well with high school kids, and I was asked to use the same material with undergraduate college students. I realized I had another purpose—to show anyone who would listen that the evidence supports belief in God and the Bible as his Word.

So why am I alive? My answer is that God had a job for me to do. He also has one for you, but it may be different. When I tried other jobs for which I did not have the training or talent, I failed. Trying to fix my own car or get the mower working was a disaster. As I approach the end of my life, I see it as being full of purpose. I saw my father and my brothers struggle because they could not see the purpose God had for them. I could never do what they would have been able to do. Your purpose might not be in education. I have seen men and women who had secular jobs that, with a bit of tweaking, could be turned into great ministries and tools for good. Whatever you are good at can be turned over to the God who created you and has a purpose for your life. “God does not create any junk” is one of my favorite mottoes. You are special. Become a Christian and follow God's purpose for your life.

—John N. Clayton

The Infinite Importance of Christianity



“Christianity, if false,
is of no importance,
and, if true,
of infinite importance.
The one thing it can not be
is moderately important.”

- C.S. Lewis

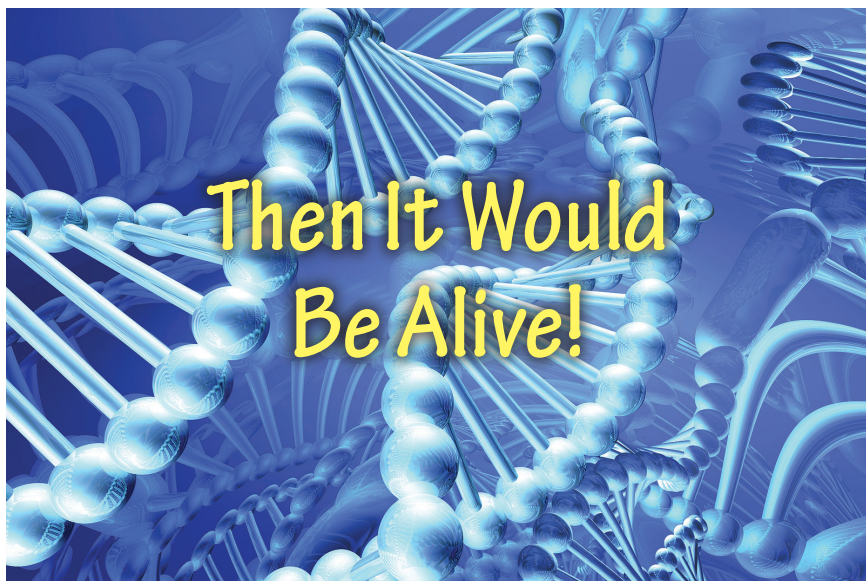
The quote by C. S. Lewis about the infinite importance of Christianity is true on several levels. When we use the term “Christianity,” we are not talking about human religions or denominations, usually named after a person or a particular philosophical or theological belief system. The word “Christian” literally means “Christ-like,” meaning doing and practicing what Jesus did and taught.

One thing that makes Christianity of “infinite importance” is what it offers to the poor and challenged. In Matthew 25:33–40, Jesus spoke about the Christ-like things his followers would do. Those things include feeding the hungry, giving water to those who do not have it, providing clothing and shelter for those in need, and helping those in prison.

Another reason for the infinite importance of Christianity is the effect it has on morality. Marriage is important, and how kids are raised is vital. In the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7), Jesus explains how Christians should treat each other and even their enemies. The wars and violence in our world today are rooted in people refusing to do what Jesus told us to do.

The most critical reason for the infinite importance of Christianity is that it provides hope for what happens after life in this world is done. When our physical bodies return to the dust from which they came, we long for our souls to return to the God who created us. Christianity uniquely offers that hope, making it of “infinite importance.”

—JNC



Origin of life research has occupied scientists for years. The media often exaggerates claims that science is getting close to creating life. “Creating RNA life in a lab” is a headline in a recent issue of *The Week* magazine. The story is about the Salk Institute in La Jolla, California, developing a molecule of ribonucleic acid (RNA) “that could generate accurate copies of another type of RNA.” The article went on to say, “This brings the researchers one step closer to their ultimate goal of creating an RNA molecule that can make accurate copies of itself.” The study’s coauthor Gerald Joyce said, “Then it would be alive.”

Ribonucleic acid (RNA) is a polymeric molecule essential for most biological functions. It has a structure similar to deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), which carries the genetic information in every living cell.



The scientists have created the macromolecule RNA in the laboratory by combining smaller molecules. To say that if an RNA molecule could reproduce itself, “then it would be alive” is an exaggeration.

As an analogy, let us suppose I

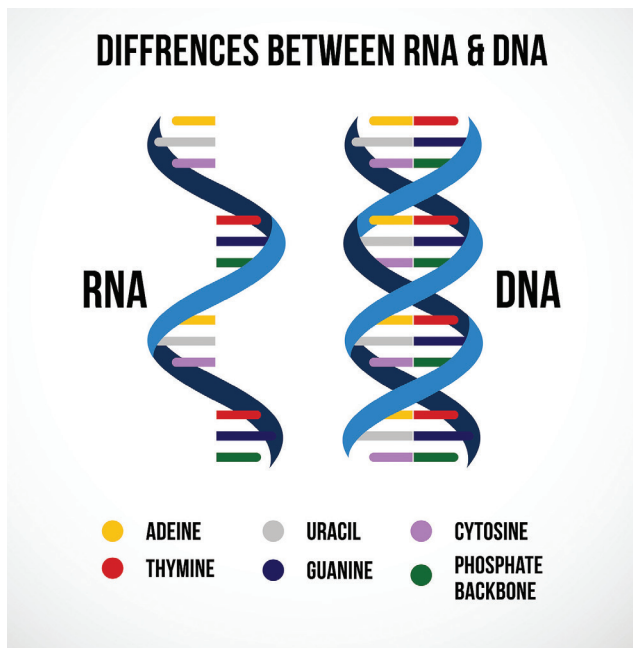
want to make a new car, which I would call a Claytonmobile. I get an engine out of a Ford, a transmission out of a Honda, a chassis out of a Chevy, and an interior out of a Rolls Royce. I put these together and announce to the world that I have created a car. In reality, what did I do? I took things already created and assembled them, but I did not create anything. Some of you old timers may remember the Tucker automobile, which was very much like what I just described.

This same process is happening in the scientific community attempting to create life. The goal of the group at La Jolla is to form an RNA molecule that can make copies of itself. The researchers say, “Then it would be alive.” That means they are changing the definition of

life that most of us learned in biology classes from high school through graduate school. That definition says life is that which can move, breathe, respond to outside stimuli, and reproduce. When researchers can get RNA to reproduce, they will have satisfied one of the parameters, but they certainly will not have created life.

The more we know of the creation, the more we understand the wisdom and power of the Creator. In Proverbs 8:17–23, Wisdom, personified as a woman, says that those who seek her will find her and that her fruit is better than gold or silver. In verse 22, she says, “The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.” The complexity of RNA and DNA and of life itself is a great apologetic for the existence of God. We need to listen to the words of Wisdom.

—JNC



See our videos at www.doesgodexist.tv



A man recently told us, “I can’t repent because I haven’t done anything I need to repent of!” That statement shows ignorance of what repentance means and what we individually should do about it. The Hebrew word translated as “repent” in the Old Testament is *nacham*, which means to rue or be sorry, as with a sigh. Genesis 6:6–7 tells us that God repented that he made man, and Exodus 32:14; Judges 2:18; and 1 Samuel 15:11 use the same word as God changes his mind about his intents. The Greek word in the New Testament is *metanoéa*, meaning “to have another mind.” We see *metanoéa* used many times, including in Matthew 3:2; 4:17; 11:20; 12:41; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; 26:20; and 2 Corinthians 12:21.

As the world sinks deeper and deeper into war, violence, ethnic cleansing, sexism, racism, and immorality, the need for a change of mind among the leaders of all nations is evident. The Old Testament tells of many instances when there was no change of mind, and the results were disastrous. At the same time, it shows that good things can happen when leaders change their thinking. In 2 Kings 23:25, we learn this about King Josiah: “... there was no king before him which turned [repented—changed his thinking] with all his soul and with all his might.” The good that came from that change contrasts with the results of the evil leaders, which is one of the primary messages of the Old Testament.

What repentance means is a change in how we think that will positively influence all we do. Matthew 3:8 tells us to “bring forth fruits which prove your repentance.” In Acts 26:20, Paul tells King Agrippa that all men “should repent and turn to God and live lives

consistent with repentance.” Ephesians 4:22–25 urges humanity to learn from their former ways of living by casting off their old nature that produces “deluded passions that grow corrupt” and be “mentally and spiritually remade, clothed with a new nature made by God’s design”

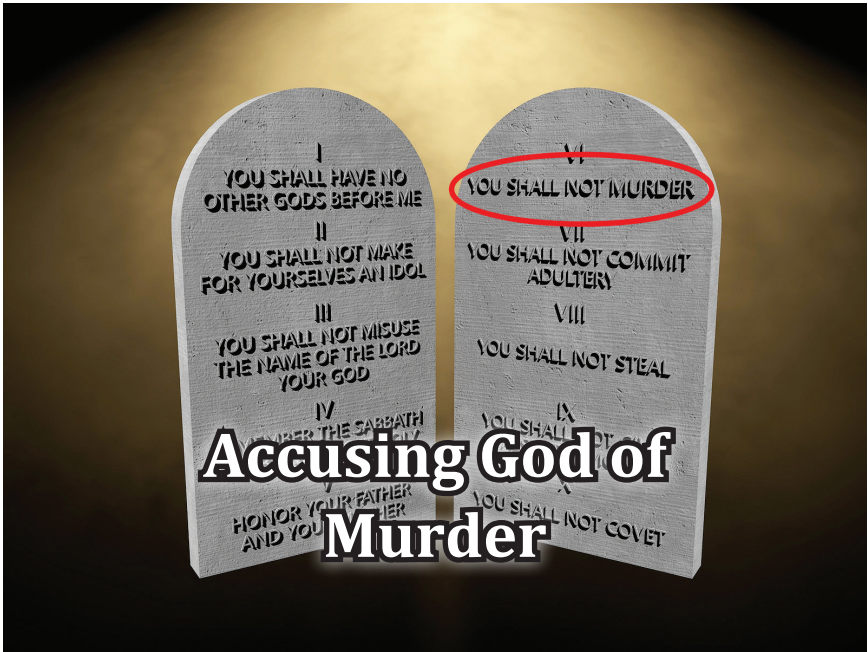
The call for all of us to repent is not about becoming a

“goody two shoes” or claiming to be better than anyone else. It is about accepting a way of life that leads to peace, confidence, and the best of what life has to offer. That is why repentance is fundamental to every biblical call to change. Acts 2:38, for instance, tells us to “repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you will receive the gift of the holy spirit.” It is a call to change how we think, and the benefits of that change are immense and eternal.

—JNC



It is not the healthy
who need a doctor, but
the sick.
I have not come to
call the righteous, but
sinners to repentance.
Jesus Christ



Skeptics in the media constantly attack the Bible and the biblical concept of God. Writers in *The New Yorker*, *The New Republic*, and *The Atlantic* have acted as if they were authorities on the Bible while accusing God of murder and condemning him as being immoral. Taking a Bible passage out of context, they fail to examine who wrote it, why it was written, and how the people to whom it was written would have understood it.

Skeptics make statements like “God murders indiscriminately” when referring to Noah’s flood and Sodom and Gomorrah. They overlook the fact that Noah preached to and taught the people of his age, warning them to avoid the coming disaster. The skeptics also ignore the fact that God agreed to spare Sodom and Gomorrah if ten people in those cities were not involved in the wicked violence and immorality. The people had rejected God, choosing actions that led to death and disease (see Genesis 18:20–33). The statement by the media accusing God of murder shows a lack of biblical knowledge.

The fact is that God was incredibly patient with the violence and immorality of the nations that rejected him, not only in ancient times but also today. The people suffered the consequences of their own actions. We see that in 1 Samuel 15:3, where God commands Saul to destroy the Amalekites. Skeptics have called God’s actions a “senseless act of genocide that was barbaric and immoral.” They say that God murders indiscriminately, but a closer study shows a different picture.

God gave the hygienic laws of Leviticus 11 – 18 for a reason. The cultures surrounding ancient Israel engaged in disastrous practices involving drinking raw blood, eating poorly prepared meat, sexual practices with animals and each other that spread STDs, and many infections that shortened life expectancies at a time when there was no medical treatment. Archaeological evidence and genome studies have left no doubt about the conditions of these ancient people.

Following God’s strict hygienic laws, given through Moses, allowed Israel to avoid those problems. How was God to treat the situation when Israel moved into an area where these hygienic problems were running rampant? Even the animals and babies carried the viruses and bacteria that saturated the people of those cultures.

Accusing God of murder shows a lack of understanding the Bible. From the New Testament, we know how much human sin grieved God and left him with no alternative. The big question is whether we are creating similar problems for ourselves while possibly destroying the planet God created for us.

—JNC



Why Would God Do That?

by Roland Earnst

A Christian friend asked why God would tell the Israelites to “attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants,

cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys” (1 Samuel 15:2–3). Why would God do that—requiring total destruction of the Amalekite society?

I shared my thoughts on this question, but first, I suggested he go to our website, doesgodexist.tv, and scroll down to “videos.” Then click the link “To watch videos in the DOES GOD EXIST? video series.” Scroll down to video number 7 in the series titled “Anticipating Some Objections.” Between 11:50 and 15:40 minutes into that video, you will find a very brief answer to the objection of why God would command the killing of all of the Amalekites, including women, children, and livestock.

It seems that in addition to other sins, such as attacking the Israelites in Exodus 17, the Amalekites were sexually corrupt, even including bestiality. That resulted in diseases, even affecting the animals, for which there was no cure at that primitive time. If the Amalekites and their animals were allowed to live in the land God had promised to his people, they would morally corrupt the Israelites and even spread diseases. In recent years, we have seen how disease can spread from animals to humans or vice-versa.

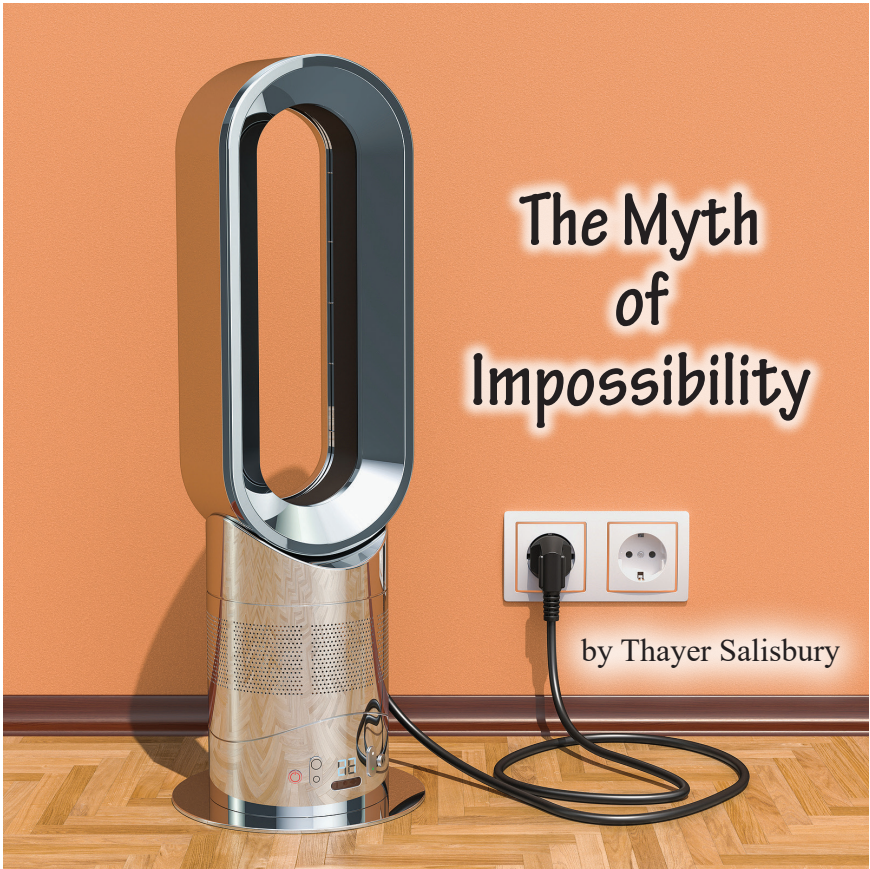
Because of his love, God was preparing a people through which he would bring salvation to all people. Allowing the Israelites to be corrupted by their neighbors could destroy God's plan to redeem all humanity through Jesus Christ. The gospel came into the world because God had prepared a people who believed in the one true God who created all things. Any other religious system would not work to prepare people to accept Christ's message.

Unfortunately, the Israelites failed to follow God's instructions to the letter, and that failure returned to haunt them (see 1 Samuel 30). Paganism corrupted even Israel's kings. However, God allowed his chosen people to suffer captivity and punishment. Why would God do that? Allowing his people to suffer eventually led to the Jewish people at the time of Jesus being completely cured of paganism. They had other faults, but they refused to worship any pagan gods. They had the prophecies of the Old Testament and the miracles and message of Jesus to cause many of them to believe and be baptized into Christ's body, the church. Although many rejected Christ, those who accepted the gospel became powerful witnesses to the pagans of their day to the point where they "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6). (Actually, they turned it right side up.)



The church today would not exist if God had not taken harsh steps that may seem immoral to our modern Christian sensitivities. I believe that without the influence of Christianity in the past two millennia, people would have destroyed civilization and the planet before now. As people reject God today, we are on the verge of doing that. Today, God does not command us to save the world by destroying our enemies but by bringing them into God's family through his church because he loves all people. When you consider the entire history from God's perspective and realize his ultimate purpose, you realize it was because of his love that he commanded the destruction of the Amalekites.

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The Myth of Impossibility

by Thayer Salisbury

About seven years ago, we bought one of those “bladeless” fans. For the first couple of years, it worked very well. But eventually, my wife said, “I don’t think that fan moves air as well as it used to.” I tested it and found that she was right. The fan barely did anything, even in the highest setting.

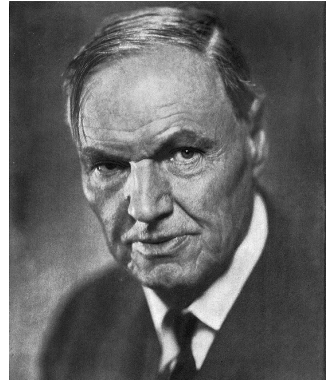
The owner’s manual says, “Do not open the fan. There are no user-serviceable parts inside.” I opened it.

Do you believe in Santa or the Easter Bunny? No? Then do not believe in a bladeless fan either. It has blades. They were just well hidden. They were also incredibly caked with dust and debris. A little cleaning and the thing worked like new. That was almost three years ago. This morning, I opened it up again and gave it another cleaning.

It can be done. I did not say it was easy. The manufacturer made the process of opening the fan needlessly complex. They evidently did not want the secret of the hidden blades made public. So, they encouraged the myth of impossibility when, in fact, user servicing of this fan is good for the environment—in more ways than one.

It angers me that the manufacturers are lying to people about these fans. It damages the environment to have usable fans thrown into landfills because the manufacturer claimed they cannot be fixed. In reality, all they need, in many cases, is a cleaning. But that is minor compared to the harm being done by other myths of impossibility. We hear many of them.

Clarence Darrow was a popularizer of this “they cannot help it” idiocy. He told the prisoners in Cook County jail:



Clarence Darrow in 1925

“There is no such thing as a crime as the word is generally understood. I do not believe there is any sort of distinction between the real moral condition of the people in and out of jail. One is just as good as the other. The people here can no more help being here than the people outside can avoid being outside. I do not believe that people are in jail because they deserve to be. They are in jail simply because they cannot avoid it on account of circumstances which are entirely beyond their control and for which they are in no way responsible.

“In one sense, everybody is equally good and equally bad. We all do the best we can under the circumstances. But as to the exact things for which you are sent here, some of you are guilty and did the particular act because you needed the money. Some of you did it because you are in the habit of doing it, and some of you because you are born to it, and it comes to be as natural as it does, for instance, for me to be good.”

That perverted philosophy has received almost universal acclaim in western post-civilization. Alcoholics cannot help it. Homosexuals cannot help it. Rapists cannot help it. One thing you can be sure of is if someone were to take violent action against those making these “can’t help it” claims, it would be labeled a hate crime. Why? There is no such thing as a crime, according to Mr. Darrow. We cannot help being what we are.

Very likely, some are more tempted by alcoholism than



others. But that does not mean they cannot help it. Many have overcome their heredity and environment to kick the habit. Very likely, the same could be said of other ill behaviors. Some may be more tempted toward sexual deviancy than others. Some may be more tempted to theft than others. Some may be more tempted to murder than others. But being tempted and giving in to the temptation are two different things. Finding it difficult to clean up your life and claiming that it is impossible are two different things.



The manufacturer of our hidden-blade-fan said I could not service it. But I have serviced it more than once. The manufacturer of human beings says that we can service our lives and clean them up (James 4:8; Ezekiel 18:31), and even that he will help us to do so (Ezekiel 36:21). Do not listen to those who say it cannot be done. That claim is from the Devil (via people like Clarence Darrow). Our lives can be changed. Our hearts can be cleansed. The myth of impossibility is a lie.



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



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Seeing God or Seeking God

by Roland Earnst

We have often referred to Romans 1:19–20 which tells us that God can be plainly seen in the things he has made. However, skeptics frequently challenge us by saying, “If God is real, why doesn’t he reveal Himself?” They want to see God “in the flesh.” But God is not flesh and blood. John 4:24 says, “God is spirit,” Seeing God is just not possible.

God desires for us to seek him. As Paul shared with the pagans in Athens, God created us with a desire to “seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us” (Acts 17:27 NKJV). The journey of seeking God is not only a path to finding him but also a source of profound joy as we discover him in the intricate details of his creation.

Suppose God appeared in front of us. The Bible tells us that in our physical state, we could not stand to see his glory. Moses had to be hidden in the cleft of the rock to protect him from seeing God’s glory. We



cannot understand how that sight could have been too much for Moses' feeble eyes to behold. However, Moses could see God's work, just as we can.

God loves us and wants us to love him. If we could see God, would we be terrified? Would we obey God's commands out of fear rather than love? Fear is a powerful motivating factor, but God wants our love. God showed his love in the form of a physical person, Jesus Christ. Jesus was God, but he was also human.



He was Immanuel, "God with us" (Matthew 1:23). He said, "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). Jesus was not hidden, but many people refused to see who he really was despite his miracles (see John 19:16.)



Seeing God in his full glory is not something we will experience in this

life. However, we can find immense joy in seeing his handiwork. If God were to fully reveal himself before our eyes, our physical beings would not be able to withstand his glory (Exodus 33:20). If we somehow managed to survive, our service to him would be driven by fear and terror, not love.

We would lose the joy of discovering him in his works. The experience of physically seeing God, even if possible, might be overwhelming. On the other hand, finding God in the things he has made is a delightful experience, akin to a child's delight in finding the one they seek in a game of hide-and-seek. May we all discover that kind of joy as we earnestly seek and find God.

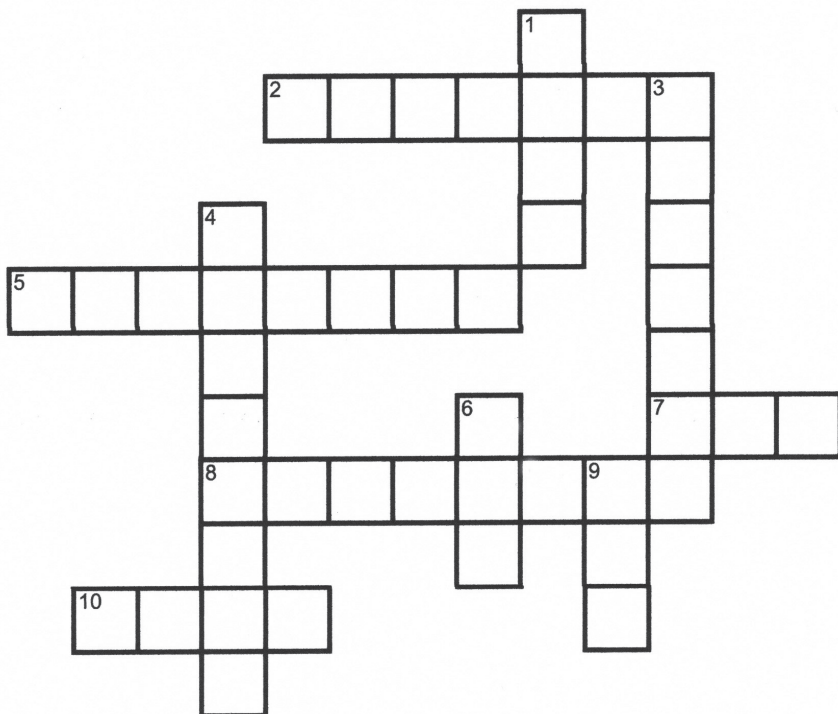


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Does God Exist?

3rd Quarter 2024 Crossword

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



Across

- [2] Everyone needs a _____, in life.
- [5] We can see God in his _____ (Romans 1:20).
- [7] The myth of impossibility is a _____.
- [8] C. S. Lewis said Christianity is of _____ importance.
- [10] God desires for us to _____ him.

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

Down

- [1] God commanded destruction of the Amalekites because of his _____.
- [3] You can always serve as a bad _____.
- [4] Acts 2:38 says, “Repent and be _____ for the remission of sins.”
- [6] _____ carries genetic information.
- [9] God agreed to spare Sodom and Gomorrah for _____ righteous people.

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[DOESGODEXIST.TODAY](https://doesgodexist.today)

Much of the material in this publication appeared earlier on that website.

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SCIENTISTS AND GOD

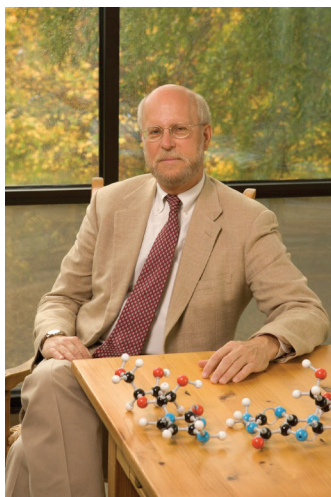
Editor's note: Atheists attempt to suggest that scientists are intelligent people who have rejected faith and do not believe in God. The fact is that some of the most productive scientists who have ever lived were believers in God. We share some of their thoughts with you in this column.

Henry Frederick "Fritz" Schaefer III
(Born 1944)

Schaefer is a computational and theoretical chemist and one of the most cited chemists in the world.

He is the Graham Perdue Professor of Chemistry and Director of the Center for Computational Chemistry at the University of Georgia.

Since 2004 he has been Professor of Chemistry Emeritus, at UC Berkeley, where he previously taught.



“The laws of nature look just as if they have been selected as the most simple and elegant principles of intelligible change by a wise creator. Belief in the intelligibility of nature strongly suggests the existence of a cosmic mind who can construct nature in accordance with rational laws.”

Reference: “How Have Christians Helped to Advance Science?” in *The Comprehensive Guide to Science and Faith*, page 511.

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



Cynthia's Corner

How Can We Explain the Existence/Purpose of Life?



It is amazing to understand that the same God who created the cosmos created you and me. Nothing God does is an accident, and nothing in the cosmos is a product of blind chance. God created humans with a spiritual capacity that makes us unique and gives us a special purpose. He made us to love, and he wants us to know and love him. God even sent his Son to Earth as a human to live among us for thirty-some years to show us who he is and tell us that we have a purpose.

Jesus was born of a virgin woman and performed many miracles during his ministry to prove he was God's Son (Hebrews 2:4). He lived, died, and rose from the grave. God speaks to us through his Word, the Bible. He clearly tells us why we were born and what our purpose is. We find our purpose in our relationship with our Creator through his son, Jesus Christ.

Our purpose for living is greater than our short life on Earth. Our eternal soul longs to be united with our Creator (Ecclesiastes 3:11). Sin separated us from God ever since Eve and Adam, but our purpose on Earth is to be reconciled to God. Because God loves us, his Son became human and died on the cross to pay the price for our sins (1 John 4:10), and only in Christ can we fulfill our purpose in living. When we are united with Christ in baptism, our sins are forgiven, and we receive God's Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38) to help us overcome our sinful nature and live for him.

God gives us purpose and direction and, when we die, eternal life with him. But every human must make a choice to receive that while we live on Earth. We are in a spiritual fight between good and evil (Ephesians 6:12), and Earth is the testing ground. All humans have sinned (Romans 3:23). Our purpose on Earth is to decide whether we will live for our sinful desires or seek to know God. We can only be reconciled to him through his Son and, in that way, become a warrior for God in the battle between good and evil. Every human must make this choice, so choose wisely because our choices have eternal consequences! Your soul will live eternally after your body dies, either with God in heaven or eternally separated from him. The choice is yours.

—Cynthia Clayton

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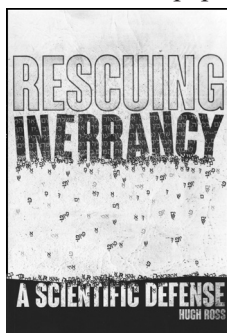


The books that are reviewed in the Book Reviews section are not available through us, but can be obtained from a local bookstore or through many online bookstores.

Rescuing Inerrancy

by Hugh Ross Reasons to Believe © 2023

\$21.95 paperback, 262 pages, ISBN-13: 978-1-956112-03-0



Hugh Ross’s new book directly addresses the charge that the Bible is full of errors and contradictions and, therefore, cannot be the inerrant word of God. The subtitle of Ross’s book is “A Scientific Defense” because he uses science to defend the accuracy of the scriptures.

Ross uses the term “concordance” to refer to agreement. He says there are “three primary spheres of concordance”—historical, scientific, and theological. The three are intertwined so that if the Bible is historically concordant, it will also be scientifically and theologically concordant. In other words, if we say that science and the Bible disagree, we are suggesting that the Bible also does not agree with actual history or even proper theology. This book addresses that challenge.

Ross says many conservative evangelical Christian teachers and leaders have abandoned the idea that the Bible and science are in concordance, causing them to abandon the Bible’s historical concordance. Since two of the primary spheres of concordance have been abandoned, how can we trust the theological concordance of the Bible?

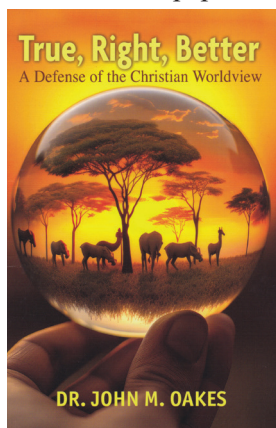
Ross does an outstanding job of addressing these challenges. He addresses evolution, Adam and Eve, Noah’s flood, Earth’s age, and other areas where people question the Bible’s inerrancy. The book’s appendix discusses the difference between the Hebrew words *bara* and *asah* in Genesis, which John Clayton has dealt with many times. It also includes 34 pages of notes and references and an index of topics.

We highly recommend this book for anyone seeking to learn more about the harmony (concordance) between the Bible and science.

Reviewed by Roland Earnst

True, Right, Better

by John M. Oakes, Illumination Publishers, © 2023
\$16.99 paperback, 151 pages, ISBN-13: 978-1-958723-94-4



One of the bright lights in the battle against atheism and naturalism is Dr. John M. Oakes, president of the Apologetics Research Society and graduate of the University of Colorado with a Ph.D. in chemical physics. John's scholarship is evident in his many books and booklets designed to answer the challenges of skeptics and atheists while building the faith of Christians. This book defends the Christian worldview.

Many of us are puzzled by how the religious leaders in Jesus' day could see him raise Lazarus from the dead and do other incredible miracles and not understand that he was not merely human but God's Son. The answer to that question is that they held a worldview that prevented them from logically and rationally dealing with the evidence that was right in front of them.

Oakes defines "worldview" as a "lens through which information passes into our rational minds for us to interpret that data." He points out three different levels of knowledge—theory, paradigm, and worldview. This book deals with worldview as a set of presuppositions we hold about our world's basic makeup. Oakes presents the Christian worldview as superior to all other options. He uses past scholars like Newton, Kuhn, Popper, Lyell, and Kurka to show different worldviews and then discusses how scholars evaluate worldviews— are they true, are they right, and are they better than other choices? That is where the book gets its title.

With that foundation, Oakes shows that the Christian worldview is superior to every other option in all three of these criteria. This includes theism (biblical, existentialism, and Islamic), pantheism (Hinduism, Buddhism, Occult, New Age, and polytheism), and naturalism (secular humanism, Marxism, nihilism, atheism, and postmodernism). Oakes' scholarship shows brightly in this book. He uses valid sources and accurately and briefly explains their views and then shows why they fail to measure up to the Christian worldview.

This book is great reading for a college student challenged in a philosophy class, but for those of us who are ignorant of philosophical teaching, it is a gold mine of useful rebuttals of the "gods of this age."

See our videos at www.doesgodexist.tv

DANDY DESIGNS

Learn from the Woodpecker Design



Woodpeckers can hammer 25 strokes while their heads travel more than 20 feet per second. If you banged your head into a tree for a few seconds, the results would be headaches, detached retinas, concussions, eye damage from flying wood chips, and massive skin damage. With all the talk about brain damage from football collisions, perhaps we can learn from the woodpecker design.

Many design features protect woodpecker brains. Their skulls are thick and heavily ossified to prevent shattering. Shock-absorbing tissue between the eyes and around the skull acts as a crash helmet. Spongy material separates the skull and bill. A sac of fluid surrounds human brains, but a tough membrane surrounds a woodpecker's brain to prevent it from bouncing around. The woodpecker brain is tiny, weighing a fraction of an ounce, so it has much less inertia than a human brain.

Woodpecker eyes are held tightly in place by bone and surrounding tissue to prevent damage. A membrane blinks over the eye to keep out wood chips. The nostrils are covered with fine bristly feathers or are narrow slits to protect the bird's air chambers. Woodpeckers have long tongues that reach deep inside tree openings to capture insects. The tongue wraps around inside the skull, further protecting the brain when the bird is hammering on the tree. The woodpecker's bill is solid and shaped like a chisel. Thick and strong neck muscles absorb the kinetic energy.

Woodpeckers are essential to forest ecosystems by controlling worms and insects that can cause blight and infections in trees. Design requiring so many specialized features is difficult to explain by a step-by-step evolutionary process. God's creatures are designed to do specific jobs, and "We can know there is a God through the things he has made" (Romans 1:20).

An Animal Using Photosynthesis



Animals use an enormous number of methods to get nourishment. Harsh environments often require unusual methods, and many times, the animal at the bottom of the food chain is unusual. An excellent example is the leaf slug or leaf sheep (*Costasiella kuro-*

shimae). This sea slug is an animal using photosynthesis to secure its nourishment by a method known as kleptoplasty.

Plants serve as the foundation of the food chain, harnessing sunlight through photosynthesis to produce energy. Many animals, such as herbivores, rely on plants to meet their energy needs. Even carnivores indirectly depend on plants, as they consume the herbivores. However, the leaf sheep, through kleptoplasty, bypasses continued reliance on plants, directly using photosynthesis for its energy needs.

Leaf sheep sea slugs are only five to ten millimeters long. They were first discovered off the coast of Japan in 1993 and later found in the Philippines and Indonesia. Their common name derives from their resemblance to a tiny sheep. They feed on algae, which are plants that contain chloroplasts that enable photosynthesis. The leaf sheep retain the chloroplast cells within their bodies, enabling them to use photosynthesis, bypassing the need to eat more algae for over two months. In the food chain, the leaf sheep become food for various fish and other forms of sea life.

The more we learn about the natural world, the more we see unique systems that allow life to exist in symbiotic relationships that give evidence of design. Mindless chance does not provide the best explanation for examples such as leaf sheep. If there were just one such case, you might think it could be chance, but this is just one of a vast number of cases where God's very specialized design allows life to exist.

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News and Notes

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A PLANT THAT SWEATS: You and I keep cool in hot weather by evaporating water from our skin. That removes a lot of heat from our bodies, allowing us to survive hot weather. Botanists have discovered that the Carline thistle plant cools itself by evaporation. You could say it is a plant that sweats.



Carline Thistle

Carline thistles grow in an area of southern Spain where almost no other plants can survive. In August, everything shrivels and dies in the arid region around the Sierra de Cazorla mountain range, except the Carline thistle. By evaporative cooling, the flowers on this plant average nine degrees cooler than the surrounding air and may be as

much as 18 degrees cooler.

To perform photosynthesis, leaves allow carbon dioxide to enter through tiny pores called stomata. During this exchange, a small amount of water in the leaf escapes, allowing some evaporation. However, the Carline thistle is the only plant known to allow substantial water quantities to move to the surface. God has designed plants to survive every conceivable climatic condition, even a plant that sweats.



UFO/UAP REPORT: One of the most repeated false claims is aliens in spacecraft regularly visit Earth and want to affect human history. In our day of conspiracy theories, there are stories that the United States government has been hiding alien contact. Dr. Sean Kirkpatrick was the director of the U.S. Department of Defense’s All-Domain Anomaly Resolution Office (AARO). Congress charged that agency in 2022 with bringing scientific evidence and clarity to the UFO and Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP) mystery.

You can read the report released by Kirkpatrick’s group of qualified scientists, “Report on the Historical Record of U.S. Government Involvement with Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP),” online by using the QR code. The bottom line is that there is no invasion by space aliens and no government cover-up. We remind our readers that all attempts to tie alien claims to the Bible or alien explanations of history are not supported by evidence or real scientific investigation.



AI CAN BE USED OR MISUSED: Artificial Intelligence is the latest marvel of science flooding every part of human life — for good or evil. On November 19, 2022, a company known as OpenAI launched an artificial intelligence application, a chatbot called ChatGPT, making it available to anyone wanting to use it. Since ChatGPT can write papers, students started using it to meet course requirements.

Alarmists have suggested that AI could take over the planet. That may be an exaggeration, but innovators can do many very positive things with this new technology. One example is the ability to decipher unreadable ancient manuscripts. Pyroclastic flows from Mount Vesuvius buried a library in the ancient Roman town of Herculaneum in AD 79, burying the scrolls under 60 feet of debris, and baking them into charcoal. The process preserved the scrolls, but scholars could not unroll and read them because they would crumble. Using high-energy scans, scientists created a 3-D image of the scrolls and used AI to analyze the ink patterns and determine the words on the scrolls.



AI will allow scholars to study documents to expand our knowledge of the past, solve insoluble problems, make medical advances, and improve human life. However, like everything else, AI can be misused. The notion that it can take over the world and eliminate the human race is science fiction and not something we should fear.



TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE OF 2024: In April 2024, a total solar eclipse crossed North America. Many people called it a “spiritual” experience that made them realize how small we are. Many indicated that it brought people together, reminding us that we need each other, and some said it was a testimony to God’s existence.

In 1815, American novelist James Fenimore Cooper wrote, “... never have I beheld any spectacle which so plainly manifested the majesty of the Creator, or so forcibly taught the lesson of humility



to man as a total eclipse of the Sun.” Modern eclipse chaser Kate Russo said about the total solar eclipse, “You don’t need to know anything about it to feel that overwhelming sense of awe.” She is a clinical psychologist who has studied how eclipses affect people and wrote a book titled *Being in the Shadow: Stories of the First-time Total Eclipse Experience*.

Multiple news commentators remarked about the remarkable coincidence that the Sun is 400 times the size of the Moon but 400 times as far away. That “coincidence” allows the Moon to exactly block out the Sun so we can see its corona. That fact is one of many “coincidences” that enable us to study and learn about God’s orderly creation.

Many people experienced awe as they watched the eclipse. Dacher Keltner of the University of California, Berkeley, is described as a “pioneer in the science of awe.” He defines awe as “the feeling of being in the presence of something vast that transcends your understanding of the world.”

It will be two decades before a total solar eclipse crosses the United States again. There is no question that America’s total solar eclipse of 2024 taught us about God’s creative power and the brevity of life.



ANIMAL BEHAVIOR: One result of evolutionary thinking is believing that humans are not unique but just animals at the top of the evolutionary ladder. As a result, many people treat animals as if they are humans, but animals do not have human values or empathy, and their instinctive behavior may cause unexpected problems.

A man named Austin Riley in Boerne, Texas, found a newborn warthog whose mother had died. Riley nursed and raised the warthog for five years. He named his pet warthog Waylon after Waylon Jennings, a country singer known for his outlaw behavior. When Riley would lie down and listen to sports radio, Waylon would lie beside

him. Waylon grew to weigh 250 pounds and was identified with Pumbaa in the popular Lion King movie, with the Swahili expression “*hakuna matata*,” meaning “no worries.” However, there was something to worry about in this case.

Warthogs have lower tusks protruding from muscular jaws like blades. The tusks are curved, so the warthog can do incredible damage to any animal or person by twisting its head. On an October evening in 2022, Austin came to Waylon’s pen, and the warthog greeted him happily as he went to the feeding trough. Twenty minutes later, Waylon attacked Austin, ripping his legs, wrist, abdomen, and neck. Doctors say that Austin lost half of his blood, and his treatment required ten surgeries.



Warthog

The bottom line is that wild animals are not good pets and do not possess human values or empathy. Humans can behave like animals, but animals cannot behave like humans. Humans are created in God’s image, which is expressed in how we live and care for one another. The world would be a much better place if everyone followed the teachings of Jesus Christ in Matthew chapters 5 to 7.



THC GUMMIES AND CHILDREN: A five-year-old Colorado girl ate some gummy bears that contained THC. Recreational marijuana is legal in Colorado and many other states, and THC (tetrahydrocannabinol) is the psychoactive drug from cannabis. Edible THC products include candy and cookies, which are attractive to children. In this case, the parents and doctors could not awaken the girl, and she remained unconscious for 16 hours.

Hospital-reported cases of THC exposure in children under the age of six increased more than 1,000 percent between 2017 and 2021. About a third of the children were treated and released, but 15% required hospital admission, and 8% were sent to intensive care. THC is concentrated in the candy, cookies, or brownies, and it remains in body fat for several days. There is no antidote for THC poisoning and no reversal agent or special treatment.

In the Colorado case, the family had no marijuana or cannabis in their home, and they did not know she had eaten the THC-laced gummy candy. They had been on a camping trip where other campers had given the gummies to the



girl. This is a new concern for parents and a problem that will grow. The marijuana industry has no supervision or control, and cities that have opted to allow unrestricted marijuana distribution are going to see increasing problems as kids find products that give them a drug high.



MEDICALIZED CHILD ABUSE: One of the most inflammatory issues of our day is the question of children who decide they want to change their gender. A team led by Dr. Hilary Cass, a renowned British pediatrician, recently produced a 388-page report based on four years of research into trans care in Britain. The UK’s *Sunday Times* reported that “Trans activists have bullied politicians and doctors into embracing ‘medicalized child abuse’ and cowed dissenters into silence.” That is a challenge to the same groups in America, but some public school counselors should be added to the group of abusers.



The number of British children referred for transgender drug and surgery treatments rose from 250, primarily boys, in 2012 to 5,000, mostly girls, in 2022. The treatments for “gender dysphoria” have lifetime effects, including a loss of bone health and fertility, making the subjects lifelong patients for medical treatment.

The Times newspaper points out that the problem is likely more severe than anyone realizes because 6 out of 7 gender treatment centers refused to give data to researchers. Although this report is from Britain, we suspect the situation is worse in the United States.

Attempting to change God’s creation and design of the human reproductive system will cause children a great deal of pain and uncertainty. We suggest that medicalized child abuse is not the way to help disturbed children find their identity and live meaningful lives.



A LESSON FROM AN ASTROLABE: The astrolabe was an ancient astronomical instrument, a two-dimensional map of the universe typically crafted from plates. Astrolabes, with their star charts and analog calculation capabilities, were tools and gateways to understanding the cosmos. People used them to calculate distances,

the time of sunrise and sunset, the position of stars, and the location of latitudes and longitudes. With its intricate design and multifaceted functionality, the astrolabe shows human cooperation.

Federica Gigante, a historian at the University of Cambridge, found the plates of an eleventh-century astrolabe in the vaults of a museum in Verona, Italy. The astrolabe she discovered was made of brass and had Arabic engravings. It also has Hebrew letters engraved on the plates, indicating their use by Jewish owners, and it was in the archives of a Christian museum. This astrolabe shows human cooperation. It means there was an era in which Muslims, Jews, and Christians built upon one another's intellectual achievements. All cultures had people with incredible minds



18th Century Astrolabe Disassembled

who contributed to human knowledge of what the cosmos is about and how we can observe it.

In our day of religious wars between these same groups, it is incredible that humans do not have the sense to realize the importance of understanding each other and working together to discover Truth. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Think of the progress the world could make if we could work together and follow the commandments of Jesus given so clearly in Matthew 5:21 – 25; 38 – 48.



We invite you to read our daily posts on:

DOESGODEXIST.TODAY

Much of the material in this publication appeared earlier on that website.

**ANSWERS TO CROSSWORD PUZZLE
ON PAGE 18**

ACROSS: 2-purpose; 5-creation; 7-lie;
8-infinite; 10-seek

DOWN: 1-love; 3-example; 4-baptized,
6-DNA; 9-ten



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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