

DOES GOD EXIST?

July/August 2016
Volume 43 Number 4

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



***Science and Faith
in Medicine***

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Articles in this Issue:

Science and Faith in Medicine 3
A Lesson from the Plagues 9

Guest Articles:

Mysterious Exodus 13
“Abba, Father” 14

Special Features:

Great Scientists and God 20
Cynthia’s Corner 21

Book Reviews:

Bible Rhymes: 52 Poems
with Commentary 22
Empowered by the Grace
of God 23
Dandy Designs:
Bug Blueprints 24
Elephants: Workhorses of
our World 25
News and Notes 26

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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 FAX: 269-687-9431

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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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SCIENCE AND FAITH: IN MEDICINE

**“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”
Psalm 139:14**

Indeed, we are fearfully and wonderfully made. What machine do you know that can run continuously for as long as 100 years without outside intervention to rebuild or repair it? We all complain about our aches and pains, which in many cases are due to neglecting our physical health, but our bodies are incredibly made. Science has given us a wealth of data about our bodies that should be encouraging and should build our faith in God. This data should expand our understanding of the simple statement, “God formed a man from the dust of the ground” (Genesis 2:7). The word “formed” is commonly used in reference to the creative act of an artist or an engineer.

Our feet alone show the incredible care and design built into all parts of our body. The human foot has 26 bones and 125,000 sweat glands. Our stomach has acid strong enough to dissolve iron, but the walls of the stomach have special cells that produce a mucous coating that prevents the acid from attacking the stomach. Your left lung is smaller than your right lung to make room for your heart. The human brain can hold five times as much information as an encyclopedia and yet it operates on the same amount of power as a ten-watt light bulb. Three-hundred-million cells die in the human body every minute so that every seven years we have a completely new body. All of this is a testimony to the fact that we are fearfully and wonderfully made.

Our challenge as humans is how to care for the body and how to repair it when something goes wrong. Our bodies suffer an incredible amount of abuse. When someone is intoxicated, he has taken a toxin into his body that has produced a change. Toxins do bad things to our bodies, and some toxins are now coming into us



from our environment due to human mismanagement of resources. A huge percentage of cancer is caused by man-made carcinogens in the environment. Science has produced many of these substances, and medical science works to correct the damage that

these substances have done. Science is warning us about physical threats to our health, and all of us need to pay attention to the warnings. Unfortunately, science cannot address the most fundamental causes of these hazards to our health—greed, selfishness, materialism, and human stupidity. This is where faith has a necessary role in how we deal with the care and repair of our bodies.

Christianity offers a perspective that complements medical science. The teachings of Christianity provide a unique view of the value and precious nature of our bodies. First Corinthians 3:16–17 (NKJV) says, “Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which *temple* you are.” The word “defiles” is the Greek word *phtheiro* which is uniquely used in this verse and means to corrupt or ruin, not just to make dirty. When we corrupt our bodies we not only cause medical problems to take place, but we also violate the spiritual force that gives the Christian the strength to do God’s will. Another treatment of this concept is given in 1 Corinthians 6:15–20 (NIV) when the subject of prostitution is addressed. We are told, “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body?” [Genesis 2:24 says], ‘The two will become one flesh.’ But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit. Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. Do

you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price.”

Science can offer ways to combat sexually transmitted diseases and avoid conception, but faith is needed to allow people to avoid the negative effects of selfish, promiscuous sexual gratification. Lifestyle is a major contributor to medical well-being, but science is powerless in motivating people to choose to adopt a constructive lifestyle. People who struggle with alcoholism and other chemical problems that damage their bodies frequently find that “learning to look to a higher power” is critical to changing their lifestyle to a constructive one. We go to a scientifically trained person for help in repairing the physical things that go wrong with our bodies. It is equally important to go to the right help to avoid those things that damage us physically, and also for help with those things linked to spiritual problems in our lives.

We tend to make major decisions about life based entirely on what can be done, and without a spiritual understanding of what ought to be done. The abortion issue has been rooted in the fact that it is now possible for people to end a pregnancy by killing the baby. From a scientific perspective, this cannot be viewed as anything but murder. In most states today if a woman is assaulted and the baby she is carrying dies, the person who did the assault is considered to be guilty of murder. Attempts to circumvent this fact have depended on saying that the baby is just an extension of the mother’s body. That view has very little scientific support. Morning sickness happens because the mother’s body is rejecting the baby as not being a part of her body. An elaborate design is built into



the system that prevents this attempted rejection from killing the baby (see January/February 2009, page 18 for more on this). Babies respond to things happening outside the womb at a very early stage of the pregnancy (see June 1978; November/December 2013, page 27; January/February 2014, page 28; March/April 2014, page 28; May/June 2014, page 29).*

From a faith perspective, there is a much better solution to an unwanted pregnancy than abortion. Deciding to have a baby is part of the family unit structure, and avoiding promiscuous sex (fornication) is the surest way to avoid the issue. When an unwanted pregnancy does occur, the baby is still viewed biblically as special, and adoption allows that beautiful child to continue to bless the world. Faith has a role in dealing with this issue, and there are solutions that avoid the psychological, physical, and social consequences of abortion.

Science and faith have a complementary relationship when it comes to the end of life as well. Euthanasia, suicide, and “pulling the plug” are growing issues in our world today. Science has developed the capacity to extend life through technology. One problem is that science cannot define “life” in a very adequate way. Some base it on the beat-



ing of the heart, some on whether brain waves exist, and some on quality of life. From a biblical standpoint, death is when the soul leaves the body—when the indwelling of the Spirit no longer happens. Unfortunately,

all of these definitions are hard to apply. Because of technology the beating of the heart is no longer useful, because hearts can be restarted or transplanted or replaced with mechanical devices. The quality of life is always relative, and brain waves are not an all-or-nothing proposition. Science should be able to make the process of dying relatively painless, but the decision to “pull the plug” has to be made by the individual or the family. Faith is involved in this, and many times an extended life has brought forgiveness, blessings, and peace not to only the one dying, but to the family left behind as well.

We have mentioned several times in this journal that atheistic decisions about death and dying have huge problems associated with them. Peter Singer, professor of bioethics at Princeton University has suggested that from a scientific and political perspective we should euthanize mentally and physically challenged individuals, as well as people who have mental illness of such a nature that hospitalization is required. His argument is that the expense of maintaining these individuals until natural death is prohibitive (see November/Decem-

ber 2010, page 26.) Many arguments for abortion and euthanasia come from the same mindset. To remove faith and Christian values from these issues is to create a society that is totally mechanical and animalistic. One is reminded of Liberal, Missouri—a town created by atheists in which no churches or Christian values were allowed. The town closed because of the chaos that resulted from such a belief system. The founder later said that he never again wanted to live in a town with no churches (see July 1989).

The mention of mental illness brings up another facet of the “science and faith in medicine” discussion. Many years ago it was popular in articles written about mental health to say, “It isn’t what you eat that is important, it’s what eats you.” Twentieth-century psychology had much of its roots in the teachings of Freud which gave a strictly physical explanation of human behavior with most of it based on assumptions about human sexuality. In the twenty-first century, we have learned that mental health is far more complex than just having one cause. We have also learned that physical health is radically affected by mental health. The importance of having a purpose in life, being part of a support group, having security, and being loved cannot be over-emphasized. Christianity meets those needs in powerful ways. There have been numerous studies showing the value of prayer, not so much that a miracle is expected as the fact that others care and are in support of the ill person. The value of looking to a higher power, to which Christianity has always called humanity, is not questioned by those who work with addiction. The importance of forgiveness, and of loving the person while not loving what they have done is a key to getting over a terrible wrong.

The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5–7 remains a masterpiece in how to live successfully. Going the second mile instead of





demanding payback, turning the other cheek instead of retaliating, returning good for evil instead of carrying a grudge, living one day at a time instead of hoarding for the future and being obsessed with things, accepting others instead of judging them, and looking for good fruit in making decisions are all keystones to good mental health and happiness.

Stress is a major cause of both physical and mental illness. Living the Christian life allows us to handle stress. I have a close friend who is a very successful doctor. I have heard him say that all he can do is “provide the resources that allow healing, but whether the patient gets healed or not depends on forces beyond the reach of medicine.” Faith and God’s actions in our lives are a major part of those forces. Science and faith are friends,



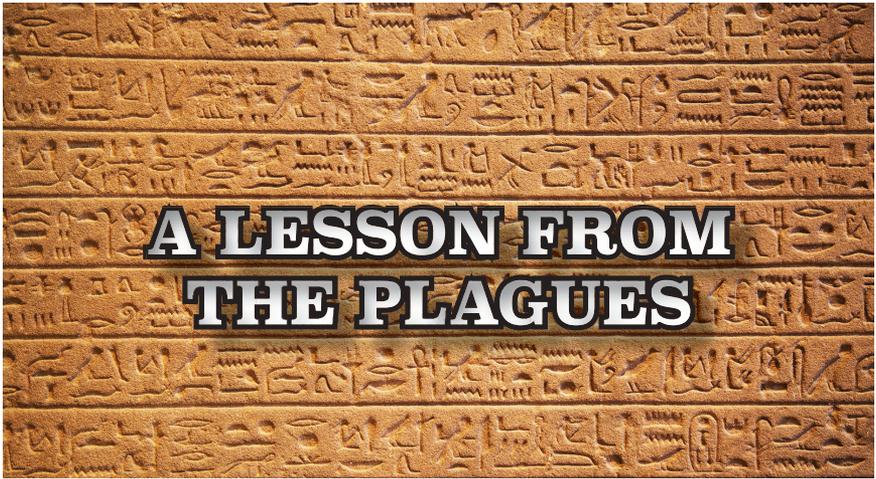
and working together they can help us deal with everything that happens in life—from conception to death.

—John N. Clayton

*References to articles in previous issues of this journal can be found on our doesgodexist.org website.

Our thanks to Dr. F. Batmanghelidj, Mark Gardner, and Paul Mitchell for the data on the human body.



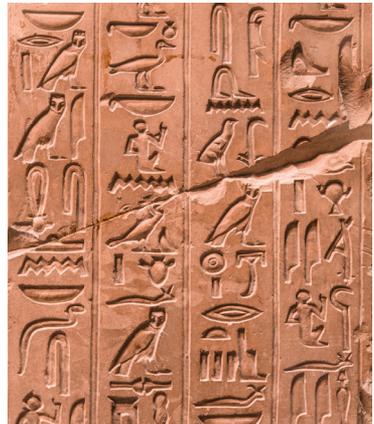


A LESSON FROM THE PLAGUES

There has been a large number of books and articles attempting to explain what happened and what did not happen as Moses led the nation of Israel out of slavery in Egypt. Some have tried to deny that the Israelites were ever in Egypt, pointing out that Egyptian records make no mention of them. The problem with that argument is that nations give scant details of failures. In modern times, Vietnam has been a demonstration of that fact, getting very little coverage in American history books. Our purpose in this article is not to debate the reality of the Exodus, but to point out some of the hidden messages and to consider skeptic explanations of the plagues.

To start the discussion, we need to understand what the Egyptian religious system was like. The Egyptians had many gods and worshipping those deities varied from time to time. The gods were promoted by magicians and soothsayers who led the people in ritualistic worship and sacrifices. Ten of the dominant gods around the time of Moses were:

- Osiris – god of the dead**
- Nu – of the river**
- Geb – of earth, creatures**
- Ptah – of health**
- Shu – of the air, creatures**
- Heqet – of fertility**
- Hapi – of protection**
- Thoth – of learning**
- Re (Atom) – of sun,
darkness**
- Nut – of weather**



Let us look briefly at each of the plagues, what Egyptian deity was involved, what skeptic explanations exist, and what problems there are with the skeptic challenges:

FIRST PLAGUE—Rivers turn to blood: Exodus 7:14.

SKEPTIC PROPOSAL—River was so high that fine-grained mud like loess or ash produced flagellate and bacteria growth turning the water blood red.

PROBLEMS—The Egyptians knew blood when they saw it, and the change was instantaneous and was even in jars and buckets (verse 19).

MESSAGE—The Nile was the life-blood of Egypt, and Nu was a major deity. Nu was incapable of stopping the plague showing God’s superiority over a major Egyptian deity.

SECOND PLAGUE—Frogs: Exodus 8:1–15.

SKEPTIC PROPOSAL—Dead fish from the first plague drove the frogs from the waters, and the frogs were killed by *Bacillus anthracis* which is an internal anthrax.

PROBLEMS—Dead fish do not push frogs out of the water, and the extreme number of frogs is not explained.

MESSAGE—The Egyptian god Hapi was considered a protector and a controller of all inundations and would never let the Egyptians be overwhelmed. Hapi could not stop the overwhelming numbers.

THIRD AND FOURTH PLAGUES—Insects, lice, mosquitoes, flies only in Egyptian areas: Exodus 8:16–32.

SKEPTIC PROPOSAL—Breeding conditions for these insects were perfect. *Stomoxys calcitrans* breeds in decaying conditions producing swarms.

PROBLEMS—Biting insects are not limited by political boundaries. Swarms would have moved into Israelite areas.

MESSAGE—Ptah, the god of health, could not stop the bites and their consequences. Heqet, the goddess of fertility could not stop the massive numbers of bugs.

FIFTH PLAGUE—Livestock dies in Egypt, not in Israel: Exodus 9:1–7.

SKEPTIC PROPOSAL—“Grievous murrain” was a disease carried by frogs which infected cattle on the range. Israelite cattle were in stalls and not affected.

PROBLEMS—Diseases are carried by a variety of agents and do not stop at political boundaries. Mad cow and bird diseases are modern examples.

MESSAGE—The Egyptian god Geb was worshiped as the

caregiver of all animals that eat from the earth. In spite of elaborate worship and sacrifice by the Egyptians, Geb was helpless.

SIXTH PLAGUE—Boils on human and animals. Magicians and sorcerers are helpless: Exodus 9:8–12.

SKEPTIC PROPOSAL—Skin anthrax from plagues 2–4 hit any exposed skin.

PROBLEMS—A boil has specific characteristics as does anthrax sores. Diagnosis is quite easy.

MESSAGE—Ptah, god of health, is helpless. Thoth, god of learning, has no response.

SEVENTH PLAGUE—Heavy hail ruins barley and flax: Exodus 9:13–35.

SKEPTIC PROPOSAL—Unusual weather pattern had already been established.

PROBLEMS—Timing is very unusual. After the barley and flax but before wheat and spelt is not when strong convection systems producing weather would occur.

MESSAGE—Shu fails, and Heqet does not produce.

EIGHTH PLAGUE—Locusts: Exodus 10:1–20.

SKEPTIC PROPOSAL—Heavy rains led to high waters in Nile which always produces swarming of locusts.

PROBLEMS—The extent of the swarms.

MESSAGE—Nut, Shu, and Heqet all fail.

NINTH PLAGUE—Darkness: Exodus 10:21–29.

SKEPTIC PROPOSAL—Dust storm from the “Kham-sin wind.”

PROBLEMS—The Egyptians knew about this dust storm source, but heavy rains would have stopped any dust storm. Darkness was too absolute to be a dust storm.

MESSAGE—Gods Re and Shu fail.



TENTH PLAGUE—Death of the first born: Exodus 11:1–12:36.

SKEPTIC PROPOSAL—No answer except denial that it happened.

PROBLEMS—No possible natural cause

MESSAGE—Osiris is helpless. Re gives no answer.

The message of this listing should be clear. Not only did the plagues decimate the Egyptian economy, medical system, and military system which forced the Exodus, but their religious system was shown to be dysfunctional. This message was critical to the Israelite's faith in God and provides a message for our times.

Where do the religious systems available today take us? Do they produce peace, provide solutions to natural disasters, motivate people to share resources, promote the equality of all people? Do they advance the welfare



of children, respect the role of civil law, promote education and learning among all people? Do they provide a reasonable hope for life after death, and do they free people from the destructive aspects of sin? Jesus said, “by their fruits you

will know them” (Matthew 7:16, 20). As the ancient Egyptians were forced to do, it would be wise for us today to look at the products of the various religious systems. This does not mean merely looking at the actions of those who claim to be following a particular system. It means looking at what the system actually teaches and practices. Christianity, as presented in the Bible, works. It has provided unique benefits in every place



where the Bible has been followed carefully and literally. Following other religious systems carefully and literally has not produced the benefits seen in the Christian system.

“I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6) can be seen in the lesson of the plagues.

—JNC

MYSTERIOUS EXODUS

THE PHARAOH WHO RULED EGYPT BEFORE THE EXODUS FROM KAHUN

AS PAPYRUS DOCUMENTS DO NAME BEFORE THE CITY WAS DONE

WAS NEEFERHOTEPI PROBABLY A YOUNG MAN OF THE 13TH DYNASTY.

RULING A FEW DECADES AFTER THE 12TH DYNASTY, STRANGE IS HIS HISTORY.

NOW, WE FIND NO EVIDENCE OF A TOMB OR HIS PYRAMID.

IT APPEARS THE EGYPTIANS WERE DISPLEASED WITH WHAT HE DID.

THE STATUES OF THIS PHARAOH EXIST BUT NOW ARE DEFACED—

COULD THIS BE EVIDENCE THE EGYPTIANS JUDGED HIS LIFE AS DISGRACED?

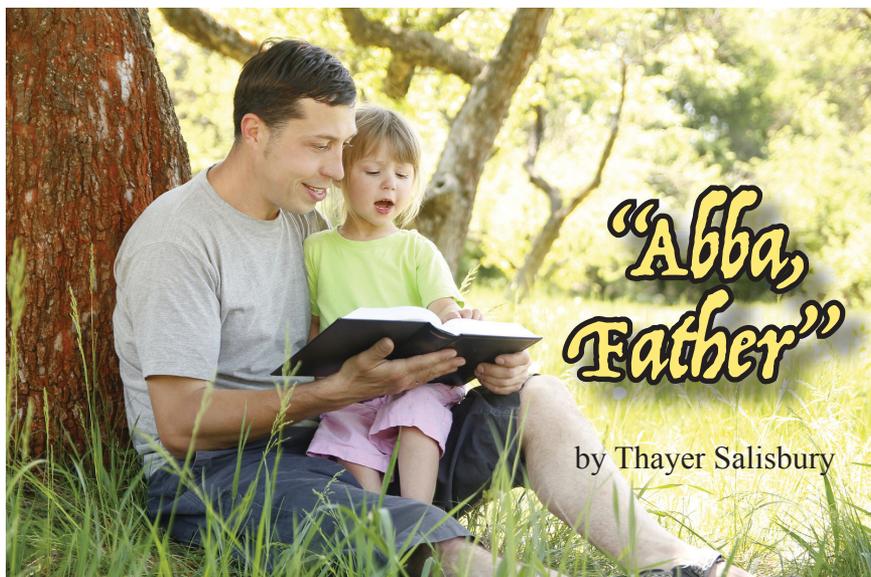
COULD HE BE THE PHARAOH WHO GOD SENT MOSES TO CONFRONT?

THE PHARAOH WHO AFTER THE EXODUS LED HIS ARMY ON AN ISRAELITE HUNT?

ONE MUST NOT OVERLOOK THE POSSIBILITY THAT THIS HISTORICAL EVENT

IS DESCRIBED IN THE BIBLE, PART OF BIBLICAL HISTORY, AND GOD SENT.

This is an excerpt from *Bible Rhymes: Fifty Two Poems with Commentary* by James M. Gregory, reviewed on page 22 and used by permission.



“Abba, Father”

by Thayer Salisbury

In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

Galatians 4:3–7 (ESV)

Romans 8* is one of the most encouraging chapters in the Bible. But it does present us with a sobering thought in verse 9 where it says, “You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.”

Although we may be listed on the roll of members in a local church, if we do not have the Spirit of Christ, we are not his. But how are we to know if we have the Spirit? What evidence do we have that the Spirit of Jesus indwells us?



We are told to test spirits by confession (1 John 4:1–2). No matter how good a life someone may live, if he denies the incarnation, the Spirit that indwells him is not from God. But, even if someone claims to be a servant of the Lord, we must examine the fruit of his life to be sure (Matthew 7:16). If these two tests are valid for others, they certainly are valid when examining ourselves.

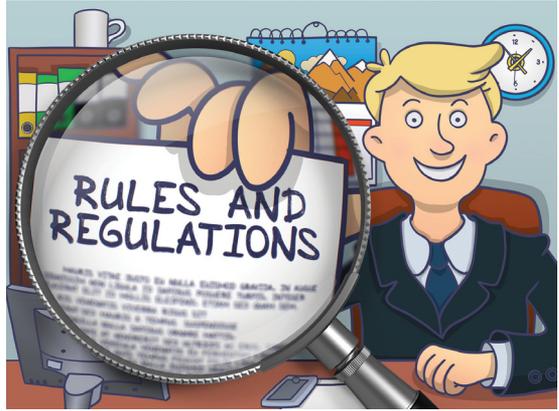
Where the Spirit of the Son truly dwells, we can expect certain results. Where these results are not found, we must question if the Spirit of the Son is being allowed to dwell in us as it should. Later in Galatians, there is a longer list of the fruits of the Spirit. But here at the end of chapter 3 and the beginning of chapter 4 we have a couple of things that we can expect to happen in the life of one who is truly converted.

FREEDOM FROM REGULATIONS

The Spirit of the Son gives us freedom from excessive regulation. This was indicated in 3:23–26 and is restated in 4:1–2. In Christ, we are no longer to live as minor children under the tutelage of the law. Instead, we are to honor the Lord with a degree of freedom.

I grew up doing the modern equivalent of herb tithing (cf. Matthew 23:23). I do not blame those who taught me. It is not unusual for children to exaggerate and misapply the lessons they are taught. I certainly did so. I remember an occasion when someone's house burned down on a Monday evening. A collection was taken up to help them when we gathered for Bible study on Wednesday. I honestly thought that we might all be lost because we were engaging in an act of worship (taking up a collection) that should only be done on Sundays.

That, thankfully, is an extreme example, but I still meet people who are restrained from doing good by too much attention to regulations. Sometimes I still see reflections of such a person in the mirror. That is not the Spirit of the Son. In Christ, we are free to serve the Lord without excessive attention to regulations. Of course, we are not to go beyond God's revealed will in our teaching. But we are not to be restrained from doing good by the paranoia of legalism.



FREEDOM FROM FEAR

Are we living in fear of spiritual forces beyond our control? To live in such fear may be better than not fearing spiritual forces. Those forces are real (Ephesians 6:12). We need to be aware of the danger they represent. But while we need to be aware of them, we no longer need to be enslaved to fear of them. “In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world” (Galatians 4:3). “Formerly, when you did not know God, you were enslaved to those that by nature are not gods” (4:8). We are delivered from these in Christ. We should not live in fear (Romans 8:15).



Are you living in fear that you are not good enough? Let me put your mind at rest. You definitely are not good enough; for “... we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified” (Galatians 2:16). Of course, we are not good enough, but not being good enough is not a problem.

But how are we to know if we have the Spirit?

Several years ago I showed up at a concert for which I had not purchased a ticket. Despite not having purchased a ticket, I was perfectly confident that I would be allowed to see the concert. I had not purchased a ticket, but I had been given one, free of charge, by the organizer and featured artist of the concert. Having an undeserved ticket was in a way better than having a purchased ticket. If anyone had questioned my right to be there, I could have appealed not only to the ticket itself but to the giver of the ticket to defend my right to be at the concert. Thus, we who know that our salvation was given, not earned, have the greater confidence.

FREEDOM FROM SELF

Have you ever been left in charge of something you did not understand, something powerful and potentially dangerous? Imagine

yourself at the controls of a jumbo jet. How would you feel knowing that hundreds of lives are dependent on your ability to fly a plane you do not understand? Sometimes I imagine that I am in control of my own life. It is terrifying.

It is a false spirit, a spirit from Satan, not the Spirit of Sonship, which causes us to think ourselves freed in such a way that we are now independent of the Lord and the masters of our own fate. Like Israel coming out of Egypt, we are freed to serve the Lord, not freed from serving the Lord (Exodus 4:22–23). We, like all of God’s children, are in his hands, not in our own (Proverbs 3:5–8).

The real Spirit of Sonship causes us to cry out to him (6), not to draw up our own plans or rely on our own ways (Psalm 44:4–8). The Spirit of the Son cries to the Father with urgency and intensity. We will all experience seasons of spiritual dryness. But, as a rule, we ought to be moving toward greater dependence on and greater communication with the Father. If we do not find ourselves doing that, we have reason to question the reality of our conversion.



LOVE AND RESPECT

I will close by mentioning a bit of a red herring. We sometimes hear it asked, “Does ‘Abba’ mean ‘Daddy?’” The answer to that question depends on what is meant by “daddy.” Daddy is appropriate on the lips of a small child. But, for many of us, the use of this term by a teen or adult may indicate a lack of respect. Abba, when used by Paul, is intended to indicate dependence and childlike trust, not disrespect. So let us be careful of



claiming that the use of Abba here equates with the modern use of daddy. It may or may not, depending on what we mean by daddy.

If the Spirit of Christ dwells in us, we will never be disrespectful of the heavenly Father. We will be submissive to his will (Matthew 26:39), eager to please him, quick to cry for his help. If we live most of our days with little reference to the will of God, that is a pretty clear indication that we are not converted, that the Spirit of Sonship does not dwell in us.

Paul tells the Corinthians, “Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!” (2 Corinthians 13:5).

Let us consider whether it is the Spirit of Sonship that is manifest in our lives, or if it is some other spirit that is prompting our actions. Let us surrender control to the Spirit of Sonship. When we do, we will find ourselves freed from excessive regulations, from fears, and, perhaps most of all, from self.

* All Scriptures are from the English Standard Version (ESV).



**The slave
does not
remain in the
house forever;
the son
remains
forever. So if
the Son sets
you free, you
will be free
indeed.**

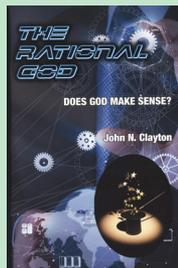
— Jesus

John 8:35–36

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GREAT SCIENTISTS AND GOD

Editor's Note: There are many publications which contain the claim that good scientists who are intelligent, well educated, and leaders in science do not believe in God. This is simply not the case. For many years we have had a column in this journal giving quotes from famous scientists who are or were believers in God. Our scientist for this month is George Washington Carver, the famous botanist and chemist who researched ways to grow and use the peanut in soils depleted by the exclusive growing of cotton. Dr. Carver's strong Christian faith is described in William Federer's book *George Washington Carver: His Life and Faith in His Own Words* (St. Louis, Amerisearch Inc., © 2002.) The quote below from Dr. Carver was taken from page 68 of that book.

GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER 1860s – 1943 An American Botanist and Inventor

“As I worked on projects which fulfilled a real human need, forces were working through me which amazed me. I would go to sleep with an apparently insoluble puzzle problem. When I awoke, the answer was there. Why then, should we who believe in Christ be so surprised at what God can do with a willing man in a laboratory?”



Left: George Washington Carver in 1942
Above: The Tuskegee Institute National
Historic Site where he did his research.

Cynthia's Corner



DOES BELIEF IN SCIENCE OR BELIEF IN GOD HEAL US?

We are blessed to be living in the twenty-first century when the advances in science and medicine can combat most illnesses and diseases and enable us to live long, productive lives. Is this confidence and reliance on modern medicine to cure us in conflict with our faith in God; or, do they work together?

Believers in God know that any knowledge, understanding, or abilities we have are because God gave us intelligence, curiosity, desire, and determination to discover new things about our existence. So, all scientific and medical discoveries and breakthroughs are possible because God has given humans these abilities. Therefore, our faith in God should not prevent us from taking advantage of the latest medical knowledge and treatments.

Our faith in God helps us understand that God is the ultimate source of healing and wellness. He designed our bodies to be able to heal themselves with proper care and nutrition and, when needed, medical treatments. Christian doctors will tell you that their medical treatments are simply helping the body to heal itself.

The connection between the mind, spirit, and body is very powerful. The medical community recognizes that the power of positive thinking, humor, love, and the will to live are powerful factors in medical outcomes. Prayer and reliance on God in times of sickness can help us respond better to medical treatments and can strengthen and comfort us during treatments. In some cases they can help us overcome many physical, mental, and emotional problems. Faith in God is the bedrock foundation for Christians when modern medicine no longer has any answers for our problems.

Our faith in God is an ally of modern medicine as it attempts to bring God's designed features of healing to our bodies and minds. Faith in God gives us the best of life physically, in most cases, but the best spiritually in all cases.

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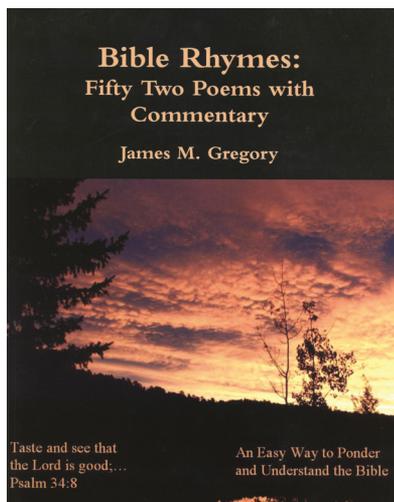


BOOK REVIEWS

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.

Bible Rhymes: 52 Poems with Commentary

by James M. Gregory, Self Published and available on Amazon,
© 2015, 217 pages, \$19.95 (paperback), ISBN-13: 978-1-312-93971-4



Dr. Gregory is a Professor Emeritus of Civil Engineering at Texas Tech University. In addition to his science work, he is a poet and has been an elder and deacon in a local church for many years. What Dr. Gregory has done is to write poems and then explain the relevance of the poems to biblical teaching. Dr. Gregory expands on his poems about Bible persons or events by discussions of archeological evidence or biblical connections to the poem content.

Our interest in this work is not only about the historical validity of the biblical record which Dr. Gregory discusses, but also scientific discussions about the design and function of things we observe in the creation. There are poems about water, oxygen, life, death, seeds, the order of life, and the design of living things.

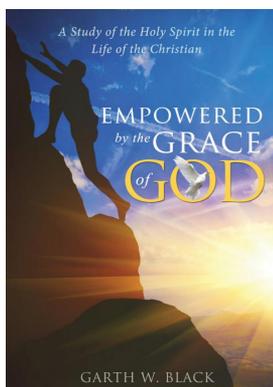
If you are looking for a very different approach to Bible stories and to the validity of the Bible, you will find this book very useful. Dr. Gregory's science is accurate, and his ability to write simple poetry is excellent. You do not have to struggle with the meter or the structure of the poems, which leaves you free to enjoy the message and reflect on what the Bible is teaching.

This is one of those practical books that all of us can read, appreciate, and understand. It will be especially useful in strengthening and encouraging Christians in their faith.

Empowered by the Grace of God

by Garth W. Black, Tate Publishing, © 2014,

164 pages, \$15.60 (paperback), ISBN-13: 978-1-63418-805-0



For over 45 years I have been talking to people about the existence of God and the validity of Christianity. During that time, I have frequently had the subject of the Holy Spirit brought up by skeptics as an example of a foolish belief that causes people to do and say things that are destructive. Whether it is Charles Manson or a recent murderer of innocent people, the Holy Spirit is frequently a scapegoat for irrational behavior. On a less dramatic note, we see religious fundamentalists attributing everything from tongue speaking to spirit dancing to the activities of the Holy

Spirit. Some forty years ago I taught several classes on the Holy Spirit using a little booklet by Garth Black. It was intelligently written, scripturally correct, and presented in a way that everyone could understand. Unfortunately, that little booklet went out of print. This book is an updated and expanded version of the old book, and we wanted to let people know about its availability.

Black introduces the book by telling of a young man who said he could not become a Christian because he could not measure up to the standard necessary to live a Christian life. Black points out that the failure, in this case, was a failure to understand the Holy Spirit and how he empowers us. The book is divided into 13 short chapters and has an appendix dealing with the error of denying the indwelling of the Spirit.

The nature of the Spirit, his role in the Old Testament, in nature, in people, and in prophesy is followed by a study of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. Garth Black explains the way the Spirit works in a Christian and how he helps us through the word. The gift of the Holy Spirit is studied in the history of the church. There is great emphasis on how each individual is blessed and guided by the Spirit. This is not an apologetic for the existence of the Holy Spirit, but a careful, logical, biblical explanation of how the Spirit fits into our lives as Christians.

We recommend this book as a unique explanation of a badly misunderstood biblical concept. Believers will find it helpful and motivating, and non-believers can come to a better understanding of the Holy Spirit's role in the Christian faith.

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DANDY DESIGNS

BUG BLUEPRINTS

Romans 1:20 tells us that “we can know there is a God through the things he has made.” Insects show the wisdom and planning of God in special ways. Each of the following insect features seems specially designed for the insect that has it. Each feature is also a wonderful testimony to God’s planning and wisdom to allow life to exist and prosper all over the earth in a variety of conditions. See if you can think of the wisdom involved in each of these designs.

PEA APHIDS are photosynthetic bugs able to turn sunlight into food. They are probably the only insects that can do that.

CATERPILLARS break down inside a chrysalis or cocoon into a soup of cells that reorganize into a winged butterfly or moth that looks nothing like a caterpillar.

THE HAWK MOTH rubs parts of its body together creating an ultrasonic sound blast that messes up the navigation system of bats.

PLANTHOPPERS jumping can generate 500 Gs on their bodies in milliseconds. Five Gs would make most humans black out.

JAPANESE HONEYBEES cannot kill a giant hornet with their stingers. They surround an invading hornet and vibrate their bodies to generate enough heat to kill the hornet.

GRASSHOPPERS have over 900 different muscles. That is more than humans have.

WEEVILS have scales which are formed by 3-D crystals that reflect light in a way that displays dazzling colors.

THE TINKERBELLA NANA is a fairyfly so small it cannot be seen with the naked eye.

JEWEL BUGS do not have teeth. They eat by liquefying plants with their saliva and sucking up the juice.

DUNG BEETLES use light from the Milky Way as a navigational tool to roll their dung balls to their nests.

ICEBUGS live in near-freezing conditions. Holding one will kill it because its body will break down at room temperature.

SOME WASPS hold on to plants with their teeth while they sleep.

Data: “Amazing Animal Facts” in *Animal Encyclopedia*, published by the National Geographic Society, © 2012, pages 52–53.

ELEPHANTS ~ WORKHORSES OF OUR WORLD



We often fail to realize how much it takes to maintain all the things that have allowed the earth to exist and to support life for a very long time. There have always been plants that grew prolifically and there had to be gardeners to prune the plants and prevent them from crowding out other life forms. There had to be a way of disposing of waste and fertilizing areas that were sterile. As science has studied dinosaurs and modern animals it has become evident that various cycles were designed into the creation, and that there were animals which played major roles in those cycles.

The age of the dinosaurs had massive plant growth and animals that could eat the rapidly-growing foliage. There were carnivorous animals who ate the plant-eaters and kept them from overeating the vegetation. Many of the resources that we depend on today, such as coal and oil, were produced by this ecosystem. The importance of the balance of nature has become better understood as human influences have thrown modern ecosystems out of balance by removing some of the animals and plants that provided balance.

One animal that plays an important role in this balance in modern times is the elephant. An elephant can eat up to 300 pounds (136 kgs) of food in a day. This pruning of vegetation is vital to many forest areas in Africa, and the processed vegetation spreads seeds and fertilizes them over areas that otherwise would be barren. Elephants can weigh 14,000 pounds (6,350 kgs). Despite their enormous size, the elephant's skin is sensitive enough to feel a fly landing on it. Elephants live in tropical areas where water is a major issue for all animals. Elephants use their trunks to smell water several miles away. The trunk may be up to seven feet long and is controlled by over 10,000 muscles. It can be used to dig for water if the area is in drought, and other animals survive by having elephant pools available.

Elephants are intelligent and social. They communicate by using sound waves below 20 hertz, the lower limit of human hearing. By working together, they survive in a very hot, dry area. Because of their size and power, they are the main workhorses molding and shaping their environment and allowing other plants and animals to survive. Elephants are another evidence of incredible design by a Master Designer. Data: *Animal Encyclopedia* published by National Geographic Society, © 2012, pages 20–21.

News and Notes

THE SECOND LAW STILL WORKS. The second law of thermodynamics, sometimes called the entropy law, has been a thorn in the side of many atheists for a long time. The law says that in a closed system the disorder (entropy) always increases toward a maximum value. The problem this poses for atheists is that it excludes any possibility of matter/energy being eternal. This law predicts that there was a beginning to the creation in which there was no entropy, and available energy was at a maximum. It also predicts heat death—an end to the creation. Stephen Hawking in his popular book *A Brief History of Time* attempted to avoid the problem by proposing virtual time. That un-testable guess was not a good answer to the dilemma the second law presents. In modern times, it has been proposed that quantum mechanics could violate the second law, but recent studies have shown that heat management in quantum mechanics obeys the second law. The “new physics” of the twenty-first century cannot discard facts and laws of the past although sometimes they have to be modified and expanded. Source: *Science News*, March 19, 2016, page 18.

SUPREME COURT WRESTLES WITH LESBIAN ADOPTIONS. On March 7, 2016, the Supreme Court reversed Alabama’s refusal to recognize same-sex adoption saying that same-sex couples cannot be denied adoption rights. The case in question also was complicated because it dealt with a couple who adopted in another state and moved to Alabama. The National Center for Lesbian Rights was the primary backer of this case, and it will have nationwide implications. As an adoptive father and as a teacher who has worked extensively with adopted kids in my public school teaching career, my concern about this ruling is that the welfare of the kids is not being addressed. The selfish interest of the lesbian adult is being held as primary, and the fact that children need the influence of a father as well as a mother is ignored. Interestingly enough, the lesbian couple that precipitated the suit have now broken up and three children are involved. The needs and welfare of children seem to be secondary in this decision, but then again that was the case in *Roe v. Wade*. Source: *USA Today*, March 8, 2016, page 3B.

GIANT CROSS BRINGS ATHEIST SUIT. As we have traveled from lectureship to lectureship, we have seen large crosses erected by denominational churches near the interstates. I have wondered how long it would be before an atheist would find a way to sue to get rid of the crosses. In Corpus Christi (that name means “Body of Christ”), a 230-foot tall cross is being erected on property owned by The Abundant Life Fellowship along Interstate 37. The cross is so tall that a beacon had to be installed on the top of it. When construction of the cross was begun, the mayor of Corpus Christi and other city leaders attended the dedication. That action by the city officials triggered a lawsuit by Patrick Greene, a local atheist, against the mayor and city council members. We have apparently reached a point where public officials are going to be sued if they attend a worship service. Source: foxnews.com, 3/16/16 by Todd Starnes.

ALIEN SPACESHIP FOUND? UFO buffs are excited by a discovery of irregular light signals coming from a star known as KIC 8462852. Some have claimed that these signals are irregular because a huge alien space ship surrounding the star is periodically blocking parts of the star’s light. SETI scientists have done a detailed study of the light curves and have concluded they are not from any intelligently designed and constructed structure. It is interesting that the public gets excited when a news report suggests life in space, but it has no relevance to the question of God’s existence. The Bible never says that earth is the only place where God has created life. This star is 1,500 light years from earth, so what is being seen is what happened 1,500 years ago. We do not know what is there today. Finding intelligent life in space would be amazing. It would be much more amazing if their relationship with God included Jesus Christ. Source: *Discover*, June 2016.

MARIJUANA SPECIATION BECOMING AN ISSUE. The reckless legalization of marijuana as a recreational drug continues to produce damaging results and useless conflict. A recently published fact about marijuana is that there are three different species, and each has its own set of characteristics producing different effects on humans. The species commonly recognized by botanists are *Cannabis sativa* (the prized species for mind-altering effects), *Cannabis indica* (which acts more as a sedative),



and *Cannabis ruderalis* (which does not do either). *Cannabis indica* has higher amounts of CBD (cannabidiol), an anti-inflammatory that has therapeutic use. The justification of making marijuana legal for medical purposes ignored the facts and is just one more indication of how our culture is bent on destroying itself as it worships pleasure above everything else. Source: *Discover*, June 2016, page 74.

DETAILS ON CHAPLAIN REPORTS. We have had several articles in this column on the dilemma that chaplains in the military face. In the March 2016 issue of *Citizen* magazine there was an article about the struggles of Chaplain Wes Modder with the U.S. Navy. Modder is 49 years old and a career serviceman with numerous deployments in war zones. In 1998 Modder became a chaplain and served until 2014 when he was recommended for promotion to commander. In February, he was given “detachment for cause” (a pink slip) because he was “intolerant and unable to function in the diverse and pluralistic environment” of the U.S. Navy. It turned out that in intimate and private conversations with a seaman, Modder gave a biblical position on premarital sex and homosexuality, and that was the cause of his dismissal. Modder has been reinstated thanks to intervention by a two-star admiral at Navy Personnel Command. Modder got legal help to fight for his right to be a chaplain according to his beliefs as a Christian. The question of how chaplains can function if they are not allowed to have their own belief system remains unanswered.

LOCATION OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN. There has been much speculation and many articles written about the “Garden of Eden.” Much of it is theological speculation about whether the story is a myth to teach a lesson. The fact is that there is evidence for the literal location of the garden. In *Biblical Archeology Review* (March/April 2016, page 16) there is an article titled “Garden of Eden: Preserved for Posterity.” The article says that there is an area in the Persian Gulf where the Tigris, Euphrates, and Karus rivers converge which is called the “Garden of Eden.” It has been set aside by the government of Iraq as an area to be protected. This is the same area the Bible describes and certainly lends credence to the idea that this was a literal place God planted for Adam and Eve to live.

GRAVITY WAVES AND GOD. One of the most significant discoveries in physics in modern times took place early in 2016 when an unmistakable gravitational wave signal was detected from the collision of two black holes. Einstein had predicted this about 100 years ago when he viewed gravity as a product of space/time and not an intrinsic property of mass. Knowing that gravity is a

wave has all kinds of scientific implications. Waves can do things such as interference and Doppler shifting and imaging. Dr. David Reitze says, “We’re opening a window on the universe—a window of gravitational-wave astronomy.” This window will show us more of how God has created the cosmos, with gravity being one of his most frequently used tools. Sources: *The Week*, February 26, 2016, page 25, and *Smithsonian*, April 2016, page 25.

MAGNETIC REVERSAL NOT IMMINENT. One of the long-term catastrophic changes the earth has sustained in the past is what is called a magnetic reversal. In a reversal, earth’s magnetic field collapses, and then it is re-established with the north and south poles being flipped. In such a reversal, the charged particles that the magnetic field pushes away would get to the earth causing changes in living things, disrupting power grids, and disabling satellites. There have been claims in religious periodicals that this happens quickly and that we are about to endure a new flip in the poles in the near future. Studies using paleomagnetism show that earth’s field today is stronger than it has been in the past and that its change is very, very small. The shielding the magnetic field gives us is vital, and it is strongly established and not likely to fail in the near future. Source: *Science News*, December 26, 2015, page 13.



SMITHSONIAN MAGAZINE PERPETUATES SCIENCE/BIBLE CONFLICT MYTH. The basic premise of this ministry is that science and faith and belief in the Bible as God’s Word are not enemies, but friends. It is an uphill battle because many religious people demonize science and many supporters of science demonize religion. The April 2016 issue of *Smithsonian* magazine does the latter in an article that explores the history of Dayton, Tennessee, where the Scopes trial was held. “You can believe the Bible, or you can believe evolution, but you can’t believe both” is embraced as fact and promoted in the article (page 80). Unfortunately, many preachers in the church today would agree with that belief. Nowhere does the magazine point out what “evolution” means, or the fact that the Bible talks about evolution in its discussion of what Jacob did with Laban’s flocks, or what the word “kind” means and that it is not the same as “species.” Naturalism is used synonymously with evolution, and Bible believers are portrayed as ignorant people who

oppose scientific progress. The need to educate people about these issues is huge, but many leaders in the church continue to embrace denominational traditions rather than take the Bible literally and deal with science factually. We have an uphill battle ahead of us, starting with the church.

SPEAKING OF FAITH. In the same magazine there is an interesting statement about what enables humans to walk on two feet. Consider this statement (page 20): “A chimpanzee’s toes are long and splayed, and its big toe equivalent pulls away from the other digits like a thumb: a prehensile foot designed for quick climbing. By contrast, in the human foot, the sole is enlarged while the bone of the big toe is thickened and aligned with the other, now-foreshortened toes: This is a sturdy platform, able to support an upright load in motion.” So now we know how our feet with their 52 bones are different from a chimp’s feet. What we do not know is how such a change could happen by accident, and the article says the feet are DESIGNED to do what they do. Knowing how our feet are different from a chimp’s is an achievement of science. Guessing as to how it might have happened by accident is not science. Believing that God designed each foot to do what it does is much simpler than trying to guess as to how such differences happened accidentally.

MORE BAD NEWS FOR LIFE IN SPACE. We have repeatedly pointed out that if life is found in space, it will have no negative implications for the Bible because the Bible does not claim that there is no life in space. If life is found in outer space, all it will show is that God has created life elsewhere as well as on the earth. However, as we learn more about what it takes to produce and support life, it becomes less likely that life does exist, at least anywhere near us. Red dwarfs had been considered to be good places for life to exist because of their lower temperature allowing a large habitable zone where water could exist as a liquid. Recent discoveries of red dwarfs have now shown that they have regular flares 10,000 times brighter and ten times stronger than the Sun’s most violent outbursts. Since a planet revolving around a red dwarf would necessarily be closer to the star than we are to the Sun, it is highly unlikely that life can exist around a red dwarf star. Source: *Astronomy*, March 2016, page 13.

MODERN VIEWS OF PORN WITH AND WITHOUT FAITH. Two research groups, the Josh McDowell Ministry and the Barna Group, have released a study of views of pornography much of which is reported in *Christianity Today*, April 2016, page 24. We recently released a video series on pornography and sexual abuse in

the church by Jimmy Hinton who gave us a special interest in this Barna study. Our attention was drawn to the data on non-Christians as compared to practicing Christians. Seventy-two percent of non-Christian males ages 13–24 seek out porn regularly as opposed to forty-one percent of practicing Christians (defined as having attended a church service in the past month). Seventy-three percent of non-Christians are comfortable with their use of porn as opposed to thirty-nine percent of Christians. When this group of young people was asked whether watching pornographic images was immoral, the vast majority felt it was not as immoral as stealing, adultery, lying, not recycling, thinking negatively about someone else, overeating, or wasting electricity or water. What you believe does make a difference. The fact that Jesus talked more about moral issues than anything else seems to escape many of us.

PLAYING GOD WITH CRISPR. The media has had dozens of articles about a new technique of modifying DNA called CRISPR (Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats). This technique makes altering our DNA faster and easier. The media has emphasized the possible positive impact of this technique. We now know that there are many diseases that are genetic in nature, including sickle-cell anemia, Huntington’s and muscular dystrophy. *The Week* magazine (March 14, 2016) calls it “genetic research nearing a breakthrough that could transform the world.” The problem is that with some 25,000 genes involved and the fact that genes interact, the possible negative consequences of making permanent changes in the DNA are very high.

SHERMER LASHES OUT AGAINST BELIEF IN GOD. Michael Shermer is probably the most vocal atheist in America. Shermer started out attending Pepperdine University to prepare himself to be a preacher in the Church of Christ. Somewhere along the line he became a committed atheist and has devoted himself to atheistic pursuits. He is the Executive Director of the Skeptics Society, the editor of two atheist magazines, *The Skeptic* and *The Skeptical Inquirer*, and has a regular column in *Scientific American* titled “The Skeptical View.” A widely circulated fundraising advertisement by Shermer is titled “The Ten Weirdest Things Countdown.” Shermer lists those things he feels are the most weird: putting denial of the Holocaust, belief in UFOs and Aliens in the list with belief in God being the most weird of all. Belief in the soul and an afterlife is number two. He devotes two pages to attacking belief in God and one page to each of the others. Shermer is very good at what he does, and this ad will be used by atheists in schools and colleges. Knowing how to answer his challenges will become increasingly important.

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

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