

THE



"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2)

January 2014

No. 337

LETTER TO AN ATHEIST

Many of us cannot begin to imagine the earth with all its beauty and diversity of life to be here by total chance! It is ridiculous to even consider such a concept. Yet, there are many poor souls in this life who think just that. The Bible tells us plainly in 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"*. Recently, as I was posting a

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scripture on Facebook, an atheist contacted me by instant message and began to criticize me for posting Bible verses. Our electronic discourse revealed that he had been a Christian for 18 years and had gone to church 3 times per week. He is now a professed atheist. He seemed to be serious about carrying on a conversation about his beliefs if I would watch a video by Christopher Hitchens giving an atheistic explanation of God's plan. I agreed to watch the video (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ndNsE7dL5Q>) and respond via e-mail. Note that this is not a recent video, as Christopher Hitchens passed away approximately two years ago. Below is the gist of my response. I hope these comments might help you in your own defense of God, our creator.

Dear Sir,

It was my pleasure to meet you on Facebook. I've met many folks via that medium that I would not have otherwise. Learning is a lifelong process. I like to both teach and learn. My limited experiences in life have led me to listen to folks when they have something to say. I think we would both call that respect. I have thoughtfully considered [the] video that you asked me to watch. I have heard of Christopher Hitchens and had heard him in a YouTube video debate some months ago.

Mr. Hitchens started off the video by saying one is asked why there is something instead of nothing, and any answers as to the reason are not very helpful. Then, he goes on to say that he'd take 100,000 years for man be-

ing on earth. Please allow me to be forthright; to take this discussion beyond those concepts would not help with this discussion at this point. I am willing to continue but until we get past how matter got here, the age of the earth, and the theory of evolution, I don't think we'd make much progress. However, as long as you want to have a discussion of this nature I will try.

I. Why is there something instead of nothing? The "Kalam cosmological argument" is stated as follows:

1. Whatever begins to exist has a cause.
2. The universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the universe has a cause.

In 1929, Dr. Edwin Hubble's telescope found that the universe is expanding. Since it is expanding, it once had to be of one mass. The sun and all the stars will eventually die of heat death. The Second Law of Thermodynamics backs this up. All energy runs out. But, what wound the universe up in the beginning? The argument from cause and effect is a very valid one. The effect cannot be quantitatively bigger or qualitatively stronger than the cause. Thus, the cause of the universe had to be far greater than the universe itself. Looking at the universe one does not see randomness like one would first think. If everything came from an initial "big bang" that put everything in place -- should not one find everything evenly distributed in every direction? Look at the Solar System that we live in.

It is nothing one would have predicted. The anthropic principle (conditions that are observed in the universe must allow the observer to exist) comes into play at this point. I see design in the solar system. If it was any other way -- we would not be here to observe it. If the sun was closer we would burn up. If it was further away - we'd freeze. There are perhaps around 30 something parameters or constants in the universe. They appear to be "fine-tuned". If the gravitational constant was any different - we would not be here. Back to the main point -- cause and effect. The universe is an un-random effect that was caused by something greater than itself.

II. I don't have the space to fully discuss the age of the earth and evolution. However, I do not agree with the dating methods (most if not all) that are used by modern geological/evolutionary science. I think Mount St. Helens is a text book case to prove my point. We know for fact Mount St. Helens erupted in 1980. Modern dating methods were used on those rocks. They were shown to be of vast age via those methods. Based on modern science I don't believe in "millions of years".

III. Consider the theory of evolution. Charles Darwin had the following to say about the human eye:

Notice a quote from the *Origin of Species*, CHAPTER VI - DIFFICULTIES OF THE THEORY:

...To suppose that the eye with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting

the focus to different distances, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correction of spherical and chromatic aberration, could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest degree.

Mr. Darwin didn't even know about the complexity of the human cell and DNA. I have a minor in Biology from Tennessee Tech University in Cookeville, Tennessee. My studies through the years concerning the human cell and DNA have indicated the immense complexity involved with both. DNA is a "code" composed of 4 letters: A, T, C & G representing different molecules. These 4 letters are read, and from them the heart, brain, eyes, the cells--the entire human body is directed and made from this blueprint. Back to the cause and effect argument, a fortuitous or chance roll of the dice did not make man out of random molecules. There is a principle called Irreducible Complexity. There could be no human without all the various systems of the body already in place. A code has to have a "code maker". Some who don't believe in God will say they believe humans were seeded on earth via aliens. I've heard Richard Dawkins say that he thought that was possible. But, that only pushes the argument back a step and solves nothing. You still have to ask "where did the aliens come from?"

There are numerous references that articulate the things I've discussed much better

than I can. We've only scratched at a small portion of the surface of a subject that is vast and very deep.

In the name of The Eternal First Cause,

Tim Eldridge
Woodland, AL

APOLOGIA

QUESTION: Why does there seem to be contradictions in the Bible such as the difference in the accounts of the ancestry of Jesus in Matthew and Luke?

ANSWER: In some passages of God's holy word there might appear to be a contradiction. Upon closer observation, however, one will usually find that he has overlooked something either there or in another passage which will prove the misunderstanding to be that - simply his own misunderstanding.

Note, for example, the seeming difference between the lines of descendants in Jesus' ancestry. Matthew 1 lists 27 generations between David and Jesus, while Luke 3 lists 42 generations. Those who discount the Bi-

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ble allege this to be a contradiction, but upon close observation it is easily detected that Matthew was writing of Jesus' line through Solomon, while Luke was writing of Jesus' line through Nathan, the brother of Solomon. God wisely provided for us to know the ancestry of both Jesus' mother and His supposed father.

This is similar to the accounts of Jesus' apprehension by those who came to take Him before the council just prior to His crucifixion.

Matthew states that *"one of them...struck a servant of the high priest...and smote off his ear"* (26:51).

Mark writes, *"one of them...smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear"* (14:47).

Luke tells us, *"One of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear"* (22:50).

John records, *"Simon Peter...smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus"* (18:10).

Each of the writers was correct, but Luke included which ear was cut off (the right ear), while John included even more in telling us the "one of them" was Peter, the ear removed was the right ear, and even the name of the high priest's servant. When all ac-

counts are considered, then the event is completely known.

HARRY COBB
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SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. How old was Sarah when her son Isaac was born?
2. What happened to forty-two of the children who made fun of Elisha's baldness?
3. Who instructed her daughter to ask for the head of John the Baptist?
4. Who lied about the price they received for a piece of land and died as a result?
5. Whose twelve year old daughter did Jesus raise from the dead?

...and remember last month's questions?

1. What was the name of Ruth's son? OBED
(Ruth 4:17)
2. What animal did Samson kill on his way to Timnah? LION (Judges 14:5-6)
3. To which tribe did Jesus belong? JUDAH
(Hebrews 7:14)
4. Which prisoner did the crowd call for to be released when Pilate asked them? BARABBAS (Matthew 27:21)
5. What does James say we should say when we make our future plans? IF THE LORD WILL, WE SHALL LIVE, AND DO THIS, OR THAT
(James 4:15)