

A Reason to Believe meets us in the upside-down world of moral relativism and scientific naturalism with lucid and reasonable answers. Dr. Elmarie Meintjes approaches some of the deepest questions of life with a scientific mind and a theistic worldview. This book will help you dig deeper into the challenges of our culture and strengthen your faith in the sufficiency of God's word. Mastery of these contents will surely prepare a generation of God's faithful servants to engage the world in which we live with a confident ability to display convincing reasons for belief. May you be blessed and may God be glorified with these wonderful pages!

- Richmond Goolsby

Director, North Texas Baptist Association,
Lewisville, TX

In today's incoherent and disjointed global culture, especially in our Western educational universe, innumerable students are daily fed a regimen of 'Reasons NOT to Believe' in a post-grave Life. This LIFE was guaranteed to those who BELIEVE, by the august and peerless God and Lord Jesus Christ, when 2 millennia ago, He burst forth from His tomb. To counter the noisily trumpeted evolutionary views, Dr. Elmarie Meintjes has published a profoundly simple, readable, yet thoroughly scientific text. May I highly recommend to all school administrators, science teachers and students that they include a copy of *A Reason To Believe* in their curriculum.

- Rev. Dale Cutlip

General Director, GlobeWorks International Ministries,
Birmingham, AL

I am thrilled to recommend this book to you! I could not put it down. Dr. Meintjes has written a well-researched, eloquent, easy-to-understand book, which puts the puzzle pieces of our life map together. *A Reason to Believe* provides tools for students to examine scientific claims with 'cordial skepticism.' At 103 pages, this thin paperback seems like a quick-read, but it is packed with questions and Bible studies that will enhance further understanding and facilitate hours of discussion. I highly recommend this book to supplement any science textbook and for any reader who desires to give an answer for 'a reason to believe.'

- Anita Nelson

Home-based Educator, TX



A REASON TO BELIEVE

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A REASON TO BELIEVE

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*To my three precious sons
and all the sons and daughters on this planet.
Because it matters in heaven what you choose on earth.*

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WHY THIS BOOK?

“Helmuth feels his thoughts changing, charging ahead to a dangerous place. Slowly, an idea rises to the surface and floats in front of Helmuth. He catches it, breathes it in and it grips him. It won’t let him go. He snaps on the light, takes out a piece of paper and jots down everything he can remember from the BBC broadcast. By midnight, he completed an essay titled, ‘*Who Is Lying?*’”¹

Helmuth, a German teenager, could stay silent no longer. News from the small shortwave radio hidden in his room gripped his soul. News that Hitler would not allow the Germans to hear. He typed tirelessly through the nights and left his letters in strategic places. Helmuth dared to tell the truth, knowing it could cost him his life.

People eventually rebuilt broken lives and cities after the dreadful war. A new, liberated world emerged; a world of freedom and prosperity, wrapped in luxuries of modern technology. Most, however, are all too familiar with the cauldron of hopelessness, injustice, poverty, abuse and suffering that kept right on sputtering. Life is hard and difficult to understand, the truth like silly putty. With a moral compass resembling a fan, it seems impossible to find meaning and direction in the sea of life.



Ignoring a problem of this magnitude is not an option for most of us. One day, I watched some ants tackle a cookie. Instead of dragging the mammoth treasure, they deftly chopped off bite-size pieces and scurried off to their nest. We too can tackle the nebulous problem of life in bite-size pieces. Then, we can link the pieces like a puzzle, a “Life Puzzle,” to build the big picture of meaning, purpose and direction.

Despite his youth, Helmuth already had the important puzzle pieces in place. Therefore, he could separate right from wrong, conquer his fears and act with conviction and purpose. In his upside-down world, Helmuth made a difference; his life had meaning that extended beyond this world. More importantly, on the day Helmuth faced his executioners, he was not lost in a storm of confusion and despair. He had a reason to believe in the living God who cares. Do you?

¹ S. C. Bartoletti, *The Boy Who Dared*. Scholastic Press, 2008, 121.

CHAPTER 1

THE LIFE PUZZLE

In a debate between Dr. Stephen Hawking, a professor of mathematics at Cambridge University, and Dr. John Lennox, a professor of mathematics at Oxford University, Dr. Hawking said, “Religion is a fairy story for people afraid of the dark.” Dr. Lennox quickly retorted, “On the contrary! Atheism is a fairy story for people afraid of the light.”¹

These scientists have two opposite Life Puzzles, because they chose different pieces for their puzzles. In fact, many puzzles have crooked pieces jammed together; but the puzzle owners cannot, or will not, acknowledge it. As a result, you will find quite an assortment of Life Puzzles in this world. Below are a few you may recognize:

- ♦ The atheist puzzle is the universe and the particles it consists of. The puzzle is defined by scientists and limited to the physical world. It is void of purpose and anything spiritual or supernatural. Because the atheists’ world is limited to the physical realm, they have to believe in the theory of evolution to explain their origin. They lack a puzzle piece for eternal destiny.
- ♦ Central to the Buddhist puzzle is the wheel of life, representing reincarnation. Buddhists meditate to achieve enlightenment, and perceive the world in some sense as unreal in order to be happier and more compassionate. They follow the teachings of Buddha, especially the four noble truths regarding suffering (the truth about suffering, the cause, the end and the path to the end of suffering). Their eternal destiny puzzle piece is a blissful nothingness called “nirvana.” Buddhists also believe that devas, characters from other realms, do not play a role in our world.
- ♦ Allah, the creator of the universe as revealed through the Qur’an, is a corner piece to the Muslim puzzle. This group’s puzzle includes pieces of eternal paradise, obedience to Allah and the command to perform jihads. The most literal reading of the Qur’an implies that by sacrificing your own life in the name of Allah, you earn assurance to reach paradise.²
- ♦ Most African tribes have a puzzle piece about a supreme being who made them. However, they also worship idols of gods like the sun and forefather spirits who



¹ J. Lennox, *Science and Faith*, 2013 Pensmore Dialogue.

² Sura 3:157, <compellingtruth.org/assured-paradise.html>

require sacrifice, sometimes even the sacrifice of their children. Their eternal destiny pieces include “good spirit” or “bad spirit.”

These puzzles are so radically different that they cannot possibly all be true! The French essayist, Michel de Montaigne, said it best in his essay, *Of Liars*, that there are a thousand ways to miss the bull’s-eye, but only one way to hit it. Only one Life Puzzle can have pieces that match flawlessly.

This guide will take you on a remarkable journey of adding some of the most important pieces to your own Life Puzzle. Life actually becomes quite a ride when the pieces click into place, when you gain insight, clarity and an unshakable hope.

If all else fails, read the instructions for building your Life Puzzle:

- ✓ The corner pieces of this puzzle are *Truth, Science, Man* and *God*.
- ✓ Be critical. Verify information for yourself.
- ✓ Do not attempt to force-fit pieces together.
- ✓ The question sections have the most valuable puzzle pieces.
- ✓ Most questions contain references to Bible verses that you can find in the “Answers from the Bible” sections.



YOUR TURN TO DIG DEEPER: THE LIFE PUZZLE

1. What does an atheist believe regarding a supreme being or beings?
 - a. Were there atheists in King Solomon's time? (Read Psalm 14:1). You can find the scriptures referenced for each question in the "Answers from the Bible" below. Unless otherwise indicated, all scriptures are quoted from the New King James Version. Different Bible translations in many languages are available at <biblegateway.com>.
 - b. Can you prove God does not exist?
2. What did God command His followers regarding worship? (Read Exodus 20:1-6 and Isaiah 42:8).
3. The Israelites repeatedly turned away from the one true God to worship demons and idols. (Read Deuteronomy 32:17).
 - a. What were the consequences? (Read 2 Chronicles 24:18, Psalm 115:4-8).
 - b. What happened to the god "Dagon?" (Read 1 Samuel 5:2-4).
 - c. Did people in the New Testament worship idols? (Read Acts 17:22-23).
 - d. Can you name a few religions that still require idol worship today?
 - e. Do you have any idols? (Read Colossians 3:5).
4. In Genesis 22, God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his only son.
 - a. What helped Abraham to be obedient? (Read Hebrews 11:17-19).
 - b. What was the consequence of Abraham's obedience? (James 2:21-23).
 - c. God did not let Abraham offer Isaac, what did He do instead? (Read Genesis 22:11-14).
 - d. By not letting Abraham sacrifice Isaac, God also taught Abraham an important lesson about child sacrifice. Can you explain this? (Read Deuteronomy 12:31).
 - e. Abortion is legal in many countries, but is it right? Is it different from sacrificing a child?

ANSWERS FROM THE BIBLE

1. **Psalm 14:1:** "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, they have done abominable works; there is no one who does good."
2. **Exodus 20:1-6:** "And God spoke all these words: 'I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image – any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. ...'"

Isaiah 42:8: "I am the LORD, that is My name; and My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to carved images."

3. **Deuteronomy 32:17:** "They sacrificed to demons, not to God, to gods they did not know, to new gods, new arrivals that your fathers did not fear."
- 3a. **2 Chronicles 24:18:** "Therefore, they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served wooden images and idols; and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem because of their trespass."
Psalms 115:4-8: "Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. ⁵They have mouths, but they do not speak; eyes they have, but they do not see; ⁶They have ears, but they do not hear; noses they have, but they do not smell; ⁷They have hands, but they do not handle; feet they have, but they do not walk; nor do they mutter through their throat. ⁸Those who make them are like them; so is everyone who trusts in them."
- 3b. **1 Samuel 5:2-4:** "When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon and set it by Dagon. ³And when the people of Ashdod arose early in the morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the earth before the ark of the LORD. So, they took Dagon and set it in its place again. ⁴And when they arose early the next morning, there was Dagon, fallen on its face to the ground before the ark of the LORD. The head of Dagon and both the palms of its hands were broken off on the threshold; only Dagon's torso was left of it."
- 3c. **Acts 17:22-23:** "Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, 'Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; ²³for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to the unknown god. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you.'"
- 3e. **Colossians 3:5:** "Therefore, put to death your members, which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire and covetousness, which is idolatry."
- 4a. **Hebrews 11:17-19:** (NASB) "By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; ¹⁸it was he to whom it was said, "In Isaac your descendants shall be called." ¹⁹He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type."
- 4b. **James 2:21-23:** "Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? ²²Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.' ²³And he was called the friend of God."
- 4c. **Genesis 22:11-14:** God provided a ram
- 4d. **Deuteronomy 12:31:** "You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods."

CHAPTER 2

THE TRUTH CORNER

Many deny the existence of the truth puzzle piece. Others have it upside down or twist it to justify invalid pieces. Yet, that does not change the fact that objective truth exists and that we can know it. Since it is easy to twist our innate sense of right and wrong to justify our desires, we need a standard of truth higher than mankind. Finding a reliable source of truth is therefore the first critical step.



2.1 A RELIABLE SOURCE

Over the ages, many have recorded their ideas and beliefs in sacred texts or holy books. A quick Internet search will list books for Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Baha'i, Islam, Scientism and hundreds more – each claiming to be the bearer of truth. One can find some truth in all of them. The real deal though will be the book that is set apart like a brilliant polished diamond amongst dull rocks. One with a central message unlike any other. Today, the Qur'an most likely takes second place amongst religious books, as Islam has slowly spread around the globe.

It all started around 632 AD, when an angel appeared to Mohammed in a cave and told him about Allah. Muhammad became a prophet and founded the religion of Islam. He was illiterate, so his companions most likely wrote down his words after his death. The collection of these works became known as the the Qur'an. However, copy errors and insertions soon created several versions with discrepancies. To solve the problem, the third caliph, Uthman, chose one of these versions to be the standard Qur'an for all Muslims, and destroyed the rest.¹

The Qur'an describes miraculous events, some prophecies, information not generally known at that time, as well as many historical narratives similar to the Old Testament of the Bible.² Yet incongruities abound. Paramount is the fact that the Qur'an denies the deity of Christ and the triune nature of Jehovah God. Surah 4:171 states, "O People of the Scripture, do not commit excess in your religion or say about Allah except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, was but a messenger of Allah and His word which He directed to Mary and a soul [created at a command] from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers. And do not say,

¹ S. Green, *The Preservation of the Qur'an*. <answering-islam.org/Green/uthman.htm>, accessed October 2015.

² T. Wallace, <fortressoffaith.org> accessed June 2015.

"Three"; desist - it is better for you. Indeed, Allah is but one God. Exalted is He above having a son."¹

The Qur'an's assertion that Jesus was Mary's son, a true prophet and messenger from God, presents a dilemma. Jesus unmistakably claimed to be God the Son (Mark 14:60-65, John 8:58, John 14:7, see Chapter 5.2). If Jesus was only a messenger of Allah, then He was delusional or a liar and therefore not a true prophet or great moral teacher. The apostle Paul warned long before the Qur'an was written, "Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ." (Colossians 2:8) Perhaps, the most significant problem followers of Allah face is that apart from martyrdom, the Qur'an offers little guarantee to enter eternal paradise. In stark contrast, the God of the Bible does not require your death. Instead, He sent His own Son to die in your place.

The Bible, the Word of God, is widely regarded as the most read book in the world. This unique book claims an exalted position as the ultimate standard and authority on truth. It never relies or appeals to any other authority. Moses wrote, "God is not a man that He should lie." (Numbers 23:19) Jesus Christ himself declared, "I am the truth" (John 14:6) and John wrote, "God's word is truth." (John 17:17) Jesus also said God's word is the ultimate judge of truth (John 12:48). No truth exists apart from Him because in Him is hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Colossians 2:3). According to the Bible, God gave all Scripture by His divine inspiration (2 Timothy 3:16). If this is true, the Bible must have unique and supernatural qualities. And it does!

God inspired over 40 men on three different continents for more than 1,500 years to write the 66 books of the Bible. They recorded history and prophecies, pronounced blessings and judgment, and answered countless questions according to God's instruction. Amongst the authors were kings, scholars, military men, shepherds and fishermen. Many were heroes with exceptional leadership, valiant men who changed history. Such were Moses, Daniel, King David, King Solomon and Paul, to name a few. Around 2000 years ago, soon after Jesus had conquered death, He personally called Saul of Tarsus into His service.

Saul, who became Apostle Paul, was a highly educated Roman citizen with a consuming passion for God. To protect God's holy name, he intensely persecuted the early Christians. That is until the day he met Jesus up close and personal and became a new man. Paul wrote many of the New Testament books and endured intense persecution and suffering, as he boldly proclaimed the truth until his death. It is said that Paul,

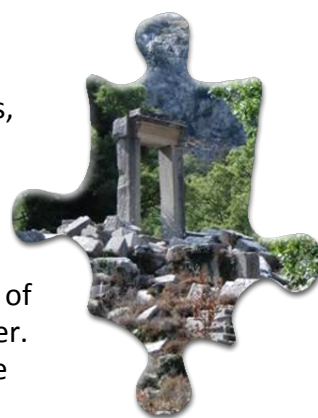
has already influenced more minds than Plato ever did; in the end, he will have influenced far more than Plato, and Bacon, and Kant, and Locke,

¹ Qur'an, Surah 4. An-Nisaa, Ayah 171. Sahih International, <corpus.Qur'an.com>

combined:— than all the Greek, the Persian, the Egyptian, the Roman priests and sages united. ... He travelled farther than Herodotus had done; he sought more than any other man the great central points of influence in the world; and at Jerusalem, at Damascus, at Antioch, at Ephesus, at Philippi, at Athens, at Corinth, at Rome, he left impressions of his presence and power such as no other man made, and destined to be of longer continuance than any opinions which influenced the men of that generation.¹

Despite the variety of authors and times, all 66 books have a remarkable unity and central theme. They consistently point to the most important story, the one about God's plan for humankind that begins in the book of Genesis and concludes in the book of Revelation. Every book of the Bible expands on this plan, weaving the story with a continuous golden thread. No man or committee came together to plan it or oversee those taking part in the amazing story. No person could, since the authors (for the most part) lived in different times and never knew each other. Only someone who is greater than mankind and outside of time could have authored and executed this amazing plan. This awe-inspiring fact alone sets the Bible apart from any other book on the planet. It is however, not the only evidence to validate the Bible as the source of ultimate truth.

A myriad of external evidence confirms the Bible's reliability, such as archeologically verified places and events, extra-Biblical documents and scientific accuracy. Details on this are readily available from many sources.¹ Unlike the Qur'an, the factual consistency within the Bible and amongst the multiple copies thereof further points to divine guidance and preservation. The Bible is also a record of countless detailed prophecies that were fulfilled to the letter. More on this in the next chapter. The evidence of the divine inspiration of Scripture is truly overwhelming.



Sometimes parts of the Bible can be confusing at first glance, only because we lack knowledge of customs and places. For instance, in Revelations 3:15-16, God warns the church of Laodicea, "I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth." Would God wish anyone to be spiritually cold? No, but to the people of Laodicea the message was clear. The analogy referred to the water condition of the city of Laodicea, which was

¹ *Early Training of the Apostle Paul*, <biblestudytools.com/classics/barnes-scenes-in-life/early-training-of-the-apostle-paul.html>, accessed November 2015.

¹ For example, watch the fascinating and award-winning documentary, *Patterns of Evidence: Exodus*, by Timothy Mahoney. <patternsofevidence.com>.

² D. Padfield, *Churches In The Lycus River Valley In Turkey. The Church at Laodicea in Asia Minor*. <padfield.com/2005/laodicea.html>, accessed November 2015.

dependent on mineral rich water piped from a spring south of the city. By the time the water reached the city, it was lukewarm and nauseating. This was in stark contrast to the therapeutic hot springs of the nearby city Hierapolis and the refreshing cold water of Colossae.²

Some critics argue that even though the Bible is true, verifiable and reliable, man cannot accurately interpret it. However, this incorrect reasoning denies objective truth. Dr. Jonathan Sarfati, a creationist and chemist, explains, “The accuracy of interpretation of Scripture is determined by how it matches the intended meaning of the author. This is determined by rule of grammar and historical and literary context ... an appeal to general human fallibility is simply not sufficient.”¹ Ultimately, only the life-changing power of the Bible will convince you of the truth.

The Bible is “living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit.” (Hebrews 4:12) Through the Bible, God reveals truths not as mystical or religious ideas but as practical wisdom from a personal friend and counselor. While Jesus walked the earth, He often told stories about everyday life to confront heart issues. He knew his hearers would inevitably find themselves in the stories. When Jesus taught, he used common language in a gentle way, but His words have depths that demand a lifetime to explore.

No other book has ever been hated with such a fury. It must be because light erupts from every page, and darkness hates the light. Brutal persecution over millennia has failed to obliterate the Bible’s message of hope, love and truth. This fact testifies to the incredible life-giving power and truth of God’s Word. If you choose the Bible as your ultimate source of truth, you will be able to determine truth in every situation you face. You will find unimaginable treasures and genuine Life Puzzle pieces. Most importantly, you will meet your holy and righteous Creator and develop a relationship with Him.

“And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe.” (John 19:35)

YOUR TURN TO DIG DEEPER: THE TRUTH

1. How is Allah and the Qur’an different from the LORD God and the Bible? (Watch the online discussion, *The Koran vs Genesis*²)
2. Read 2 Timothy 3:16, one of the most important statements in the Bible. What does it mean that all Scripture is God-breathed, or inspired by God? (Also, read 1 Corinthians 2:13).

¹ J. Sarfati, Ph.D., *Refuting Compromise*. Master Books. 2004, 45.

² *The Koran vs Genesis*. Creation Magazine LIVE! 4-21, <creation.com/creation-tv>.

3. Why did God give us His written word? (Read 2 Timothy 3:16 again, also Isaiah 43:10 and 1 John 5:13).
4. What is the root problem of those rejecting the truth of the Bible? (Read Romans 1:18, Ephesians 4:17-18 and 2 Peter 3:5, 15-16).
5. Who and what will convince those who hear the truth? (Read 1 Corinthians 2:4 and Hebrews 4:12).

ANSWERS FROM THE BIBLE

2. **2 Timothy 3:16:** "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness."
- 1 Corinthians 2:13:** "These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual."
3. **Isaiah 43:10:** "'You are My witnesses,' says the Lord, 'And My servant whom I have chosen, That you may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, nor shall there be after Me.'"
- 1 John 5:13:** "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God."
4. **Romans 1:18:** "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness."
- Ephesians 4:17-18:** "This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, ¹⁸having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."
- 2 Peter 3:5:** "For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water."
- 2 Peter 3:15-16:** Peter warns that unstable people who don't know what they are talking about, twist Scripture to their own destruction.
5. **1 Corinthians 2:4:** "And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God."
- Hebrews 4:12:** "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

2.2 PROPHECIES AND PROBABILITIES

Humans cannot foretell the future. Therefore, when prophecies come true it is powerful proof of divine origin. Unlike the vague prophecies of Nostradamus, the Bible is filled with detailed prophecies from the first one in Genesis 3, fulfilled in Christ Jesus, to the last ones in the book of Revelation, speaking of days in our near future. In this, the Bible is unique. Dr. Carl Broggi wrote, “There are no verified fulfilled prophecies in the Muslim’s Koran, in the Latter Day Saint’s Book of Mormon, in the Hindu’s Upanishads or in any other religious or secular book.”¹ Over a period of 1,500 years, many prophets, angels and regular people (like Joseph who interpreted dreams), accurately foretold events. Examples include the rise and fall of nations and kings, impending dangers and even weather forecasts.²

Most fascinating are the more than 300 prophecies about the birth, life, death and purpose of one person, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus himself claimed that the Scriptures testify about Him.³ To put the significance of these prophecies in perspective, let us make up a modern day scenario. Imagine that around 1,500 years ago, several people accurately foretold some detail about Queen Elizabeth. Maybe they wrote where she would be born, the name of her great-great-great-grandfather, her role in England and world events, and in what manner she would die. This would be supernatural and surreal. However, much more than this was prophesied about Jesus, which is overwhelming evidence of the truth and divine inspiration of the Bible.

Critics say that the Lord Jesus, who knew the Old Testament, arranged events to fulfill prophecies, just so He could claim to be the Messiah. It is a bit difficult, however, to pre-arrange for example your own virgin birth, birthplace and crucifixion. Some say that you can find other historical figures that fit Messianic prophecies. It is true that certain individuals could fulfill one or even a few, but to find one person to fulfill them all is next to impossible. In the mid-1900s, Peter Stoner, a science professor, wanted to find out just how impossible this was. In his book, *Science Speaks*, he published a compilation of probability statistics regarding many prophecies, including those about Jesus. Members of the American Scientific Affiliation reviewed the mathematical analysis and found it sound, dependable and accurate.

Professor Stoner’s initial assessment included only eight of the 300 prophecies regarding Jesus (listed in the question section below).⁴ He found that the chance that any man fulfilled all eight prophecies was one in 10^{17} . This number is so

¹ C.J. Broggi, *Why is the Bible Unique?* In *How Do We Know the Bible is True?* Master Books. 2012, 55.

² Read Genesis 41, Daniel 8, Mathew 2:13, 1 Kings 17:1 as a few examples.

³ Luke 24:44, John 5:39, Hebrews 10:7

⁴ P. W. Stoner and R.C. Newman, *Science Speaks*. Moody Press Chicago, Online HTML revised edition 2002, Chapter 3, <sciencespeaks.dstoner.net>, accessed October 2015.

enormous and the chance so small, that Professor Stoner used an analogy to help the reader visualize it. He wrote,

Suppose that we take 10^{17} silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state, two feet deep. Now, mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote using their own wisdom.¹

Perhaps you will agree at this point that this is as close to impossible that one can get, but Professor Stoner took it one step further by adding eight more prophecies, assuming the same probability as the first eight. This resulted in a chance of one in 10^{45} . The number 10^{45} is beyond comprehension, so Professor Stoner used another analogy to explain:

Take this number of silver dollars. If you make these into a solid ball, you will have a great sphere with a center at the earth, and extending in all directions more than 30 times as far as from the earth to the sun. (If a train had started from the earth at the time the Declaration of Independence was signed, and had traveled steadily toward the sun at the rate of sixty miles per hour, day and night, it would be about reaching its destination today. But remember that our ball of silver dollars extends thirty times that far in all directions.) If you can imagine the marking of one silver dollar, and then thoroughly stirring it into this great ball, and blindfolding a man and telling him to pick out one dollar, and expect it to be the marked one, you have somewhat of a picture of how absolutely the fulfillment of sixteen prophecies referring to Jesus Christ proves both that He is the Son of God and that our Bible is inspired.

In his search for happiness and meaning, Josh McDowell tried religion, education, prestige and parties without finding answers. Eventually, he was drawn to a small group of Christian students at the university campus. Upon asking them why they are different, a student answered, "Jesus Christ." "Oh, for God's sake, don't give me that kind of garbage. I'm fed up with religion. I'm fed up with the church. I'm, fed up with the Bible," he snapped.² His new friends then pointed out that Christianity is not a religion. Religion is humans trying to work their way to God. They challenged him to make a "rigorous, intellectual examination of the claims of Christ," which is exactly what he did. He even suspended his studies for a period. Josh started by looking for "indisputable evidence that the Bible is unreliable." He found evidence, lots of it, but evidence that led him to the conclusion that "the Old

¹ P. W. Stoner and R.C. Newman, *Science Speaks*. Moody Press, Online HTML revised edition 2002, Chapter 3, <sciencespeaks.dstoner.net>, accessed October 2015.

² J. McDowell and S. McDowell, *More Than a Carpenter*. Tyndale. 1977, 2005, 2009, 5.

and New Testament documents are some of the most reliable documents in all of antiquity.”¹ His wrote about his journey of finding true Life Puzzle pieces in his book, *More Than a Carpenter*. His story might just change yours.

Drawn by tales of rugged beauty and unique lifeforms, my husband and I decided to explore the Richtersveld, a harsh mountainous desert in South Africa. This was back in the days before cell phones and GPS devices. At the last remnant of civilization, a dusty town bordering the desert, we stopped to buy a map. Since roads were non-existent in the Richtersveld, the storeowner sold us a topographical map on which he signposted certain landmarks as well as places to avoid. That the map showed significant wear and tear after one week is an understatement. Our very lives depended on that map! Similarly, the Bible is the map for our life’s journey. A journey filled with beauty and dangers alike. The Bible is the only accurate and trustworthy map available, because God, who cannot lie,² is the author. It is precious beyond words; treat it as such.

YOUR TURN TO DIG DEEPER: PROPHECIES AND PROBABILITIES

1. Who is the ultimate source of prophecies recorded in the Bible? (2 Peter 1:21)
2. Jesus said, “These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.” (Luke 24:44) Read eight of the 300 prophecies regarding Jesus Christ. These are the ones Professor Stoner used in his probability analysis.

	<i>Prophecy</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Fulfillment</i>
a.	Micah 5:2		Matthew 2:1-2
b.	Malachi 3:1		Luke 1:13-17
c.	Zachariah 9:9		Matthew 21:1-9
d.	Psalms 41:9		John 13:21-27
e.	Zechariah 11:12		Matthew 26:15
f.	Zechariah 11:13		Matthew 27:5-7
g.	Isaiah 53:7		Mark 15:3-5
h.	Psalms 22:16, Isaiah 53:12		Luke 23:33

¹ J. McDowell and S. McDowell, *More Than a Carpenter*. Tyndale. 1977, 2005 and 2009, 7.

² Titus 1:2, Isaiah 25:51

ANSWERS FROM THE BIBLE

1. **2 Peter 1:21:** "For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

2a. **Micah 5:2:** "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting."

Matthew 2:1-2: "Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, ²saying, 'Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.'"

2b. **Malachi 3:1:** "'Behold, I send My messenger, and he will prepare the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. Behold, He is coming,' says the LORD of hosts."

Luke 1:13-17: "But the angel said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. ¹⁴And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. ¹⁵For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. ¹⁶And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.'"



He

2c. **Zechariah 9:9:** "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey."

Matthew 21:1-9, Jesus enters Jerusalem riding on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

2d. **Psalm 41:9:** "Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me."

John 13:21, 25-27: "When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.' ²⁵Then, leaning back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, 'Lord, who is it?' ²⁶Jesus answered, 'It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it.' And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. ²⁷Now, after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then, Jesus said to him, 'What you do, do quickly.'"

2e. **Zechariah 11:12:** “Then I said to them, ‘If it is agreeable to you, give me my wages; and if not, refrain.’ So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver.”

Matthew 26:15: “‘What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?’ And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver.”

2f. **Zechariah 11:13:** “And the LORD said to me, ‘Throw it to the potter’—that princely price they set on me. So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the LORD for the potter.”

Matthew 27:5-7: “Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself. ⁶But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, ‘It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood.’ ⁷And they consulted together and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in.”

2g. **Isaiah 53:7:** “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth.”

Mark 15:3-5: “And the chief priests accused Him of many things, but He answered nothing. ⁴Then Pilate asked Him again, saying, ‘Do You answer nothing? See how many things they testify against You!’ ⁵But Jesus still answered nothing, so that Pilate marveled.”

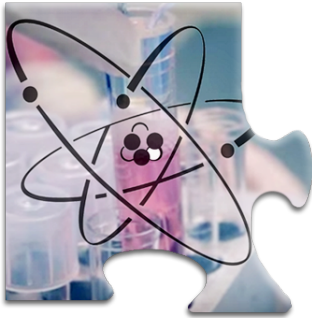
2h. **Psalm 22:16:** “For dogs have surrounded Me; the congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet.”

Isaiah 53:12: “Therefore, I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.”

Luke 23:33: “And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left.”

CHAPTER 3

THE SCIENCE CORNER



Scientists and the many branches of their studies fill the second corner of this puzzle. People often get riled up debating various issues of science. Perhaps this is because man is quite proud of his understanding of the universe and everything in it. When Charles Darwin published his book, *On the Origin of Species*, in 1859, it created a sensation. Here, finally, was a scientific puzzle piece to explain life without God. Today, secular scientists and the media claim that you must choose between science and

God if you want to be intellectually acceptable, meaning that both beliefs cannot fit in the Life Puzzle. Before choosing, though, consider clarifying your ideas about science, scientists and the limits of scientific explanation.

3.1 SCIENCE

By definition, science is “the intellectual and practical activity encompassing the systematic study of the structure and behavior of the physical and natural world through observation and experiment.”¹ This definition describes observational or operational science, which requires an eyewitness who gathers, interprets and publishes the data. It is repeatable and testable. A different kind of science exists that is not to be confused with observational science. It is called historical science and it relies only on indirect evidence. The indirect evidence used in historical science must always be interpreted, and the interpretation depends heavily on the assumptions or starting points of the scientist.

Historical science has produced origin theories such as the “Big Bang” (origin of the universe) and evolution (origin of species). Creationism is also an origin theory that explains God as the purposeful Creator of the universe and all life. Most people will categorize creationism as historical science. However, unlike the Big Bang and evolution theories, creationism is backed by an eyewitness account and reliable documentation.² By understanding that observational science is verifiable, but historical science depends on the scientist’s assumptions, you can better sort through the good and the bad of the science puzzle pieces. Yet, depending on the nature of scientific fields, even observational science is not immune to interpretation and assumptions.

¹ The Oxford Dictionary.

² K. Ham and T. Mortenson, *Science or the Bible?* June 14, 2007, <answersingenesis.org>.

Fields of science such as astronomy and quantum physics are in constant flux as new research disproves or clarifies accepted facts. The reason lies, in part, in man's limited ability to explore deep space and the world of atoms respectively. The same is true for biology, medicine and nutrition, because the complexity of life is still far beyond our understanding. Many theories therefore resemble tumbleweeds – they stick to fences for a while, but eventually, they too roll away in the wind. This does not mean that science is a waste of time. On the contrary, it is critically important to save lives, improve living conditions, and to fulfill God's commandment to subdue the earth and rule the living creatures.¹



Science is fascinating, and we enjoy the benefits of the resultant technology. It is rather chilling how much modern civilizations have come to depend on it. Yet, there is no ultimate precision and stability in man's scientific knowledge and understanding. S. M. Hutchens, the senior editor of *Touchtone*, wrote, "I am uneasy with the 'but science now understands' language used in support of theistic evolution. The current state of empirical [observational] science is too slender reed to lean on this way, since tomorrow it may 'understand' something much less friendly to theism."² Unlike scientific textbooks that quickly become obsolete, the Bible has stood the test of time. God's Word remains relevant, up-to-date and without mistakes.

*"Who has directed the Spirit of the LORD, or as His counselor has taught Him?
¹With whom did He take counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him in the
 path of justice? Who taught Him knowledge, and showed Him the way of
 understanding?" (Isaiah 40:13-14)*

¹ Genesis 1:28

² S. M. Hutchens, *Review of Creation and Time by Hugh Ross*. Touchstone 8:40 Winter 1995.

YOUR TURN TO DIG DEEPER: SCIENCE

1. A few thousand years ago, God questioned Job rather seriously in Job 38:4–7. Can you answer God?
2. Even though the Bible was not meant to be a science textbook, it contains many scientific truths. What was written regarding:
 - a. The revolving earth? (Read Luke 17:34–36)
 - b. Wind patterns? (Read Ecclesiastes 1:6)
 - c. Washing in running versus stationary water for sanitizing purposes? (Read Leviticus 15:13)
 - d. Sanitary legislation? (Read Leviticus 13)
 - e. Four dimensions? (Read Ephesians 3:17–19. Note: In 1888, Charles H. Hinton coined the term “tesseract,” to describe the four-dimensional analog of the cube.)

ANSWERS FROM THE BIBLE

1. **Job 38:4–7:** “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. ⁵Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? ⁶To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, ⁷when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?”
- 2a. **Luke 17:34–36:** (NASB) “I tell you, on that night there will be two in one bed; one will be taken and the other will be left. ³⁵There will be two women grinding at the same place; one will be taken and the other will be left. ³⁶Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other will be left.”
- 2b. **Ecclesiastes 1:6:** “The wind goes toward the south, and turns around to the north; The wind whirls about continually, and comes again on its circuit.”
- 2c. **Leviticus 15:13:** “And when he who has a discharge is cleansed of his discharge, then he shall count for himself seven days for his cleansing, wash his clothes, and bathe his body in running water; then he shall be clean.”
- 2d. **Leviticus 13** provides sanitary legislation.
- 2e. **Ephesians 3:17–19:** (NASB) “... so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.”

3.2 SCIENTISTS

As mentioned before, facts of science need interpretation. For example, Genesis 1:6-7 describes God's creation of a firmament. Fact: God created a firmament in the midst of the waters. Interpretation: the firmament was a water canopy. The interpretation always depends on the starting point of the author. Steven Hawkins admitted this when he wrote, "We are not able to make cosmological assumptions without some admixture of ideology."¹

According to Thomas Kuhn, scientists often interpret data according to the ruling starting assumptions and models, easily explaining anomalies away.² Dr. Scott, an immunologist, wrote, "Even if all data points to an intelligent designer, such a hypothesis is excluded from science because it is not naturalistic."³ Consensus, rather than truth, seems to be the driving force in the scientific community.



You also need to recognize when claims made by scientists are unfit for science puzzle pieces. For example, Richard Dawkins stated, "Only the scientifically illiterate believe we exist for a higher purpose. The scientifically literate know there is no reason 'why' we exist, we 'just do' as an accident of history."⁴ This statement, while made by a credible scientist, is not a statement of science, but rather a statement of personal belief and opinion. "Statements from scientists are not always science!" warns Dr. Lennox.⁵

Furthermore, remember that all people, including scientists, are imperfect and deceitful by nature. Mistakes, whether intentional or not, abound. Be a critical reader with cordial skepticism. An article published in a peer-reviewed journal is likely to be more credible than a case study or opinion uploaded to the internet. Always insist on multiple sources of evidence and truthful examination before adding a science piece to your puzzle.

Some claim that you cannot be a real scientist and a Christian. This is another statement of opinion—and a false one at that. There are many internationally recognized Christian scientists, some with multiple doctoral degrees. They demonstrate excellence and integrity in their research, publish in scientific journals and are popular speakers at conferences. Consider also that many of the greatest

¹ S. W. Hawking and G.F.R Ellis, *The Large Scale Structure of Space Time*. Cambridge University Press. 1973, 134.

² T.S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. 3rd edition, University of Chicago Press. 1996.

³ S.C. Todd, correspondence to *Nature*. 410 (6752):423, September 30, 1999.

⁴ G. Easterbrook, *Of Genes and Meaninglessness*. *Science*. 277:892, August 15, 1997.

⁵ J. Lennox, *Science and Faith*. 2013 Pensmore Dialogue.

scientists who ever lived made scientific breakthroughs, not in spite of, but because of their faith in the living Creator God.

These scientists expected to find laws, structure and ordered systems, because they served a God of order (See Chapter 3.6). Dr. Henry Morris writes, “And somehow this attitude did not hinder them in their commitment to the “scientific method.” In fact, one of them, Sir Francis Bacon, is credited with formulating and establishing the scientific method! They seem also to have been able to maintain a proper “scientific attitude,” for it was these men (Newton, Pasteur, Linnaeus, Faraday, Pascal, Lord Kelvin, Maxwell, Kepler, etc.) whose researches and analyses led to the very laws and concepts of science which brought about our modern scientific age.”¹

Most of us admire brilliance, whether we see it in a scientist, musician, artist, chef, athlete, engineer, or a leader. The list is endless, because people are amazing. However, all this admiration pales in comparison to the admiration due the greatest Scientist of all – the One who designed, built, and still maintains everything, from the tiniest molecular engine, to the vast incomprehensible galaxies. His mind and brilliance compare to none.

“To whom then will you liken Me, or to whom shall I be equal?” says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things, who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, by the greatness of His might And the strength of His power; not one is missing.” (Isaiah 40:25-26)

YOUR TURN TO DIG DEEPER: SCIENTISTS

1. Is it Biblical to be skeptical and demand evidence? Did people in the Bible ever ask for evidence from God? (Read Genesis 15:8-9, Numbers 16:28, Judges 6:17 and 2 Corinthians 8:24).
2. Why was the Berean believers called “fair-minded”? (Read Acts 17:11).
3. Does God require evidence from those who claim to be His children? (Read Matthew 7:15-20 and 2 Corinthians 13:5).
4. One of the Bible authors was a scientist called Luke.
 - a. What was his occupation? (Read Colossians 4:14).
 - b. Which two books did he write? (Read Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1).
 - c. From reading Luke 1:1-4, how thorough do you think his research was?
 - d. Do you think he believed God created the universe and everything in it? (Read Acts 4:24).

¹ H. M. Morris Ph.D., *Bible-Believing Scientists of the Past*. <icr.org/article/bible-believing-scientists-past>.

ANSWERS FROM THE BIBLE

1. **Genesis 15:8-9:** "And he said, 'LORD God, how shall I know that I will inherit it?' So He said to him, 'Bring Me a three-year-old heifer, a three-year-old female goat, a three-year-old ram, a turtledove and a young pigeon.'"
Numbers 16:28: "And Moses said: 'By this you shall know that the LORD has sent me to do all these works, for I have not done them of my own will.'"
Judges 6:17: "Then he said to Him, 'If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me.'"
2 Corinthians 8:24: "Therefore show to them, and before the churches, the proof of your love and of our boasting on your behalf."
2. **Acts 17:11:** "These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so."
3. **Matthew 7:15-20:** "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? ¹⁷Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Therefore by their fruits you will know them."
- 2 Corinthians 13:5:** "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified."
- 4a. **Colossians 4:14:** "Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you."
- 4b. **Luke 1:1-4:** "Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, ²just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, ³it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed."
- Acts 1:1:** "The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach."
- 4d. **Acts 4:24:** "So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: 'Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them.'"

3.3 LIMITS OF SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATION

Underlying our willingness to accept scientific claims as fact, is a rising movement called “scientism.” It is the idea that science is the only way to truth. Many renowned scientists would stake everything on the validity of that claim. Thankfully, the dangerous idea of scientism is false. To disprove it, Dr. Lennox uses logic. He said, “Is the statement that science is the only way to truth a statement of science? No, it is a statement about science. Thus, if it is not a statement of science and science is the only way to truth, that statement cannot be true. It must be false if it is true!”¹ Science cannot be the only way to truth, because there is truth that is outside the scope of science.

To explain, let us consider what science does. For example, the laws of gravity explain what gravity does and how it acts. The laws can give us equations to help send a man to the moon, but it cannot explain what gravity is. Explanation is limited even in science itself. Dr. Lennox uses the kettle to explain. He begins by asking, “Why is the kettle boiling?” Well, the stove heats up the kettle, which conducts energy and causes vibration of water molecules until it reaches 100 degrees Celsius. Nonsense! It is boiling because I want a cup of tea!

You see, there are two kinds of explanations: a “how” explanation and a “purpose” explanation. Science can only answer the how questions of function. It can explain the physical properties of paper and ink, but it cannot explain why the written letters or symbols such as music notes have meaning. A different level of explanation is needed, one of purpose and intelligence.¹



Everyone admiring a beautiful mansion will naturally assume that a great architect designed it with purpose and intelligence. How then, can we look at the universe’s intricate order and specific design, and not recognize the purpose and intelligence of the Architect? Sadly, too many reject the existence of a spiritual realm, despite the evidence from the physical realm.

Nicodemus, the Pharisee, once asked Jesus how a man could be reborn.² Jesus used earthly metaphors of birth and physical wind to explain spiritual rebirth, but Nicodemus still could not understand. Jesus then asked, “If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?” (John 3:12) Jesus’ question reveals the fact that science can never explain or define the spiritual realm. However, the physical realm clearly points to the almighty Creator in a way that not just scientists, but everyone, can see. Paul explained, “For

¹ J. Lennox, *Science and Faith*. 2013 Pensmore Dialogue.

² John 3:1-11

since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.” (Romans 1:20)

“Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable.” (Isaiah 40:28)

YOUR TURN TO DIG DEEPER: LIMITS OF SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATION

1. Aristotle taught that a prime mover is a being solely responsible for creating the universe and everything in it. If a being has the power to create something out of nothing, will humans who are limited within the creation and bound to time be able to intellectually grasp the entirety and origin of this infinite Being? (Read Psalm 103:14, Isaiah 55:8-9 and 1 Corinthians 2:11).
2. Does God claim to be the prime or unmoved mover? (Read Colossians 1:16-17 and 1 Corinthians 8:6).
3. Daniel 3:8-28 tells of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who refused to bow before the gold image of King Nebuchadnezzar, even though they were certainly familiar with the science of fire.
 - a. Did they believe God was greater than the laws of nature?
 - b. What reason did they give for their choice?
 - c. What was Nebuchadnezzar’s reaction?
4. God often overrules laws of nature, we call it miracles. You can find countless fascinating examples in the Bible. Below a few to consider. Some say the miracles in the Bible are only symbolic. What do you think? Does it matter?
 - a. The water of the Jordan backed-up for the Israelites to cross over. (Joshua 3:14-17)
 - b. The sun stood still. (Joshua 10:1-15)
 - c. Balaam and the talking donkey. (Numbers 22:21-30)
 - d. Jesus fed 5000 people with five loaves and two fish. (Matthew 14:13-21)
 - e. Christ Jesus’ resurrection. (1 Corinthians 15:3-8)

ANSWERS FROM THE BIBLE

1. **Psalm 103:14:** "For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust."
Isaiah 55:8-9: "'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' says the LORD. ⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.'"
- 1 Corinthians 2:11:** (NASB) "For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God."
2. **Colossians 1:16-17:** "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist."
- 1 Corinthians 8:6:** "... yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live."
3. In **Daniel 3:8-28**, Daniel's friends disobey the king. You can find the book of Daniel after Ezekiel, between Psalms and the book of Matthew.
- 4a. **Joshua 3:14-17** describes the Jordan drying up because the water "rose in a heap very far away at Adam."
- 4b. **Numbers 22:21-30** tells of the pagan prophet Balaam, his conversation with his donkey and the Angel of the LORD.
- 4c. In **Matthew 14:13-21**, Jesus multiplied five loaves and two fish to feed 5000 people.
- 4d. **1 Corinthians 15:3-8:** "For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. ⁶ After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. ⁷ After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. ⁸ Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time."

SCIENCE PUZZLE PIECES

Before leaving the science corner of the puzzle, it will be helpful to sort through some of the puzzle pieces concerning the universe, rocks and fossils, organization and energy and lastly, life itself. A logical place to start is at the very beginning.

3.4 THE INCREDIBLE UNIVERSE

• THE BEGINNING

You are most likely familiar with the Big Bang theory and the singularity theories as explanations of the origin of the universe. With the help of great minds such as Newton, Robertson-Walker and Einstein, some astrophysicists determined that the universe is expanding. Reversing time, they make the assumption that space-time must have become a singular at the point $S=0$.¹ Alan Guth, the author of the inflation theory, wrote, "The observable universe could have evolved from an infinitesimal region. It's then tempting to go one step further and speculate that the entire universe evolved from literally nothing."² (Note that many scientists disagree, since they believe that a steady state universe always existed.³) However, there are several problems with the mind-boggling idea that a random expansion of nothingness created our universe.

First is the infinitely precise tuning of all forces to support the universe and life. For example, if the gravitational force were off just a bit either way, stars would burn up too fast or burn too cold. Martin Reese, a famous astrophysicist and cosmologist from England, wrote a book about six numbers and the universe. He concludes that:

These six numbers constitute a 'recipe' for a universe. If any one of them were to be 'un-tuned,' there would be no stars and no life. Is this tuning a coincidence? Or is it the providence of a benign Creator? I take the view that it is neither. An infinity of other universes may well exist where the numbers are different. Most would be stillborn or sterile. We could only have emerged in a universe with the 'right' combination. It is astonishing that an expanding universe, whose starting point is so 'simple' that it can be specified by just a few numbers, can evolve (if these numbers are suitably 'tuned') into our intricately structured cosmos.⁴

Reese finds the data amazing, and he interprets it according to his starting point.

¹ S. W. Hawking, *The Large Scale Structure of Space Time*. Cambridge Univ. Press. 1973, 137.

² A. Guth and P. Steinhardt, *The Inflationary Universe*. Scientific American. May 1984, 128.

³ F. Hoyle, G. Burbidge, and J.V. Narlikar, *A Different Approach to Cosmology*. UK: Cambridge University Press. 2000.

⁴ M. Reese, *Just Six Numbers: The Deep Forces That Shape the Universe*, 2000.

Reese acknowledges that science cannot explain this fine-tuning, but he denies the existence of a spiritual reality. He chooses to believe in an untestable theory of an infinity of universes, which mirrors the reasoning behind evolution: something must eventually happen if you never quit trying. Like “the monkey banging away at the typewriter will eventually type a Shakespeare novel” argument. However, this argument lacks a critical component called “purpose.” To explain, even if the monkey types for infinity, he can never reach a goal without a pre-determined purpose. Sir Reese’s multi-verse theory, as well as the Big Bang theory, has no purpose whatsoever. These theories also lack an explanation of a source of energy.

Newton’s first law of thermodynamics exposes the energy source problem. According to this law, energy cannot be created or destroyed. Scientists now agree that this law even holds true in quantum mechanics as well as the expanding universe.¹ Since new energy cannot be added to the universe, the universe must have received the total incalculable amount of energy at birth. Neither the multi-verse nor the Big Bang theory proponents have a testable answer for the original source of energy.

Dr. Sarfati lists a host of other problems with the Big Bang theory.² Quantized red shift analysis contradicts the no-center assumption. Star formation is another sticky issue. Gasses do not contract and spontaneously start a nuclear fusion reaction. It needs an unimaginable compression force. Some suggest exploding stars formed new stars, but how did the first star form? Missing antimatter, as well as problems in explaining galaxy formation and their rotations makes it difficult, if not impossible to link Big Bang pieces together.² These are not the only issues.

John Harnett writes, “Just detecting Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB) radiation, which was a big bang prediction of George Gamow in 1948, is not sufficient reason (evidence) to conclude that the big bang happened ... Besides there is contradictory evidence that supports the idea that the CMB radiation is not even from the background and thus it can’t be leftover radiation from the big bang fireball, as is believed.”³ Recently, LIGO observatories observed gravitational waves as predicted by Einstein. Even though this exciting observation clarifies several theories, it does not strengthen the Big Bang theory in any way.³

On the other hand, Hebrews 1:10 explains, “In the beginning, LORD, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands.” God Himself was the source of energy because He created the universe, as indicated by the Hebrew word “*bara*” in Genesis 1:1, 21, 27 and Genesis 2:3 and 4. “*Bara*” means

¹ Clara Moskowitz, *Fact or Fiction? Energy Can Neither Be Created Nor Destroyed*. Scientific American. August 5, 2014.

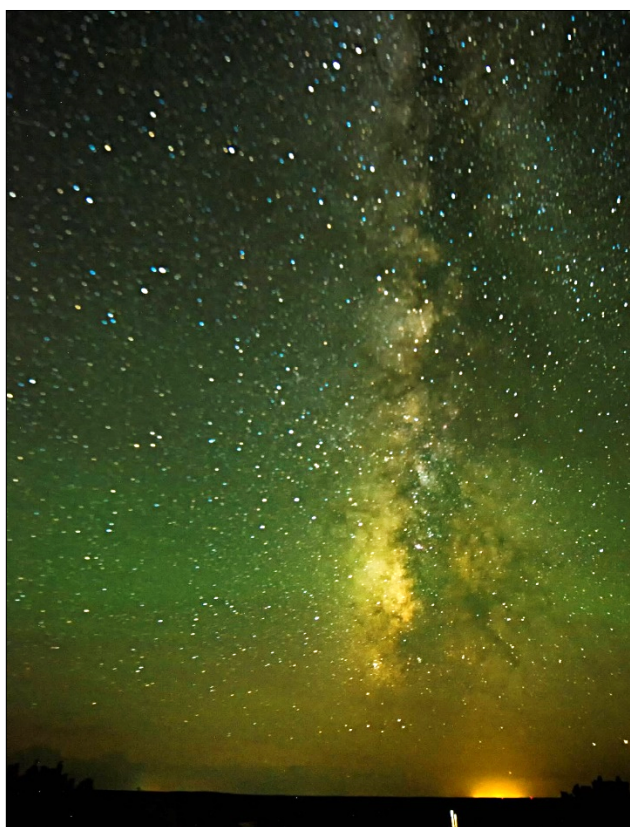
² J. Sarfati, *Refuting Compromise*. Master Books. 2004, Chapter 5.

³ J.G. Harnett, *What Impact Does the Detection of Gravitational Waves Have on Biblical Creation?* February 16, 2016, <creation.com>.

to shape or create which infers creating out of nothing. No person, not even the most brilliant scientist, can ever create out of nothing. So how did God create the universe out of nothing? Did you know the word “uni-verse” means “single spoken sentence?” The words “God said” in Genesis 1 represent God’s action of creation, His “bara.” Because energy equals matter,¹ we can conclude that God energized the universe creating time, matter and space with His spoken words.

Some claim that there are similarities between the Big Bang theory and Genesis 1. However, as long as the Big Bang tumbleweeds keep rolling, the future of any such similarities is in jeopardy. It makes infinitely more sense that the amazing cosmos reflects not random chaos, but rather the supreme intelligence and inexpressible ability of God, the Creator, as revealed in the Bible.

“He has made the earth by His power; He has established the world by His wisdom, and stretched out the heaven by His understanding.” (Jeremiah 51:15)



The Milky Way in the starlit sky of West Texas²

¹ Albert Einstein, *Theory of Special Relativity*, $E=mc^2$.

² Photo courtesy of Steve Miller, <SteveMiller3D.com>.

YOUR TURN TO DIG DEEPER: THE BEGINNING

1. How did God create the universe? (Read Psalm 33:6-9, Jeremiah 51:15).
2. Our universe is in no way haphazard or illogical, and the laws of nature are constant. Would the universe then likely have originated from an unchanging source, or from random chaos? (Read James 1:16-18).
3. Everything, from the motion of planets to interactions between molecules to subatomic particles, obey laws of nature.
 - a. Laws pre-suppose a lawgiver. Does God claim to be the lawgiver of the laws of nature (ordinances of heaven and earth)? (Read Jeremiah 33:25).
 - b. Does the Bible provide a foundation for the laws of nature? (Read the article by Dr. J. Lisle, *God & Natural Law*. August 28, 2006, <answersingenesis.org/is-god-real/god-natural-law/>)
4. Is God bound to the laws and physical limits of the universe He created? (Read 1 Kings 8:27 and Isaiah 66:1).

ANSWERS FROM THE BIBLE

1. **Psalm 33:6-9:** “By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. ⁷ He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deep in storehouses. ⁸ Let all the earth fear the LORD; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. ⁹ For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.”
Jeremiah 51:15: “He has made the earth by His power; He has established the world by His wisdom, and stretched out the heaven by His understanding.”
2. **James 1:16-18:** “Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. ¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. ¹⁸ Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.”
3. **Jeremiah 33:25:** “Thus says the LORD: ‘If My covenant is not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth ... ’”
4. **1 Kings 8:27:** “But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain You, how much less this house which I have built!”
Isaiah 66:1: “Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. Where is the house that you will build Me? And where is the place of My rest?”

END OF PAGE VIEW