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Beliefs Have Consequences

As a high school student decades ago I remember a radio personality ridiculing the theory of evolution with the catchphrase, “Did we come from scum, or did we climb from slime?”—parodying the idea that life emerged from some algae-laden pond. His phrasing had a clever ring to it, as evidenced by the fact that I still remember it years later.

At the time I was intensely interested in science. I won my school science fair’s highest award three years in a row, once for creating a set of three-dimensional, full-color cutaway models of various kinds of cells.

I still remember researching and working on that project and being amazed at the complexity of the microscopic marvels of blood cells, nerve cells, muscle cells, skin cells, plant cells and more. Electron microscopes were just beginning to reveal that cells were not merely simple blobs of matter, but were in fact highly refined structures beautifully designed for their purpose.

Except, we were told in our biology books, they weren’t really designed at all. And they didn’t have a purpose. In fact, they were nothing more than the product of chance and countless random accidents over an unfathomable period of time.

But what I saw sure had me fooled. I had never seen anything that worked so well put itself together out of nothing!

And then there were the cattle. Every year we raised a steer to provide meat for our family with three boys, and we consumed a lot of beef and beans. After my older brother left home, it fell to me as an eighth-grader to help my father kill and carve up that year’s steer.

To put it mildly, it was not a pleasant task. But the yuck factor was considerably compensated for by the opportunity to examine, up close and personal, how a large living creature was put together—the skeletal structure, the various internal organs, the protective outer hide, the digestive system, the blood veins and arteries, the intricate nerve system, and even a natural built-in fly swatter in the form of a highly efficient tail.

It sure looked like an intricately designed system to me. But again, I was fooled by my own eyes. The biology books assured me it had all put itself together out of nothing!

I speak facetiously, of course—but just barely. Only a few years earlier the U.S. Supreme Court had banned the Bible and prayer from public schools and much of public life. At my own school those rulings were pretty much ignored, and students continued to pray and meet for Bible studies every day before classes started. No one then ever worried about serious school violence, and school shootings were unheard of. This was even though some students in rural schools like mine had rifles in gun racks in their trucks or a pistol under the car seat, usually for shooting snakes.

What a different world we live in today. We are now well into a second or even third generation of schoolchildren who’ve been educated without the Bible, prayer or acknowledgment of God as part of their formal schooling. And sadly, it shows.

For decades now, in spite of its many flaws, Darwinian evolution has been taught to schoolchildren as fact. They’ve been educated to believe they’re simply highly developed animals. So why should we expect them to behave differently than animals?

With God removed from the picture and schoolkids taught they’re just another kind of animal, is it any wonder our schools today see so much bullying, violence, casual sex, teen pregnancies and sexually transmitted disease, along with an unprecedented epidemic of young male mass killers?

Is it any wonder human life is so degraded and devalued when abortion is so commonplace? After all, we’re told those tiny human beings are just lumps of tissue, of even less value than animals, to be discarded when it’s no longer wanted or convenient!

The sad fact is, beliefs have consequences. History is littered with the bloody debris of that reality.

Margaret Sanger was a firm believer in eugenics—ridding the human race of what she considered less-desirable specimens. You might say she wanted to streamline the evolutionary process, to make it more efficient. And she did. She founded Planned Parenthood a little more than a century ago. In the decades since, the organization has been responsible for the deaths of tens of millions of babies through abortion and “emergency” contraception—making the organization one of history’s most prolific mass killers.

Adolf Hitler similarly believed in enforcing a kind of “evolution” as government policy. He ordered the extermination of millions of members of cultural or ethnic groups deemed undesirable in death camps so he could purify the earth for the superior Aryan master race to rule in a planned thousand-year Germanic empire known as the Third Reich.

Darwinian evolution has as its foundational premise “survival of the fittest.” And tragically, that mentality has taken root again and again in hateful ideologies all over the globe, leaving death and destruction in its wake. Isn’t it about time we woke up and acknowledged its evil fruit?

In this issue we examine some of the more recent discoveries highlighting the theory’s fatal flaws. Evolution leaves mankind blind to our purpose, wandering and wondering in the dark.

We hope you’ll read these articles carefully—and realize that yes, beliefs have consequences.
The Problem With Evolution and the Return of God

What does biochemistry tell us about the entrenched idea that life resulted from random chance over billions of years? Will we see a resurgence in belief in God as the true explanation?

by Peter Eddington

Dr. Tour further remarks of those who would attempt to replicate life: “But even if we gave them the DNA in the structure that they wanted, they wouldn’t know how to put all the components together because of the sophistication within a cell. The interactomes, the interacting connectivity between the molecules . . . all of these have to be in the right place and in the right order for a cell to function. We don’t even know how to define life, let alone knowing how to spark it to begin!”

The generation of life through mindless processes is impossible. A much better explanation for the origin of life is not evolution but God.

We will summarize and quote more of Tour’s comments as we go.

Miseducation on the subject abounds

If you look at a typical college or high school textbook, it will tell you that life began in a prehistoric pond with chemicals forming molecules that came together to form a simple cell, which sparked into life from a bolt of lightning or something similar, with a creature eventually slithering out of the pond onto dry land.

But this is totally fallacious! Scientists, after being given all the elements and chemicals we find in a simple living cell, don’t know how to make the molecules required for assembly or how to assemble them.

Dr. Tour puts it this way: “Not only do we not know how to make the basic components, we do not know how to build the structure—even if we were given the basic components . . . Even if I gave you all the components, even if I gave you all the amino acids, all the proteins, all the protein structures from those amino acids that you wanted, all the lipids in the purity that you wanted, the DNA, the RNA, in even in the sequence that you wanted (so I’m even giving you the code) . . . Can you now assemble a cell here in your individual labs? . . . Not in a prebiotic cesspool but in your nice laboratory? And the answer is a resounding no! And if anybody claims otherwise they do not know this area.”

There is a huge misunderstanding even among science and biology professors that humanity understands how to build life once given all the structures, acids and lipids needed. Yet none of these has ever been assembled to make so much
Even if handed every intricate component already assembled, scientists still could not build the most basic living cell, even in the most sophisticated lab environment. How then did this happen on its own, *unguided, by chance in a pool of ooze?*
as a single cell or anything close to it! As Dr. Tour points out, magazine articles will proudly announce that scientists know how to build life, and then the average person reads it and believes that scientists know how to do it. Even some scientists believe that other scientists know how to do it, but they don’t—nobody does! The general public is being led wildly astray!

**Time for a recall!**

Have you ever owned an automobile that was issued a safety recall? Perhaps the seatbelts were not up to standard, or the airbags could go off prematurely, or the brakes would not hold up to tough conditions. So you receive a notice to take your vehicle in to be serviced and have upgraded parts installed. It’s for your own safety.

The academic world should take the same approach. The fact is, for many years our high school and university textbooks have been making claims about the origin of life that are totally false. It’s time for those textbooks to be recalled! It’s time for scientists to be honest about what they actually know and don’t know about building life. It’s time for our students to understand that even when given all of the required building blocks of life in a perfect, sterile laboratory environment (let alone having the building blocks themselves handed over on a silver platter, without having to create them), the greatest minds of our time, the smartest organic chemists, cannot explain the origin of life or create even the simplest cell.

**Unlimited time actually works against chance origin of life**

You may have been told that given enough time, given millions or billions of years, that there is a chance, a probability, that life could begin on its own. Once again, this is not true. Time is an enemy of organic synthesis, not a friend.

Many of the chemicals needed for life are kinetic products, meaning they’re not thermodynamically stable. For example, carbohydrates—a main class of compounds that link together DNA—are kinetic products that decompose over a very short period. So if over billions of years a carbohydrate were to form by chance, it would decompose very quickly—long before all the other necessary building blocks were available to generate life.

Did molecules really mysteriously form on their own and sit there waiting for millions of years for other molecules to arrive? No! Organic chemistry doesn’t work that way.

Dr. Tour notes that any university student setting up reactions to produce carbohydrates, who goes home for the weekend without stopping the reaction at a precise moment and putting it in a sterile bottle under inert conditions in a freezer, will come back to find a caramelized carbohydrate that is now useless. And to think that some scientists believe this would all somehow work in a primordial pond with no laboratory conditions or controls!

Again, time is actually an enemy in this process!

**Life’s chemical building blocks have not been reproduced**

The chemicals needed for life are more than just carbon and water. You also need amino acids. These then have to link together to form proteins—and it’s not easy to get amino acids to link together.

Then you need enzymes. But in a prebiotic world enzymes do not exist, as the enzymes themselves are made out of amino acids and proteins.

After this you must have carbohydrates and a way to link them together. This is extremely complex. Consider the example Dr. Tour gives of just the simple carbohydrate D-mannose (a sugar related to glucose). If you make six units of D-mannose it can be linked together in more than a trillion different combinations, and only one works. How do you get that by chance?

Next you need lipids. The lipids have to have two molecular tails—not one. Having just one would destabilize the membrane layers they need to form. How is that done in a prebiotic system? No scientist knows!

After that you must have nucleic acids. These have to some-

We have spaceflight, rovers on Mars, silicon chips, super computers—but we cannot build the simplest living cell.

how link very cleanly to a carbohydrate that had to be made independently without becoming caramelized.

Next is the nucleotide that has to hook together with a phosphate group—but that’s only done by enzymes. Synthetic organic chemists don’t know how to do that cleanly before enzymes existed.

Science doesn’t know how to even make all these pieces—let alone connect them together! Yes, we have spaceflight, rovers on Mars, silicon chips, computers and Wi-Fi connectivity (none of these being alive with life)—but humankind cannot build life even when given all of these building blocks pulled from our environment. (And we cannot actually make the building blocks ourselves to begin with!) Why should we believe that blind forces with no intelligence could do this?

**Probability arguments destroy chance origin of life**

“Deep time” is typically invoked to improve the odds of life arising by chance. The underlying assumption is that, given enough time, eventually anything and everything becomes possible—including life arising completely by chance. Therefore vast amounts of time must be factored in to mitigate the extremely remote probabilities involved. But the fact is, the numbers are simply far too great to overcome. There is not enough time (an estimated 14 billion years since the formation of our universe) for a random combination of factors to come together to generate even a simple protein, much less a living organism.

The odds against such an occurrence are much greater than the total number of atoms in existence in the universe! Even if the universe were many times older, that would still not be anywhere close to enough.

To illustrate, Dr. Tour notes that the possible combinations of protein interactions in a single yeast cell are 10 to the 79 billionth power! That’s a 1 followed by not just 79 zeros, but a 1 with 79 billion zeros after it! This is just the number of
molecular interactions (the interactome) in just one protein. It’s impossible to even comprehend. By comparison, the estimated number of elemental particles in the entire universe is only 10 to the 90th power!

Dr. Tour further states: “Then in addition to just those 3,000 proteins that are there in that single yeast cell, you still need all the DNA, all the RNA. You need to have all the carbohydrates. Remember, the carbohydrates have all their own definition order by the way they’re hooked up … You can put more information in the carbohydrates that are on a cell surface than you store in DNA and RNA combined. And that information has to come from an original DNA template, plus a series of other enzyme cascades. All of this is in that [single] cell in addition to those interactomes. It’s very complex. *Origin of life is a complex problem,* and it’s hard to throw this at the feet of just large numbers.”

(Besides the interview with him, another Discovery Institute video at YouTube featuring Dr. Tour is well worth watching: "James Tour: The Mystery of the Origin of Life" from the January 2019 Dallas Conference on Science & Faith.)

The return of God

Time, probability, science and the greatest of human minds (how did such minds come to be anyway?) cannot explain the origin of life. So what can?

We are approaching a time when society may come to reject Darwinism and experience something of a religious revival. More than 200 years after the birth of Charles Darwin, growing numbers are returning to a belief in the Creator God (or Intelligent Design) as the best explanation for the origin of life. Evolutionists have had 160 years since the publication of Darwin’s *On the Origin of Species* to explain the origin of life and the complexity of creation. They have failed abysmally.

It’s time to return to the understanding held by most of Western society before Darwin—the belief in God as the Creator of all things!

Dr. Stephen Meyer is a former geophysicist and college professor who received his Ph.D. in the history and philosophy of science from Cambridge University. A leader in the intelligent design movement, he now directs Discovery Institute’s Center for Science and Culture. Meyer has authored most recently the *New York Times* bestseller *Darwin’s Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design* (2013) as well as *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design* (2009).

Meyer is now completing his latest book *The Return of the God Hypothesis: Compelling Scientific Evidence for the Existence of God,* which is slated for release in April 2020. He is developing a fundamental argument for intelligent design, showing that there is a third fundamental factor needed for life alongside matter and energy—information.

Where does the information encoded in the cell come from? It’s not material, just as the article you’re reading is not the medium it’s written on but the message it communicates. The information embedded in nature all the way down to the tiniest levels requires an intelligent, thinking, planning mind behind all of creation. And that mind is the mind of God.

*That* is the answer to our existence, to the origin of life—God.

God does exist, and His work as Creator is the only reasonable explanation for the origin of life. As Dr. Tour so eloquently explains, from the point of view of a synthetic organic chemist, it is impossible for life to have begun by chance over long periods of time. It simply could not have happened that way! (For more proof of God’s existence, download or request our free study guide *Life’s Ultimate Question: Does God Exist?* at BTmagazine.org/booklets.)

Growing doubt about Darwin and evolution

The online resource Conservapedia includes the following in its lengthy entry on evolution. Although the following quotes are from a decade or more ago, they show a larger trend of scientists moving away from Darwinism:

“A 2005 poll by the Louis Finkelstein Institute for Social and Religious Research found that 60% of American medical doctors reject Darwinism, stating that they do not believe humans evolved through natural processes alone. The study also reported that ½ of all medical doctors favor the theory of intelligent design over evolution.

“The prestigious journal *Science* reported the following in 2006 concerning the United States: ‘The percentage of people in the country who accept the idea of evolution has declined from 45 in 1985 to 40 in 2005. Meanwhile the fraction of Americans unsure about evolution has soared from 7 per cent in 1985 to 21 per cent last year.’

“In January 2006, the BBC reported concerning Britain: ‘Just under half of Britons accept the theory of evolution as the best description for the development of life, according to an opinion poll. Furthermore, more than 40% of those questioned believe that creationism or intelligent design (ID) should be taught in school science lessons.’”

Here are reports from other sources about growing doubt about the validity of Darwinism and evolution: “Darwin’s strongest critics were scientists, and the theologians who criticized
him objected mainly to his philosophical insistence on natural causes and his denial of design—which Princeton’s Charles Hodge regarded as ‘tantamount to atheism.’ Even today, many critics of Darwinism are not religious fundamentalists, and a growing number of critics are credentialed scientists” (Jonathan Wells, “The Problem of Evidence,” Forbes, Feb. 5, 2009).

“A growing number of respectable scientists are defecting from the evolutionist camp . . . Moreover, for the most part these ‘experts’ have abandoned Darwinism, not on the basis of religious faith or biblical persuasions, but on strictly scientific grounds, and in some instances, regretfully” (Wolfgang Smith, quoted by Paul Taylor, Origins Answer Book, 1995, p. 107).

“Scientists at the forefront of inquiry have put the knife to classical Darwinism. They have not gone public with this news, but have kept it in their technical papers and inner councils. Many second-rank evolutionists, on the other hand, continue to repeat that minor miracles . . . were accomplished by natural selection working in a step-by-step manner; but the steps are never shown. They do this largely because they are compelled to say something—anything is better than admitting ignorance—and they don’t know what else to say” (William Fix, The Bone Peddlers: Selling Evolution, 1984, pp. 179-180).

Renewed faith will be hijacked

As we look into the facts clearly pointing to a divine Creator, keep in mind that a revitalized belief in religion will seem to be very good at first in the global community. But as has happened so often in human history, the Bible shows that other forces will play into the story, and what should be a good thing will be used for something evil. Religious belief will be hijacked by a powerful church-state alliance centered in Europe and be steered horribly wrong.

Scripture emphatically shows us that a religious “return to God” will envelop our planet during the end time. Belief in atheistic evolution may no longer be as mainstream as it is now. A giant geopolitical machine will be given power by a global religion.

The book of Revelation refers to the principal partners in this coming power bloc as the Beast and the False Prophet. The events described in the second half of the book of Revelation are directly related to the past and future of two groups represented symbolically by two women who are diametric opposites.

The first, described in Revelation 12, represents those who have been God’s covenant people—the Church of God—both Old Testament and New Testament servants of Jesus Christ.

The second woman, also representing a church, is presented symbolically by two women who are diametric opposites. These ‘experts’ have abandoned Darwinism, not on the basis of religious faith or biblical persuasions, but on strictly scientific grounds, and in some instances, regretfully” (Wolfgang Smith, quoted by Paul Taylor, Origins Answer Book, 1995, p. 107).

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The first, described in Revelation 12, represents those who have been God’s covenant people—the Church of God—both Old Testament and New Testament servants of Jesus Christ.

The second woman, also representing a church, is presented in Revelation 17 as a harlot. “And on her forehead a name was written: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH . . . [She is] drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus” (verses 5-6).

In the end time, this church’s influential relationships will reach into the highest political and social circles. As we’re told in Revelation 18: “The kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth have become rich through the abundance of her luxury . . . Her sins have reached to heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities” (verses 3, 5).

God calls this woman, this church—with her corrupt practices and entanglements in international affairs—Babylon the Great. She will set the cultural and religious standards for the end-time political-religious empire of the Beast.

And so, yes, there will be a religious revival and return to some kind of belief in God, but the religious and political system instituted and forced on the nations will use this understanding to advance their own positions and oppress the masses as in times past.

At the time of the end many ungodly and unbiblical concepts will be embraced broadly through the influence of Satan the devil. Rome, spiritual heir of ancient Babylon’s idolatrous traditions, will again emerge as the chief city over a greatly expanded revival of the ancient Roman Empire.

Citizens of many countries will embrace her approach toward personal and spiritual relationships. They will welcome her influence and power over them. She will boast, “I sit as queen, and am no widow, and will not see sorrow” (verse 7).

God, however, labels her the mother of harlots and a city full of abominations.

Again, a revitalized belief in religion will seem to be very good at first, but it will become a tool for this powerful political and religious union (akin to Babylon), leading nations into horrible wrong.

To understand more about this revived religious system that will overtake society, download or request our free study guide The Book of Revelation Unveiled (available at BTmagazine.org/booklets).

Then God truly comes back

What does all this mean? And what is the ultimate solution to this coming mayhem? In the end, God truly will be back, and in the right way. It won’t be a return to a false religious system, but the return of Jesus Christ as King over all the earth. God will institute 1,000 years of peace and happiness, a period often referred to as the Millennium.

This is the ultimate return of God, when all will at last come to know the truth about life’s origins and even the astounding purpose behind it all!
This year, 2019, marks the 160th anniversary of Charles Darwin's famous book *On the Origin of Species,* which gave us the popular theory of evolution. The theory has now long been taught in nearly all schools and universities around the world, in most even as dogma, yet there is a growing uneasiness and anxiety among many scientists. Evidence against the theory continues to pile up, such as increased understanding of the incredible complexity of life from the molecular level on up.

Currently there are two main theories to explain life on earth. One requires an intelligent Designer and Creator; the other insists the natural laws and undirected forces of the universe, including natural selection and mutation, are sufficient to produce living things that appear designed but are actually the result of a sequence of blind, purposeless chance occurrences.

Darwin, a 19th-century British naturalist, championed the idea that all life evolved from one or a few simple forms. He gave rise to the notion that nature does not need a divine Creator—that instead, all species on earth can readily be accounted for through natural selection and random variation. Despite its grip on modern academia, there is increasing pushback against the theory. Intelligent design is gaining ground through various avenues, including mounting evidence of foresight in design, as we’ll see.

A mere illusion of design?

Richard Dawkins, a zoologist and famous atheistic evolutionist, has defined biology working through Darwinian evolution as “the study of complicated things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose” (*The Blind Watchmaker,* 1986, p. 1, emphasis added throughout). To this day, he denies that living things are actually designed for a purpose and insists it only appears that way since this is only an illusion. In other words, he rejects the idea that any foresight and planning were involved in the formation of living systems.

Yet more and more scientists are coming to doubt the efficacy of this theory. In fact, in 2016 numerous leading scientists gathered at the Royal Society of London, one of the oldest scientific academies in the world, to discuss “calls for revision of the standard theory of evolution,” recognizing that “the
issues involved remain hotly contested” (“New Trends in Evolutionary Biology,” RoyalSociety.org, November 2016). Even having such a meeting was a scientific milestone, showing mounting concern over weaknesses in the theory!

Not only is there stark evidence of design to cope with, but there is growing evidence that various challenges were anticipated in this design. Recently, Marcos Eberlin, one of the world’s leading chemists, has dared to voice the truth about serious flaws in evolutionary theory, pointing out:

“On this view, evolution provided design without a designer. We see evidence of purposive design in the universe and in us, but we are supposed to believe that this is just an illusion, and that, in reality, a process unguided by anything except the laws and constants of nature slowly formed all we know—the universe, the stars, the ocean, the sky and clouds, RNA and DNA, ribosomes, bacteria, fish, birds, chimpanzees, and us. So we are told.

“Sadly, this story has constrained science, narrowed our horizons, and deadened our wonder. But happily, some fresh air has finally slipped onto the scene. The evidence for foresight and design in nature is growing progressively more apparent as we pursue scientific discovery. And unlike materialistic philosophy, an openness to the evidence for intelligent design broadens the horizons of science” (Foresight: How the Chemistry of Life Reveals Planning and Purpose, 2019, p. 145).

The importance of foresight

One of the discoveries that is revolutionizing the fields of biology and biochemistry is the growing evidence of foresight and planning involved in the makeup of living things.

There must have been foresight—contemplation in advance—to produce the ingenious solutions organisms are equipped with for dealing with all manner of problems. These solutions were already in place when the problems were encountered, or else species would not have survived and been perpetuated.

Consider immune systems and blood clotting, for instance—without which countless creatures would’ve died from infection or injury before they lived long enough to pass on their genes. Yet such foresight in design is also much more fundamental—concerning the very formation of living organisms.

We will note a few other examples of apparent foresight and planning, and you can judge for yourself if this is best explained as an illusion—or as something that points to a Designer!

Chaperones in protein formation

As scientists peer deeper into the cell, they have finally figured out one of the most complicated engineering problems at a fundamental level—how proteins, the building blocks of biological structure, manage to fold into their precisely programmed form to function properly.

Researchers have found a specialized protein called a chaperone, which acts in a sense like a human chaperone—a person entrusted with looking after or supervising others, such as

Respected Yale Professor Renounces Evolution

Earlier this year, David Gelernter, a famous computer scientist at Yale University, renounced his belief in the theory of evolution, causing dismay in the scientific community.

In a carefully written essay in the Spring 2019 issue of The Claremont Review of Books titled “Giving Up Darwin” (posted online May 1), Dr. Gelernter gave his reasons for forsaking a beloved idea due to the evidence pointing another way.

He states: “There’s no reason to doubt that Darwin successfully explained the small adjustments by which an organism adapts to local circumstances: changes to fur density or wing style or beak shape. Yet there are many reasons to doubt whether he can answer the hard questions and explain the big picture—not the fine-tuning of existing species but the emergence of new ones. The origin of species is exactly what Darwin cannot explain.

“[Cambridge scholar and intelligent design pioneer] Stephen Meyer’s thoughtful and meticulous Darwin’s Doubt (2013) convinced me that Darwin has failed. He cannot answer the big question. Two other books are also essential: The Deniable Darwin and Other Essays (2009), by David Berlinski, and Debating Darwin’s Doubt (2015), an anthology edited by David Klinghoffer, which collects some of the arguments Meyer’s book stirred up. These three form a fateful battle group that most people would rather ignore. Bringing to bear the work of many dozen scientists over many decades, Meyer . . . disassembles the theory of evolution piece by piece. Darwin’s Doubt is one of the most important books in a generation. Few open-minded people will finish it with their faith in Darwin intact” (p. 104).

Professor Gelernter agrees with Berlinski that, in contrast to Darwin’s predictions about the fossil record, “in general, most species enter the evolutionary order fully formed and then depart unchanged.” The incremental development of new species is largely not there” (p. 105).

Gelernter also brings up the difficulty of producing a stable and functional protein if evolution were true, stating: “Proteins are the special ops forces (or maybe the Marines) of living cells, except that they are common instead of rare; they do all the heavy lifting, all the tricky and critical assignments, in a dazzling range of roles. Proteins called enzymes catalyze all sorts of reactions and drive cellular metabolism. Other proteins (such as collagen) give cells shape and structure, like tent poles but in far more shapes. Nerve function, muscle function, and photosynthesis are all driven by proteins. And in doing these jobs and many others, the actual, 3-D shape of the
an adult with a group of children or one accompanying a dating couple to make sure everything is aboveboard. A protein chaperone supervises the protein to fold in the right way and assume its three-dimensional shape. This is one of the most complex choreographies in nature.

Professor Eberlin explains: “Many proteins require chaperones to fold rapidly and properly. Instead of spontaneous self-assembly we find assisted assembly. And even after the proteins are folded correctly, chaperones help them maintain their functional states . . . Such work is indispensable. Misfolded proteins are not merely useless to the cell, but ruinous . . . Without them [the chaperones], no life. And yet, chaperones are themselves made of proteins that must be properly folded and maintained by other kinds of chaperones. For those committed to origin-of-life scenarios devoid of foresight and planning, this is a devilishly difficult chicken-egg problem . . .

“The probability of hundreds of essential proteins all folding into the correct shape at proper speed on their own without mistakes beggars rational belief . . . Without chaperones, [there would be] no viable cells” (pp. 72-76).

So what came first, the protein or the chaperone? You need both to exist at the same time for many large proteins to become functional. How could there be proteins without chaperones? And how did chaperone proteins develop without other chaperone proteins to guide them?

And what even is the use of a chaperone without another protein to guide? Why would natural selection select for such chaperones before they were needed? How could any of this have ever evolved through blind chance?

The best explanation—and indeed the only logical one—is that a masterful mind was involved in anticipating the complex folding problem and created both the protein and the chaperone at the same time so both could effectively do their job!

The miraculous eggshell

Speaking of the chicken-and-egg question, another great example of foresight in nature is the humble chicken eggshell. There are so many problems to solve in the first place if the developing chick is to survive the three-week incubation period inside the egg.

One major challenge posed by such development is how your way from 150 links of gibberish to a working, useful protein and you are guaranteed to fail. Try it with ten mutations, a thousand, a million—you fail. The odds bury you. It can’t be done” (p. 107).

Gelernter states that he “cannot accept intelligent design as Meyer presents it,” but he notes that “it says aloud what anyone who ponders biology must think, at some point, while sifting possible answers to hard questions” (p. 104). He has difficulty with there being so much extinction of species in the past and with the existence of problems in nature like disease (p. 109)—not understanding that God did not intend the physical realm to be perfect now and that sin has resulted in curses on the world according to God’s plan.

He nevertheless admits that “intelligent design might well be the ultimate answer. But as a theory, it would seem to have a long way to go” (ibid.). However, Scripture makes the matter clearer—if people would just believe it.

Later in June, Gelernter relayed some of what he faced from the academic community. While he was still treated well by his colleagues personally, he goes on to say: “On the other hand, when I look at their intellectual behavior, what they publish, and, much more important, what they tell their students, Darwinism has indeed passed beyond a scientific argument.

“As far as they are concerned, take your life in your hands to challenge it intellectually . . . They will destroy you if you challenge it” (quoted by Sarah Taylor, “Prolific Yale Professor Turns Against Darwinism, Warns Darwinians ‘Will Destroy You If You Challenge the Theory,” The Blaze, Aug. 22, 2019).

He further noted that he hadn’t seen anything “approaching free speech on this topic . . . It’s a bitter rejection . . . a sort of bitter, fundamental, angry, outraged, violent rejection, which comes nowhere near scientific or intellectual discussion. I’ve seen that happen again and again. ‘I’m a Darwinist, don’t you say a word against it,’ or, ‘I don’t wanna hear it, period’” (ibid.).

“I am attacking their religion,” Gelernter concluded. “It is a big issue for them.”

—Mario Seiglie and Tom Robinson
to breathe within the egg. If the egg was perfectly sealed, the chick would quickly suffocate. Yet if the eggshell was porous, its contents could seep out.

The answer is a semi-porous eggshell, where oxygen can come in without letting the valuable contents inside leak out. The shell has 7,000 pores of ideal size and location to allow oxygen to enter and carbon dioxide to exit. If the pores were larger or smaller or wrongly spaced, the effectiveness of the whole system deteriorates and the chick dies.

This delicate problem of providing oxygen and eliminating carbon dioxide while maintaining the integrity of the eggshell had to be solved before the first chick developed—of any kind of bird, not just chickens. It took foresight and planning to come up with the thousands of right-sized pores at their precise positioning at the time needed to do their job.

The maligned appendix

The last example we’ll consider, among the many that are available, is the human appendix. Again, it is the ubiquitous Darwin who, in his book The Descent of Man, concluded the human appendix is a vestigial or remnant organ—a body part supposedly left over from evolutionary change that no longer has a functional use.

Yet researchers have discovered the appendix to be quite a useful organ—one revealing foresight in its design. The appendix has two main functions. First, it is a reservoir of antibodies that strengthen the body’s immune system. Second, it is a haven for good bacteria that repopulates the intestinal tract after a bout of diarrhea cleans bacteria out.

Similarly, diarrhea itself is a protective mechanism of the body when harmful substances enter the digestive tract. The problem is that while this watery process removes toxic elements, it also gets rid of good intestinal bacteria that are essential for proper digestion.

So how does the digestive system quickly repopulate the good bacteria? By means of the appendix at the end of the large intestine. It’s a virtual dead-end enclosure positioned so that its store of good bacteria is not flushed out with the bacteria in the rest of the intestinal tract.

As Professor Eberlin points out about the appendix: “Its location is perfect from a hydraulic engineering point of view: placed just below the normal one-way flow of food and germs in the large intestine, it occupies a cul-de-sac and is thus well protected from the disruption due to diarrhea. . . . So the argument that the appendix is a vestigial organ that supports evolutionary theory is itself vestigial, a leftover of nineteenth-century Darwinian biology. We know better now” (p. 121).

Five conclusions about foresight

Everywhere we look, we see evidence of a mind behind the design of all things—a supreme mind that foresaw all the challenges of the vast universe and life on earth at every level and planned out how these challenges would be met.

In pondering the evidence before us, it’s worthwhile to once more quote Dr. Eberlin’s book—which received endorsements from three Nobel Prize winners!—on his five conclusions about foresight:

“1. We see many examples of apparent foresight in the natural world—of problems being anticipated before they arose, and ingeniously solved with on-time delivery of multiple, essential, and well-orchestrated parts.

“2. We know from our uniform experience that the ability to anticipate and solve such problems is a characteristic of intelligent minds.

“3. There are not demonstrated examples of unguided, mindless processes anticipating and solving problems that require a sophisticated orchestration of fine-tuned parts, all brought together on the ground floor of an origin event. Hand-waving references to cases that are assumed rather than demonstrated do not count.

“4. Therefore, our uniform experience provides us with only one type of cause with the demonstrated capacity to anticipate and solve such problems—intelligent design.

“5. Intelligent design thus represents the best and, indeed, the only causally adequate explanation for the many examples of apparent foresight in the natural world, of situations where problems are ingeniously solved with on-time delivery of multiple, essential, and well-orchestrated parts. The foresight is not merely apparent, but real” (p. 143).

Yes, the faulty idea that complex life forms and components arose and developed from a blind and purposeless process of natural selection and mutation is slowly being discarded as more open-minded scientists follow the evidence to where it truly leads. (See also “Respected Yale Professor Renounces Evolution” on p. 10.)

The Bible was ahead of its time in challenging those who would try to teach creation without a Creator, or design without a Designer. It has for many centuries told us to study the ingenious ways living things exist and survive to recognize that something inferior to them could not have made them—that instead only something vastly superior could have done it.

As Job 12:7-10 states in the Good News Translation: “Even birds and animals have much they could teach you; ask the creatures of earth and sea for their wisdom. All of them know that instead only something vastly superior could have done it.

As Job 12:7-10 states in the Good News Translation: “Even birds and animals have much they could teach you; ask the creatures of earth and sea for their wisdom. All of them know that the Lord’s hand made them. It is God who directs the lives of his creatures; everyone’s life is in his power.”

Learn more

How did life and all we see around us come to be? Is evolution really a valid answer? And does it actually matter? You need to know the answers! Download or request our free study guide Creation or Evolution: Does It Really Matter What You Believe?

BTmagazine.org/booklets
This November marks the 160th anniversary of the publication of Charles Darwin’s landmark work *On the Origin of Species*. Its controversial premise popularized the idea that the vast variety of life forms we see in the world around us diverged from a single or small pool of common ancestors as a result of the survival and reproduction of offspring with advantageous traits—termed natural selection.

Over time, the book slowly but surely found its way into the foundational tenets of the biological sciences in modern academia. It’s difficult to find a professor or student of biology today who doesn’t accept the theory of evolution. In fact, acceptance of evolution by natural selection, also known as Darwinism, is often used as a litmus test in academia to prove one’s allegiance to science over myth.

However, as technology has advanced and science is able to understand more and more about DNA and the microbiological world, discoveries are being made that have begun to unravel Darwin’s theory. A number of scientists—both believers in God and non-believers—have concluded that Darwin’s explanation is simply not adequate to explain the levels of complexity seen in the natural world.

In recent years, scientists in the fields of biology, biochemistry and even psychology have presented strong evidence that challenges the academic status quo in biology—a house of cards 160 years in the making.

**The proposal of slow, gradual change**

In 1831, a young Charles Darwin boarded the *H.M.S. Beagle* and set sail on the adventure of a lifetime. For five years he served aboard as the ship’s naturalist. The 22-year old Darwin, fresh out of university, was provided extensive opportunities to explore vast tracts of South America and the Galapagos Islands, Australia and New Zealand, and a number of other remote locales around the world, cataloging and observing flora, fauna and fossils.

Just a year earlier, in 1830, Charles Lyell published the first volume of his groundbreaking work *Principles of Geology*, which popularized the idea that the processes shaping the earth today are the same as they were in eons past. He believed we can therefore extrapolate past conditions by observing rates and degrees of change in the present.

This process was referred to as uniformitarianism. It was claimed that the slow processes of today, acting little by little over long periods of time, were responsible for the rise of mountain ranges, the erosion of canyons and the building up of islands.

Before Lyell’s work, it was commonly understood that the earth changed through “catastrophism,” which held that the earth’s geological variation was due to periodic large-scale catastrophic events, not slow, incremental change.

The idea of uniformitarianism turned the world of geology on its head, and was a great influence on Charles Darwin. During his time aboard the *Beagle*, Darwin devoured Lyell’s book.

On a stop in Valdivia, Chile, the crew of the *Beagle* experienced a serious earthquake and then, setting sail, witnessed the devastation it had wrought on the local villages and shoreline. Darwin and the crew observed one area where the land had shifted a full eight feet.

These observations, combined with Lyell’s ideas, led Darwin to eventually consider how uniformitarianism and natural biological laws and forces might have the same effect on species. He would later wonder whether the extreme diversity he observed in the flora, fauna and fossils of South America might be due not to large-scale changes over a few thousand years, but instead to small, incremental change driven by some natural process over millions of years.

**Natural selection**

Years after his voyage, Darwin eventually came to the idea of gradual evolutionary change. But what process or mechanism could cause this?

Darwin raised pigeons as a hobby and belonged to several pigeon-breeding clubs in England. He knew that pigeon groups changed through the artificial process of selective breeding—putting birds with desired characteristics together to produce more like them.

Darwin began to wonder if something similar occurred in nature. Could nature somehow be directing how organisms...
change over generations?

In his travels, he observed how animals produce more offspring than can survive. He observed how there is competition among those organisms over food, water and mates. And in time he thought about certain advantages enabling some to succeed above others. If those advantages could be passed from parent to offspring, then organisms would develop greater fitness for survival over many generations, as those with the beneficial adaptations reproduce and those without them do not.

Here was a mechanism for evolution. He called it natural selection.

Darwin reconsidered many of his earlier observations in the Galapagos Islands in this light. He had learned that there was a large degree of variation among the beaks and body shapes of finches there.

Others would later take up the study of these finches. It was observed that certain beak types were prevalent on certain islands, and this appeared to have a direct correlation to the food type available. Beak types even appeared to be able to change based on food availability from island to island, seeming to imply that those birds not adapted to the food source available died out. Those with beneficial adaptations survived and reproduced to pass on these adaptations.

The finch variations would be used to show that species change, the conclusion being that, as Darwin had proposed, organisms change over generations, developing structural adaptations in response to changing environmental conditions through natural selection. (Yet it’s been pointed out that the changes among finches were fluctuations back and forth within limits rather than clear developmental progression.)

Such structural adaptation was understood to accommodate needed function.

Functionalism vs. structuralism in biology

Darwin came to see the world from a functionalist perspective.

For the better part of two centuries, biologists have approached questions regarding the nature of organic form from two opposing camps—the viewpoints of functionalism and structuralism.

A biological functionalist believes the order and structure in living organisms—a bird’s beak, a five-fingered limb—must have arisen as a result of a functional need. To functionalists, the primary organizing principle of biology is adaptation contingent on environmental causes.

Structuralism (also called formalism), on the other hand, maintains that laws of biological form operating within living systems, which include internal constraints, are at the core of the structure of organisms. Thus the various physical aspects of organisms are seen as limited to particular ranges of form.

As an example, consider an animal cell’s enclosing membrane, which controls transport into and out of the cell. It’s made up of a series of phospholipid molecules. Structuralists would argue that it has resulted from chemical and physical laws that allow only so many possibilities for its structure rather than following an undirected and unbounded process of adaptation.

Limitations according to natural law are observed in the folding of proteins, the DNA molecule, the organization of other chemical compounds and the formation of crystals. These can only be organized in so many ways. Structuralists argue that common structural patterns in various creatures—such as five-fingered limbs in various birds, reptiles, marine animals and mammals—are preset forms and not a result of function leading to structure.

Structuralism does allow for certain adaptation but explains it quite differently from functionalism, as we’ll see.

A house of cards

Functionalism, which lies at the basis of Darwinism, is the prevailing view in modern biological science today. But what if the entirety of the theory of evolution is based on a faulty assumption? What if the idea that organisms are driven to evolve in a random, non-directed response to external pressure is wrong? What, instead, predetermined internal factors drive molecular shape and organization at a cellular level, these being the actual basis for adaptation?

Dr. Michael Denton, biochemist and author of the books Evolution: A Theory in Crisis, Nature’s Destiny and Evolution: Still a Theory in Crisis, is a prominent proponent of structuralism. He writes:

“Of course, all structuralists accepted that organisms exhibit adaptations to serve external environmental conditions. But these were considered to be ‘adaptive masks,’ grafted as it were onto underlying ground plans or ‘primal patterns.’ Thus the great diversity of vertebrate limbs—fins for swimming, hands for grasping, wings for flying—are all modifications of the same underlying plan or pattern, which serves no particular environmental necessity” (“Two Views of Biology: Structuralism and Functionalism,” Evolution News, 2016).

Structuralists believe that adaptation exists, but not as fundamentally arising from environmental factors. Instead, internal factors such as genetics produce specific patterns that may sometimes be modified through natural selection leading to microevolution, or minor variation. This does not allow for structure emerging from random mutation and macroevolution.

Denton goes on to state with regard to Darwin’s finches: “From the emerging developmental genetic picture, it is now relatively easy to envisage how gradual adaptive fine-tuning of the expression patterns of a handful of genes could result in the different beak forms of the Galapagos finches we see today. The evolution of finch beaks requires no causal agency beyond natural selection. Some finch beaks proved advantageous; others, not.

“The lesson of the Galapagos, and all such cases of microevolution, is that cumulative selection will work its magic just so long as there is an empirically known or plausible functional continuum, at the morphological [structural] or genetic level, leading from an ancestral species or structure to a descendent species or structure” (“Evolution: A Theory in Crisis Revisited [Part One of Three],” Inference: International Review of Science, Oct. 15, 2014). That is, the beak form was there to start with and was gradually modified to something still similar.

This is significantly different from Darwinian evolution. Darwin proposed that small variations from one generation
to the next over long periods would, through the process of natural selection, produce entirely new structures and new kinds of life forms, what is now known as macroevolution.

But, in a world of more primitive scientific thinking, Darwin didn’t realize many major problems with this line of thought.

Understanding of genetics and genetic mutation—which Darwinists would seize on as a means of species modification—did not come until later. And with this came the realization that, more often than not, such mutations are harmful, causing more problems than advantages. Furthermore, mutations are not always heritable. Sometimes a novel mutation, even a rare beneficial one, doesn’t pass to the next generation.

Now, Dr. Michael Behe, author of Darwin’s Black Box: A Biochemical Challenge to Evolution, presents a new realization in his book Darwin Devolves: The New Science About DNA That Challenges Evolution. He writes:

“Darwinian evolution proceeds mainly by damaging or breaking genes, which counterintuitively, sometimes helps survival. In other words, the mechanism is powerfully evolutionary. It promotes the rapid loss of genetic information. Laboratory experiments, field research, and theoretical studies all forcefully indicate that, as a result, random mutation and natural selection make evolution self-limiting. That is, the very same factors that promote diversity at the simplest levels of biology actually prevent it at more complex ones. Darwin’s mechanism works chiefly by squandering genetic information for short-term gain” (2019, pp. 37-38, emphasis in original).

From a DNA standpoint, the evolutionary process actually prevents the level of complexity evolutionists claim it can achieve. This ultimately reinforces the structuralist position.

**Irreducible complexity disproves evolution**

Dr. Behe earlier presented the issue of “irreducible complexity,” a term he coined after exposure to the foundation of the concept in other works, such as Dr. Denton’s book Evolution: A Theory in Crisis. It means that complex systems must have all components in place to function and be passed on to the next generation—that the components cannot come together gradually over multiple generations. That’s because there would be no advantage in non-functional alterations—and perhaps this would even be disadvantageous—so that such changes would not be passed on.

An example is what Denton pointed out about bird lungs. While most organisms have bellows-style lungs—where air goes in, gas transfer occurs and exchanged gases are exhaled as the “bellows” close—birds have circulatory lungs. These do not expand and contract like those of mammals or reptiles. Instead, air goes into the rear air sacs of the bird, then flows to the lung, and from the lung to the front air sacs, and then out. This happens without expansion and contraction of the lung itself. It is unilateral flow, efficient and complex.

This level of complexity could not have resulted from gradual random mutations over generations. It is an example of irreducible complexity. If bird lungs evolved over time, what would the transitional forms of birdlike creatures have done to breathe?

Is it probable that the functional need led to the structure in a series of random, non-directed mutations? Or is it more likely that predetermined structure led to the function? Clearly the latter.

Another example of irreducible complexity is the DNA molecule and its transcription and translation in the cell. DNA replication, transcription and translation—the complex process of duplicating the DNA molecule, transcribing it into the messenger RNA (mRNA), and then translating this to amino acid sequences and protein synthesis—is another system that is irreducibly complex. Any random mutation in the process that doesn’t lead to the full system operating all together leads to a lack of protein synthesis and the likely death of the organism.

The system had to have been in place in its entirety from the beginning to account for its existence at all.

**A designer and lawmaker**

All of this implies some directing force. Despite his stand for structuralism, Dr. Michael Denton, although he opposes Darwinian evolution, remains a staunch evolutionist. He doesn’t attribute the design he feels is implicit to a higher power, but thinks there must be a direction of some kind—some force calling the shots. He believes in a primal order that imparts the structure, and an adaptive order that modifies it as needed.

Dr. Michael Behe is an advocate for intelligent design. He believes that a designer exists who has created these patterns and forms—that designer being God.

If we accept that these scientists are correct in terms of structuralism being the paradigm through which we should view the world—recognizing that predetermined structure led to function—the only conclusion we can logically make is that someone or something established that structure to begin with. Someone or something dictated the natural laws causing proteins to fold in predictable ways, crystals to form in specific ways and genes expressing in certain ways.

Genesis 1 clearly states that God created the heavens and the earth. He designed and formed the moon and stars, the waters, the land, the plants and animals, and mankind in His image.

In Jeremiah 33:25, God declares that it was He who created order in the heavens and earth, establishing day and night—that He created the physical laws through which our universe operates.

This is the most reasonable explanation for all the evidence we see. Structure with intended function came from the mind and work of a supremely intelligent Creator. The Bible tells us of that Creator and of His plan for you and me as His special creation, the very children of God!
Beyond Today Interview:
Intelligent Design Proponent
Dr. Jay Richards

During the Dallas Conference on Science and Faith in January 2019, Beyond Today senior writer Mario Seiglie sat down with author and presenter Jay Richards.

Beyond Today: Dr. Richards, you have been involved in the Intelligent Design and Darwinian evolution controversy for more than 20 years. Could you summarize the progress made by Intelligent Design theorists during these past 20 years?

Jay Richards: I think a lot of what has happened in the Intelligent Design community has been filling out the details of the argument.

When I first got involved in the 1990s, Bill Dembski [now Dr. William Dembski, author of several books on intelligent design, evolution and creation] and I were in graduate school together. That’s how I got pulled into the fine-tuning argument. Then we developed a key set of intuitions about how you infer design. What happens when you detect design, and what is a reliable indicator of intelligence, both in the human world and in nature. But there is still a lot of work left to be done.

Intelligent design in many ways is a research program, essentially. So what you saw here in this conference and what Steve Meyer [fellow presenter Dr. Stephen Meyer, director of Discovery Institute’s Center for Science and Culture] has been doing over the years, is filling out the evidence for design—including the discovery of things we didn’t know about before. Twenty years ago we might have talked about the information in the DNA, but we didn’t talk about epigenetic information, the information elsewhere in the cell and in an organism.

In many ways, this research program is similar to paleontologists in a dig who have detected the tip of a T-Rex dinosaur fossil. So now you know you are on to something and that this is not a normal side of a mountain. This is an artifact of something, but there is still a whole dinosaur fossil left to discover. I think we are now, in this sense, partway up the tail.

If you noticed, in the past, intelligent design conferences tended initially to be about such things as [molecular biologist] Michael Behe’s important book on molecular machines or Steve Meyer developing his DNA evidence over the years. But now if you look at the people involved, it’s all across the scientific disciplines. In fact, I now spend more time on artificial intelligence and the mind—and a lot of people are doing the same thing.

So we began with a set of reliable intuitions that have proven themselves over time. Now in the last 20 years we started filling out that research program. Yet I would still say the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. So between scientists who are casualties of personal attacks and just the kind of difficulty of this endeavor, it would be nice if there were more key players involved.

There are a lot of graduate students and young scientists who work on this issue, and they feel they have to work behind the scenes and quietly. Of course, you can have someone involved like James Tour, who is a very prominent scientist, and he can say whatever he wants (see “The Problem with Evolution and the Return of God” beginning on page 4). But there are also many hundreds of junior faculty members and researchers who can’t yet talk about this subject. So I would say the pressure to conform and not to speak about it has gotten worse, even while the evidence has gotten stronger.

BT: I heard Dr. Jonathan Wells, a colleague of yours, say in an intelligent design conference over 10 years ago that Darwinian evolution would reach a serious crisis of belief and that its popularity would begin to decline around 2025. Do you believe this to still be the case, or will it take more time?

JR: I think it’s one of those things that’s almost impossible to predict, but there is no doubt in my mind that it will happen—because I think ultimately the truth is already out. If you look at the history of science, theories or mainstream paradigms have a way of holding on long after the evidence runs out and long after all the anomalies have built up. But they can’t go on forever, because they don’t fit reality.

Still, I also think these are unpredictable and chaotic phenomena where you may have a tipping point—one person who is well-placed who says the right thing and then all of the sudden it all changes. There is a famous aphorism that says when you come up with a new idea, first they ignore you, then they say you’re crazy and finally they say they knew it was right all along. So we are way into the crazy stage and going past it.

What is happening now is similar to what the Royal Society Conference in 2016 was about, where you have a lot of mainstream biologists and top scientists casting about for something other than the neo-Darwinian synthesis. But they also worry, because they know what the main alternative to Darwinism is—the argument for design. The whole point of Darwinism was to squeeze design out of biology. So in many ways their worry over the point about design prevents them from jumping ship long after they probably knew better and probably should have done so.

BT: That reminds me of the famous quote by a Chinese paleontologist about being in denial.
It’s gotten where you can’t even have a public discussion about it. But materialists are still holding on tenaciously—unfortunately. Unfortunately, it has gotten more fanatical and dogmatic than ever. When I first started talking about these things, I was a bit safer as a philosopher speaking about fine-tuning, and you could have a rational conversation about it. But now it’s gotten where you can’t even have a public discussion about it.

BT: For thousands of years, the prevailing thought was the belief in a Creator. It’s just been in recent times that this has changed. Do you think we are far away from a flip back to the original idea?

JR: I think that is exactly right. At least if you look in Western history and even with the pre-Socratic philosophers, the debate was whether the universe was a result of a Creator or at least was purpose-driven. And Plato in his book Timaeus argues against those pre-Socratic sophists and materialists. That, at least in the West, has been the overwhelming point of view.

So we are in this weird moment in which creationism, if you actually took a poll of the population, is still a majority view, but not in the commanding high culture and influential institutions. So I do think the prevailing evidence of nature goes so strongly against materialism that at some point we are going to see it flip back. But materialists are still holding on tenaciously—unfortunately.

BT: In June 2018, an article in the journal Human Evolution pointed out that after examining gene sequences of mitochondrial DNA in 100,000 species, the hundreds of scientists involved concluded that the event—it either simultaneous appearance of humans and most animals, or a population crash—occurred about 100,000 to 200,000 years ago. What can you remark about this discovery?

It does suggest casting doubt on the idea that all the information from population genetics is sown up. First, it says that all human beings could not have descended from a single pair of humans in the recent past. Yet, most of those predictions from population genetics are, in fact, highly theory-laden. It presupposes the Darwinian account is true, and then they just plug in the data.

What is interesting about this finding is it shows, if nothing else, how uncertain all of these claims are and how much the Darwinian theory is read into the data and then treated as if it is evidence for the theory—when in fact it is the theory that is describing the data. So this is the problem with a lot of these comparisons. I often tell people not to buy this claim that population genetics has shown either that we all share a common ancestor or that we couldn’t descend from an original pair.

BT: Another unexpected result of this large genetic study, according to David Thaler, one of the co-authors of the report, was that “species have very clear genetic boundaries, and there’s nothing much in between. If individuals are stars, then species are galaxies. They are compact clusters in the vastness of empty sequence space. The absence of ‘in-between’ species is something that also perplexed Darwin.” Could you comment on these findings?

JR: I honestly think that simply confirms everything we have learned since Darwin composed The Origin of Species in 1859. If Darwinism were true you would expect, through infinite plasticity between species and different kinds of organisms, to get huge amounts of variation. Yet what we find, for example, with domesticated dogs, which are highly genetically diverse—and you get everything from a Chihuahua to a Great Dane—is that they are all of the same species! They hit a genetic wall and don’t go any farther.

The best examples we have of [supposed] Darwinian evolution in action would be antibiotic resistance and bacteria, but they never become anything but bacteria. I think this is an honest look at the biological evidence. What is happening in biology, whatever power natural selection and random genetic mutation have, it’s tweaking around the edges and doesn’t explain the complexities or the diversity of life.

In fact, Michael Behe’s new book, Darwin Devolves, really drills down on this. It shows that . . . the capacity for variation is just fixed, and at some point you will hit a brick wall, and random mutations just are not going to do anything else for you.

BT: Is there anything else you would like to say, especially to the youth of today, about the intelligent design versus Darwinian evolution debate?

JR: I would just encourage youth and anyone who hears the words “intelligent design” not to assume they know what it means, and to especially not assume that the critics of intelligent design are describing it accurately. Take the time if you are curious to actually read some of the books by intelligent design proponents and grapple with their arguments. See what they are actually saying and not what their critics say they are saying. There is no harm in doing this, and they might very well learn something they would never have learned otherwise.
Mankind’s understanding of the cosmos has never been as developed as today. Yet for many centuries, misunderstanding prevented people from recognizing the real reason for its existence. The key lies in seeing that God has always been and always will be at the center of the universe.

When we look up to the stars above, what do we see? The hand of our God? Or do we miss the point?

The universe we are privileged to observe is meant to reveal the God of creation, the God of Abraham, the God of the Bible. It is meant to reveal to us our purpose and place in the plan of God. It is meant to point us to God. It is meant as one of the greatest helps to a relationship with Him.

King David looked up into the heavens and wrote this: “The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known. They speak without a sound or word; their voice is never heard. Yet their message has gone throughout the earth, and their words to all the world” (Psalm 19:1-4, New Living Translation).

This passage is a perfect place to begin to develop a view of a God-centered universe. God created the universe to display His glory. Everywhere we turn our telescopes we see immense space and distance. We see astral bodies and systems that reveal more mystery. The more we see, the more we learn.

As Apollo 11 astronaut Buzz Aldrin stepped down from the lunar lander to the surface of the moon, his words describing the barren moonscape were simply “magnificent desolation.” That desolation doesn’t end at the moon. We see a universe full of great and expanding power. Some physicists have argued that at some point billions of years from now, the universe could reach a point of full expansion and collapse back upon itself, into another point and then begin another expansion, another “big bang.” Many others disagree, contending the universe will expand forever, with all cooling to absolute zero and material cohesion ceasing—the supposed heat death of the universe. Others envision mysterious dark energy ultimately ripping everything apart.

None of these predictions provides a comforting scenario, leaving us with only meaninglessness, loneliness and despair. But if we see the universe through the lens of it being God-centered, we are drawn to God and gain great hope and understanding. Know this: The universe and human life will not end with a bang or a whimper! But we have to understand the universe from God’s perspective. When we do, we find meaning and we find hope.

Centuries of wrong perspective

Mankind has not seen the universe this way because the first human beings rejected revealed knowledge from God in the Garden of Eden, and their descendants went further astray. As people looked to the heavens they began to see and worship a false conception of God and even other gods—ultimately “the god of this age,” Satan the devil (2 Corinthians 4:4).
Cut off from the knowledge of the true God and deceived by Satan, people came to imagine among the stars a false pantheon of divine beings. Their deceived view of the cosmos was carried down in various forms through history. As the sun and stars rose and moved through the heavens, people thought they were witnessing stories of conflict, lust, love, jealousy and war being played out. Gods and goddesses, imbued with human frailties, supposedly acted out dramas in the heavens that impacted life on earth.

Farmers thought these events determined whether or not they would have a good crop. Women sought fertility by worshiping the bright morning star as a female goddess who would grant the blessing of childbirth. Kings sought divine wisdom from a combination of stars thought to represent their chief god.

This vivid imagination ruled the thinking of the Babylonians, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans and the rest of the world. They all looked to the skies and saw false gods, not the true God. It led to the development of astrology—foretelling and reading the future events of one’s life by the position of the stars in the heavens—which many still believe in today.

Through astrology man made his first great leap into a scheme for describing how unseen forces from the greatest distance of space and time, from the very depth of the heavens, shaped everyday life. Instead of seeing the glory of the true God in the heavens, man embraced a false system of religion that is still with us. Instead of seeing God at the center of the universe, man saw divinity in the universe itself and its various aspects.

Another mistake man made was concluding that the earth was the center of the universe and that everything revolved around it. As the ancients imagined it, each day the sun god rose in the east and rode his chariot across the skies into the west. At night, he traveled the underworld in a boat to appear once again at the dawn of a new day.

The stars were seen to rotate around the sky. Earth was seen as a platform within a domed universe with a canopy of stars strung across the ceiling. The sun went around the earth in its daily and yearly courses. This conception provided an orderly scheme for describing how unseen forces from the greatest distance of space and time, from the very depth of the heavens, shaped everyday life. Instead of seeing the glory of the true God in the heavens, man embraced a false system of religion that is still with us. Instead of seeing God at the center of the universe, man saw divinity in the universe itself and its various aspects.

They concluded that planet Earth was the center of everything. This became the accepted cosmological view. A Roman astronomer in Egypt named Ptolemy described how this worked, and his view was accepted as truth for around 1,500 years. This even became the accepted view of the universe. But they were wrong, of course. Earth is not the center of the universe, and Scripture never said that it was!

A scientific revolution

It was not until the 16th and 17th century that a group of scientists beginning with Nicolas Copernicus began to question the earth-centered view of the universe. With the invention of the telescope, man obtained a closer view of the stars and planets and came to see that the accepted wisdom was false. The earth moved. The planets moved around the sun, and they did so in different orbits and at different speeds. Some of the planets, like Jupiter, had their own moons revolving around them.

Events came to a head when Galileo was being brought before the Inquisition for his “heretical” ideas. The Roman Catholic Church could not accept this intrusion into accepted dogma. Yet before long the age-old error was glaring.

By the time Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo and Newton finished their groundbreaking work, man’s view of the heavens, what we call today outer space, was radically changed. Society came to realize that the earth is not the center of the universe but is one of the planets circling the sun.

Yet for a long while the sun was then regarded as the center of the universe. But of course the sun is not the center either. In fact it was later understood to be a small star among many billions of stars in a galaxy that is itself one of many billions of galaxies.

In the last century our knowledge about the universe has multiplied many times over. Today we know that the universe, which scientists have estimated to be some 14 billion years old, is so immense that man is not able to perceive its full size. From all observation, it continues to expand in every direction wherever we aim our telescopes. We discover black holes—collapsed stars that suck anything that comes near them, even light, into a bottomless vortex.

We ponder what these might yet reveal about the universe. And the more we discover, the more we realize how much we don’t know. Everything we discover about the cosmos is astounding. Yet in its immensity we find that it is mostly space—dark, empty, cold, lonely space.

Is man alone?

Let’s stop and think about the history we’ve reviewed. Ancient man concluded the earth was the center of the universe. He looked at the heavens and imagined a host of gods. The pagan world gave us a false view of the divine.
medieval world also erred in seeing the earth and man as the center of the universe. Although that world accepted a form of Christianity, it remained devoid of much biblical truth and had a terribly distorted spiritual view of both man and God.

Sadly, society today isn’t really that much closer to understanding the full truth about the universe, God or man. We have moved from belief in an earth-centered, man-centered universe to focus on one that is vast and empty and, in the eyes of many, without God. This is the “progress” scientists have given us! And man feels even more alone.

When the telescope shattered the view that the earth was the center of the universe, it was part of a revolution in knowledge that led to a modern scientific world where human reason has reigned supreme. But what came next? Enter the evolutionary theory that man is merely the highest form of life, that through mere chance, carbon-based life came into existence and that there was no involvement of God or any supernatural power.

Academic science becomes god, and man is just another animal, the one that evolved from the able to ask, Who am I? Man has moved from wrong cosmic understanding and wrong theology about God to a more distant view of God and even to outright rejection of God. Yet Romans 1:20 declares what is patently true: “For ever since the world was created, even to outright rejection of God, the focus has been on earth and man. For modern academic science, God is not in the universe. And many in the world give Him little thought. It’s all about man. And this leaves man empty, because from a human view, we are alone. Earth seems fragile and vulnerable in this vast cosmic danger zone.

Medieval thinkers persisted in an earth-centered view of the universe by badly misinterpreting Scripture. Now society’s academic leaders reject Scripture and shut out God. It’s time for a fresh, new appraisal. What does the Bible tell us? What does the universe tell us?

Psalm 19, quoted earlier, tells us. The universe is God-centered. It always has been and always will be. Man isn’t at the center of the universe, but man is at the center of God’s plan. We human beings can look up into the skies and, with the minds God gave us, ask questions about the origin and purpose of both the universe and ourselves.

In Psalm 8:3–5, King David observed, “When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers—the moon and the stars you set in place—what are mere mortals that you should think about them, human beings that you should care for them?” (NLT).

Hebrews 2:1-10 quotes this same passage as a question and then answers it: God made man to be the crowning achievement of His creation. It is a God-centered universe with man as the only intelligent physical being able to ask questions about his origin and purpose.

Yes, we live in a God-centered universe. When we focus our mind on that key truth we will find the true meaning of not only the universe, but of human life. As Psalm 19 declares, “The heavens proclaim the glory of God.” Man’s future glory can be found in that picture!

The earth, our solar system, our universe and everything we can see is God-centered. The universe exists to fulfill God’s purpose and plan for mankind.
As the turbulent summer of 2019 drew to an end in September, the world economy seemed to breathe a sigh of relief. The Chinese Ministry of Commerce signaled to U.S. trade negotiators a willingness for serious negotiations in October to resolve the growing trade war between the two nations.

To many observers, this might be the beginning of an end to the trade impasse that began in January 2018 when U.S. President Donald Trump’s administration set in place against Chinese imports the first of a series of tariffs—taxes that drive up the cost of imports.

The effect on the two nations was anything but positive. For a Chinese economy heavily dependent on exports to the United States (which remains the world’s largest economy with the largest market), import duties of up to 30 percent on hundreds of billions of products were strangling economic growth.

In the United States, stock markets saw a wave of volatility as investors worried that the tariffs might also choke off world economic growth. Consumers are wary of price increases on the thousands of Chinese-made consumer products. And such tariffs also increase the cost of many domestic products that use Chinese components.

What’s behind all this, and what does it mean for the future?

**Struggle for supremacy**

A quick look at the trading history of the two gigantic economies opens the door to understanding how and why this economic showdown came about. After the death of Communist China’s founder Mao Zedong in 1976, Chinese leaders began taking steps to modernize their state-run centralized economy.

The 1980s saw a wave of economic reforms that included some increased free-market practices, modernization of industry and a desire to make life better for the Chinese people.

China has vowed to become the world’s largest economy, with access to U.S. markets being a critical part of its plan. The world’s most populous nation had long sought Most Favored Nation (MFN) trading status, which it finally attained with U.S. backing in late 2001. But while this status gained China access to markets and trade advantages it long coveted, it also required that China adhere to fair trade practices it has largely ignored.

Bloomberg News policy analyst Josh Rogin summed up the frustration of U.S. policy makers: “There was a belief that China would develop a private economy that would prove compatible with the WTO [World Trade Organization] system. Chinese leadership has made a political decision to do the opposite. So now we have to respond” (“The United States Is Finally Confronting China’s Economic Aggression,” The Washington Post, March 25, 2018).

With its new MFN trade status, seemingly overnight the Chinese economy began to look much more capitalistic. Official encouragement of Chinese investment by other nations led to thousands of manufacturing enterprises that took advantage of low Chinese pay scales and looser environmental regulations (China is by far the world’s biggest polluter).

Over the past quarter century, Chinese exports to the United States have skyrocketed. From just 1 percent of U.S. imports in 1991, they doubled from $51.5 billion in 1996 to $102 billion in 2001, and have grown prodigiously since then. America in 2018 saw a record $540 billion in Chinese imports, up nearly 7 percent from 2017 and up almost 60 percent from 2008.

By the mid-1990s billions of dollars of Chinese-made exports began to flow to America and Europe. China used its newfound wealth not only to improve the lot of its people,
but also to build gleaming modern cities and infrastructure. Wealthy Chinese traveled to America, buying up billions in U.S. commercial real estate.

The dark side of Chinese economic growth

But this growth had a dark side, as the Chinese military made certain that much of the nation’s new wealth flowed into creating a modern army and world-class navy. China used that navy to threaten its neighbors and key trading routes. It has proclaimed an Exclusive Economic Zone that includes most of the South China Sea, to the dismay of neighbors Taiwan, Vietnam and the Philippines, all of which border the sea and use it extensively.

That dark side extended to the United States, which saw a tremendous loss of manufacturing jobs to China. American manufacturers closed hundreds of factories, putting millions out of work. Hit especially hard in America was the industrial Midwest, where entire towns, losing key manufacturing plants, became virtual ghost towns. U.S. manufacturing centers such as Detroit, Milwaukee, Chicago, Pittsburgh and Cleveland felt the impact.

By 2015 the situation had become critical. American manufacturing, reeling from the body blows of China’s trade abuses, had lost more than three million manufacturing jobs since 2000, and the situation was worsening. With China exporting $4 of goods to the United States for every dollar of U.S. exports to China, hundreds of billions of dollars were flowing out of America into China every year, with a much smaller amount flowing back into the United States.

Designed in part to protect domestic industries by taxing foreign imports, both nations have used tariffs over the years. However, China has long imposed much higher tariffs on American imports.

Troubling as this has been, China’s international trade practices became the main issue generating friction with the United States. To sustain rapid economic growth of as much as 9 percent per year, China engaged in unsavory trade practices such as demanding technology sharing of U.S. firms as a price of doing business, intellectual property theft, dumping of Chinese goods in U.S. markets, large subsidies to Chinese firms and other practices that tilted the playing field heavily in China’s favor.

Hundreds of billions in economic losses

“Dumping” here refers to selling goods into foreign markets below production cost to gain market share. Coveting lucrative U.S. and European markets, China has unfairly dumped in them such products as steel tubing, machine parts, cast iron parts and aluminum, devastating U.S. manufacturers. The World Trade Organization, which China joined in 2001, has long made demands that China correct these practices—demands Chinese policy makers have largely ignored.

Particularly galling has been the theft of intellectual property, a practice that robs U.S. creative and innovative firms of billions of dollars a year. The U.S. Customs Service estimates that 87 percent of counterfeit goods seized at U.S. ports originate in China. A March 2018 CNN report cited losses of $225 to $600 billion annually from intellectual property losses to American technology and other firms.

These practices have led to the loss of nearly 3.4 million U.S. jobs from 2001 to 2017, according to an October 2018 report by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI). Certain industries, such as electronics, textiles, apparel and some heavier durable goods, have been especially hard hit. And while job losses have been heaviest in California, Texas and the industrial Midwest, they have occurred in nearly every U.S. state and congressional district.

Workers fortunate enough to hold on to their jobs saw their wage bargaining power diminished due to cheap Chinese competition. The EPI report found wage and salary stagnation to be a major contributing factor to lower living standards and a widening inequality gap, especially among older workers. Economic inequality is something American academia and the media have long railed against, but which globalization—advocated by the same media and academia—tends to promote.

War of tariffs begins

In the U.S. presidential campaign of 2016, Donald Trump lashed out at these abuses and promised to address the problem if elected. It brought him hundreds of thousands of votes in industrial states like Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, states particularly hard hit by the loss of manufacturing jobs.

The Trump administration followed through at the beginning of 2018 by slapping tariffs on Chinese-made washing machines and solar panels, products China has been accused of dumping. Tariffs on steel and aluminum followed in March. China responded with its own tariffs on U.S. goods, and since then the Trump administration and China’s leadership have imposed further tariffs tit for tat for more than a year. In the latest round as of this writing, new U.S. tariffs of up to 15 percent were imposed Sept. 1 on an additional $325 billion in Chinese imports.

Trump and his U.S. trade negotiators are counting on what they see as a simple reality—that the Chinese, benefiting four times as much as the United States in their exchange of goods, would feel the pressure of steep tariffs earlier and harder.

Washington wants a deal that would see China reduce industrial subsidies, cut production of commodities such as steel and aluminum where overproduction is depressing global prices, and stop pressuring U.S. firms to hand over proprietary technology as a cost of doing business in China. The administration would also like to see stepped-up purchases of U.S. goods and services, and a strengthening of China’s currency, the yuan, which China had devalued to give it an edge in international trade.

It seemed China was signaling a wish to de-escalate the trade stalemate this past summer by agreeing to restore some of its imports of American farm commodities and other U.S. goods. But when Chinese president Xi Jinping reneged on the agreement, President Trump announced the new round of tariffs on Chinese goods, affecting virtually all remaining Chinese imports not previously subject to tariffs. In response, Chinese central banking authorities took steps to weaken the yuan in an effort to stanch some of the slowdown in exports.

Now nearly two years since it began, the trade war has taken its toll. Since mid-2018 the Chinese economy has slowly contracted, with growth at its slowest pace since 1992. Hundreds
of companies that set up shop in China to take advantage of low Chinese labor costs have left or are threatening to leave. Trying to gear up his nation for a long-term trade struggle, Xi Jinping called this past spring for a new “long march” reminiscent of Mao’s 1935 call for his people’s resistance to the invading Japanese. Chinese leaders have begun to worry.

The White House has signaled that it too is prepared for a long-term battle. “I’m like them; I have a long horizon,” President Trump told Reuters news agency, adding he had “no time frame” for ending the trade dispute. Though often criticized for what many consider to be the president’s back-and-forth approach to the trade war, others defend his stance as a strat-

ey aimed at keeping China off balance, never knowing what the next U.S. move will be.

The Chinese government has ample reason to want the dispute settled quickly. China’s leaders know a protracted trade conflict would damage the country economically and complicate their plans to transform it from a low-wage manufacturing economy into a global leader in high technology. It’s been rumored that Xi has instructed his deputies to stabilize the relationship with the United States as soon as possible.

What lies ahead?

This battle of titans could turn worse. It goes without saying that the U.S. business community is not thrilled at the prospect of even more barriers to trade with China, a nation that supplies an astonishing array of raw materials and finished goods. And while U.S. importers largely absorbed the initial rounds of tariffs, they have signaled that most of the additional 10 to 15 percent tariffs will be passed on to U.S. consumers in the form of higher prices for clothing, electronics, toys and hundreds of other consumer products.

U.S. retailers, already under pressure from the growth of Internet shopping, will feel more pressure as business slows. Some will not survive, and most will be forced to cut back on staff and inventory. Either way, the result could be substantial job losses going into early 2020.

In China the situation will likely be worse. The latest round of tariffs on nearly $325 billion in Chinese imports, on top of tariffs already imposed on about $250 billion of Chinese goods, will cost millions of jobs, a situation that will only get worse if hundreds more factories decide to close their China operations and move to other nations such as Vietnam or the Philippines.

Could this result in long-term rearrangement of global supply chains that have taken decades to create? Many products, such as cell phones, digital cameras and laptops, are assembled in China with parts sourced around the world. Economists realize that a shift could disrupt supply chains spread across much of Asia and the world. The production of Apple’s iPhone, for example, involves nearly 200 major suppliers that deliver parts to China for final assembly.

To put this in perspective, the price to U.S. consumers of Apple’s iPhone XS could rise by $160 if tariffs of 25 percent go into effect. The U.S. would share the pain from slower iPhone sales as not only retailers but downstream support businesses are affected.

Consumers will of course feel the pain of higher prices on these items. While the U.S. Trade Representative’s office has excluded many products for which China is the main source, the new tariffs will apply more than 40 percent to consumer products, up from 25 percent from earlier tariffs that mainly target industrial goods. And since consumer spending accounts for nearly 70 percent of the U.S. economy, it is easy to see how higher prices could lead to a gradual slowing of U.S. economic activity.

Around the world it is hoped that both nations will back away as they approach the economic precipice. The United States hopes that China will eliminate or ease up on its restrictive and unfair trade policies. China hopes that U.S. consumers and manufacturers will feel the pain of higher prices enough to pressure Washington to ease off or eliminate the ever-mounting tariffs. In Beijing, Chinese leaders watch closely as the 2020 U.S. elections approach, hoping that Donald Trump will not be reelected and that a new administration will back off the hard-line trade stance and return to the China-friendly agreements of previous years.

Yet even if a deal is reached, will Chinese economic leaders abide by its terms? China has often failed to keep its past trade agreements and has been evasive about commitments to curb intellectual property theft. Thus the United States would need to continue the threat of economic sanctions.

In any event, any deal reached would likely not deter China from its long-range goal of global economic supremacy. Chinese leaders will not accept what they consider economic humiliation, and Xi Jinping is not likely to bend over backwards to accept what he considers a harsh deal.

The end of 2019 approaches with the U.S. and China, like two huge sumo wrestlers, circling each other in the struggle for global economic supremacy. Perhaps only the ongoing potential for catastrophic events like nuclear warfare poses a greater threat to the well-being of millions. If Chinese and U.S. trade negotiators fail to arrive at an agreement soon, it is all but certain that both nations will feel widespread economic pain—pain that will spread to the rest of the global economy and lead to worsening conditions around the world.

Any deal would likely not deter China from its long-range goal of economic supremacy. Chinese leaders will not accept what they consider humiliation.
Iran behind oil facility attacks in Saudi Arabia

Coordinated attacks on Sept. 14 raised new fears about the stability of Middle Eastern oil production, posing an immediate threat due to the global economy's dependence on a reliable and inexpensive oil supply.

Iranian-supported Houthi rebels in Yemen, who have been at war with Saudi Arabia since 2015, claimed responsibility, but it's strongly suspected that Iran itself is the true actor behind the scenes. The Sept. 14 attacks mark the most successful in a string of incidents dating back to May 2019 against Saudi oil interests. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo implicated Iran on the day of the attacks with the following unequivocal statement via Twitter:

"Teheran is behind nearly 100 attacks on Saudi Arabia while Rouhani and Zarif [Iran's president and foreign minister] pretend to engage in diplomacy . . . Iran has now launched an unprecedented attack on the world’s energy supply. There is no evidence the attacks came from Yemen."

According to geopolitical analyst George Friedman, the attack was a crucial political play by Iran: "Not only did it demonstrate that the Saudi oil industry was vulnerable to Iranian attack but the attack significantly reduced Saudi oil production, inflicting real pain. It is not clear how long it might take to bring production back online . . . . If it takes time, the financial impact will hurt" ("The Geopolitics of Iran’s Refinery Attack,” Geopolitical Futures, Sept. 16, 2019).

Friedman also cites America’s reduced dependence on foreign oil as a new reality Iran is seeking to exploit. The thinking goes that if America is able to largely supply its own oil needs, then it has less incentive to protect the rest of the world’s oil supply as in decades past. This could contribute to the growing political alienation of the United States from other Western nations. By underscoring this point, Iran may be seeking to create a political wedge between America and other nations to diminish America’s global influence, which has kept Iran in check, particularly in delaying its development of nuclear weapons and its avowed intention to destroy Israel.

U.S. President Donald Trump authorized America’s use of its emergency oil reserves the day after the attacks. That same day, however, he threatened via Twitter that the United States is “locked and loaded” to respond to the assault with force. It remains to be seen how far Iran will test those words and how President Trump will respond.

Hostility between Iran and Saudi Arabia is borne out of the divide in the Muslim world between the Shia and Sunni branches of Islam. There has long been a struggle for dominance between Shiite Iran or Persia and the Sunni Arab nations.

End-time prophecy from the book of Daniel describes a worldwide political struggle in the end times between the “king of the North” and the “king of the South.” Note that Daniel 11:40 says, “At the time of the end, the king of the South shall attack him; and the king of the North shall come against him like a whirlwind . . . He shall enter their countries, overwhelm them, and pass through.” Bible prophecy attests to a coming war in the Middle East!

The northern power, originally in Syria to the north of Israel, shifted in ancient times to Rome and in the end-time will be a revival of the Roman Empire centered in Europe.

The southern power, originally centered in Egypt, seems to refer to an end-time Islamic power to the south of Israel. This kingdom of the South may well again be centered in Egypt, which is now Sunni Muslim and the most populous Arab nation, or perhaps Saudi Arabia, the homeland of Islam, or some other neighboring state. It could likewise spring up from a terror network like ISIS or al-Qaeda taking over the governments of Arab nations. Others think Iran will lead this southern power, as it could if it came to dominate the countries south of Israel (and Iran’s desire for nuclear weapons no doubt plays into its desire to dominate the Islamic world).

Yet Iran is located far to the east of Israel, and it might instead be part of another power bloc of Asian nations in that direction. Revelation 16:12 mentions a coalition of “kings from the east” marching into the Middle East as the war progresses. Of course, Iran does not have to be part of the southern power bloc to be part of its rise. The threat it poses to the Sunni Arab countries could push them into emerging as a regional power.

Only time will tell where current events will lead. To learn more about the history and future of this region, be sure to download or request our informative study guide The Middle East in Bible Prophecy. (Source: Geopolitical Futures.)

Study changes narrative on “gay gene”

New research has overturned the longstanding myth of the “gay gene” supposedly discovered in 1993. The gay gene has been lauded as proof that homosexuality is natural and must be accepted as such. However, a new analysis of nearly 500,000 genomes has debunked the idea of a single “gay gene” and found that only “up to 25% of sexual behavior can be explained by genetics” (Jonathan Lambert, “No ‘Gay Gene’: Massive Study Homes in on Genetic Basis of Human Sexuality,” Nature, Aug. 29, 2019).

The gay gene has become entrenched in mainstream culture, even inspiring pop anthems such as Lady Gaga’s 2011 hit song “Born This Way” to celebrate the false idea that homosexuality is predetermined from birth—with upbringing, interactions with others and personal choices playing no role in sexual orientation—so that the homosexual lifestyle must be accepted.

However, the increasing push for “tolerance” defies even that concept, as the conversation has now dramatically shifted from homosexuality towards all manner of newly invented orientations and “gender identities,” including “gender fluidity.”

The standard now advocated by the ever-widening LGBTQ community is that anyone should be able to choose any sexual orientation or gender identity they desire at any time, even changing from moment to moment, without judgment. Yet few acknowledge that this completely contradicts the narrative of being born gay that made accepting homosexual lifestyles a moral imperative to begin with. Shaky science, elevated by political and media voices pushing the false and disempowering idea that sexual lifestyle is beyond people’s control, has led to moral confusion for an entire generation.

Even the authors of the recent study are unwilling to let go of the premise, explaining that “nonheterosexual behavior is polygenic” (“Large-Scale GWAS Reveals Insights Into the Genetic Architecture of Same-Sex Sexual Behavior,” Science, Aug. 30, 2019). In other words, they replace the idea of a single “gay gene” with the unverifiable claim that there are many genes associated with homosexual behavior. They report that they’ve found small influences on sexuality from several different genes but that altogether the effect is not enough to predict people’s sexuality from their DNA.

It’s no wonder that people find themselves in such confusion and denial as society drifts farther away from God and the Bible. God is the author of male and female sexuality. And He declares through Scripture that sexual relations outside of monogamous marriage between a man and a woman is sin. This truth accords well with scientists now reporting on finding no proof of homosexuality being predetermined by one’s genes. (Source: Nature, Science.)
A new study of 2,500 U.K. parents showed that three in four families sit in complete silence during meal time (John Anderer, "Dinner and No Conversation: Third of Families Sit in Silence While Eating, Shock Survey Reveals," StudyFinds.org, Sept. 13, 2019).

The study showed that many parents reported simply not knowing what kinds of topics to talk about with each other or their children. It’s also not hard to imagine how technology use (smartphones or tablets) at the dinner table would account for such quiet time.

The study also found that many families are not even eating together more than a few times a week: “Just sitting down at the dinner table together as a family is a struggle for many as well. The survey . . . found that four in 10 parents don’t even eat dinner at the same time as their children on most days. Additionally, one in 10 never eat dinner at the same time as their families” (ibid., emphasis added).

One psychologist explained just some of the benefits of conversing with loved ones around the dinner table: “There is evidence showing that stimulating conversation at mealtimes builds children’s confidence and self-esteem and [these] in turn actually boost academic performance,” Dr. [Linda] Papadopoulos explains. “In fact, they are beneficial to the whole family’s mental well-being, a time for everyone to unload. So it’s a good idea to try and make them part of your weekly routine” (ibid.).

To learn more about the incredible benefits that flow from a healthy family life, send for or download a copy of our free study guide Marriage and Family: The Missing Dimension. (Source: StudyFinds.org.)

**Anti-Semitism at U.S. colleges grows to record levels**

A shocking and sad new report recently revealed that students who are openly supportive of Israel are being harassed at rates never seen before. The findings come from the AMCHA Initiative, a non-profit organization that monitors anti-Semitism—hostility or prejudice against Jews—across more than 400 college campuses in the United States (amcha meaning “your people” in Hebrew, connoting grassroots among the common people).

The group has tracked around 2,500 anti-Semitic incidents since 2015 and reported that levels have risen 70 percent in just the last year: “Anti-Semitic harassment on college campuses aimed at pro-Israel students jumped by 70 percent in the past year, the highest levels ever seen, according to a new study showing that the endorsement of anti-Israel causes by students and professors has created an unsafe environment for Jewish students . . .” (AMCHA found in its latest report that while examples of classical anti-Semitism decreased overall, there has been a major spike in students being targeted for hate speech and violence due to their open support for the state of Israel” (Adam Kredo, “Report: Anti-Semitic Harassment at U.S. College Campuses Hits Historic Levels,” The Washington Free Beacon, Sept. 17, 2019).

The Bible warns of rising tensions between people of different religious and ethnic backgrounds in the last days. It also refers to animosity against the Jewish people and other descendants of ancient Israel. To learn more about where such trends are heading, read our eye-opening study guide Are We Living in the Time of the End? and The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy. (Source: The Washington Free Beacon.)

**Ban of e-cigarettes on the horizon?**

E-cigarettes are relatively new in the tobacco world. Inhaling an aerosolized solution or vapor that includes nicotine, now known as “vaping,” has been on the rise while traditional cigarette smoking has been declining over the last decade.

“New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said Sunday [Sept. 15] he will push for a ban on some electronic cigarettes amid a health scare linked to vaping—a move that would follow a similar ban enacted by Michigan and a call from President Trump for a federal prohibition on certain vaping products” (Scott Neuman, “New York Set to Join Michigan in Banning Some Electronic Cigarettes,” National Public Radio [NPR.org], Sept. 16, 2019).

Contributing to the attraction of vaping is the assortment of flavors added to the tobacco. Flavors like bubblegum, strawberry watermelon and pink lemonade are popular among teens. Gov. Cuomo wants to start by banning such flavored tobacco.

Since e-cigarettes are relatively new, there are no long-term studies showing the impact of vaping on health. Yet as information comes out, the dangers of vaping seem even more evident. “The push at the state and federal levels to ban certain vaping products comes as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said . . . [in early September] that 380 confirmed or probable cases of lung disease associated with e-cigarettes had been identified in 36 states and the U.S. Virgin Islands, with six confirmed deaths” (ibid.).


Cigarette smoke was tied to cancer in the 1960s, but substantial regulations on the tobacco industry did not come until much later. No doubt we will see further regulation of e-cigarettes. In any case, we should all avoid substances and practices that are seriously damaging to health and lead to addictions. (Search at our website ucg.org for “Smoking and Health: The Often-Overlooked Key.”) (Sources: National Public Radio, NBC News.)
Is Christmas Really Christian?

Many assume Jesus was born on Christmas or that, even if He wasn’t, it’s a good occasion to celebrate, since it’s still worshipping Him. But did early Christians observe Christmas? And what should we do today?

by Jerold Aust

Don’t bother me with the facts—my mind’s made up!” This hypothetical retort exemplifies someone challenged over an entrenched false belief. And sometimes many people stubbornly cling to a particular fiction over fact as a result of groupthink (see “The Grip of Groupthink” on page 27).

How many Christians who observe this holiday are willing to research whether it’s rooted in Scripture? What if one’s Christian beliefs differ from biblical teachings? Do we ignore the Bible and go along with religious traditions that are more comfortable? Is concurrence-seeking more important to us than living by God’s eternal truths?

If you desire to know where Christmas came from, read on. Here you will find the answer to the question, Is Christmas really Christian? And if it isn’t, will you change and follow God’s truths?

Jesus’ birthday not a focus early on

An article at the popular Christian website Crosswalk.com defends Dec. 25 as an early established date for Jesus’ birthday, yet contains some significant admissions:

“...The tradition for December 25th is actually quite ancient. Hippolytus, in the second century A.D., argued that this was Christ’s birthday [though this Roman church father wrote several generations after Jesus and the apostles]. Meanwhile, in the Eastern Church, January 6th was the date followed.

“But in the fourth century, John Chrysostom [Catholic archbishop of Constantinople] argued that December 25th was the correct date and from that day till now, the Church in the East, as well as the West, has observed the 25th of December as the official date of Christ’s birth [though some still opt for Jan. 6].

“Though the gospels of Matthew and Luke both give an account of Christ’s birth, neither one provides a date for this great event. Though it may sound strange to our modern minds, it is likely that early Christians did not place any particular value on birthdays. This makes it hard to conclude when Jesus was really born.

“It was not until the third century that various pockets of Christians began to show interest in the date of Christ’s birth, and it would take another century for the Church to begin celebrating it with some uniformity” (Angie Mosteller, “When Was Jesus Born and Why Do We Celebrate on December 25th?”, Dec. 6, 2011, emphasis added throughout).

Notice, Christmas was assigned the date of Dec. 25 not by God or His Word, but by the clergy of the church well after apostolic times. The article goes on to accept that the establishment of the “Birth of the Unconquered Sun” on Dec. 25 by the Roman Emperor Aurelian in 274 may have had a secondary influence on the church accepting this date as the birth of Jesus, but it contends that Aurelian may have co-opted a date already significant to Christians. Yet the timing of this sun-worship festival close to the winter solstice had a much more ancient origin, as we will see.

Christmas observance a late departure

The Catholic Church did not fix the date of Christmas until the fourth century. The same article notes that “the first clear record of Christ’s birth on December 25 was not until 336 A.D.”

According to The Catholic Encyclopedia: “The liturgical [public ceremonial worship] year in the Roman rite, as known today, came into existence only gradually once Easter and Christmas feasts had been established . . . The commemoration of the birthday of the Lord on December 25 spread from Rome throughout the Western Church from the 4th century [A.D. 300s], and Epiphany [on Jan. 6] remained as the commemoration of the Magi incident recounted in M[atthew] 2.1-12” (“Early Christian Feasts,” 1967, Vol. 5, p. 868).

The same encyclopedia elsewhere states: “The celebration of Christ’s birth on December 25. The name is derived from the Old English Cristes Maesse or Cristes-messe, meaning the Mass of Christ [ironic since the Mass is a Catholic rite marking the death of Christ rather than His birth].

“...Inexplicable though it seems, the date of Christ’s birth is not known. The Gospels indicate neither the day nor the month; and although Luke (2.1-3) sets the Nativity in a historical perspective, the year cannot be determined with exactitude” (“Christmas and Its Cycle,” Vol. 3, p. 656).

We also see in The Catholic Encyclopedia the incredible admission that Jesus, the apostles and the early New Testament Church persisted in the observance of God’s seventh-day Sabbath (Friday sunset to Saturday sunset) and the annual festivals mandated in God’s law:

Here the notion is advanced that although the early Church initially continued to celebrate the same weekly Sabbath and annual festivals that the Jewish people did, which of itself is a remarkable admission, the church finally woke up and dissociated itself from these “Jewish feasts” in embracing a more “gentile” Christianity. Sunday observance and other unbiblical holidays were substituted for the allegedly archaic Old Testament Sabbath and annual feasts.

Yet Christ condemned the negation of God’s law, declaring of those who spin His truth, “In vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men” (Mark 7:7). Clearly, a wayward groupthink about rejecting biblical practice and adopting the Christmas tradition is at work here!

No real connection to Jesus’ birth

Today, Christmas is promoted as a commemoration of the birth of Jesus Christ, and of course the story of His birth is indeed biblical. But how does that align with the observance of Christmas?

What was the purpose of Jesus’ birth? Most Christians would quickly answer that He was born to be our Savior. That’s true, but there’s more. He was also born to become our Sovereign Ruler (Daniel 2:44), Leader (Colossians 1:18) and Teacher (John 3:2).

If He is our Teacher, then where are His instructions to observe Christmas? Jesus asked those professing to follow Him, “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ [signifying supreme Master] and not do the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46).

Some will argue that the accounts of Christ’s birth in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke and the announcements of it made there prove the validity of observing Christmas today. But there is no hint anywhere of such observance for us (while the days we are told to observe have been summarily rejected).

Certainly God announced Jesus’ birth, and He was honored by a delegation of wise men from the East who brought gifts for the future King of Kings (Matthew 2:1-12). Yet their arrival with these gifts was evidently a considerable time after His birth, not on “the first Christmas,” as many try to paint it.

There were no Christmas trees, wreaths, Yule logs, reindeer, elves, stockings by the fireplace or exchanging of gifts with one another. There was no attachment to Dec. 25. Jesus was not even born in the winter.

Since the accounts of Jesus’ birth in Matthew and Luke have nothing really to do with the observance of the Christmas holiday as we know it, where did this religious tradition originate?

Perpetuating a pagan winter festival

The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church states in its entry on “Christmas”: “The popular observance of the feast has always been marked by the joy and merry-making formerly characteristic of the Roman Saturnalia and the other pagan festivals it replaced” (1958, p. 277). This celebration was filled with wantonness, reveling and drunkenness.

The Catholic Encyclopedia likewise shows that the Christmas season came from the ancient winter festival that celebrated the sun god in the lengthening days following the winter solstice. The early Catholic church father Origen, writing in the early A.D. 200s, never mentioned Christmas, and in fact said that Christians did not even observe Christ’s birth at...
all, as though He were a pagan king (compare “Christmas and Its Cycle,” 1967, Vol. 3, 1967, and “Christmas,” 1913, Vol. 3).

Tertullian, another outspoken Catholic theologian at the time, rebuked compromising Christians who joined in the pagan winter festival from which Christmas derives: “By us . . . who are strangers to Sabbaths, and new moons, and festivals [as found in Leviticus 23, since they had ceased to observe these], the Saturnalia [that is, the winter festival that with others became the Christmas season], the feasts of January, the Brumalia, and Matronalia are now frequented; gifts are carried to and fro, new year’s day presents are made with din, and banquets are celebrated with uproar; oh, how much more faithful are the hearthen to their religion, who take special care to adopt no solemnity from the Christians” (Tertullian in De Idolatria, quoted by Alexander Hislop, The Two Babylons, p. 93).

Despite the warning, such celebration was eventually made part of “Christian” worship. The Christmas tree and other elements of the Christmas season were brought over with the ancient pagan festival, which was rooted in the idolatry of the early Babylonian king Nimrod, a rebel tyrant against God (see Genesis 10:8-11).

From clues in pagan traditions, it appears he was ultimately slain for his rebellion against God and debauchery. Yet his worship became diffused through many and varied pagan traditions, so that he is the one ultimately portrayed in the burning Yule log on Christmas Eve, the one who was cut down and died and, as the returning sun in the sky, then became the redivivus Nimrod— the slain god come to life again” (Hislop, p. 98).

Forms of the idolatrous winter festival spread throughout the Middle East. It also accompanied the peoples who migrated into Europe. Among the Romans it became the Saturnalia and Brumalia and New Year’s, as we’ve seen. In northern Europe it developed into the aforementioned Yule—and ultimately the Christmas we know today. The Wikipedia entry “Winter Solstice” tells us:

“The pagan Scandinavian and Germanic people of northern Europe celebrated a twelve-day ‘midwinter’ (winter solstice) holiday called Yule . . . Many modern Christmas traditions, such as the Christmas tree, the Christmas wreath, the Yule log, and others, are direct descendants of Yule customs. Scandinaivans still call Christmas ‘Jul’. In English, the word ‘Yule’ is often used in combination with the season ‘yuletide’, a usage first recorded in 900. It is believed that the celebration of this day was a worship of these peculiar days, interpreted as the reawakening of nature . . .

“Julblot [or Yule sacrifice] is the most solemn sacrifice feast. At the Yule blot, sacrifices were given to the gods to earn blessings on the forthcoming germinating crops. The Yule blot was eventually integrated into the Christian Christmas.”

In short, the pagan winter festival of the ancient world changed clothes, eventually adding the title of Christ and reappearing as Christmas. The celebration was embraced by an increasingly wayward Christianity as a way to entice and hold on to new converts who refused to give up their frivolities, drinking and debauchery during the pagan winter festival.

Scripture itself is clear that we are not to use pagan religious practices in the worship of the true God, as He considers that an abomination (Deuteronomy 12:29-32). Thus Christmas is not a festival of Christ or the true God at all. The only thing in Christmas that speaks of Christ is the misuse of His name.

God condemns such pagan festivals. They sadly blind people to His great plan as revealed in His true holy festivals, which serve as the symbolic map of humankind’s salvation. The well-meaning and heartfelt appeal by many to put Christ back into Christmas is futile. Christ was never in Christmas. Had He observed or told others to observe Christmas, He would have broken His own laws, which is sin (1 John 3:4-5), and we would have no Savior. We would then have no release from the wages of sin, which is death (Romans 6:23).

Will we wait for Christ to return before we honor Him? Must Christ be seen and touched for us to believe Him? Jesus addressed this: “Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (John 20:29). Do you believe God the Father and Jesus Christ? Not just believe in Them, but believe what They have said through Scripture?

Do They through the Bible tell you to observe Christmas—or not to observe it? Is Christmas really Christian? How can it be? God never instituted it, and He never taught that it be observed. Just the opposite, He tells us not to worship Him with pagan practices. However, God did give us His festivals and Holy Days to show His step-by-step plan for humanity’s salvation. With all this in mind, what will you choose to do?
How can we avoid negative thinking and focus on the positive?

by Janet Treadway

H ow can we change a doom-and-gloom mindset? Instead of letting the problems we see in life keep us down, we can strive to see the positive and look at difficult circumstances as challenges to endure or work through.

A favorite response of one of my relatives is, “But the problem is . . .” No matter what you mention or bring up, this person comes back with a negative comment. Even if I said, “The sky is beautiful,” the response would be, “But the problem is . . .”

We should replace such a mindset with a positive one of knowing that you are a child of God and that He can help you through anything!

We live in such a negative world. The news is so negative. All of this can drag us down and put us in a bad attitude. We should refocus our thoughts away from ourselves and toward others by giving them kind words of encouragement.

Here are some tips that will help:

1. **Be thankful.** “Gratitude . . . can be an incredibly powerful and invigorating experience,” says Harvard psychiatrist Jeff Huffman of UC Berkeley’s Greater Good Science Center. “Furthermore, there is growing evidence that being grateful may not only bring good feelings. It could lead to better health” (quoted by Summer Allen, “Is Gratitude Good for Your Health?” March 5, 2018).

When you get up in the morning, start thinking of things you are thankful for—like a nice warm bed to sleep in that you just got out of. Personally, I dislike dark, gloomy days. However, I could approach it another way by thanking God that the sun will come out tomorrow. You just feel better when you have an attitude of gratitude.

Start your day with gratitude to God. When you get up in the morning, think of at least three things you are grateful for. It will make a difference in your approach to life. Being grateful relieves stress, reduces depression, changes your thinking and opens the doors to possibilities. Conclude your day in the same way for the same reasons!

2. **Take on a can-do approach.** Instead of seeing a problem in everything that can’t be dealt with, turn your perspective around to look at the positives. Consider the upside of everything. “Having a PMA [positive mental attitude] is asking how something can be done rather than saying it can’t be done,” observed success expert Bo Bennett (Year to Success, 2011, emphasis added). Avoid a mind-set of “The problem is . . .”

3. **Question your thoughts.** Ask yourself: “Are my thoughts godly, or are they based on Satan’s ways and influence? Are my thoughts of courage to endure and work through the problems, knowing there is light at the end of the tunnel, or are they of defeat?”

And what are we actually dealing with? Are we making mountains out of molehills? Take control of your thoughts! Replace them with a positive, encouraging approach to life, knowing that everything can be worked out with God’s help!

4. **Bring positivity into someone else’s life.** Many people are going through severe trials right now. We should refocus our thoughts away from ourselves and toward others by giving them kind words of encouragement.

Doing this will change your whole thought process. Be kind and helpful to others! Be an encourager, as the apostle Barnabas appears to have been. His name in Hebrew means “son of encouragement” or “son of comfort.” The world needs more people like that, and we all can help fill that job!

5. **Take your problems to God.** God cares so deeply for us. “‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart’” (Jeremiah 29:11-13, New International Version).

Note that God will listen to you and will bring you out of captivity, even captivity to negative thinking. Why? Because He has wonderful plans for you to bring good in your life! This far exceeds anything we could be going through at the present (compare Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:17-18).

Keep your mind focused on God all day long with gratitude, while helping others. Look for positive solutions. Replace negative thinking with positive thinking! Take control of your mind by cleansing it immediately of negative thinking, replacing them with godly thoughts and focus on God’s promises!

The apostle Paul told us how we should think: “Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things . . . And the God of peace will be with you” (Philippians 4:8-9, NIV).

When you look at your problems, strive to keep this perspective and look for the way forward, always staying close to God!
“A World Going Insane”

You’re so right [referring to the editorial in the September-October issue]! We live in a world where evil has become good, and all that is good has become evil. It makes me sick that the world has sunk to this level. May God speed the return of Jesus and the establishment of His Kingdom.

From the Internet

Thanks! You are the first person to really look at the world’s problem clearly! More laws will not solve the problem of sin! America needs a call to Almighty God, and there is no voice trumpeting this to our country. Perhaps you and several other godly Christian leaders could get together and call America to a period of prayer and fasting for God’s mercy on our nation!

Subscriber in Georgia

“Surprising Discoveries About Our Universe’s Origins”

Incredible! May God bless it in reaching those who hunger for truth. Thanks to all of you who make articles like this possible, and most of all thanks and praise to the Creator of all.

From the Internet

Thankful for Beyond Today magazine and Bible study aids

Thank you very much for sending your wonderful magazine without ceasing. I appreciate your commitment, and I have benefited a lot from the magazines and booklets you have sent me. The articles open my eyes to what is going on in the world. It’s helped me to see this lost world through the lens of Scripture. I don’t ever want to miss a single issue.

Subscriber in Canada

I just want to thank you for all that you do. I had ordered some materials from your ministry to help me with my relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and to understand Bible prophecy. Thank you so much also for Beyond Today magazine. Enclosed is a donation to your ministry. Thank you again and God bless you and your ministry.

Subscriber in Ethiopia

Thank you so much for your booklet The United States and Britain in Bible Prophecy. I can see the events it describes happening. May I also request three of your other booklets? I love all of this information, and I can’t get enough. Thank you in advance.

Reader in Victoria, Australia

I thank you very much for the materials you have been sending me. I read all of them and share the Word of God in our congregation every Sunday. It’s very helpful for all of us here.

From the Internet

We have taught Sunday school, Bible school, youth groups and filled several other jobs in our church for 47 years. We sincerely believe in God, Jesus and the Bible. Through our study we dropped both Christmas and Easter celebrations several years ago. Several pastors have confronted us about this, and we have simply asked them to show us where it was taught in the Bible. We told them that our teaching is “Bible-based” to our best understanding. Any material you can send us would be greatly appreciated and utilized.

From the Internet

I cannot stop thanking you for sending me Beyond Today magazine. Every issue gives me a lot to learn from and help me grow. Please continue sending me the magazine—you have transformed my life. Your study guides and magazine have enabled me to grow spiritually. You are a blessing to me. I now observe God’s Sabbath day and in fact I am now a member of United Church of God.

Subscriber in Thailand

Hello and a sincere thank you for your enterprising and wise magazine, which I stumbled on at the local pub.

Reader in Brisbane, Australia

Looking to worship together with others of like mind

My husband and I have been studying the teachings of Jesus and the message He originally taught His disciples. We’ve been doing this by reading publications based on the Holy Bible. We have also been attempting to find the correct type of church to attend in order to further our knowledge and have fellowship with other believers. If you can advise of a church close to our residence, I would appreciate it.

From the Internet

Separation from pagan traditions like Christmas, and our desire to observe God’s Holy Days, has been very challenging. The extra support of a local congregation of believers like us would be an added bonus to be able to put our knowledge into action. We strive to be “doers of the Word and not hearers only.”

From the Internet

We have many congregations around the world. You can find a list of them and search for the nearest one to you at ucg.org/congregations. We hope to be able to meet you soon!

Published letters may be edited for clarity and space. Address your letters to Beyond Today, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A., or email BTinfo@ucg.org (please be sure to include your full name, city, state or province, and country).
What Is Your Purpose?

Our jobs, our phones, entertainment, sports and even our families keep us busy. But when those moments come that you’re alone with your thoughts, have you wondered what it’s all for?

“What is my purpose?”

The answer is both profound and quite simple. Request our free Bible study aid Why Were You Born? to see the answer, straight from the pages of your Bible!

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