

GOD OF THE GAPS

NUMBER 184

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In 1972 my boss, Bobby Nelson, told me that our God was “God of the Gaps”. Time and time again, hard to explain things were attributed to the direct activities of God, yet we have subsequently learned scientific explanations for them. That left a smaller and smaller set of things which God would have done. It seemed only a matter of time until the other gaps in scientific knowledge were filled in. At that time God would be excluded completely.

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WHAT IS PERSONAL EVANGELISM?

In the Luby’s Cafeteria parking lot after Sunday night church, a Mr. Washington was getting out of his car as we were getting into ours. He said hello and asked where we went to church. I told him we went to a Church of Christ about 12 miles away and he said he attended Bridgeland Church of Christ, a couple of miles up the road that Luby’s was on. Brother Washington was doing personal evangelism.

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THE JUSTICE OF GOD

“Vengeance is mine says the LORD, I will repay.”

It is of no concern to the beloved followers of Jesus Christ what form of justice God may choose for the evildoers which may range from discipline to great wrath. What **IS** of concern to God is whether His people follow His commands to “Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.

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BE THANKFUL FOR OUR HOLY GOD

“How great is God—beyond our understanding! The number of his years is past finding out.” (Job 36:26 NIV) **Just for a moment** let’s focus on thanking God for who He is and all He does. Taking thoughts from the **Psalms**, praise Him for his holiness, awesome power and eternal presence.

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GOD OF THE GAPS, P2

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I did not have a good answer in 1972. My faith was not shaken, but I did not have a good response.

In the past 51 years I have seen and learned a great deal; I would love to have that conversation with Bobby again.

During the **Middle Ages** religious authorities overstated the case for God. Established religion and science were effectively combined, with the church deciding what was scientific truth. That the Earth was the center of the Universe (geocentric) was official church doctrine. Galileo was imprisoned for life for saying that the Sun was the center of our solar system (heliocentric).

Scientists rebelled against the church as the scientific authority, with Darwin's 1859 *On the Origin of the Species* being a high point in the rebellion. Armed with Darwin's book and other similar books, the case against God (substituting atheistic evolution as the "creation story") is now highly overstated. The "pendulum" has swung to the other side.

Bobby Nelson was fully armed in his atheistic point of view, and I was ill equipped to respond. Atheists picked off religious overstatements one by one, and functionally put religion into a retreat of sorts.

With the limited scientific knowledge 1859, Darwin could believe that cells were simply blobs of protoplasm which could easily evolve into different things. His teachings led to a number of overstatements of that position. Some of these are discussed in "EVOLUTIONARY FRAUDS AND ERRORS", our lesson 3.10 at www.occg.institute/topical-lessons

Especially since the 3-dimensional double helix structure of DNA was described by James Watson and Francis Crick in the 1950s, things began to change. Cells are clearly not blobs. Everything we have learned about the complexity of cells teaches that they cannot be an accident of evolution. They show extreme Intelligent Design. The pendulum is starting to swing back some, but it has a long way to go.

Instead of seeing how everything could evolve, we see so clearly how impossible it would be for these complexities of creation to have accidentally evolved with no design or Designer. The book which you can receive for free by subscribing or resubscribing to this newsletter shows more than 100 things which were impossible for atheistic evolution to do.

We do not need to be defensive because atheistic "scientists" regularly come up with new proofs which will soon be debunked. We need to know that God is real and created the heavens and the earth.

Benton F. Baugh



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WHAT IS PERSONAL EVANGELISM?

Most youths believe that the culture they are growing up in is the best place for them to be. Their culture is typically embraced by their authority figures (parents and teachers) and has been presented to them in positive terms. The negatives of their culture are not normally addressed, or are minimalized at the best.

If the culture being discussed involves religion and it is not Christianity, there are sadly few of these young people who could find a Bible, read it and become convicted of its truths. Christianity is likely to have been presented to them in a negative light in the world around them, and so is a suspect religion. Their starting thoughts about Christianity will not be positive.

In our churches today most youths are baptized. Their conversions are frequently someplace between belief and social acceptance, whether the youth actually believes he or she will likely remain in the church: If they are being baptized for social acceptance, they are likely to leave the church. It has been said that baptism of young members offsets the deaths of older members; while that may have been true in the past, but it does not seem adequate today. Our brotherhood is in decline in 2024, which means most of our congregations are in decline. With the after-effects of Covid, it is hard to tell how much our decline is, but we are in decline.

In the 1960s era of Jule Miller filmstrips, it was reasonable to say that we were being evangelistic as a group. We were aided by a general society support of religion. Society is very different today. Instead of supporting religion, society is generally against religion. While much of society is may be in general, "religious" today, the media is completely overtaken over by people with an anti-religious point of view. The news you (and your kids) hear characteristically has a very negative view of religion.

The point to this is that somewhere between the 1960s and now things have changed dramatically.

We have rested on our past laurels as one of the fastest growing religious groups, and hardly noticed that we stopped growing and fallen into a decline.

We stopped doing personal evangelism so long ago that we don't even know what it looks like today. Brother Washington' evangelism was a pleasant surprise.



Continued from page 1

THE JUSTICE OF GOD

All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” Matthew 22: 37-40 “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another”. John 13: 34-35

We are to love our enemies, show concern for their needless pain and suffering in sin, have readiness to forgive the repentant and have readiness to act with compassion and grace to a reluctant doubter who may be unaware of the depth of love God has for each one of His creation- not wanting even one to perish but as prodigals to wake up, come to their senses, repent and return to their Father.

Christians everywhere should grieve and pray for the poor in spirit, the fallen who have been taken prisoner by Satan and trapped in the snares of sin, and the complacent conformists to the pattern of this world who neither “know not what they do” nor the terrible consequences of choosing to hate God and the godly among them.

Reach Out-or-React – Gather or Scatter

Petulant child-like people of the world who complain “No one likes me – so I hate them”, are special in the eyes of God, but the world does not care! Believing in the promises of God yields godly rewards, but stirs envy in the hearts of the worldly. If believers allow themselves to be dissuaded by “pushback” from doubters or determined God-haters, even the righteous become at-risk of scattering the flock

rather than gathering the harvest. Rather than simply dismiss the petulant, out-of-control disobedient children, mature believers must take responsibility to reach out as witnesses to the power of God’s infinite love and demonstrate their capacity in collaboration with the indwelling Holy Spirit to gently comfort them, touch their hearts, encourage them to open the eyes of their minds and help them to imagine the new life waiting for them in the care of Jesus who has already redeemed them from the fate of the world.

Larry S. Grubbs, Harrison, Ohio

BE THANKFUL FOR OUR HOLY GOD

“Say to God, *“How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies cringe before you. (66:3) Your righteousness, God, reaches to the heavens, you who have done great things. Who is like you, God? (71:19) The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. (116:5) As for God, his way is perfect: The Lord’s word is flawless; he shields all who take refuge in him.” (18:30) (47:7) And the heavens proclaim his righteousness, for he is a God of justice. (50:6)*

Now, thank God for all he does for us! *“Surely God is my help; the Lord is the one who sustains me. (54:4) Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge. (62:8) Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. (100:3) Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.” (25:5)*

Elizabeth Brown, Texarkana, TX

GOOD SAMARITAN

A Sunday school teacher was telling her class the story of the Good Samaritan. She asked the class, "If you saw a person lying on the roadside, all wounded and bleeding, what would you do?"

A thoughtful little girl broke the hushed silence, "I think I'd throw up."

DID NOAH FISH?

A Sunday school teacher asked, "Johnny, do you think Noah did a lot of fishing when he was on the Ark?"

"No," replied Johnny. "How could he, with just two worms?"

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

A Sunday School teacher decided to have her young class memorize one of the most quoted passages in the Bible - Psalm 23. She gave the youngsters a month to learn the chapter. Little Tommy was excited about the task - but he just couldn't remember the Psalm. After much practice, he could barely get past the first line.

On the day that the kids were scheduled to recite Psalm 23 in front of the congregation, Tommy was so nervous. When it was his turn, he stepped up to the microphone and said proudly, "The Lord is my Shepherd, and that's all I need to know."

UNANSWERED PRAYER

The preacher's 5 year-old daughter noticed that her father always paused and bowed his head for a moment before starting his sermon. One day, she asked him why.

"Well, Honey," he began, proud that his daughter was so observant of his messages. "I'm asking the Lord to help me preach a good sermon."

"How come He doesn't answer it?" she asked.

BEING THANKFUL

A Rabbi said to a precocious six-year-old boy, "So your mother says your prayers for you each night? That's very commendable. What does she say?"_The little boy replied, "Thank God he's in bed!"

ALL MEN / ALL GIRLS

When my daughter, Kelli, said her bedtime prayers, she would bless every family member, every friend, and every animal (current and past). For several weeks, after we had finished the nightly prayer, Kelli would say, "And all girls."

This soon became part of her nightly routine, to include this closing. My curiosity got the best of me and I asked her, "Kelli, why do you always add the part about all girls?"

Her response, "Because everybody always finish their prayers by saying 'All Men!'"

SAY A PRAYER

Little Tommy and his family were having Sunday dinner at his Grandmother's house. Everyone was seated around the table as the food was being served. When Little Tommy received his plate, he started eating right away. "Tommy! Please wait until we say our prayer." said his mother.

"I don't need to," the boy replied.

"Of course, you do" his mother insisted. "We always say a prayer before eating at our house." "That's at our house." Tommy explained. "But this is Grandma's house, and she knows how to cook."

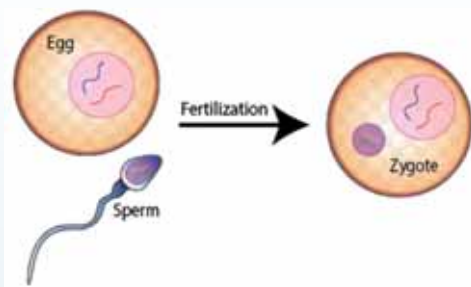
IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION #139: EAR DESIGN

I have had a goal for years to find out how much DNA information it takes to make an ear. Not the complex inner workings of the ear, just the visible portion on the side of your head. Your ear has a design, and the details for that design are stored someplace. If anyone knows the answer to this, I cannot find it. Your ears are as unique as your fingerprints. It is just not as easy to make a paper copy of them.



Let's look at a little reality.

When a female human egg is fertilized by a male sperm, the combination is called a Zygote. The Zygote is a single cell and is a living human being. It contains all the information which will be used to become a full sized human being. It is about 0.12 mm (0.0047") in diameter and is one of the largest human cells. A typical sheet of Xerox paper is about 0.003" thick, so the cell is as thick as 1 1/2 sheets of Xerox paper.

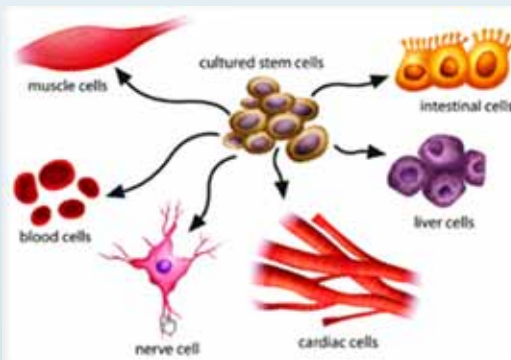


The Zygote will implant in the uterine wall, and will have an umbilical cord as a lifeline to the mother. The umbilical cord has no nerves

for transmission of information to the Zygote, so the Zygote has all the information that it needs to make an ear.

The zygote begins its journey down to your uterus over the course of about one week. During this journey, the zygote divides many times, eventually creating two separate structures. One structure eventually becomes the embryo (and later, the fetus) and the other becomes the placenta.

The Zygote goes on to form as many as 400 different types of cells. The graphic to the left illustrates some of the cells which come from the Zygote. There is no information coming from



any other source; the massive amount of information needed to form all these and the other of the 400+ types of cells is within the Zygote. The embryo begins to develop, using solely the information programmed into it from the very beginnings of the fertilized ovum

It doesn't stop there. Individual cell types are formed into complex organs. The graphic to the right illustrates a few of these organs. Just imagine how complex a heart, lung, brain, intestine, and skeleton are. These complex designs don't appear out of thin air. The information to make these wonderful designs were in the Zygote.



For decades, 98% of our DNA was written off as junk DNA. Scientists didn't know what it did, so it was declared to be junk.

I don't know where in the DNA the design of the ear is, but I know the design of the ear had to be in the Zygote. I am comfortable in believing that, in some part of the 98% of DNA which scientists called "junk DNA," exists is the information for the design of the ear. I don't know how much or where, but I am sure it is there. I am also comfortable in believing that the design of the 400+ cell types and the design of the rest of the body is there.

Basically, I believe there is little if any junk DNA; rather, I believe we have junk science saying that there is junk DNA.

If you know or learn how much DNA it takes to make an ear, please let me know.

Benton F. Baugh, PhD, PE

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Bob directs the Sunset Academy of Leadership Training. He is a coach, consultant, and full-time speaker, conducting workshops in leadership development. He is dedicated to helping leaders implement positive, transformational change and creating a vision to prepare the next generation of leaders. He lives in Virginia Beach, VA and holds a Doctorate in Intercultural Studies with an emphasis in adult leadership development from the Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA.



ZONE LEADER
7 Tactics for Leading in the Zones

ZONE LEADER: 7 Tactics for Leading in the Zones

TURNER



ZONE LEADER

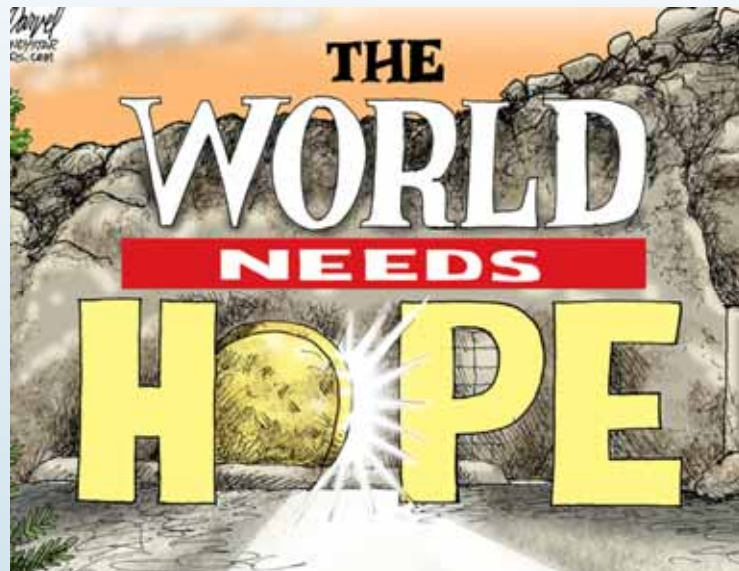
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44. Yield.

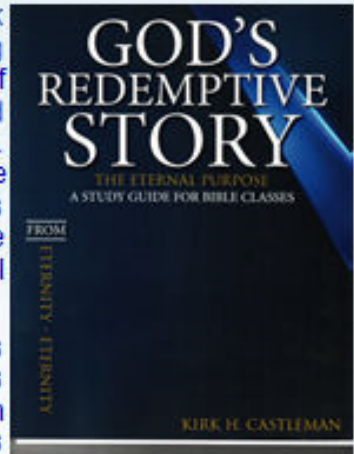
45. Life isn't tied with a bow, but it's still a gift."

46. I started with nothing and still have most of it.

47. Your greatest strength is often your greatest weakness also.

Source unknown.

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