

Reformed

A MAGAZINE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY

MAY 2013  
Volume 32 Issue No. 7

# PERSPECTIVE

NEW LOOK SEE MORE INSIDE »

WHO  
MADE  
GOD?

p. 31

TWO-BOOK  
FALLACY

p. 22

NEVER READ  
A BIBLE VERSE

p. 13

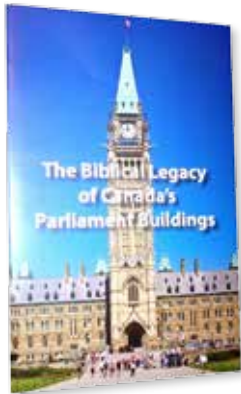
READ THE BIBLE  
LIKE A KING

p. 18

NEWS WORTH NOTING  
NOTA  
BENE  
p. 10

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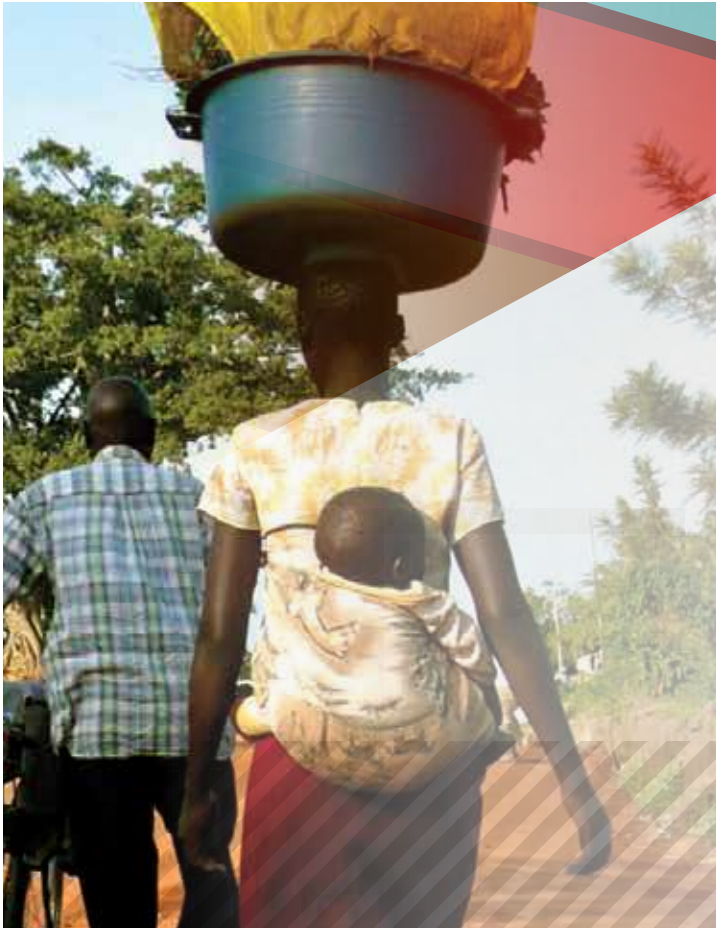
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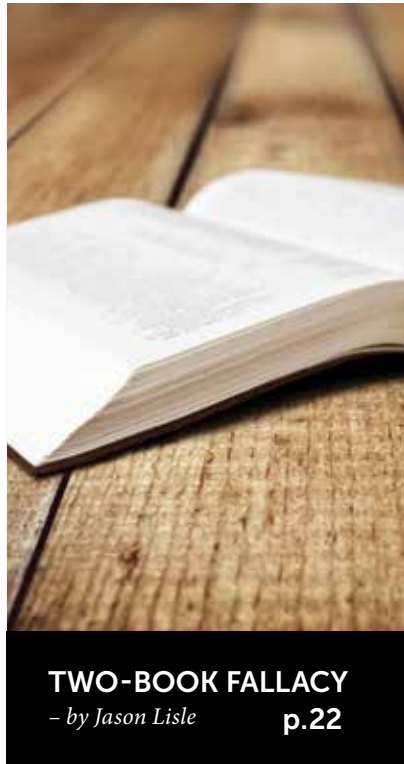


# READ THE BIBLE LIKE A KING

— Nathan Ketchen  
p.18



**NEVER READ A BIBLE VERSE**  
— by Gregory Koukl p.13



**TWO-BOOK FALLACY**  
— by Jason Lisle p.22



**THE COST OF AN OLD EARTH**  
— John Byl p.28

**FROM THE EDITOR** p.7  
— Jon Dykstra

**NOTA BENE** p.10

**IN GLORY ABIDE** p.24  
— Christine Farenhorst

**WHO MADE GOD?**  
— Rob Slane p.31

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FROM THE EDITOR

# Scripture vs. the “book” of Nature

Ever since I first read *The Ultimate Proof of Creation*, I’ve kept an eye out for anything else by creationist Dr. Jason Lisle – I appreciate his insights and perspective.

I also try to read most of what Dr. Frederika Oosterhoff writes because she is an influential figure in our church circles, now using her influence to get people questioning a literal understanding of Genesis 1 and 2. I keep track of her articles to see if *Reformed Perspective* can have a role in correcting her, and in answering the questions she raises.

We get to do that this issue.

The opportunity presented itself when, earlier this year, both Dr. Oosterhoff and Dr. Lisle wrote articles about the “two-books metaphor” which compares the two ways that God reveals himself to us – through his Creation (Nature), and through Scripture – to two books that we can open up and read. Christians debating Creation vs. Evolution use this metaphor to make the point that, since God is the author of both books, they must not contradict one another. Any apparent contradiction is the result of us either misunderstanding what God is telling us through the “book” of Nature or misunderstanding what He is teaching in his second book, Scripture.

But which book should correct the other? Scientists tell us that Nature reveals the world started billions of years ago, and Mankind evolved from lower forms. The Bible tells a very different story.

Creationists resolve this conflict by using Scripture to correct our scientists – they must have misunderstood what the “book” of Nature was telling us.

But theistic evolutionists believe that the scientists got it right; Nature does declare an ancient Earth so it must be the Bible that we misunderstand.

## Science over Scripture?

Dr. Lisle and Dr. Oosterhoff both agree that this two-book metaphor is problematic. But, as you might suspect, they have entirely different reasons.

Dr. Oosterhoff argues there is no need to resolve “what Scripture and [the book of Nature] tell us about the physical world” because the Bible was never meant to teach us anything about the physical world.

Rather than informing us about the structure, properties, and operations of nature, Scripture reveals (like nature) the existence, wisdom, and power of God.

In other words, the Bible tells us only about God and nothing about the physical world, so when it comes to “structures, properties, and operations of nature” we should believe the scientists over the Scriptures.

What Dr. Oosterhoff is offering here is nothing more than an updated version of “the Bible is not a scientific textbook” argument. True, the Bible doesn’t contain the periodic table, or diagrams on the inner workings of the cell. But it doesn’t need to teach science for it to still be scientifically accurate. As Carl Wieland notes,

a novel about apple orchards could refer to apples falling down (rather than up) in accordance with the known facts about gravity. It could be completely accurate scientifically without its purpose being to teach science.

While the Bible doesn’t contain *all* there is to know, all it contains is true. There is no reason to dismiss the reliability of the eyewitness account given by God in Genesis 1 and 2



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simply because teaching science isn’t His primary purpose here.

## Scripture over science

So why does Dr. Lisle have a problem with the two-books metaphor? Because “Nature is not a book... It is not something that a person can literally read.” The Bible, however, has been given to us to be read and understood. He writes:

The meaning of a book is the intention of the author. But that’s not the case with nature. What does a rock *mean*? What does a fossil *mean*? They don’t literally mean anything because they are not statements made by an author who is intending to convey an idea.

So when it comes to which we should give priority, Scripture offers clarity that the “book” of Nature simply does not.

You can read Dr. Lisle’s full article on pages 22-23.

### DEAR EDITOR,

This is a letter in response to the review by Rev. Wes Bredenhof of Tim Keller's book *The Reason for God* (March 2013). The review asks whether Keller's approach is biblical, since he doesn't begin by assuming that the Bible is true (and that human reason is flawed, as per the fall). For example, Rev. Bredenhof writes, "By starting with reason, rather than Scripture, Keller really betrays the cause he seeks to defend and promote."

Though I believe that the Bible is true, and that it is impossible to argue from a completely objective position, I can't help thinking that reason is key to beginning a discussion with someone who wants to know why we believe what we believe.

Telling skeptics that we believe the Bible is true because the Bible is true doesn't give them the information they are actually asking for, and in some cases I think it damages our credibility more than it contributes to a defense of the faith. It's circular reasoning, and just because everyone's beliefs, atheists' included, are rooted in presuppositions (and therefore circular), doesn't mean it makes sense.

If we absolutely must proceed along these lines of argument, what can we say to the followers of other books, such as the Koran? What happens when someone challenges the authority of Scripture? Or, if we are confronted by an atheist, and we counter-confront to show him that his worldview is actually based on a set of unprovable assumptions, what will we

say when he retorts that ours are equally unprovable? We still haven't given a good reason why we believe, so there is no reason for him to change his mind about anything. Back to square one, as they say.

Only God can grant faith, but as the editor points out in the opening pages of the same issue of *Reformed Perspective*, we are commanded in 1 Peter 3 to be ready to make a defense. I think that must include some regard for evidential and classical apologetics, because a command to make a defense of our belief implies that the belief is defensible - in other words, we have a reason for believing that the Bible is true.

James Linde  
Aldergrove, BC

### EDITOR'S RESPONSE:

Great question. Starting with Scripture means that, rather than spending time justifying our belief in the Bible, we spend our time contrasting our beliefs with theirs. How might that look with an atheist? As you said, both his and our beliefs are based on circular reasoning - we believe in the Bible because we believe in the Bible, and he believes in atheism because, well, because he has faith. Though he may be reluctant to admit it, his atheism is an entirely faith-based position.

So our job is to compare and contrast our worldviews to show that his starting assumptions are on shifting sand, and ours are built on the solid foundation of God's Word.

So let's do some contrasting. Why do we, atheist and Christian alike, believe there is such a thing as reason? When we use reason to discuss anything at all, we are operating on shared assumptions that include:

1. The world is not chaotic - i.e., 2+2 will continue to equal 4, and not suddenly one day equal 7
2. Our senses are reliable - when I hear you say a string of words, I am able to respond to it, because I believe that my

sense of hearing is providing me with real input from the world outside of me

3. We are rational beings, able to use logic to evaluate ideas

So some assumptions undergird both the Christian and atheist belief in reason. But the Christian can explain his assumptions in light of Scripture. We learn from the Bible that we worship an unchanging God (Hebrews 13:8) who reveals himself as a God of order (1 Cor. 14:40) and Who made us in His image (Gen. 1:27). No wonder, then, that there is an orderly world rather than chaos, and that we are able to use and count on our senses and our reasoning faculties to investigate it and grow in understanding of it (though we also know that the Fall into Sin has impacted even our ability to reason).

But how does the atheist explain these assumptions? He might turn to evolution, but how does chance bring about order? And why does the atheist, who thinks himself nothing but the product of random happenings, believe that what he perceives is what really is? How can he trust senses that had no intelligence behind their design to provide him with reliable information? How can he trust his reasoning faculties that had no rhyme or reason behind their construction to allow him to reliably



reason? So he has no reason to believe in reasons; based on his worldview it would be irrational to believe in reason!

So his worldview isn't just circular, it's self-contradictory. That stands in stark contrast to how we can build our understanding off of the foundation of the Bible, how through it we can make sense of the world around us. (For a second example of how we can start with Scripture and contrast and compare our worldviews, see the comic above.)



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# NOTA BENE

News worth noting

## SUPPORTING SPANKING

BY ANNA NIENHUIS

**I**n April ARPA Canada released a policy report called *Respectfully Submitted - Corporal Discipline* to support parents' right to use corporal punishment.

While roughly half of Canadians claim to use spanking to discipline their children, "this number is much lower than one generation ago. Spanking is quickly becoming socially unacceptable in Canada, and the pressure to ban it is mounting." While each parent chooses their own means of discipline to suit their child's personality and needs (and such discipline must never be allowed to stray into abuse), the real issue at stake is whether the government should be permitted to control parents in this way. This invasion of the government into individual homes is a dangerous road. As the ARPA report so aptly states, "Even a secular and pluralist Canada should tremble at the prospect of such an Orwellian authority." To read the report visit: [ARPAspanking.notlong.com](http://ARPAspanking.notlong.com).

SOURCE: "New Policy Report: Spanking" [arpacanada.com](http://arpacanada.com), April 4, 2013.

## CHINA TO REAP WHAT IT SOWED SOONER THAN EXPECTED

BY ANNA NIENHUIS

**C**hina's one-child-per-couple policy is catching up with them sooner than expected, the prequel to a "precipitous decline," according to the International Monetary Fund. Earlier this year China admitted that the country's working-age population has started to shrink.

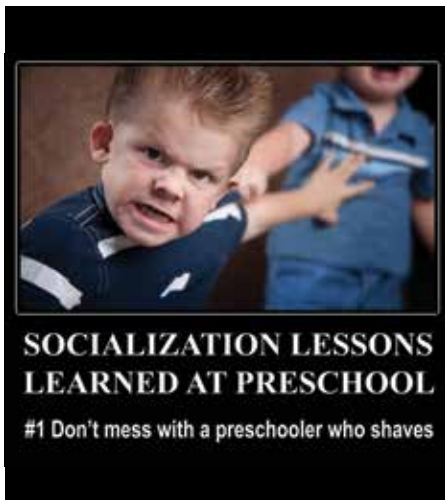
This will have swift economic consequences: as workers become scarce, wages will rise, cutting into profits for companies. According to *The Telegraph's* Ambrose Evans-Pritchard, this is a key reason why American companies such as Ford and General Electric are already closing plants in China and heading back to the United States.

Not only was China's "one-child" policy an oppressive government policy, it has now shown itself to be an uneconomical one as well.

SOURCE: Ambrose Evans-Pritchard's "IMF sees 140m jobs shortage in ageing China as 'Lewis Point' hits" [telegraph.co.uk](http://telegraph.co.uk), Feb. 3, 2013

## PEER OR PARENT? WHY EARLY SOCIALIZATION DOESN'T HELP

BY ANNA NIENHUIS & JON DYKSTRA



**T**o preschool or not to preschool? – that is the question for more and more parents. Governments in both the US and Canada have been expanding the funding for preschool, daycare and all-day kindergarten, and touting the benefits of early socialization for children.

But is earlier really better? While the Bible doesn't preclude making use of outside help, it makes clear that as parents we are our children's primary

educators (Eph. 6:4, Deut. 6:6-7, Prov. 13:1). So there is no need to rush them out the door. Canadian psychologist Dr. Gordon Neufeld, in an article published by the Institute of Marriage and Family Canada, explained that the research also doesn't support socialization as a reason for early schooling. He noted: "probably the greatest myth that has evolved is this idea that socializing with one's equals leads to socialization." In the same article his thoughts were echoed by Helen Ward, president of Kids First Parents Association. She stressed that if we want children to mature, then it is important they develop strong stable attachments with mature adults, rather than with other immature children. However, early learning environments encourage peer attachment over parent attachment.

While in many instances daycare cannot be avoided, children should never be put in early learning environments with a goal of socialization, as studies have lent no support to the value of this. We should not be concerned with our children "fitting in" and being like everyone else, but should instead encourage them to be who God wants, and teach them how to stand up and stand out.

SOURCE: Andrea Mrozek's "Nurturing children: Why 'early learning' doesn't help" [imfcanada.org](http://imfcanada.org), Aug. 30, 2012.

# OUR PM'S "TOP TEN PRO-ABORTION MOMENTS"



**P** rime Minister Harper has done it again. On March 21<sup>st</sup> a House of Commons subcommittee deemed Conservative MP Mark Warawa's Motion-208 non-voteable. The motion would have had the House of Commons condemn sex-selection abortion – aborting girls just because they're girls – but the subcommittee's decision means the motion won't even come up for debate (though there is a route of appeal that Mark Warawa can pursue).

Mr. Harper has told his caucus that he is simply upholding an oft-overlooked statement in the Conservative Party policy platform, which reads on page 19, point 62:

A Conservative Government will not support any legislation to regulate abortion.

This is just the latest of the many actions the Prime Minister has taken to oppose any sort of protection of advances for the rights of the unborn. In what follows we remember "Stephen Harper's Top Ten Anti-Life Acts and Statements":

- 10 In 2002, Stephen Harper used the abortion issue to attack pro-life candidates in the Canadian Alliance leadership race when he himself was seeking the leadership. He cited their pro-life credentials as a reason not to support them as party leader.
- 9 In 2004 as leader of the newly formed Conservative Party, Stephen Harper begrudgingly said he would allow a "free vote" on the abortion issue (something the federal Liberals do as well), but referred to abortion as "a woman's right to choose," clearly highlighting his pro-abortion views on the matter. During the English Election debate on June 15 of the same year, Harper declared that, "I will not have legislation limiting a woman's right to choose."
- 8 At the March 2005 Conservative policy convention, Stephen Harper noted in his speech that, "as Prime Minister, I will not bring forth legislation on the issue of abortion." According to LifeSiteNews.com: "This speech...is said to have produced a successful, although narrow, passage of the motion that officially shut down abortion debate in the party and which has been used as a club to silence pro-life candidates and members of caucus."
- 7 On December 11, 2005, Harper wrote a letter to the *Washington Times*. He writes toward the end of the letter that, "a new Conservative government will not initiate or support any effort to pass legislation restricting abortion in Canada."
- 6 On March 1, 2006, shortly after his election, Harper told *Maclean's* that, "In my entire career, I've made it clear that I have no intention of getting into the abortion issue. It has not been my issue in my entire career. And it won't be in the future."
- 5 In 2008, *LifeSiteNews.com* reported that, "Harper's Justice Minister, Rob Nicholson, effectively scuttled a private members bill that sought to protect unborn victims of violence, by pledging to introduce his own gutted version that would merely list pregnancy as an aggravating factor at sentencing. Nicholson alleged that protecting wanted babies would risk 'instilling fetal rights.'"
  - 4 On December 15, 2010, Harper voted against Roxanne's Law (Bill C-150), a bill that would ban Canadians from coercing women into an abortion.
  - 5 On April 4, 2011, Harper assured a reporter asking about the abortion issue that, "Our agenda is the same agenda with a majority government or a minority government."
  - 2 In April of 2012, Harper not only promised to vote against MP Stephen Woodworth's Motion 312 to examine when life begins, but also noted during Question Period that it was "unfortunate" that the motion had even been deemed voteable.
 

And the Prime Minister's worst anti-life moment ever is:

## 1. ...and now?

In response to a letter to the RCMP by three Conservative backbenchers requesting an investigation into the discovery that between 2000 and 2009, 491 babies had been born alive following abortion procedures and left to die, Harper stated in the House of Commons that: "All members of this House, whether they agree with it or not, understand that abortion is legal in Canada, and this government, myself included, have made it very clear that the government does not intend to change the law in this regard."

## MARGARET THATCHER (1925-2013)

BY JON DYKSTRA



**I**n early April Margaret Thatcher passed away at the age of 87. She earned her nickname, the "Iron Lady," for her staunch opposition to socialism. Internationally that meant she was a

ready ally to Ronald Reagan in the Cold War battle against the Soviet Union. Domestically it involved a program of deregulation, the privatization of state-owned companies, and a battle with the unions that left them with far less power.

When her 11 years as Prime Minister came to an end in 1990, one opposition Member of Parliament challenged her legacy, saying:

*Over her 11 years the gap between the richest ten per cent and the poorest ten per cent in this country has widened substantially. How can she say at the end of her chapter in British politics that she can justify many people...being relatively much poorer, much less well*

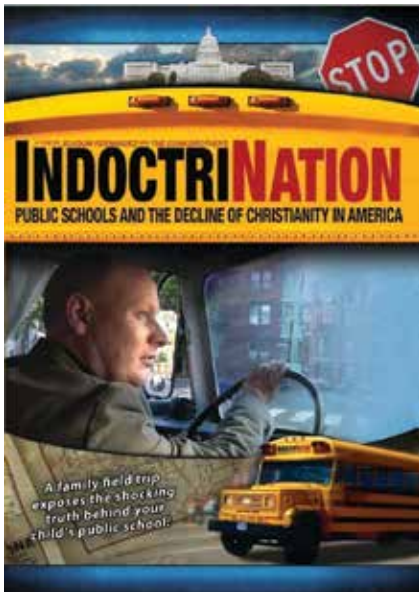
*housed, and much less well provided than it was in 1979?*

The PM's response is as relevant today as it was then. She explained it was important to understand what socialists mean, "once they start talking about the gap" between the rich and the poor. It wasn't about raising the poor out of poverty, since "all levels of income are better off than they were in 1979." No,

*What the honorable member is saying is that he would rather the poor were poorer provided the rich were less rich.... what a policy! He would rather have the poor poorer provided the rich were less rich... Yes, it came out, he didn't intend it to, but it did.*

## REASONS TO ABANDON PUBLIC EDUCATION

BY JON DYKSTRA



Indoctrination, by a Reformed filmmaker, also explains why the public education system must be abandoned.

**E**arlier this year a Vancouver Island mom was outraged when her Grade 8 son came home from school with a sexually-explicit illustrated flip book he had won as a prize in a sexual-health class. According to the *National Post* the booklet

*depicts the sexual act when the pages are flipped.... School officials say they took steps to ensure materials used in class are age appropriate but somehow unsuitable materials slipped through...*

The school district pointed the blame at the "one outside presenter" – AIDS Vancouver Island – that was involved in the class, but when asked whether this group would be invited back, school district spokeswoman Donna Reimer said that it's "too soon to say."


Around the same time this hit the news, columnist Daren Jonescu posted "One hundred reasons to abandon Public Education now" on AmericanThinker.com. Listed prominently at #7 was "Sex education." If the fact this booklet was awarded as a prize wasn't proof already, then the school system's response that it is "too soon to say" whether AIDS Vancouver Island should be invited back certainly shows why parents should abandon the public schools – they've shown they are not trustworthy caregivers for our children.

In our Reformed churches we already have our children safely out of the public schools, but love for our neighbor should motivate us to motivate our neighbors to get their kids out, too. What follows are 5 more reasons, from Jonescu's list, to abandon public

education. Let's pass them on!

8. Psychiatric branding and drugging of non-compliant children.
22. Anti-bullying programs. Government creates Lord of the Flies; proposes to correct it by creating Nineteen Eighty-Four.
37. Peer pressure: The moral intimidation of a child whose character is not yet firmly established, by an ever-present group with the power to condemn with ostracism.
60. Thomas Edison. Judged addle-minded by his teacher; withdrawn from school and educated by his mother; began a nomadic life of entrepreneurial endeavors and scientific experiments at twelve. Today, he would be on Ritalin at six, urged to make friends by his mother, and likely bored out of his skull and a failing student throughout his teens.
97. "I can undo the school's damage at home." If the government mandated that your child be force-fed rotting "state food" for each meal, would you say, "No problem - I can feed him healthy food on weekends"? Then how do you justify allowing the state to force-feed its spiritual rot to your child's mind?

SOURCE: [www.americanthinker.com/2013/02/one\\_hundred\\_reasons\\_to\\_abandon\\_public\\_education\\_now.html#ixzz2MKdZ8ZMD](http://www.americanthinker.com/2013/02/one_hundred_reasons_to_abandon_public_education_now.html#ixzz2MKdZ8ZMD)



*I can do all things  
through Him  
who strengthens me*

*Philippians 4:13* NASB

# NEVER READ A BIBLE VERSE

by Gregory Koukl

Out of context this verse has been applied to countless sporting events. In context we can see that, rather than talking about how through God he can achieve anything, Paul's meaning is more along the lines of: "I can be content in all things, through Christ who strengthens me."

**IF** there was one bit of wisdom, one rule of thumb, one single skill I could impart, one useful tip I could leave that would serve you well the rest of your life, what would it be? What is the single most important practical skill I've ever learned as a Christian? Here it is: never read a Bible verse. That's right, never read a Bible verse. Instead, always read a paragraph at least.

## MY RADIO TRICK

When I'm on the radio, I use this simple rule to help me answer the majority of Bible questions I'm asked, even when I'm totally unfamiliar with the verse. It's an amazingly effective technique you can use, too.

I read the paragraph, not just the verse. I take stock of the relevant material above and below. Since the context frames the

verse and gives it specific meaning, I let it tell me what's going on.

This works because of a basic rule of all communication: Meaning always flows from the top down, from the larger units to the smaller units, not the other way around. The key to the meaning of any verse comes from the paragraph, not just from the individual words.

The numbers in front of the sentences give the illusion the verses stand alone in their meaning. They were not in the originals, though. Numbers were added hundreds of years later. Chapter and verse breaks sometimes pop up in unfortunate places, separating relevant material that should be grouped together.

## CONTEXT + RESTATE

First, ignore the verse numbers and try to get the big picture. Then begin to narrow your focus. It's not very hard or time consuming. It takes only a few moments and a little observation of the text.

Begin with the broad context of the book. What type of literature is it: history, poetry, proverb? What is the passage about in general? What idea is being developed?

Stand back from the verse and look for breaks in the narrative that identify major units of thought. Ask, "What in this paragraph or group of paragraphs gives any clue to the meaning of the verse?"

There's a reason this little exercise is so important. Words have different

“...ignore the verse numbers and try to get the big picture. Then begin to narrow your focus.”

meanings in different contexts (that's what makes puns work). When we consider a verse in isolation, one meaning may occur to us. But how do we know it's the right one? Help won't come from the dictionary. Dictionaries only complicate the issue, giving us more choices, not fewer. Help must

come from somewhere else close by: the surrounding paragraph.

With the larger context now in view, you can narrow your focus and speculate on the meaning of the verse itself. Sum it up in your own words.

Finally, and this is critical, see if your paraphrase makes sense when inserted in the passage. Does it dovetail naturally with the bigger picture?

## JESUS, THE UNCREATED CREATOR

Here is an excellent example of how effective this paraphrase technique can be, from John 1:1-3:

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

In John 1:1 the writer states plainly that "the Word was God." In verse three he provides backup support for this claim. John writes, "All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being."

John says the same thing in two different ways for emphasis and clarity: Everything that ever came into being owes its existence to the Word, Who caused it all to happen. If the Word caused all created things to come into existence, then He must have existed before all created things came into existence. Therefore, the Word could not have been created. Jesus is the uncreated Creator, God.

Those who deny the deity of Christ offer this rebuttal, though. "Wait a minute, Greg. You didn't read the verse carefully. You missed something in the text. Notice the phrase 'apart from Him.' The apostle excludes Jesus from the count. If you said, 'Apart from Billy, the whole family is going to Disneyland' you wouldn't mean that Billy wasn't part of the family, just that he wasn't included in the count. Every member of the family is going to Disneyland with the

exception of Billy. In the same way, every created thing was created by Jesus with the exception of Jesus Himself. Jehovah created Jesus first, then Jesus created everything else. Jesus is not God."

Note that this rebuttal turns on the ability to replace "apart from Him" with the phrase "with the exception of Jesus." Allegedly they're synonymous. Okay, let's try the replacement and see what happens. The verse then looks like this: "With the exception of Jesus, nothing came into being that has come into being."

If your brow is furrowed trying to figure this out, I'm not surprised. The reconstructed phrase is nearly nonsense. Strictly speaking, it means that Jesus is the only created thing that exists. Read it again and see for yourself. Obviously, the phrase "apart from Jesus" can't mean "with the exception of Jesus." These phrases are not synonymous.

"Apart from Him" means something entirely different. It means "apart from His agency." It's the same as saying, "Apart from me you'll never get to Disneyland. I've got the car." Apart from Jesus' agency nothing came into being that has come into being. Why? Because Jesus is the Creator. He is God. That makes perfect sense in the context.

Let me give you some other examples

## HAVING A "PEACE" ABOUT IT

Colossians 3:15 is a text that is constantly misunderstood by well-meaning Christians:

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts...

Some have accurately pointed out that the Greek word for "rule" means to act as arbiter or judge. They see this verse as a tool for knowing God's will for our lives.

The conventional thinking goes something like this. When confronted with a decision, pray. If you feel a "peace" in your heart, go ahead. If you don't feel peace, don't proceed. This internal sense of peace acts like a judge helping you make decisions according to the will of God. A paraphrase might be: "And let feelings of peacefulness in your heart be the judge

about God’s individual will for your life.”

Is this what Paul means?

This is a classic example of how knowledge of the Greek can be dangerous if context is not taken into consideration. The word “peace”

in mind here – lack of conflict between Christians – not a subjective feeling of peace in an individual Christian’s heart.

This becomes obvious when we join the suggested paraphrases with the context:

“  
I read the paragraph, not just the verse.  
I take stock of the relevant material  
above and below.

actually has two different meanings. It could mean a sense of inner harmony and emotional equanimity. Paul seems to have this definition in mind in Philippians 4:7: “And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” This is the subjective sense of peace.

The word also has an objective sense. It sometimes means lack of conflict between two parties formerly at war with each other. This definition of peace is what Paul intends in Romans 5:1: “Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Note the distinction between the peace of God and peace with God in these two verses.)

What sense of peace did Paul have in mind when writing to the Colossians? The Greek gives us no indication because the same word is used in all three cases. Once again, context is king. The specific meaning can be known only from the surrounding material.

In Col. 3:11, Paul says that in the Body of Christ there are no divisions between Greek and Jew, slave and free, etc. He appeals for unity in the body characterized by forgiveness, humility, and gentleness. He then adds that harmony (“peace”) should be the rule that guides our relationships.

Paul has the objective sense of peace

Put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. And let feelings of peacefulness in your heart be the judge about God’s individual will for your life, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.

vs.

Put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. And beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. And let harmony, not conflict, be the rule that guides you, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.

The first is completely foreign to the context; the second fits right in with everything that comes before and after. In the context of Colossians 3, there is no hint of using internal feelings as a divine

stamp of approval on our decisions. Personal decisionmaking is not the point of the paragraph. Harmony and unity in the Body is.

### “IF I BE LIFTED UP”

John 12:32 is another case where a phrase can have two widely divergent meanings. It’s not uncommon for worship leaders to quote this statement of Jesus:

“And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.”

We “lift up” the Lord when we exalt Him and declare His glory. If we focus on Jesus and ascribe glory to Him, the power of Christ is released to transform the hearts of those listening, and they are drawn to Him. This is the meaning the worship leader has in mind, but it isn’t what Jesus is talking about.

When we apply our paraphrase test by adding the very next verse, the results look like this: “And I, if I be exalted before the people, will draw all men to Myself.” But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die (John 12:32-33).

Oops. Praising Jesus will kill Him? I don’t think so. No ambiguity now. In this instance, being “lifted up” clearly means to be crucified.

Understanding this phrase in context sheds light on another familiar passage, John 3:14-15: “And as Moses lifted up [raised in the air] the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up [raised in the air], that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life.”

Our paraphrase looks like this: “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be crucified that whoever believes may in Him have eternal life.”

This makes perfect sense. Jesus had to be crucified before salvation could be offered, an appropriate lead-in to the verse that comes next, the most famous salvation verse in the world: John 3:16.

### “MY SHEEP HEAR MY VOICE”

Let’s try another.

# This raises legitimate questions about daily devotionals that build a short message from a single verse.

Many have taken this statement by Jesus in John 10:27 to refer to the Christian's acquired ability to "hear" God's personal instructions to him. "Hearing God's voice" is advocated as a very useful skill that aids optimal Christian living. Allegedly, this is a learned ability one gains as he matures in Christ. It enables him to sense Jesus' will in any given situation as he "hears" Jesus' voice.

Jesus has nothing like this in mind, though. I know, because of the context surrounding the verse and a key clarification John himself gives early in the chapter. In verse six, John explicitly states that when Jesus speaks of His sheep "hearing His voice" He is using a figure of speech.

The word "voice," then, can't actually mean some kind of inner voice because a thing is never a metaphor of itself. It's a picture of something else. Jesus must be referring, in a figure, to something else that the phrase "hear my voice" represents. What is it?

The context tells the story. Jesus says, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me," and then adds, "and I give eternal life to them" (verses 27-28). Note the sequence: His sheep hear His voice. They follow Him in response. He then gives them eternal life. Hearing Jesus' voice is a figure of speech for the inner working of the Holy Spirit that leads to our salvation. It results in salvation; it's not the result of salvation. It's applied here to non-believers destined for the Kingdom, not believers already in the Kingdom.

This makes perfect sense in the broader context of the chapter. The Jews have no trouble hearing Jesus' words. They know what Jesus is saying. Their problem is that they don't respond with belief. Why don't the Jews "hear" Jesus by responding with

belief? Jesus tells us plainly. They don't "hear" because God is not "speaking" to them. They are not among the sheep the Father has given to the Son (verse 26).

The voice being referred to here is not the still, small voice of private direction given by God to Christians, but the effective call of the Holy Spirit bringing non-Christians to salvation. Our paraphrase test comes to our aid once again:

You do not believe, because you are not of My sheep. Mature Christians have the ability to sense My personal direction for their lives and obey it, and as a result I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all....

vs.

You do not believe, because you are not of My sheep. The ones that the Father gives me – my sheep – are the ones that respond to my message and believe in me, and as a result I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all....

The first view actually makes salvation dependent on the ability to get personalized communications from God. The second makes salvation dependent on the Father, which is Jesus' point in the passage.

To Jesus, "hearing" God is not an advanced skill one must develop to open lines of communication to the Father. It's a figure of speech. Hearing Jesus' voice is not getting individual, personalized direction. It's getting saved. It's the result of the Father drawing the non-believer

into Jesus' arms.

## DAILY BREAD?

This raises legitimate questions about daily devotionals that build a short message from a single verse. In my view, such quiet-time helps can be inspirational, but they come with an obvious drawback.

Fortunately, the liability can be overcome by remembering our basic rule: Never read a Bible verse. Instead, read a paragraph, at least. Always check the context. Observe the flow of thought. Then focus on the verse.

Remember, meaning always flows from the top down, from the larger units to the smaller units. A reflection on a Bible passage from a sermon or a devotional may be edifying, encouraging, and uplifting. If it is not the message of the text, though, it lacks biblical authority even when the quote comes right out of the Word of God.

If you will do this one thing – if you will read carefully in the context applying the paraphrase principle – you will begin to understand the Bible as God intended. Without the bigger picture you'll be lost.

Only when you are properly informed by God's Word the way it is written in its context can you be transformed by it. Every piece becomes powerful when it's working together with the whole.

It's the most important practical lesson I've ever learned...and the single most important thing I could ever teach you.

## FOR FURTHER READING

- *Playing with Fire: How the Bible Ignites Change in Your Soul* by Walt Russell
- "The Perils of Proof-texting" by Gregory Koukl in the Sept/Oct 1999 issue of *Solid Ground*
- *Scripture Twisting* by James Sire
- *Exegetical Fallacies* by D.A. Carson
- *How to Read the Bible For All It's Worth* by Gordon Fee & Douglas Stuart

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# IN A NUTSHELL

TIDBITS RELEVANT,  
AND NOT SO,  
TO CHRISTIAN LIFE.

BY JON DYKSTRA

## AN ATHEIST ON EVANGELISM

If we really believe the Gospel is good news, we should want to share it with everyone we know. Or so says atheist Penn Jillette, of the famous (and frequently Christian-bashing) magician duo Penn & Teller. As he puts it:

I've always said, you know, that I don't respect people who don't proselytize. I don't respect that at all. If you believe that there's a heaven and hell, and that people could be going to hell or not getting eternal life or whatever, and you think that it's not really worth telling them this because it would make it socially awkward...how much do you have to hate somebody to not proselytize? How much do you have to hate somebody to believe that everlasting life is possible, and not tell them that? I mean, if I believed beyond a shadow of a doubt that a truck was bearing down on you, there is a certain point where I tackle you. And this is more important than that...

## WATCH ME!

"Do you ever speak to a young Christian and say, 'Do you want to know what Christianity is like? Watch me.'"  
– D.A. Carson *challenging Christians to live their lives so they, like the Apostle Paul, will be able to encourage others to "be imitators of me, even as I am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1).*

## "UNDEFINING" MARRIAGE

Gay marriage doesn't redefine Marriage; it only furthers the process of undefining it.

- We used to recognize Marriage required lifelong commitment. But we took that out of the definition with the introduction of no-fault divorce.

- Marriage was understood as being between a man and a woman, but now we are undefining the gender aspect of it.
- We still acknowledge it involves just two, but for those that think the word "marriage" can be morphed and modified however we wish, what reason is there to keep this arbitrary numerical limit? It too, will be cut.

So, no, we aren't redefining Marriage. We are undefining it, taking more and more pieces out of the definition, leaving us with a word, and an institution, that is becoming increasingly meaningless.

## YOU HAVE TWO COWS... MODIFIED

### Capitalism

You have two cows.  
You trade one for a bull. In a few years you have many cows.

### Socialism

You have two cows.  
The State redistributes one, and eventually the other dies.

### American Capitalism

You have two cows.  
Your competitor lobbies the State to take one of your cows and give it to him.

### Canadian Socialism

You have two cows.  
The State bans you from having three, but hikes up milk prices so small dairies can still survive.

### Occupy Wall Street-ism

You have two cows.  
Lots of people have no cows so the State should take both, slaughter them and give everyone a hamburger.

## MULTICULTURALISM IS JUDEO-CHRISTIAN

"Multiculturalism is a unicultural phenomenon; as my *National Review* colleague John Derbyshire put it, 'No Muslim country would allow Christians – let alone Jews! – to settle in huge numbers in their territory; and in that respect, they are wiser than we are.'"  
– Mark Steyn, writing in the foreword to *Geert Wilders' Marked for Death about how half the Christian population in Iraq has fled, and in 2010 the last church in Afghanistan was razed to the ground.*

## MORE ON CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM

"The inherent vice of Capitalism is the unequal sharing of blessings, while the inherent virtue of Socialism is the equal sharing of miseries."  
– Winston Churchill





and I will meditate on your word; for I will rejoice in the word of the Lord, as I have done, and I will glorify your abundant mercies and your righteousness.

146 The Lord is gracious and merciful, and his righteousness shall endure forever.  
 147 The Lord is just, and loves righteousness; he shall endure forever.  
 148 The Lord will fulfill the desire of those who love him; he will save all those who are devoted to him.  
 149 The Lord watches over all who love him; he will rescue all whose lives are in peril.  
 150 The Lord will rescue the life of the lowly, and he will save the life of the needy.  
 151 The Lord will rescue the life of the needy, and he will save the life of the lowly.  
 152 The Lord will rescue the life of the needy, and he will save the life of the lowly.

"I will exalt you, O Lord, and I will praise your name forever and ever, for you are wonderful and glorious in your works."  
 145 "I will praise you, O Lord, and I will glorify your name forever and ever, for you are wonderful and glorious in your works."  
 146 "I will praise you, O Lord, and I will glorify your name forever and ever, for you are wonderful and glorious in your works."  
 147 "I will praise you, O Lord, and I will glorify your name forever and ever, for you are wonderful and glorious in your works."  
 148 "I will praise you, O Lord, and I will glorify your name forever and ever, for you are wonderful and glorious in your works."  
 149 "I will praise you, O Lord, and I will glorify your name forever and ever, for you are wonderful and glorious in your works."  
 150 "I will praise you, O Lord, and I will glorify your name forever and ever, for you are wonderful and glorious in your works."  
 151 "I will praise you, O Lord, and I will glorify your name forever and ever, for you are wonderful and glorious in your works."  
 152 "I will praise you, O Lord, and I will glorify your name forever and ever, for you are wonderful and glorious in your works."



# READ THE BIBLE LIKE A KING

## THEY BOTH ATTENDED THE SAME YOUTH BIBLE STUDY: ONE BECAME A PASTOR, THE OTHER, AN ATHEIST. WHAT HAPPENED?

I came to faith in Jesus in God's providence after a family crisis that drove us to seek a new town to live in. Our move happened when I was in my teens, a time when social concerns outweigh most of the other aspects of life. In my new school I didn't have any friends, and so as a way of finding friends whom I could trust, I started attending the youth group meetings at the Baptist church my grandparents attended. There I met Billy (not his real name).

**B**illy and I hit it off right from the beginning. We were fast friends with a similar sense of humor (few people appreciate puns like Billy), and we were the same age. Most of the other kids in the youth group attended the local Christian school, while Billy and I were public school kids. It was because of Billy and that youth group that I heard the gospel.

You'll want to know more about Billy. He was born in Africa, where his parents were missionaries for a time. He won all the Bible knowledge contests we ever had in the youth group. He had seemingly memorised vast portions of the Bible. As a new kid, I looked up to him as one of the mature ones (despite his penchant for my sort of tomfoolery). We had a close friendship, and I came to rely on him as my closest brother in Christ. Fast forward. It is now twenty years later. I am a minister of the gospel in the Reformed Churches of New Zealand. Billy is a very successful accountant and

an outspoken atheist. Yes, atheist!

What happened? How does the goofy new kid grow up to be a preacher while the mature son of a missionary leaves the faith? The answer to that question is complex, but there is one area that stands out as being key to the answer. It has to do with the Bible.

### TRIVIAL PURSUIT

Billy and I still keep in touch. One time I got to ask him what drove him away from the faith. His answer is fascinating. I thought it might be because Christians tend to be fanatics and hypocritical with so many things. While he agreed that that was no encouragement to stay in the faith, the followers of Jesus were ultimately not what drove him away. What drove him away was that he wasn't getting answers to hard questions.

After exploring for a bit, I found that the questions he was asking are the same sort of questions I happened to be asking. Billy even remarked that

both he and I had sought the answers to those questions in different directions. He doesn't believe that the Bible has the answers to hard philosophical dilemmas like the so-called problem of evil, while I do. Billy hasn't found the answers to all his questions, and while I haven't necessarily found all the answers either, I have found, by God's grace, eternal hope.

Billy and I approach the Bible very differently. Billy "knows" the Bible (as evidenced by those contests in high school), but not at all the same way I do. For Billy, the Bible is a book of trivia. He knows lots of seemingly obscure details about Israel's history, along with key verses in the New Testament that emphasize various spiritual facts about salvation and the Christian life. He knows the details so well that he can go on and on about all the places where the Bible (allegedly) contradicts itself. He learned the Bible just like so many well-meaning Christian parents want their children to learn it. How many parents wouldn't be delighted if their children

## DEEPER IN

What is it about the way I read the Bible that is so different from Billy? To start with, my quest to answer life's tough questions (unlike Billy's) took me into the Bible. I approached it without questioning whether it is God's Word. I simply assumed it is. I read it on its own terms, assuming (childlike) its authority, sufficiency, and necessity.

Once you start getting into the text of Scripture and reading it on its own terms, there are certain unavoidable consequences as the Spirit moves. In this article I want you to see that if you have questions about ultimate things, the Bible is satisfying beyond your dreams, even if you don't come to all the answers in your lifetime. Alas for Billy, a book of trivia could never do that.

## CONSIDER THE COINCIDENCES

Consider the "coincidences" in the Bible. I put this word in quotes because I know they aren't really coincidences. As Commissioner Gordon in Christopher

mean. Buckle up. One of the greatest Reformation principles for interpreting the Bible is that Scripture interprets Scripture. The Westminster Confession of Faith states this explicitly in the first chapter. That means that when you read the Bible and have a question about what the text you just read means, the best place to go for the right interpretation is another place in the Bible that talks about the same thing. For example, if I'm reading 2 Samuel 5, I find that David says some very odd-sounding things about blind and lame people. In verse eight, David proclaims that he hates blind and lame people, and that they are forbidden to enter the "house."

And David said on that day, "Whoever would strike the Jebusites, let him get up the water shaft to attack 'the lame and the blind,' who are hated by David's soul." Therefore it is said, "The blind and the lame shall not come into the house."

Isn't that strange? Why is David so heartless toward disabled people? Does that mean we're supposed to keep the disabled out of the church, that we're only supposed to have physically fit members? What's going on?

The answers to our questions come in the New Testament. Jesus is the son of David, and so his attitude toward the lame and blind ought to give us a clue into what's going on with David. One of the clearest passages that deal with this is Mark 10:46ff. In that passage is one of my favourite men in the Scriptures. Bartimaeus, the blind beggar, is sitting outside of Jericho and hears that Jesus is passing by. He cries out, "Son of David, have mercy on me!!" and he won't stop yelling that phrase over and over. He made such a nuisance of himself that the disciples went over to make him stop. He got Jesus' attention, and Jesus called for Bartimaeus. Bartimaeus jumped up so fast his outer cloak fell off and he ran to Jesus. Jesus asked him, "What do you want me to do for you?" Bartimaeus is so excited he can't even put a complete sentence together in the Greek. He says, "That I may receive my sight!" Well,

Billy and I approach the Bible very differently. Billy "knows" the Bible (as evidenced by those contests in high school), but not at all the same way I do.

could recite several Bible verses from memory? Don't parents love it when their children can summarize whole books of the Bible? For our tradition, isn't it great when a young person has the whole catechism memorised?

But if it's all just a bunch of trivia, we're missing the point. Billy missed the point.

While I find the trivia interesting, I don't read the Bible to get answers for a quiz. Don't get me wrong, we ought to know the details of the Bible as much as possible, and it is good to memorize key passages along with the catechism. But it can't stop there. Billy stopped there.

Nolan's *The Dark Knight Rises* said, "You're a detective now, son. You're not allowed to believe in coincidences anymore." A coincidence is an accidental correlation. The Bible doesn't have those. That means we have to read it like one of Commissioner Gordon's detectives.

The Bible is the written record of God's mighty acts through history, and certain ideas get repeated. An idea that is only mentioned early in the Bible gets riffed on later on, developed, deepened, layered, concretised, and fulfilled. That is a pretty abstract idea, I know. We need a couple of examples of this to show what I

# “It is the glory of God to conceal things, but the glory of kings is to search things out” (Proverbs 25:2).

you probably know what happened next. Jesus healed him with a word, told him to go on his way. Bartimaeus, though, decides that “his way” can only be following Jesus, so he follows him to Jerusalem.

Now that we know how Jesus responded to the blind and lame, we can piece together what the text in 2 Samuel means. David’s proclamation that forbade the lame and the blind to enter the house occurs because of God’s standard of absolute perfection in His children. That perfection isn’t just ethical; it has to do with every aspect of life, including the physical body. So if you’re lame or blind, or you happen to be dead, you can’t be part of God’s family. It’s impossible. You’re excluded. Do you see what Jesus did? As the perfect David he takes the lame, the blind, even the dead, and equips them for life in God’s family. Bartimaeus didn’t just receive his sight. He received a home. He lost his old outer garment and was given the righteousness of Jesus as his covering. This man is welcome in David’s “house” because Jesus made him new. That’s the gospel. Whoa!

Take another example of a Biblical “coincidence.” The book of Jonah is pretty weird if you think about it. Really? God prepared a great fish to swallow him, and he was in the belly of the fish for three days? That seems ridiculous. What could such a weird story possibly mean? Why such bizarre detail in a story? Why would God allow a historical event such as Jonah’s life seem like a made-up legend?

Then, as you read the New Testament,

you see something that explains it all. Jonah shows up a few times in the gospels. He shows up twice in Matthew (chapters 12 and 16) and once in Luke (chapter 11). Jesus brings him up. It’s in the context of how evil the Jews of that generation were. “It seeks a sign,” Jesus says, “but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.” Interesting, right? There are some fairly obvious things you might take away from Jesus saying such things. You’ll realize that Jesus died and rose on the third day, just like Jonah’s time inside the fish. That isn’t all there is to the sign of Jonah, though. When Jonah came out of the fish, he preached the gospel to Nineveh. Nineveh was the capital city of Syria, Israel’s principle enemy at the time! Nineveh repented while Israel perished in their unrepentance. The sign of Jonah is that the one who rises on the third day will take a message of life to the enemies of Israel (specifically the Roman empire), and they will repent while the Jews perish in unrepentance.

It took some centuries, but this understanding of the sign of Jonah is an undeniable fact. It happened. It’s a historical event. Constantine’s conversion to Christianity led to a cultural paradigm shift that was a long time coming. The modern church, made up primarily of non-Jews, is the sign of Jonah still working itself out in history. Whoa!

## DON’T BE BLIND TO THE RICHES

There are “coincidences” like these on about every page of the Bible. But as I wrote before, there are no coincidences with God. God put these things in the Bible on purpose. If you’re paying attention to the Bible, a consequence is that these coincidences will get your attention. You’ll start looking for them. You’ll want to dig deeper. By God’s grace that’s what happened to me. Billy never had that. He might see some of the coincidences, but because he’s not looking into the Bible for answers to his hard questions, he won’t see the richness. “It is the glory of God to conceal things, but the glory of kings is to search things

out” (Proverbs 25:2). Billy refuses to be a king and learned only trivia.

Why is all of this so important for our spiritual lives? Why does it matter that the more I dig into the Bible the more I’ll see “coincidences”? It matters because challenges to your faith are real. Countless situations arise in our lives that cause us to question whether or not God knows what he’s doing. Just think about the direction of our society in the political sphere; there is a large-scale movement away from faithfulness to God in favor of feel-good policies like “gay” marriage. That seems bad enough, but why does God allow that to go on?

Do you see the temptation? If this kind of wickedness is going on without God doing anything about it, how can we be sure He’s even there? Does God exist? Why should I bother following a myth?

Knowing the Bible this way will insulate you from the folly of that line of reasoning. Together with regular weekly attendance in worship, close intimacy with the Bible will give you the confidence that God is firmly in control of history (see Psalm 73). Whatever challenge might come to you with regard to your faith, you know the Bible can’t possibly be made up. It isn’t a bunch of trivia. Maybe you don’t have the answer to a tough question, but because the Bible is so incomparably woven together in all of its parts, you won’t be shaken or tossed around by all the winds of doctrine out there (Ephesians 4:14).

I wish I could convince Billy of this. He has lived his lifestyle his way for so long that by now leaving it would be unthinkable for him. Thankfully, convincing him isn’t up to me. That’s the work of the Holy Spirit. All I have to do is tell him about the Bible, pray for him, and serve him. God will do the rest if He wills. Now, go read your Bible, and let your mind run to all the places in the Bible that passage hints at. Take comfort in the beauty of the fabric of the Scriptures. You’ll see. RP

**Mr Nathan Ketchen** is one of the ministers of the Reformed Church of Palmerston North, New Zealand. His article was first printed in *Faith in Focus* (April 2013) and is reprinted here with permission.

by Jason Lisle



Bible & Nature: only one of these is a book

# THE TWO-BOOK FALLACY

The founder of the scientific method, Francis Bacon, taught that God has written two books: the Scriptures and the book of creation (or nature).<sup>1</sup> Today, many professing Christians affirm this view. After all, the Scriptures teach that God's attributes are clearly seen in nature (Romans 1:20). So we can learn about God through both Scripture and science – the systematic study of nature.

The founder of the scientific method, Francis Bacon, taught that God has written two books: the Scriptures and the book of creation (or nature).<sup>1</sup> Today, many professing Christians affirm this view. After all, the Scriptures teach that God's attributes are clearly seen in nature (Romans 1:20). So we can learn about God through both Scripture and science – the systematic study of nature.

But can nature really be considered a book? And what happens when there is an apparent discrepancy between what the Bible teaches and the "record" of nature?

Advocates of the "two-book" view would say that any apparent conflict between science and the Bible is due to a faulty interpretation of one or the other. Thus, our interpretation of Scripture must match our interpretation of nature. They might say that both the Bible and the "book of nature" are inerrant since both were written by God. But our interpretations of each are subject to error. Is this view biblical? Is it logical?

The two-book view has been used to justify all sorts of unbiblical teaching. For example, some people say that the book of nature clearly reveals that all life has evolved from a common ancestor. Thus, we must take Genesis as a metaphor. Others deny evolution but insist that the book of nature teaches that the earth is billions of years old. Therefore, we must interpret the days of

Genesis as long ages, not ordinary days.

Such a procedure is dangerous. Interpreting the Bible in light of some other "book of God" is a distinguishing characteristic of cults.

The two-book view is actually a fallacy. The reason is simple: Nature is not a book. It is not something that is comprised of statements in human language. It is not something that a person can literally read or interpret in the same way that we interpret a sentence. This isn't to say that people cannot learn anything from nature. But it is not a book or record that contains propositional truth.

The advantage of a book is that it is comprised of clear statements in human language that are designed to be understood by the reader. The meaning of a book is the intention of the author. But that's not the case with nature. What does a rock mean? What

does a fossil mean? They don't literally mean anything because they are not statements made by an author who is intending to convey an idea.

Some advocates of the two-book view refer to things like rocks and fossils as the "record of nature." But a record is an account in writing that preserves the knowledge of facts or events. Rocks and fossils are not in the written form and are, therefore, not a record.

The Bible, however, records the major events of history in the natural world. The Bible cannot conflict with the record of nature because the Bible is the record of nature!

God knew that people would not properly understand the world around them without clear instructions. After all, the primary purpose of nature is not to teach, but to function. Consequently, the world is not comprised of statements that are easy to understand. Moreover, nature is cursed due to sin. Therefore, God gave us a clear, inerrant account of the major events of history in writing so that we can begin to properly understand nature. Thus, if it is to yield reliable results, scientific research must be conducted in light of the clear teaching of Scripture. God has only written one book – the Bible. RP

#### Reference

<sup>1</sup> Bacon, F. 1828. *Of the proficience and advancement of learning, Divine and Human*. London: J. F. Dove, 53.

**Dr. Lisle** is Director of Research at the Institute for Creation Research and received his Ph.D. in Astrophysics from the University of Colorado. This article is reprinted with permission from the January 2013 edition of *Acts & Facts*, a publication of the Institute for Creation Research ([www.icr.org](http://www.icr.org)). Lisle, J. 2013. The Two-Book Fallacy. *Acts & Facts*. 42 (1): 9.

The meaning of a book is the intention of the author. But that's not the case with nature. What does a rock mean? What does a fossil mean?"



*In doubt and temptation,  
I rest, Lord, in Thee;  
My hand is in Thy hand,  
Thou carest for me;  
My soul with Thy counsel  
through life Thou wilt guide,  
And afterward make me  
in glory abide.*

by Christine Farenhorst

# IN GLORY ABIDE

**T**here is not a Christian soul on earth who has never doubted. There is not a Christian soul who has not, at some point or other in his or her life, been harassed by fears of not being right about the way he or she thinks and lives. There is not a Christian soul alive that has not been prone to question whether or not heaven will open its doors to him or her.

And yet, as the Puritan-thinking pastor Octavius Winslow (1808-1878) points out, a doubting faith is not a doubtful faith. All the doubts and fears that ever bothered a child of God cannot erase his name from the Lamb's book of life, nor take him out of the heart of God, nor shut him out of glory.

This truth was also beautifully stated by the Scottish preacher and theologian Samuel Rutherford (1600?-1661), who said,

Unbelief may perhaps tear the copies of the covenant which Christ hath given you; but He still keeps the

original in heaven with Himself. Your doubts and fears are no parts of the covenant; neither can they change Christ.

## **DOUBT AND TEMPTATION**

There is a story (recorded by Richard Wurmbrand) about a Russian Orthodox priest, a Father Mihail. Father Mihail served a church during a time of great Russian upheaval – during a time when he saw many of his colleagues arrested, tortured and killed. The Communist regime had taken over. He himself had not been arrested yet, but he worried, and his faith was sorely tried. Why would God allow such misery and



“We will give you a chance, however,” the leader of the group mocked, “If you renounce Christ and trample on the cross, we will let you go.”

suffering? Was God really there? Did He really and truly exist? Or had his whole life been spent in believing a myth?

Father Mihail was profoundly troubled – so troubled that his pastoral actions became mechanical. Thinking he no longer believed, he almost cried out to the seeking people who attended the church services, “Go home, poor people. There is no God! If there were a God, would He permit such a horrible time as we are experiencing today?”

Father Mihail’s moment of arrest eventually came. It happened on the day before Easter. A drunken, rowdy group of soldiers pushed and shoved their way into his church and informed him that his time had come to die. They had decided to kill him. Among the men confronting him stood a former cantor

of the church, a man who had been dismissed by Father Mihail because of immoral behavior.

“Well, what do you have to say?” One of the soldiers almost spit the question at Father Mihail.

Wearily Father Mihail shrugged his shoulders. “As you like,” he answered. After all, his mind told him, he did not believe in God any longer. What did it matter?

“We will give you a chance, however,” the leader of the group mocked, “If you renounce Christ and trample on the cross, we will let you go.”

Father Mihail’s thoughts became blurred. Would it actually make any difference at this point if he did trample on the cross, the cross he no longer professed? This action would save him his life. But when he opened his mouth to say that he would renounce his Lord, to his own surprise the words would not come. Instead, he heard himself say something totally different.

“I believe in one God.”

The men laughed raucously, and his former cantor hatched a hideous plan.

“It’s Easter,” he said dramatically, “let him be crucified like his Savior. And after that he can be resurrected.”

The men turned Mihail’s fur hat inside out. They placed it on his head and said it was the crown of thorns. They next flung a sack on his shoulders and kneeling in front of him they blasphemed: “Hail, King of the Jews!”

Then they began to beat him and within Father Mihail a prayer rose up – a prayer to the One in Whom he had thought he

did not believe. “If you exist, save me.”

And his voice rang out again, echoing throughout the church: “I believe in one God.”

The soldiers, somehow awed by this heartfelt confession in spite of their cruel treatment of Father Mihail, let him go. He went home. And then, like the disciple Thomas, Father Mihail confessed, “My Lord and my God!”

## CONCLUSION

Jesus never minimizes the fact that His followers will face struggles of faith. And He has great mercy and understanding. For we know that even though the disciple Thomas expressed grave doubts regarding what the other disciples had told him about seeing Jesus alive, Jesus did not rebuke him or make fun of him for this doubt. On the contrary, He led Thomas through his doubts into a confession – a very great confession.

One should never pretend, if confronted by doubt, that it does not exist. Sadly, there are many who repeat, who parrot, theological truths without ever having thought them out, truths they do not truly believe.

But, when thinking on the great truths which God has promised, if you falter, then realize that a tried and doubting faith can be strengthened by God’s grace. Speak of your doubts to Jesus, tell Him you desire Him, and He will surely give the grace which is needed. For the beautiful truth is that the doubts and fears of God’s children are always overruled by almighty grace for their present and for their eternal welfare.

RP

“All the doubts and fears that ever bothered a child of God cannot erase his name from the Lamb’s book of life...”

# REVIEWS

## CHILDREN'S CHURCH HISTORY

### LADY JANE GREY

BY SIMONETTA CARR / 60 PAGES



Four hundred and sixty years ago, Lady Jane Grey was made Queen of England, but she lasted in that position for less than two weeks. She never wanted the job, but was pressed into the service of her country after the Protestant King Edward died, leaving his Roman Catholic older stepsister, princess Mary, as the only other potential successor. So Jane accepted the crown. But only days afterward Mary seized power and imprisoned Jane. A little over six months later Jane was executed, but not before gaining fame for her unwavering faith and love for the Lord. Though she reigned just days, her example of faithfulness has impacted generations.

Simonetta Carr has authored a half dozen "Christian Biographies for Young Readers" so far, and I've found each of the four I've read to be of an impressively high quality, from pictures, to production values, to prose. They are intended for kids, probably Grade 3 and up, but adults will enjoy them, too. That said, *Lady Jane Grey* was slower paced than the others, probably because there is a lot less action in her life and short reign, so if you have the other titles this will make a great addition. Otherwise start with *Augustine* or *John Calvin* instead.

– Jon Dykstra

### INK ON HIS FINGERS

BY LOUISE A. VERNON



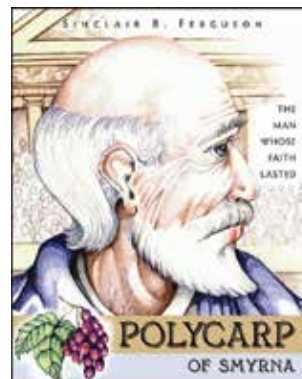
This easy-to-read novel, aimed at an upper elementary school age audience, combines true church history with an intriguing mystery. The main character, 12-year-old Hans Dunne, lives in Germany in the 1450s and dreams of becoming a scribe one day and participating in the noble task of copying the Bible. Events turn, and he finds himself apprenticing for Johann Gutenberg, the man said to be the first to print a Bible using type. Young Hans discovers controversy around the printing press, and the suspense of traitors and mischief keeps the story rolling.

Vernon puts together an interesting and educational book that is enjoyable to read. One thing to note is that there are some Roman Catholic practices (e.g., a monk praying to saints, doing penance as a way to earn forgiveness) that are described without the error of these practices being noted, so this will need to be explained to younger readers. This is only a minor element in this title but it is worth noting that this author tends to empathize with the main character in each of her books, regardless of who it is (which is quite problematic in the biography she wrote about Luther's opponent, Erasmus). So not all of Vernon's books are worth reading... but this one, minor flaw notwithstanding, certainly is.

– Jessica Wildeboer

### POLYCARP OF SMYRNA

BY SINCLAIR B. FERGUSON



Sinclair Ferguson wants to point young people to heroes, rather than idols. As the back cover asks, "what's the difference?" Well, our idols are people we admire and want to be like because of their looks, their money, their power, or their abilities, but heroes – true heroes – are people who pursue the Lord with everything they have, willing to live and die for Him.

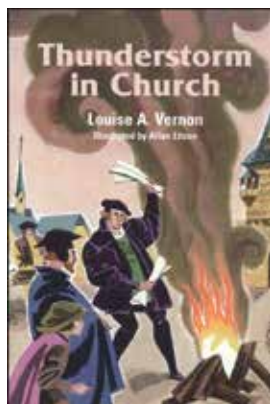
Polycarp was just such a hero. He lived during the time of the Roman Empire, and had been taught by the Apostle John himself. As an old man he was presented with a choice: deny the Lord, or be burned to death. His accusers didn't really want to burn him, and they pleaded with him to renounce his faith. But Polycarp would have none of it, declaring: "For 86 years I have served Christ. He has done me no harm! How can I deny Jesus who is my Savior?" He was burned but his courage and steadfastness encouraged the believers who saw him die.

Colorful illustrations are sprinkled throughout – this would make a good gift for children in Grade 2 and up.

– Jon Dykstra

## THUNDERSTORM IN CHURCH

BY LOUISE A. VERNON

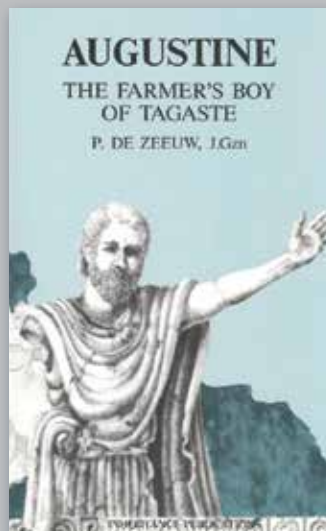


If you would like to learn more about the life of Martin Luther, give this short novel a read!

Written from the perspective of his oldest son, Hans, who is not yet a teen, the reader gets a sense of what it was like to live in the home of Martin Luther in the 1530s. Young Hans struggles to know what vocation he is to follow one day, and he feels the pressure of becoming a preacher like his famous father. Through Hans' eyes we see that Martin Luther was an energetic, passionate, bold, witty, and loving man, who had a temper which sometimes caused him to be described as a "thunderstorm in church."

The setting, mainly in the Luther family home (which was in the University of Wittenberg, Germany), is a lively and interesting place for Hans and his four younger siblings to live. Older cousins live with them, as well as boarding university students, hired help, and "the usual houseguests." Learning the role of Hans' mother and the deep relationship his parents had is heart-warming. Vernon's book is aimed at an upper elementary school age level, and could be used as a wonderful tool for helping to teach invaluable church history, or could simply be encouraged as a wholesome read.

– Jessica Wildeboer



## AUGUSTINE: THE FARMER'S BOY OF TAGASTE

BY P. DE ZEEUW

Augustine might be called the father of the Reformation - though he lived a thousand years before Luther and Calvin, he was an influential figure to both of them.

*Augustine: the farmer's boy of Tagaste*, aimed at Grade 3 and older, is an age-appropriate look at what a man without God is really like. Author P. De Zeeuw shows us that Augustine was not a nice young man – he stole from his parents, lied repeatedly to his mother, was lazy, and didn't care about anyone other than himself. For our children, many of whom have been blessed to be born into the church, Augustine's early life may be an eye-opening look at wickedness and its consequences. They likely will not have met a man with the past of this fellow! The time De Zeeuw spends looking at Augustine's sinful young life is what makes his redemption, and the use God made of Augustine, that much more awe-inspiring. God took a rebel and made him a key figure in the Church, both in his own time, and in the Reformation one thousand years later.

Remember when you were told not to judge a book by its cover? This is the sort of book they had in mind. The cover has nothing to do with this tale (no broken statues are featured) but the story itself is excellent, and the writing is solid. It is a translation of the Dutch original so there are a few rough spots where the sentences don't flow smoothly, but the writing is never so rough as to get in the way of the story. I'd recommend it for children who love reading and are able to handle these "spots."

De Zeeuw's *Augustine* focuses primarily on the church leader's pre-conversion life, spending only a third of the 93 pages on what happened afterwards (Pelagius is mentioned just once!). So Simonetta Carr's *Augustine of Hippo*, which focuses on his post conversion life, would be the perfect title to read right afterwards.

– Jon Dykstra



**THE COST  
OF AN OLD  
EARTH  
IS IT WORTH IT?**

by John Byl

Until recently, most Christians believed that the Bible teaches us that the Earth was only a few thousand years ago. This contradicts mainstream science, which holds that the Earth is billions of years old. Consequently, many Christians have modified their reading of the Bible accordingly.

At first sight, this may seem rather harmless. The age of the Earth hardly seems to be a doctrine essential to the Bible's main message of salvation.

Yet, much more is at stake than first meets the eye. Accepting mainstream science on the age of the Earth entails that we accept the reliability of its dating methods, with all the underlying presumptions. It entails also that we should likewise accept other results of mainstream science that are based on similar assumptions. Let's see where this takes us.

### PROBLEM 1: THE ORDER OF CREATION

We note first that mainstream science challenges not only the timescale of the Genesis creation account but also its order. So how do the two compare?

#### GENESIS 1

Day 1: Water, earthly elements, then light

Day 2: Firmament, then oceans, atmosphere

Day 3: Dry land, then land vegetation, fruit trees, grass

Day 4: Sun, moon, stars

Day 5: Marine life, then birds

Day 6: Land animals, then humans

#### MAINSTREAM SCIENCE

14 billion years ago (bya): First comes light, light elements, then stars, galaxies, then heavy elements, water

4.58 bya: Sun is formed

4.54 bya: Earth is formed

550 million years ago (mya): first fish appear

440 mya: first primitive plants

360 mya: first land animals – reptiles

245 mya: first mammals

210 mya: first birds

140 mya: first flowering plants

70 mya: first grasses, fruit trees

2 mya: first tool-making humanoids

Note that the two orders differ at many places. For example, Genesis has fruit trees first, then birds, then land animals while mainstream science has exactly the reverse. Genesis has the Earth before the Sun and stars while mainstream science has stars and Sun before the Earth, etc.

Since it does not help to simply recast the creation days as long periods of time, most commentators trying to accommodate mainstream science now advocate that Genesis 1 has to be taken as a purely literary structure, with no real historical information – other than stating that God created the entire universe.

### PROBLEM 2: THE EFFECT OF THE FALL

A second consequence of accepting mainstream science on the age of the Earth concerns the Fall of Adam. Calvin (and Kuyper) believed that predation, death, disease, thorns, and earthquakes all arose as a result of Man's Fall into Sin. Viewed in terms of the traditional reading of Genesis, the fossil record reflects events that all happened after the Fall.

Acceptance of an Old Earth, on the other hand, entails that the fossils we observe mostly reflect life before the Fall. Predation, pain, suffering, disease, earthquakes and the like must then have existed already before the Fall. The fossil record, thus viewed, implies that the Fall did not have any observable effects on the Earth or on non-human life. It follows that proponents of an Old Earth must minimize the physical consequences of Adam's fall.

Traditionally, all animal suffering is seen as a result of human sin. But now it must be seen as part of the initial "very good" creation. Further, if the current world is not a world that has fallen from a better initial state, how can there be a universal restoration (cf. Romans 8:19-23; Col. 1:16-20)?

There are other difficulties. For example, how could Adam name all the animals if by then more than 99 per cent were already extinct?

How could Adam name all the animals if by then more than 99 per cent were already extinct?

### PROBLEM 3: HUMAN HISTORY

Consider further the implications for human history.

According to Genesis, Adam and Eve were created directly by God (Gen. 2) about 4000 BC (Gen. 5 & 11). They were the parents of all humans (Gen. 3:20). The Bible describes Adam as a gardener, his son Abel as a shepherd, and his son Cain as a farmer who founded a city (Gen. 4). Tents, musical instruments and bronze and iron tools were all invented by the offspring of Cain (Gen. 4), who were later all destroyed by the Flood (Gen. 6-9), which destroyed all humans except for Noah and his family (cf. 2 Pet. 2:5). Within a few generations after the Flood there is a confusion of language and people spread out to populate the earth (Gen. 11).

Mainstream science, on the other hand, gives the following outline of human history:

## Predation, pain, suffering, disease, earthquakes and the like must then have existed already before the Fall

**2 million years BC:** we see the appearance of homo erectus, anatomically very similar to modern man

**200,000 BC:** oldest anatomically human Homo sapiens fossils (Ethiopia)

**40-50,000 BC:** oldest artistic and religious artifacts

**40,000 BC:** first aborigines in Australia (and continuously there ever since).

**9000 BC:** first villages

**7500 BC:** first plant cultivation, domesticated cattle and sheep (neo-lithic era)

**5000 BC:** first bronze tools

**3000 BC:** first written records

**1600 BC:** first iron tools

The Biblical account is clearly at odds with the mainstream interpretation of the archaeological and fossil evidence.

For example, if Australian aborigines have indeed lived separately from the rest of the world for 40,000 years,

then the Flood, if anthropologically universal, must have occurred more than 40,000 years ago. But Genesis places the cultivation of plants and cattle, metalworking, cities, etc., before the Flood. Mainstream science places these events after 10,000 BC. Hence, according to mainstream science, Noah's flood could not have occurred before 10,000 BC. Consequently, an Old Earth position forces us to demote the Genesis flood to a local flood that did not affect all humans.

Likewise, the tower of Babel incident (Gen. 11) must now be localized to just a portion of mankind.

Consider also the origin of man. Since Adam's sons were farmers, mainstream science sets the date of Adam no earlier than 10,000 BC. This entails that the Australian aborigines are not descendants of Adam. Thus Adam and Eve are not the ancestors of all humans living today. This undermines the doctrine of Original Sin,

which the confessions say was propagated in a hereditary manner from Adam to all his posterity (Belgic Confession 15-16; Canons of Dordt 34:2-3). This, in turn, undermines the view of Christ's atonement as a penal substitution where Christ, as a representative descendent of Adam, pays for the sins of Adam's race. Many of those who accept an evolutionary view of man have thus re-interpreted the work of Jesus as merely an example of love.

Further, given the close similarity between human fossils of 10,000 and two million years ago, it becomes difficult to avoid concluding that Adam and Eve had human-like ancestors dating back a few million years. Hence Adam and Eve were not created directly by God, contrary to Genesis 2, and human suffering and death occurred before Adam's Fall, contrary to Romans 5:12.

### CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, embracing mainstream science regarding its assertion of an Old Earth entails the following consequences:

1. Both the timescale and order of the creation account of Genesis 1 are wrong.
2. The Flood of Genesis 6-8 must have been local, not affecting all humans.
3. The Babel account of Gen. 11 must have been local, not affecting all humans.
4. Adam's Fall – and the curse on the Earth – did not significantly affect the earth, plants, animals, or the human body.
5. Adam, living about 10,000 BC, could not have been the ancestor of all humans living today.
6. Hence the doctrines of Original Sin and the Atonement must be revised.
7. Adam had human ancestors.
8. Hence human physical suffering and death occurred before the Fall and are not a penalty for sin.

These in turn entail the following constraints on the Bible:

1. Genesis 1-11 does not report reliable history.
2. Hence the Bible cannot be taken at face value when describing historical events: we cannot believe everything the Bible says (cf. Belgic Confession 5; Heidelberg Catechism Q/A 21).

In sum, acceptance of an Old Earth has dire consequences for the rest of Genesis 1-11, for Biblical clarity, authority and inerrancy, and for the essentials of salvation.

Worldviews come as package deals. One cannot simply mix and match. Logical consistency dictates that those who do not wholeheartedly base their worldview on the Bible will ultimately end up rejecting it.

A better course of action would thus be to hold fast to the full authority of the Bible, to reconsider the presuppositions leading to an Old Earth, and to interpret the data in terms of scientific theories that are consistent with Biblical truths.

This article first appeared on the author's blog [Bylogos.blogspot.com](http://Bylogos.blogspot.com) and is reprinted here with permission.

# WHO MADE GOD?

by Rob Slane

**OF** all the hard questions produced by atheists, the granddaddy of them all is surely this: “If God made everything, who made God?”

To understand the thinking behind the question, let’s turn to the High Priest of Atheism, Professor Dawkins himself. In his 400-odd page polemic against his creator, *The God Delusion*, he wrote the following:

The whole argument turns on the familiar question, “Who made God?” which most thinking people discover for themselves. A designer God cannot be used to explain organized complexity because any God capable of designing anything would have to be complex enough to demand the same kind of explanation in his own right. God presents an infinite regress from which he cannot help us escape. This argument... demonstrates that God, though not technically disprovable, is very, very improbable indeed.

Ho hum. So let’s get this straight. We start by saying that anything with a degree of complexity must have been designed. Seems logical. And the designer behind that thing must be more complex than the thing itself. Good so far? But if we apply this to God, it follows that we have this infinitely complex being, but no one there to have designed him. Therefore he can’t exist, can he?

Looks like Dawkins might have a point, doesn’t it? Okay, let’s continue the logic and see where it takes us. So if there is no God, it follows that everything ultimately came from nothing, right?

Now hold on a minute. Something doesn’t quite ring true there, does it? The chain of logic seemed to be in order right up until the point where it needed non-existent space/time/matter to bring itself into existence. Maybe we need to back up and check our thinking.

## BEYOND US

There is a false assumption at the core of the “Who made God” objection which is the idea that humans are capable of understanding the attributes and properties of God, such as his eternal and infinite being. Yet there is a very good reason why this is not so. The universe you and I inhabit consists principally of three things: time, space and matter, which means that our only frame of reference is to these three things.

God, on the other hand, is by definition timeless, transcendent and spirit – the exact opposite of the attributes for which we possess any hard knowledge. In other words, these three attributes of God just happen to lie completely outside the realm of human scientific enquiry, which is confined to time, space and matter, and so our ability to pronounce authoritatively on the existence of God using our knowledge and experience alone is about the same as a three-year-old pronouncing authoritatively on the reasons for the causes of the First World War.



## THE NON-GOD HYPOTHESIS

Let's look at the non-God hypothesis first. Broadly speaking there are two competing theories of the "Big Bang." One proposes that it was literally the start of everything. In other words, prior to the Big Bang there was nothing – no pre-existing time, space or matter. The other assumes the prior existence of space, time and matter. The problem with the first is that of nothing producing something. The problem with the second is that it implies eternally existing matter, and that a tiny amount of matter can order itself into a universe of intricacy and beauty. Let's plug these versions into our question:

1. "What is the probability of absolute nothing being capable of producing a universe?"
2. "What is the probability of matter existing eternally and being capable of producing a universe from itself?"

In case you didn't work it out, the answer to both questions is zero. Or to put it another way, they are infinite improbabilities. Rephrasing the original question, we might well ask: "If everything made everything, what made everything?"

## THE GOD HYPOTHESIS

But what if we plug God into the same question? "What is the probability of an infinite and omnipotent entity being capable of bringing a universe into existence?"

Well, here the answer is clearly the opposite of the others. The likelihood of an omnipotent and infinite entity being capable of bringing a universe into existence is an infinite probability. Which is in effect the teaching of Romans 1:20:

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.

The "Who made God?" question turns out to be high irony. We have enough

Rephrasing the original question, we might well ask: "If everything made everything, what made everything?"

As an illustration, imagine a fetus that could think and reason as well as a fully grown adult, and imagine that it was aware of the water surrounding it, but of nothing beyond that. Its entire sphere of knowledge consists of water, and everything outside water is an unknown, including, of course, its mother. Now, would that fetus be in any position to make scientifically verifiable statements about the probability of the existence of a mother by trying to understand the attributes of the mother? To the fetus, which knows nothing but a life lived in water, and therefore has no ability to conceive of life outside water, the idea of a being that is said to exist outside water would appear to be utterly inexplicable. Such a fetus might well conclude that such a being is very, very improbable. Of course this doesn't mean that the fetus has no mother. All it means is that

the fetus cannot understand the concept of a mother.

And so it is with Man. Trying to determine the probability of God by trying to grasp the concept of an eternally-existing, uncreated being, is merely a fruitless attempt to superimpose our knowledge of time, space and matter on a being for whom, by definition, these characteristics simply don't apply. On the basis of our knowledge and experience alone, the best we could do would be to say that the probability of the existence of a timeless, transcendent spirit who made the universe is 50/50.

But this is not the end of the story. For whilst we can't determine the probability of God by looking at his attributes, we can do so by asking, what is the likelihood of the universe even existing under the "God hypothesis" or the "non-God hypothesis"?



# How on earth did they get those stones there without lorries and giant excavators?

knowledge to state that matter cannot have created itself, or appeared from nothing, or been eternally existent, which you would think ought to tell us something. But instead of concluding – as logic would suggest – that it must therefore have been created by something outside the material universe, this very knowledge is then used as a reason for rejecting the only plausible explanation out there. And then, when the death of God has been proclaimed, back goes the unbeliever to believing the falsehoods which he knows are impossible.

It's a bit like a man looking at the Great Pyramid of Cheops, scratching

his beard and shaking his head in bemusement saying, "I just can't understand it. How on earth did they get those stones there without lorries and giant excavators? Now I know that those stones can't have appeared there from nothing. And I know they can't have gotten there by themselves. And I know that they cannot have been there forever."

But the more he tries to understand how the men of those days could have put these stones into position, the more he fails to understand it. In the end he gives up, shrugs his shoulders and says, "Oh well, I suppose they must have just appeared there, or got there by themselves, or been there forever after all." Such thinking may be many things, but logical, rational and reasonable it certainly isn't!

## AN EASY QUESTION

If you begin your theory of the universe with anti-logic, you're going to have to go on with anti-logic. Which is why in *The God Delusion*, Dawkins explains the beginnings of life in a sentence you sense he would rather not have had to put in at all, but knew he must otherwise some

little boy out there might point the finger at him and blurt out, "Hey look! The professor has got no clothes on!" And what was his explanation? "Life," he explained, "needed some luck to get it started."

That was it. The mechanism whereby dust became a living creature was some luck! Notwithstanding his desperate desire not to be thought ridiculous, the little boy stood and cackled derisively at the professor anyway.

So that's the alternative, folks. Something from nothing, followed by a little bit of luck to turn rocks into bugs, then a long bloody process where we take our place as 55th cousins twice removed to the dung beetle. Or we can go with the timeless, transcendent, spirit God, without beginning and without end, who spoke a universe into existence for his glory, and crowned it with the creature made in his own image. Now that's not a hard question, is it? RP

**Rob Slane** lives with his wife and five home-educated children in Salisbury, England. He is the author of *The God Reality: A Critique of Richard Dawkins' The God Delusion*, and now blogs several times a week on cultural issues from a biblical perspective at [www.theblogmire.com](http://www.theblogmire.com).

## COMICS





## Problem to Ponder #199 – “Calculate the Cost”

What is the better buy? A 2 kg jar of mixed nuts for \$9.49 or a 250 kg bag of mixed nuts selling in the bulk section for \$0.55/100 g? What is the better buy? Three peppers (in a 400 g package) for \$4.39 or a 150 g individual pepper that costs \$1.65? What, therefore, is the lowest price that could be paid for 3 kg of mixed nuts and 6 red peppers?

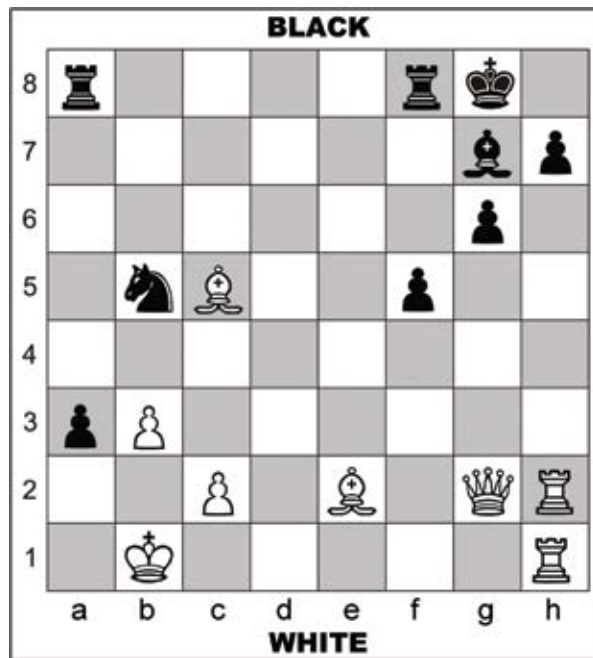
## Riddle for Punsters #199 – “A vehicle to which he could relate!”

What did the army officer have in common with his jeep? He was \_\_\_\_\_ of war, he was running out of \_\_\_\_\_ to carry out all his duties and he was ready to blow a \_\_\_\_\_ when given frustrating orders.

What did he have in common with his jeep’s windshield? He felt \_\_\_\_\_ when he had to run for long periods of time in the rain.

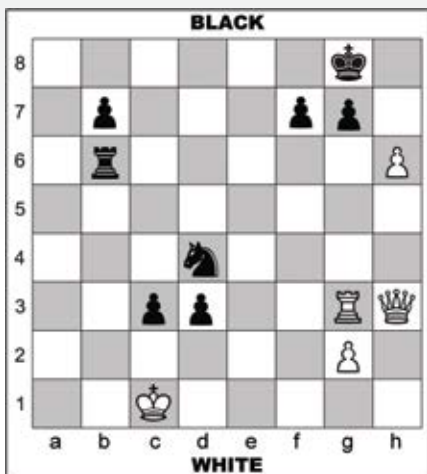
**WHITE to Mate in 3**  
Or, If it is BLACK’s Move,  
**BLACK to Mate in 4**

## Chess Puzzle #199



## Last Month’s Solutions

### Solution to Chess Puzzle #198



### White to Mate in 3

#### Descriptive Notation

1. Q-B8 ch K-R2
2. RxP/7 ch KxP
3. Q-KR8 mate

#### Algebraic Notation

1. Qh3-c8 + Kg8-h7
2. Rg3xg7 + Kh7xh6
3. Qc8-h8 ++

### BLACK to Mate in 2

#### Descriptive Notation

1. ----- N-d4-e2 +
2. K-Q1 R-N8 mate

#### Algebraic Notation

1. ----- Nd4-e2 +
2. Kc1-d1 Rb6-b1 ++

## Answers to Riddle for Punsters

### #198 – “A Honey of a Rash”

Barney Bumblebee came down with a bad rash on much of his body, so bad that he did not want to be seen in public with his **honey**. She sent him to a doctor who diagnosed it as a case of the **hives**.

## Answers to Problem to Ponder

### #198 – “Inside the Inside Figure”

What is the area of a square that exactly fits inside a circle which exactly fits inside a square of area 64 square cm? The area of the outer square = 64 cm<sup>2</sup>.

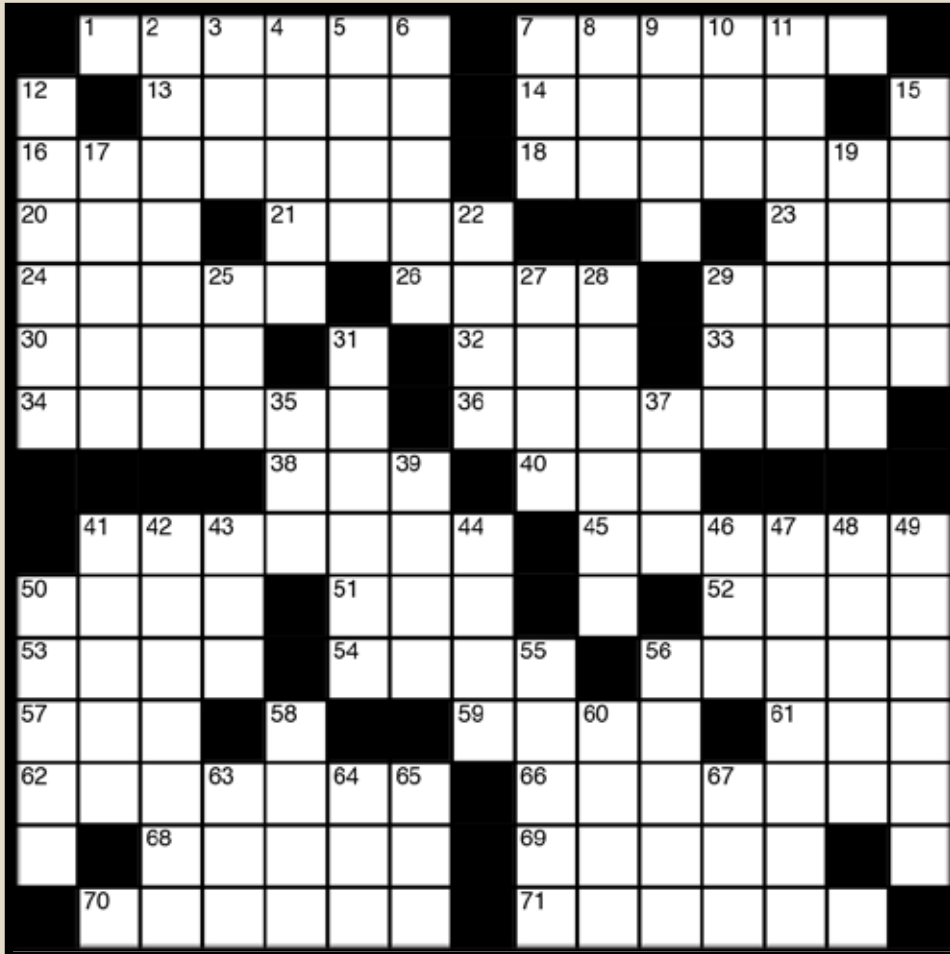
Therefore each side of that outer square = 8 cm (since 8x8=64)

Therefore the diameter of the circle is also 8 cm. Thus, 8 cm is the hypotenuse of the inner square.

Let x cm be the length of each side of the inner square. By the Pythagorean Theorem,  $x^2 + x^2 = 8^2$  here so  $2x^2 = 64$  so  $x^2 = 32$  but  $(x)(x)=x^2$  is the area of the inner square! **Thus, the inner square has area 32 cm<sup>2</sup>** (exactly 1/2 the outer square’s area!)

Send Puzzles, Solutions, Ideas to Puzzle Page,  
43 Summerhill Place, Winnipeg, MB R2C 4V4 or  
robleach@gmail.com

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE



SERIES 19 #14

## PUZZLE CLUES

### ACROSS

1. Character from The Tale of Peter Rabbit
7. Type of tunnel soldier
13. Make very happy
14. Decorate with ornaments
16. Vast cold region of Russia
18. Judge of Israel
20. Female given name
21. Makes a mistake
23. Collection of miscellaneous info about something
24. Natives of Denmark
26. OT boat builder
29. Bird products
30. Enough, archaically speaking
32. A winglike part
33. TV, in Britain
34. An Indian language
36. Let go
38. Connecting word
40. Matching dishes
41. Buyers, legally speaking
45. Woke up from a deep sleep
50. Finished
51. Small tear
52. Toward the front
53. Eat a meal
54. Stout mast pole

56. Units of weight in India
  57. Short for ecology
  59. Tiara, of old poems
  61. Sugar suffix
  62. Extremely odd
  66. Pet styler
  68. Moses' older brother
  69. Greeting
  70. Clothing connector
  71. Natural ability
- DOWN**
2. Where Solomon's cedars came from
  3. Old word, as of old
  4. Peels potatoes
  5. Mix a liquid
  6. Long for
  7. Sorrowful
  8. Fruit drink
  9. Post Office Boxes
  10. Expert
  11. Makes very angry
  12. Actor's semi-private comments
  15. Pursue
  17. Lacking sense; silly
  19. The space within two lines
  22. Fly like an eagle
  25. Female farm animal
  27. Malt beverages
  28. Czech money units
  29. Airport abbreviation
  31. English estates
  35. Feline
  37. European theater of operations
  39. Kind of coffee maker

41. To expel from a building
42. Seven branched candelabrum
43. Before prefix
44. Petty quarrel
46. Flying saucer
47. Temple builder
48. Delete
49. Arid region
50. Ukrainian port
55. Direction
56. Sing in a full, rolling voice
58. "in the matter of", legally speaking
60. Location
63. Against all risks (abbr.)
64. Tibetan gazelle
65. Stop
67. Spanish greeting

### LAST MONTH'S SOLUTION



SERIES 19 #13

*Joyce*



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