“How Do I Convince My Friends to Be Saved?”

I have some really good friends who claim that they are Christians but I know for a fact that they aren’t saved and I’m not exactly sure how to talk to them about Christ and getting saved. I also hear some of them who claim to be Christians say that they are glad that their parents don’t go to church because then they wouldn’t be able to sleep in on Sundays. I have brought a couple of them to my church but they acted like they didn’t like it. How should I convince them that they should believe in Christ?

My second question is this: I have a friend who always talks about Christ and how he has changed her life. But I know that she hasn’t been saved. Do you have to be saved go to heaven?

Having an attitude of trying to convince people to believe in Christ will seldom be successful. There needs to be a sincere desire to seek the truth. Your time would be well spent demonstrating an attractive vision of the Savior through your life and be ready to discuss and answer their eventual questions. Those who are indifferent to Christianity—or even hostile—need to to see a dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ which faithfully follows 1 Peter 3:15: a life that sanctifies Jesus as Lord of their lives and is always ready to give an answer for the hope that they have and yet do so with gentleness and respect. Evidence and arguments will rarely make an impact unless there is an inquisitiveness first.

And yes, we must be saved to spend eternity in heaven. Be careful however, about being certain in judging someone’s salvation. Even the greatest saints still sin and while there should be a pattern of good works to verify someon’s salvation, we all go through periods of rebellion. Also, only Christ can judge the true condition of a person’s heart.

If a person truly thinks they are saved and seeems to at least have a basic understanding of salvation through Christ, we should take them at their word until something incontrovertible happens that leads you to believe they have been living a lie. I'm just asking that you be careful in making these kinds of judgments and that as far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men (Rom. 12:18).

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin
Probe Ministries

"What Is the Prevailing Evolutionary Theory for the Origin of the Universe?"

What is the prevailing evolutionary theory for the origin of the universe? I would also like to know your views on the "Gap Theory."

The prevailing theory for the origin of the universe is the Big Bang Theory which suggests that the universe began as a particle that was infinitely dense and occupied no space. This particle came into existence essentially from nothing (actually a quantum fluctuation from nothing to something), and immediately exploded, thus beginning a process that led to the universe as we see it today. This happened approximately 12-13 billion years ago.

Astronomers, cosmologists, and astrophysicists alike will admit they have a problem accounting for the origin of the

initial particle. How does something come from nothing? The quantum fluctuation idea is a dead end since quantum physics is a property of the current universe. If there was no universe prior to the existence of the particle, how do we know that a quantum fluctuation was even possible? You must have a universe first!

In addition, the mechanistic process following the explosion that led to our current universe as we see it has difficulty explaining the many finely tuned characteristics of this universe seemingly designed for life with no purpose or design. How does a mechanistic process accomplish this? Some Christians believe that God ordered the initial particle in such a way to allow these finely tuned parameters to arise by His design by a seemingly mechanistic but preordained process. However, others like me see these properties requiring God's intimate involvement and perhaps even intervention. The other view seems more deistic (a distant God who wound up the universe initially and then left it alone) than theistic. It also seems difficult to reconcile Romans 1:20 where we are told we are without excuse of God's existence by simply observing what has been made. If it all looks like a mechanistic process, how are we without excuse?

The gap theory has been largely rejected by evangelical scholars since it requires a reading of Genesis 1:1-1:2 that seems to be ruled out by the grammatical construction of the sentence. The Gap Theory usually suggests that the earth BECAME formless and void, suggesting that God's original creation was marred (perhaps by the fall of Satan) and then God recreated it in six literal days. However, while the verb *was* is sometime translated as *became*, the Hebrew grammar of the sentence does not allow it in this case. Therefore the traditional translation that the earth WAS formless and void is preferred.

Hope this helps.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin, PhD

“Should I Be Concerned About Sarah Young’s ‘Jesus Calling’?”

What do you have to say about *Jesus Calling* author Sarah Young? I’m seeing and hearing about red flags from several other reputable Christian sources such Lighthouse Trails and Worldview Weekend.

One ought to be skeptical when someone is writing a book telling you they have heard from Jesus and this is what He said. The popularity of Sarah Young’s *Jesus Calling* also calls for scrutiny because millions are reading it and saying they have benefited from it. I have looked at the links you provided and here is what I think.

Their use of Galatians 1 to criticize the book is puzzling to me because Sarah Young does not offer another gospel. Paul was dealing with the Judaizers and those who were adding works to the salvation message. She makes quite clear that Jesus is her Savior and as a former missionary she also is clear that salvation is by grace alone. This also comes across in many of the daily entries.

Sarah Young also makes no pretension to be adding to Scripture. She makes it clear that the Bible is the only infallible word of God. In the foreword to a follow-up book, *Jesus Lives*, she says she has written what she “heard”

(quotation marks are hers) and has tried to make sure it aligns with Scripture. So she is careful to indicate she is not hearing the infallible Word of God and she checks what she eventually writes with the Bible. Each entry is followed by several Scriptures, and when Scripture is quoted in what she has written it appears in italics.

One of the links referenced 1 John 4:1 which admonishes us to test the spirits since not every spirit is from God. They did not mention the following two verses which tell us that we know a spirit is from God if "that spirit confesses Jesus as the Christ who has come in the flesh" (1 John 4:3). Sarah Young tests what she "hears" against the Word of God and she definitely believes Jesus is the Christ and came in the flesh. John also implies that we may sometimes hear from spirits that are from God! Why else would he admonish us to test them? If we never hear from God after the apostolic age, John should simply have said do not pay any attention to any spirit—it can't be from God. Testing is a waste of time if the authors from Lighthouse and Worldview Weekend are to be followed.

The gospel of John closes by telling us that Jesus did many more things that have not been written (and presumably said other things that were not written). So Jesus said some things that are not in the Bible. Since Jesus did not sin and He tells us He spoke only what the Father told Him to say (John 17:7-8), then there are words of God that were not recorded in Scripture. They are not in the Bible presumably because they were not intended for all people at all times. Similarly, I'm sure kings and leaders in Israel consulted prophets of God at times for which we have no recording. It's reasonable to assume that often the prophets did indeed hear from God but didn't write it down. Again, there have been words God has spoken that we do not have in the Bible because they were not intended for all people at all times. But it was still communication from God. The links provided verses that clearly say we are not to add to the Scriptures. I agree. Sarah Young

makes no claim to do so. Some will find what she has written useful and some will not. She may occasionally write something that is not clearly Biblical in character. Her admission that she tries to make sure what she writes is in accordance with the Bible indicates that she knows she is human, makes mistakes, and does not claim any sort of infallibility of her writings. Any Christian writer today should always recognize their own fallibility.

In John 15, Jesus calls His disciples “friends.” Since this is in the Bible it’s meant for all people at all times. Those of us who have fully accepted Jesus’ death on the cross as payment for our sin and believe God raised Him from the dead are friends of Jesus. With my earthly friends I don’t just know in my head they are my friends; I spend time with them, and yes, even converse with them. The canon of Scripture is definitely closed. Sarah Young does not pretend to be opening the canon back up again.

Jesus Calling is not for everybody. (The claims that the Jesus of *Jesus Calling* sounds feminine is more a problem of the writers than of Sarah Young.) The Triune God is the author of both masculinity and femininity. I would think He knows how to speak both languages (Isaiah 49:15).

Again, I was not impressed with the arguments put forth that what Sarah Young has written is somehow adding to Scripture, presents a false gospel, or that the only way God speaks to us today is from the Scriptures.

I have been using *Jesus Calling* and *Jesus Lives* as part of my daily devotional time for a year and a half. My discernment filter is operational all the time, and I have not come across anything that concerns me.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin, Ph.D.

Posted June 22, 2013
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“There is No Proof Your Pathetic Manmade God Ever Lived”

There is not one proof that Jesus ever lived. Everything you quoted on your stupid page was all hearsay that was passed along by g*dd*mn fools. Yeshu was real and lived one hundred years before your concocted fake savior. There was jesus of gamala who was another savior. There was jesus bar kocba, yet another savior. Josephus never wrote that passage about jesus and only a f*ing fool would believe it was anything other than another ‘christian’ lie and forgery. Josephus was a Jew and would have been stoned to death for such a statement. You people lie like dogs and couldn’t tell the truth if your lives depended on it. There were at least 50 well known authors/historians during the era that your pathetic manmade god was said to have lived yet not one of them bothered to write one word about him. Hell, man don’t you think with all his miracles and dead people popping out of graves during his crucifixion that someone might sit up and take notice? There are no people on this planet meaner or more insane that Christians. Also, our Founders did not found this nation on your sickening repulsive deadly religion and most of them hated it. History is completely silent on all the major bible characters, including the child raping killer Moses and the pimp Abraham. Thank goodness, for you couldn’t find a more disgusting and perverted bunch if you spent your life looking. Yahweh was a real b*stard that I wouldn’t allow in my**

neighborhood. Why don't you try the truth for a change?

I am sorry that our material has caused you to respond with such negative emotion.

But if I may, I'd like to engage some of your points.

> ***There is not one proof that jesus ever lived. Everything you quoted on your stupid page was all hearsay that was passed along by g*dd*mn fools.***

This is a fairly broad generalization. Could you refer to something specific so we can get a better idea of what you object to most?

> ***Yeshu was real and lived one hundred years before your concocted fake savior. There was jesus of gamala who was another savior. There was jesus bar kocba, yet another savior.***

Do you have some documentation for these various Jesus characters so we can research ourselves? This is a commonly held notion but the documentation we often see is not reliable.

> ***Josephus never wrote that passage about jesus and only a f***ing fool would believe it was anything other than another 'christian' lie and forgery. Josephus was a jew and would have been stoned to death for such a statement.***

Concerning Josephus, Michael [Gleghorn] clearly indicates that the second passage he refers to by Josephus was likely edited by a Christian scholar to include the references to Jesus as the Christ and other messianic phrases. Most scholars regard the rest of the passage as genuine. www.probe.org/ancient-evidence-for-jesus-from-non-christian-sources/.

> You people lie like dogs and couldn't tell the truth if your lives depended on it. There were at least 50 well known

> authors/historians during the era that your pathetic manmade god was said to have lived yet not one of them bothered to write one word about him.

Can you provide us a list of a few of these authors/historians? You have to consider that any news did not travel very far or very fast in that era. Many of Jesus' miracles would be beyond belief for many and would have just been dismissed. It makes sense therefore, that Jesus was noted a few decades later when the number of his followers continued to grow despite severe persecution.

> ***Hell, man don't you think with all his miracles and dead people popping out of graves during his crucifixion that someone might sit up and take notice? There are no people on this planet meaner or more insane that Christians. Also, our Founders did not found this nation on your sickening repulsive deadly religion and most of them hated it.***

I agree with you to a degree. Jefferson and Franklin were likely deists who used the Bible when it suited them. George Washington however, seems to be a genuine Christian. Do you have sources who indicate otherwise?

> ***History is completely silent on all the major bible characters, including the child raping killer moses and the pimp abraham.***

Well, that's not exactly true. Roman and Jewish historians make reference to Jesus and Christians in the first century. Also a stone from around 800BC contained the phrase "House of David." Babylonian records refer to the appropriate kings of Judah in the early years of the Babylonian captivity, both those left in Jerusalem and those taken to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar is real as are the accounts of various Assyrian kings mentioned in Chronicles and Kings. The Babylonian and Persian kings are accurately reflected in Daniel. It's quite unlikely to find any archeological references to Abraham,

Isaac and Jacob. They were nomadic herders who didn't keep any history.

> ***Thank goodness, for you couldn't find a more disgusting and perverted bunch if you spent your life looking. Yahweh was a real b*stard that I wouldn't allow in my neighborhood. Why don't you try the truth for a change?***

We are looking for the truth and confidently believe we have found it in Jesus Christ of Nazareth. I suspect that something else besides your perceived lack of evidence is driving the strength of your rejection. Whatever that may be, I am truly sorry that some Christian or group of Christians have grievously harmed you in some way in the past. No true Christians ever claim to be perfect or to have exhaustive knowledge. But we have seen and experienced the truth in ways that are quite convincing.

Respectfully,

Raymond G. Bohlin, Ph.D.

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https://sites.google.com/site/yahwehelohiym/sons-of-god/the-boundaries-of-the-nations

Yahweh was just a hateful petty tribal god and one of the many sons of el elyon, the most high god, and your bible proves it but you people do not understand what the hell you read and keep the lies going.

I'm afraid your source is a bit behind the times. While some of what he says is correct, that some names of God go back to the Ugaritic language, his/her reliance on the Documentary Hypothesis is outdated. www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2010/09/24/the-documentary-hypothesis.aspx#Article

"Sons of God" appears elsewhere in the Old Testament, in

Genesis 6:2,4 and Job 38:7. In each case it is either a reference to men who followed God (Genesis 6) or angels (Job 38). Nothing new or damaging here.

If you just look a little further in the Old Testament you find Isaiah saying;

> I am the Lord, I have no peer,
> there is no God but me.
> I arm you for battle, even though you do not recognize me.
> I do this so people will recognize from east to west
> that there is no God but me;
> I am the Lord, I have no peer.
> Remember what I accomplished in antiquity!
> Truly I am God, I have no peer;
> I am God, and there is none like me (45:5-9)

The God of the Bible is a monotheistic God throughout. And we do have a nearly complete Book of Isaiah from the Dead Sea Scrolls and the only difference with the Masoretic text of AD 900 is a few spelling changes.

One item at a time.

www.stephenjaygould.org/ctrl/buckner_ncn.html

I also advise you to read *Liars for Jesus* and Thomas Paine's *The Age of Reason*. Paine helped word our Constitution and Bill of Rights and named this country The United States of America. Few Christians will speak about his book because it cannot be refuted intelligently. His part 3 proves there are NO OT prophecies of jesus and makes jackasses of anyone who says otherwise. Can you people read? Christians don't follow the doctrine of jesus, they follow the apostate liar paul. Read the *Egyptian Book of the Dead* to find the Lord's Prayer and the so-called ten commandments along with many other items the murdering jews (who are not jews but are liars from the

synagogue of satan) stole and created their rotten religion. Much of what they stole was from the ancient Sumerians who lived about 1000 years before the hyksos came to be known as Hebrews. Their epic of creation was used by these maggots to create the most bloody and perverted religion this world has known, until Christians showed up.

Hmmm. I don't recall claiming that the U.S. is a Christian nation. You won't find that anywhere on our website. But do read from George Washington's farewell address:

> Of all the dispositions and habits, which lead to political prosperity, Religion and Morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of Patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of Men and Citizens. The mere Politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connexions with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked, Where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths, which are the instruments of investigation in Courts of Justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect, that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.

Clearly he doesn't say what religion, but there was little else in America at that time except for different forms of Christianity. Even if he only means a loose form of deism, he clearly questions that government can function for long without it.

So you really want to use Thomas Paine as your source for the conviction that there are no OT prophesies about Jesus? There

is so much we didn't know in the late 18th century. Archaeology was barely a fledgling science. So many manuscripts were unknown. We have thousands of OT and NT manuscripts today that Paine had no knowledge of whatsoever. Isaiah 52:13 through 53:12 is about as clear a prophecy of Jesus that you will find. And remember we have a complete copy of Isaiah from the Dead Sea Scrolls, well before Jesus lived.

Liars for Jesus looks like an interesting book. I have no doubt there has been sloppy scholarship on the part of many in the religious right. At Probe Ministries we make every effort to research with integrity and write with a biblical reasonableness and respect for those we disagree with.

Two of the foremost and revered Jewish Archaeologists in Israel have proven the OT is a lie but preachers will never tell that. They are greedy dogs and deceivers. www.hiddenmysteries.org/mysteries/history/jehovah.html

I am familiar with the archaeologists you mention and their conclusions are quite controversial. Archaeology comes with a need for publicity to help donors and foundations continue your funding. Making such an outrageous claim would certainly get headlines and keep the dollars flowing.

I'm not surprised that there are "official" documents declaring that YHWH had Ashterah as a consort. The Jewish histories of the Bible are filled with condemnation for continuing to worship in the high places and using Ashterah poles for fertility. They did indeed worship many gods at times. The Bible doesn't hide that.

But again, this document refers to the Documentary Hypothesis and the P source. This has been debunked for decades but is still used in many secular universities because it fits their predetermined conclusions about biblical texts.

By the way, you can find documentation for the House of David inscription here: www.reclaimingthemind.org/blog/category/archaeology/.

Also we do have the oldest form of writing from Tell Mardikh, the Ebla Tablets. These date to between the 26th and 23rd centuries BCE. There are names, of places, people, and customs similar to those found in Genesis. If Genesis was supposedly written in the 7th century BCE as many claim, these names, places and customs could not be known.

evidenceforchristianity.blogspot.com/2008/11/ebla-tablets-ancient-sumerian.html

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Elba Tablets?! Ha, your man was long ago discredited. You must keep up.

www.infidels.org/library/modern/james_still/reliability.html

Everything the so-called jews have or ever had was stolen from other cultures. It is easy to understand why those horrid creatures have been tossed out of every nation they tried to infiltrate with their money making schemes and corruptions. They were the central bankers our founders hated and tried to keep out of this nation. The Presidents who came against them were assassinated. Jackson managed to survive the attempts they made on his life but they still managed to gain the upper hand again and now the swine damn near own this entire nation. The only method used to gain control of Palestine was more lies. Go figure. You don't have a clue what is even happening in this world and who is in control.

I don't think Mr. Still refutes much of anything about the Ebla Tablets. He admits that Pettinato is a Sumerologist and therefore will have skills of translation. The only quibble Mr. Still seems to have with Pettinato is his claim to find the name Yah, similar to Yahweh. OK fine, he just offers

another opinion. He says nothing about the names of the cities on the plain. He lost almost all credibility with me in his opening three paragraphs, claiming that Christianity is just a faith and mystery religion according to Paul. Then says Josh McDowell's theology is in tension with this since McDowell wants an inerrant scripture based on facts. Sorry, I don't see any tension at all. Paul refers to actual events in his letters, things that happened to him and things he learned from the apostles. Paul is the one in 1 Corinthians 15 who puts a lot of weight on the historical resurrection. There's no tension. He's making mountains out of ant hills.

His account of how the gospels came about is some shoddy tying together of weird threads. The so-called "Q" document does not exist. It is only supposed to exist because it fits this model. He refers to some of the church fathers to back up some of his points but not to the early tradition among those same church fathers that Mark was written by Mark from Peter's recollections. Luke is indeed an historian. Still's confusion over the middle chapters is not worth responding to. Most conservative scholars now suggest that all the gospels were written before AD 70 because none of them mention the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish temple when Jesus specifically predicts this in all three synoptic gospels. It would be easy to add this as an editorial proof that Jesus got it right. Especially if these gospels were supposedly cobbled together from sayings and other recollections.

Last, I really liked the part about Jesus waving a magic wand over Lazarus in the catacombs indicating they saw him as a magician. I haven't actually seen the picture though I looked for one. Found a few articles stating the same but no documentation. I suspect that it's another Everest out of an ant hill.

I'm still working on the Thomas Paine refutation of messianic prophecies. Not terribly impressed though. As suspected some of his objections no longer hold up. He also assumes away the

supernatural so when Isaiah refers to the Persian Cyrus who wasn't even born in Isaiah's time, he uses that to say that obviously Isaiah was written after 500 BCE. It's bad form to assume away what you are trying to discredit.

Funny how you keep claiming that men like Paine just assume things while he at least existed and that is more than you can say about your bible supermen. It would be one thing to have one of these paragons of virtue (not) to disappear but to have the great majority of them to vaporize from all historical records should wake up even the village idiot. I guess when a man makes his living off conning the sheeple he will stand by his deception until the end. Religion is now a trillion dollar a year BUSINESS. That is like waiting for a used car salesman to tell the buyer to be ware, there may be something wrong with his intended purchase. If Christians really claim the bible is the word of god they must really be confused about what the book says since there are over 3000 sects of Christianity and they disagree on many points. If god is not the author of confusion he sure messed up with his only written word to man. Not only is the bible a mess of contradictions and falsehoods, it is by far the filthiest and bloodiest book ever penned by man. You claim the Creator of this entire world had any part of that filth and to me that is where blasphemy truly is found. You are obviously rooted in lies or you are just taking advantage of brainwashed people to make a living. Either way, you will never open your eyes. Enjoy the holiday of greed and materialism with the rest of the Christian world.

Your hatred blinds you at least as much as you would say my faith blinds me.

I will readily admit that much that passes for Christianity indeed is little more than business. But I would say you are guilty of following the old adage of throwing out the baby

with the bathwater. We're not all liars, cheats and frauds.

Jesus did/does exist.

He indeed fulfilled dozens of OT prophecies about the Messiah.

Performed signs and miracles beyond the plain ability of a simple magician, control over nature that frightened even his own disciples, raised a man dead for four days, healed a man blind from birth.

He died for my sins and for yours.

His historical resurrection proved his claims of deity and opened the door for all who call Him Lord and believe that God raised him from the dead, will be saved. Ten of eleven disciples died a martyr's death, believing all that they saw and heard was real.

You are following the imaginations of those who are guilty of seeking to destroy what they simply don't like. Besides, as the evolutionary biologist J.B.S. Haldane said, "If my brain is simply composed of atoms, and my thoughts are simply the interaction of atoms in my brain, I have no reason to suppose my brain to be composed of atoms" (loose paraphrase). In a fully materialistic universe, there is no truth, no way to truly know what is real; truth is simply what works, for the moment. Truth is indeed relative and ultimately unknowable. So why bother with your crusade? If some choose to belief a benevolent fiction, what do you care? Obviously you do care, you believe some things to be true and false. I only observe that you need to borrow from a Christian worldview to do so.

Pascal's wager is still worth considering; if I am wrong and death is the end and there is no afterlife, I've lost nothing. I've lived a good life, loved my wife and kids, kind to my neighbors, supported an Indian boy, and help give others hope. If you're wrong, you lose everything.

I will enjoy the celebration of the Incarnation that the now secular culture of the USA has turned into a necessary economic ritual. My family will enjoy a very modest Christmas.

I hope you can enjoy some time with friends or family during this end of year.

Respectfully,

Dr. Ray Bohlin

Posted Dec. 26, 2011
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"I Can't Recommend Probe Because of Your View of Creation"

Dear brother,

I am a Pastor and also teach Bible at _____ School. I have used some of your materials in my Church and ministry. I have also made Probe.org a resource for my Senior Bible Class. I must confess that I was greatly disappointed recently to see your view related to creation. While I admire your view that six literal days of creation make the most sense I do not at all understand how you allow "overwhelming" scientific evidence to move you from that sensible position. Seems to me that one could make the same argument of the miracles or even the resurrection to be contrary to "overwhelming" scientific evidence. It would also seem from a scientific point of view the evidence was at one time overwhelming that the earth was flat. While I do not think it is your intention to place

science above the Bible this is certainly what is happening among many of our youth today. I am sure in the long run it makes little difference but I can no longer recommend your ministry to my students or my church. Rather than be a "fence sitter" to use your description I would urge you to stand up for the faith once delivered to the saints in the inspired Word rather than the ever changing observations of science.

Pastor,

I regret your decision to deprive your students of our material because of one cautious position on an issue of secondary importance. However, I understand your position. But your response has raised issues and questions I feel I must respond to.

> *While I admire your view that six literal days of creation make the most sense I do not at all understand how you allow "overwhelming" scientific evidence to move you from that sensible position.*

This evidence is something that requires a simple and plain reading of facts that I and the other young earth creationists I have asked, have no answer for.

> *Seems to me that one could make the same argument of the miracles or even the resurrection to be contrary to "overwhelming" scientific evidence.*

Not at all. There is no pertinent scientific evidence to contradict miracles in Scripture. But there is present and currently observable evidence to lead anyone to question the young earth view of a thousands of years old earth and universe.

> *It would also seem from a scientific point of view the evidence was at one time overwhelming that the earth was flat.*

A spherical earth was recognized from the early Greeks onward. You are victim here of the naturalists' contrived view of the flat earth. The Bible never taught it and even early science never did.

> *While I do not think it is your intention to place science above the Bible this is certainly what is happening among many of our youth today.*

That is certainly not my intent and I fully recognize the strong tendency that you mention. My contention is that it is not absolutely clear that Scripture teaches a young earth.

> *I am sure in the long run it makes little difference but I can no longer recommend your ministry to my students or my church.*

I truly do not understand this position. But I have run across it frequently among my young earth friends. I find it sad and counterproductive.

> *Rather than be a "fence sitter" to use your description I would urge you to stand up for the faith once delivered to the saints in the inspired Word rather than the ever changing observations of science.*

Where in Scripture does it say the earth and universe are only thousands of years old? There are many uncertainties here both scripturally and scientifically, I for one, do not consider myself so informed to conclude which position is correct. There is a resolution, I just don't know what that is. At least I am not refusing to consider all the evidence at hand. The young earth model now admits that all the supposed radioactive decay necessary to indicate billions of years actually occurred. But since the earth CANNOT be that old the decay must have been accelerated a million times or more. This means incredible heat and radiation that would have

annihilated all life on earth, even the life on the ark. But that couldn't have happened so they appeal to miracle and heat release nowhere indicated in Scripture. That is special pleading which I find disappointing.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin, Ph.D.

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"Is Laminin All That Louie Giglio Says It Is?"

There are some crazy-popular YouTube videos featuring Louie Giglio about a cross-shaped molecule called Laminin that holds us together. What's your take on it?

As a biologist myself I was intrigued when I heard about it and watched one of his YouTube videos. He really had to pump the crowd to get the reaction he wanted when he put it on screen. He almost always uses the crafted diagram, not an actual photograph, because the diagram shows the cross far better. Seemed a little forced to me.

Some observations:

1. The cross is not Jesus, so we are not held together by a symbol of Jesus. The cross is just the symbol of crucifixion, maybe.
2. Any adhesion molecule is going to need a way to interlock with another and this shape works well.
3. As mentioned above, when you see an electron micrograph (tiny tiny photo) the cross shape is not so clear. Textbooks

will naturally lay it out differently.
4. Sorry, no goose bumps for me.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin, Ph.D.

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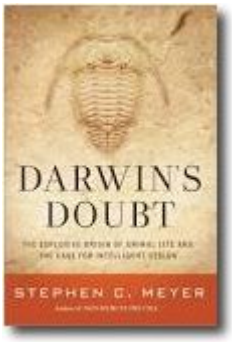
Darwin's Doubt

Dr. Ray Bohlin reviews Stephen Meyer's book Darwin's Doubt, *showing that the sudden appearance of complex animal forms in the Cambrian cannot be explained by evolutionary mechanisms.*

The Essence of the Cambrian Explosion



The fossil record of the Cambrian Period has been known as a problem for evolutionary theory since Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859. Darwin was aware of the sudden appearance of complex animal forms in the Cambrian from his own collecting in northeastern Wales. Complex animal forms such as trilobites seemed to appear with geological suddenness with no apparent ancestors in older rocks below them.



In his 2013 book, *Darwin's Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design*{1}, Stephen Meyer quotes Darwin from the *Origin of Species*: "To the question of why we do not find rich fossiliferous [fossil-bearing] deposits belonging to these assumed earliest periods prior to the Cambrian system, I can give no satisfactory answer. . . . The case at present must remain inexplicable; and may truly be urged as a valid argument against the views here entertained."{2}

Meyer provides some of the historical context of this period and Darwin's disagreement with the eminent paleontologist of his day, Louis Agassiz of Harvard. Darwin's solution to his dilemma was to suggest that the fossil record is incomplete and that he fully expected that abundant fossils would be found to indicate the evolutionary origin of these Cambrian animals. However, in the intervening century and a half, the problem has not been resolved. If anything, as we have gained more knowledge of animal life and development and found numerous deposits of periods just prior to the Cambrian, the problem is worse than Darwin perceived.

Early in the 20th century, a rich Cambrian deposit was found in the Canadian Rockies, the Burgess Shale. Entirely new organisms were found exquisitely preserved, many with soft-body parts well preserved. Then in the mid-1980s, an even earlier Cambrian deposit was found in Chengjiang, China. This deposit revealed an even richer diversity of organisms than the Burgess Shale, and even finer soft-body preservation—even down to eyes, intestines, sensory organs and stomach contents.

Later work in different parts of the world had timed the Cambrian explosion to a roughly 5-10 million year time frame around 530 million years ago [with the Cambrian period itself beginning 543 million years ago] in the evolutionary time frame. Though that's a very long time, even for evolution, it's practically instantaneous when discussing the origin of

entirely new body plans. As Meyer faithfully recounts, Darwin's dream of an ever-increasing rise in complexity and diversity is shattered by the geologically abrupt appearance of both complexity and diversity.

What has been referred to as "Darwin's doubt" could be more aptly referred to as "Darwin's headache." In this article I will explore some of the additional problems this sudden explosion of animal body plans poses for evolution. While committed evolutionary materialists pretend to not be disturbed by these developments, those with open minds are questioning this long-held theory and giving new consideration to Intelligent Design.

Evolutionary Explanations of the Cambrian Explosion

Even Darwin recognized the Cambrian as a puzzle for his theory. Darwin hoped that further exploration of fossil-bearing strata would reveal the ancestors of the Cambrian animals.

In the early 20th century, Harvard paleontologist, Charles Walcott, found a new Cambrian deposit in the Canadian Rockies, the Burgess Shale. The Burgess Shale contained new creatures never seen before and was able to preserve some soft-body parts, also never seen before. This proposed an even greater problem than Darwin knew. Older deposits were still not revealing the ancestors of the Cambrian, but now there was even more diversity and novelty than anyone had imagined. The discovery of a predator, the up-to-meter-long *Anomalocaris*, demonstrated there was a well-defined ecosystem with plant producers, plant consumers and carnivores.

The origin of the Cambrian fauna seemed to turn Darwin's theory on its head. Darwin expected all animal life forms to be descended from a single common ancestor through a lengthy process of descent with ever-so-slight modification. But these

Cambrian novelties appeared quite suddenly with no ancestors. That is not evolution as Darwin envisioned it. Walcott suggested two reasons for the disparity. First, he suggested that the immediate Pre-Cambrian deposits containing the Cambrian ancestors were to be found on the ocean floor. Subsequent off-shore drilling for oil provided a unique opportunity to test this hypothesis. But most of the sea floor is much younger than the Cambrian. If there were Pre-Cambrian deposits, they no longer exist.

Walcott also tended to be a "lumper" in taxonomic terms. That means he fit fossils into already existing categories whether they fit well or not. This appeared to minimize the explosive part of the Cambrian. But additional field excavations in the Burgess Shale, as well as in different parts of the world, revealed that many of these Cambrian creatures were unique and that their descendants are not known today—they are extinct. The novelty of Cambrian forms is more pronounced than ever.

The late Stephen J. Gould of Harvard famously described the uniqueness of these Cambrian creatures when he said; "Imagine an organism built of a hundred basic features, with twenty possible forms per feature. The grab bag contains a hundred compartments, with twenty different tokens in each. To make a new Burgess creature, the Great Token-Stringer takes one token at random from each compartment and strings them together. Voila, the creature works—and you have nearly as many successful experiments as a musical scale can build catchy tunes."{3}

Fossils have been found in sediments older or below the Cambrian but these fossils do not appear to be ancestors of the Cambrian creatures. They were also quite unique and most are now extinct. The mystery remains.

Libraries of New Genetic Information

Needed: Pronto!

All Darwin had to examine were the unique animals found in Cambrian deposits. He knew nothing of genetics and the need for new genetic information.

Paleontologist James Valentine has gone so far as to say that probably all the living animal phyla had their beginning in the Cambrian period, over 500 million years ago. We do find multi-celled animal fossils 20-30 million years before the Cambrian, but only sponges seem to resemble anything we find in these deposits.

A phylum is an upper level of classification. For instance, all vertebrates are in the same phylum. Insects, crustaceans, and spiders are also in the same phylum. The phylum represents organisms with a distinct body plan though there may be many variations on that theme. In order to have all these new body plans or phyla appear in the Cambrian in a geological instant, you need a lot of new genes or genetic information. Different types of cells are needed. New genes are needed to grow new body plans out of a single-celled fertilized egg. With different cell types come different kinds of functions and cell types each needing specific gene products to give them their unique functions.

When protein sequence and gene sequence comparisons were begun in the late 70s, there was an expectation that comparing gene sequences would solve relational puzzles among living organisms but that by comparing genes from different phyla, it could be determined how phyla were related. The Cambrian fossils offer no such clues since most animal phyla appear at nearly the same time. But several decades of gene sequence comparison studies have revealed no consistent evolutionary scheme. As Meyer summarizes, “Many other studies have thrown their own widely varying numbers into the ring, placing the common ancestor of animals anywhere between 100 million years and 1.5 billion years before the Cambrian explosion.”{4}

Meyer does a great job of articulating why there would need to be an information explosion along with the Cambrian explosion. Accounting for all this new information, in a relatively short period of time, by known processes is a herculean task. If evolution solely depends on a Darwinian model, then mutation and natural selection must be able to account for the explosive rise of new genes and regulatory gene networks during the Cambrian. Meyer spends several chapters working this through. Achieving the extreme specificity of proteins through the slow, plodding, processes of mutation and natural selection appears impossible.

In the next section I address an even greater difficulty of the Cambrian explosion. Darwinism has always needed a slow gradual accumulation of genetic change. However, with the relatively quick appearance of very different forms of animals in the Cambrian, is Darwinism up to the task?

The Exasperating Problem of New Body Plans

Darwin understood nothing about how animal body plans are laid out and built in the early embryo.

Since Darwin's time we have learned a great deal. And none of what we have learned offers any help in deciphering how all these new body plans originated in such a short geological time period in the early Cambrian. The overall structure and shape of an organism is laid out early in embryonic development. Particular genes necessary for development are tightly controlled in when and how they are expressed. These genetic regulatory programs operate only in early development and they limit the possibilities of the final form of the organism.

Biologists use a classification term, phylum, to refer to the largest category of animals and plants. Humans belong to the Phylum Chordata, which includes all the vertebrates. Insects

are in the Phylum Arthropoda, which includes crustaceans and spiders. These two phyla possess very different body plans, and the genetic programs to build these plans are very different in the earliest stages, even in the first few divisions of the fertilized egg. The Cambrian demonstrates that these very different body plans arise in less than ten million years of time geologically. Is that possible? All Darwinism has to work with as the source of genetic variation, are mutations.

In 1977, French evolutionist Pierre Paul Grassé noted that mutations don't provide any real evolutionary change. Mutations only seem to provide only a slightly different variety of what already existed.{5} Twenty years later, a trio of developmental biologists noted that modern evolutionary theory explained well how the already fit survive and reproduce. But just how organisms came to be that way, the modern theory seemed silent.{6} Evolutionary biologist Wallace Arthur explained that modern textbooks told the same stories about how finch beaks and the color of moths changed to suit their environment, but nowhere was it discussed how the organism as a whole came to be so integrally functional.{7}

These problems have been further addressed in recent years but nothing seems to propose any clear answers as to how new body plans could have appeared in such a short span of evolutionary time.

Steve Meyer summarizes his review of these difficulties in the light of the Cambrian saying, "The Cambrian explosion itself illustrates a profound engineering problem the fossil data does not address—the problem of building a new form of animal life by gradually transforming one tightly integrated system of genetic components and their products into another."{8}

An Opportunity for Intelligent Design

I have documented how the sudden appearance of new forms in

the Cambrian creates mysteries in terms of the fossils, genetics and developmental biology.

In chapter 18, Meyer turns his attention from the observation that modern evolutionary theories do not explain the sudden appearance of all the major animal groups in a short burst of geologic time, to what can explain the Cambrian Explosion. He carefully argues that Intelligent Design has all the causal power to bring about what is needed in the Cambrian.

Initially he summarizes the conclusions of two important evolutionary students of the Cambrian, Douglas Erwin and Eric Davidson. Together these scientists have listed a few of the observations any evolutionary cause must explain. First, whatever the cause of the Cambrian Explosion, it must be able to generate what is referred to as a top-down pattern. That is, the broad general categories of animals appear before there is any refinement in these characters. Second, the cause must be capable of generating new biological forms relatively rapidly. Third, this cause must be capable of constructing, not just modifying, complex genetic regulatory circuits.

They also note, as Meyer reports, that no existing theory of evolutionary change can accomplish any of these necessary events.{9} Davidson and Erwin are quite insistent that the processes operating in the early Cambrian were fundamentally different from anything operating in nature today. That's a tall order. But Meyer adds a few more prerequisites for a cause for the Cambrian Explosion. In addition to the need for rapid development of a top-down pattern, new body forms and creation of new genetic regulatory circuits, Meyer observes that this cause also needs to generate new digital information in the DNA and new structural information that cells use routinely. There also needs
to be the development of new types of information that are precisely coordinated to specify brand new body plans.{10}

A designing intelligence may be the only sufficient cause that

can accomplish all of these events within any time frame, let alone the 5-10 million years of the Cambrian Explosion. Meyer concludes the chapter by writing, “The features of the Cambrian event point decisively in another direction—not to some as-yet-undiscovered materialistic process that merely mimics the powers of a designing mind, but instead to an actual intelligent cause.”{11}

Clearly when all the evidence is reviewed as Meyer does, the conclusion of Intelligent Design is nearly impossible to avoid. To ask how a designing intelligence did all this is to insist on a materialistic explanation for an immaterial cause. More is yet to be discovered, but if the pattern holds, Intelligent Design will become even more robust in the future.

Notes

1. Stephen C. Meyer, *Darwin’s Doubt: The Explosive Origin of Animal Life and the Case for Intelligent Design* (New York: HarperCollins, 2013).

2. Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, Chapter X (pp. 235, 252-254), quoted in Darwin’s Doubt.

3. Stephen J. Gould, *Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1989), p. 217.

4. *Darwin’s Doubt*, pp. 105-106.

5. Pierre-Paul Grassé, *Evolution of Living Organisms* (New York: Academic Press, 1977), p. 87.

6. S. Gilbert, J. Optiz, and R. Raff, “Review—Resynthesizing Evolutionary and Developmental Biology,” *Developmental Biology* 173 (1996): 361. “The Modern Synthesis (Neo-Darwinism) is a remarkable achievement. However, starting in the 1970’s, many biologists began questioning its adequacy in explaining evolution . . . Microevolution looks at adaptations that concern only the survival of the fittest, not the arrival of

the fittest."

7. Wallace Arthur, *Biased Embryos and Evolution*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 36. "Textbooks of evolutionary biology have for years trotted out the usual old stories about how birds' beaks evolve to match their food items, or how moths' colours evolve to match their background. But where are the equally detailed studies about the importance of one body part matching another."

8. *Darwin's Doubt*.

9. Ibid., p. 355.

10. Ibid., p. 358.

11. Ibid., p. 381.

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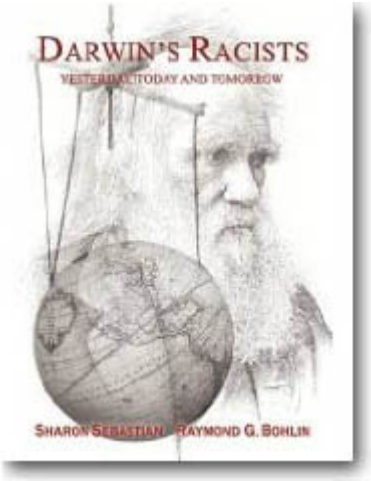
Was Darwin a Racist?

In some circles to even ask this question and impugn Darwin's integrity conjures up charges of secular blasphemy. After all, Darwin is well documented as holding views on slavery commensurate with the great William Wilberforce himself. Darwin was repulsed by any cruelty of humans on humans.

Darwin was by all accounts an affectionate husband, loving father, defender of the oppressed, and just an all round good and decent man. So how could one accuse him of racism? You simply need to read his second major work on evolution, *The Descent of Man.*

As Benjamin Wiker makes clear in his recent biographical book, *The Darwin Myth: The Life and Lies of Charles Darwin,* Darwin

insisted that his theory of natural selection and evolution be understood as a purely natural and undirected process. Consequently, he could only see humans and apes as the result of a real struggle for survival. By all accounts, humans were winning. There was also a severe struggle going on between the races of man.



I recently coauthored a book with Sharon Sebastian entitled *Darwin's Racists: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*. In chapter three we discuss Darwin's explanation of the differences between men and apes from *The Descent of Man.*

In Chapter 6, On the Affinities and Genealogy of Man, Darwin argues that he expected the civilized races of men to fully exterminate the savage races of men in just a few centuries. He also expected the anthropomorphous apes [Ed. note: those most like humans] (gorillas and chimpanzees) to become extinct. As a result, he believed that the gap between humans and animals would eventually be much greater than exists. Darwin postulated that this higher form of man would come from the current Caucasian race. In his book, Darwin states that the current gap between apes and humans is between the gorilla, on the ape side, and the Negro or Australian aborigine, on the human side:

> The break will then be rendered wider, for it will intervene between man in a more civilized state, as we may hope, than the Caucasian, and some ape as low as a baboon, instead of

as present between the Negro or Australian and the gorilla.

Darwin's foremost German disciple, Ernst Haeckel, made even more dramatic statements. According to Haeckel, if you want to draw a sharp boundary between the human races and the apes, "you must draw it between the most highly developed civilized people on the one hand and the crudest primitive people on the other, and unite the latter with the apes." Elsewhere Haeckel identifies these cruder and primitive races as the Australian aborigines and the South African Bushmen, which he says, still live in herds, climb trees and eat fruit. According to Haeckel, certain more primitive groups of "people" are more ape than human.

Darwin certainly did not invent racism. Prejudice because someone is "other" than us has always been a part of human existence. What Darwin did provide was a scientific rationale that justified racial prejudice. Implicit in Darwin's struggle for existence is that some forms of a species would be more fit for the current environment than others. From Darwin's vantage point, the Caucasian or European race was well underway to surpassing the other "human" races because of their intelligence, culture, and superiority in war as demonstrated routinely in conflicts between Europeans and any other race or culture to that point.

Darwin's ideas were used to launch the first eugenics society in Britain headed by his cousin, Francis Galton. Darwin's son, Leonard, later served as President of the same society. Margaret Sanger drew her inspiration for what became Planned Parenthood from Darwin and saw a need to control the breeding of poorer and less fit humans.

If humans are a part of a naturalistic struggle for existence, then it logically follows that some tribes and races of humans will be more fit than others. And since with Darwin's help, we now understand this struggle, why not help it along by slowing down the breeding of those less fit? Or, as Hitler

rationalized, eliminate them altogether.

To be sure, Darwin himself would likely have been horrified by the excesses of the early 20th century eugenics societies and the national excesses of Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia, Mao's Cultural Revolution and Pol Pot's regime of extermination. But they all thought they were simply aiding and abetting the process of natural selection.

You can order a copy of the book at the Probe Online Store.

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"Is Dark Matter Another Attack on God?"

I was reading an article about experiments with dark matter in a very deep underground lab in South Dakota. What is dark matter and is this another secular atheist way to circumvent God?

The simple answer is that dark matter is material in space that cannot be directly detected with telescopes because it does not emit any type of radiation. Ordinary dark matter is made up of cold gas, stars with so little mass that they never ignite nuclear fusion, small rocks, etc. Even though astronomers cannot directly see dark matter, they can detect its presence through its effects, e.g. impact on movement of galaxies. (See the excerpt from an article by Dr. David Rogstad below for more information on this.) In attempting to measure the amount of dark matter required to create the observed effects, astronomers have developed a theory that there are two types of dark matter: ordinary dark matter and

exotic dark matter. Exotic dark matter only weakly interacts with light and ordinary matter, so it is different than the material we normally deal with on earth. I would guess the experiments you were reading about were dealing with the study of exotic dark matter.

Based on this definition, the existence of dark matter does not directly bear on the existence of God. I have not seen any arguments from atheists that point to dark matter as supporting evidence for their claims. Given that dark matter in space can only be detected through very sophisticated, expensive methods, I would not expect the Bible to talk about it directly, and it does not. Of course, the Bible makes it clear that "For by Him [Jesus Christ] all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible" (Col. 1:16). No matter how you define dark matter, it is covered by this verse.

Going a little deeper, it is true that some (but not all) of the ways used to estimate the amount of dark matter in the universe assume that the universe has been expanding for billions of years. Some Christian scientists, such as those at Reasons to Believe, who promote a Biblical creation model based on a 13.7 billion-year-old universe, point out that the existence of dark matter in just the right quantities is further evidence that our earth is fine tuned for life to such a degree that it could only be through the work of a transcendent, all powerful, intelligent creator. RTB has a number of articles on dark matter which you can see at www.reasons.org/search/node/?keys=%22dark+Matter%22.

If you are interested in understanding the different Christian perspectives on the origins of the universe, check out our Faith and Science section at www.probe.org; in particular you may be interested in "Christian Views of Science and Earth History" at www.probe.org/christian-views-of-science-and-earth-history

I hope this answer is helpful for you.

God bless,
Steve Cable

Excerpt from Dr. David Rogstad on history of dark matter: "Based on his observation that clusters of galaxies do not have enough matter to remain gravitationally bound, Fritz Zwicky proposed (in 1933) the existence of dark matter to provide the needed gravity. Since then, there has been a growing body of supporting evidence, including flat rotation curves in large spiral galaxies, larger-than-expected velocity dispersion in elliptical galaxies, and certain measured characteristics of the cosmic microwave background, all of which require the presence of dark matter for their explanation." [www.reasons.org/filling-gap]

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Dr. Ray Bohlin Engages in Embryonic Stem Cell Debate

Dr. Ray Bohlin was recently (3/11/09) a guest on a radio talk show concerning President Obama's Executive Order expanding federal funding for embryonic stem cell research. This was on station KPFT in Houston, a "Progressive" (liberal) radio station. The other guest was Dr. P.Z. Myers, in his own words "a godless liberal," a biologist at the University of Minnesota at Morris. He hosts what is called the most popular science blog in the nation, Pharyngula. The host of the program, Geoff Berg, could probably also be described in the same way. The hour-long show is archived here. You might be

interested to listen to Dr. Bohlin explain his viewpoint in a sometimes hostile environment.

Articles you may find helpful:

Human Embryonic Stem Cells Go to Human Trials [Heather Zeiger]

The Continuing Controversy over Stem Cells [Dr. Ray Bohlin]

Stem Cell Wars [Kerby Anderson Commentary]

Stem Cells and the Controversy Over Therapeutic Cloning [Dr. Ray Bohlin]

Stem Cell Commentary [Dr. Ray Bohlin]

Cloning and Genetics: The Brave New World Closes In [Dr. Ray Bohlin]