

MIGHTY MAGAZINE ARROWS

LIFE. GOD. TRUTH. FOR COPTIC YOUTH.

Christianity & Science
Friends or Foes?

Atheism
The Devil's Well Wedged Battle

**The Evolution
Controversy**

You
The Object of His Attention

VOICES OF THE SAINTS:
ST. MOSES THE BLACK



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Mission Statement

We, the magazine staff, have a mission regarding you, the reader: to encourage you on your Christian walk and to strengthen you through articles, answers and more about God's very special plan for you.

Material Submission

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My Beloved Youth,

This issue of the Mighty Arrows addresses the perfect plan of creation whose inception was of the perfect Creator, the orderly creation itself, and what the implications of the creation signify for each of us today.

First ask yourself...

Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone—while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy? Who shut up the sea behind closed doors when it burst forth from the womb, when I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness, when I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place, when I said, "This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt?" Have you ever given orders to the morning, or shown dawn its place? (Job 38:4-12)

We are being told to walk with God through the visual and sound effects of the Creation. Through the earth's orderly process of evolving and boundary immersion we begin to understand our Creator and his impact upon us all.

Second consider...

"Do you know when the mountains goats give birth?... Do you count the months they bear? Do you know the time they give birth?" (Job 39:1-2)

We are being told through creation to prepare for the Second Coming, the eternal life with the Lord and it is made plain that we do not know its exact time of happening. Throughout the postulated time of the highly anticipated event occurring in childbirth or in the anticipation of eternal life, we are given time to prepare for its arrival. Throughout the life span, we are given many opportunities to wait, to anticipate, to feel relief and/or satisfaction with the waiting period and preparation. It is always an orderly process as the Creation itself was and continues to evolve season to season.

Third contemplate on...

"Take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world..." (Matthew 25:34) Lactanius (c. 304) said, "When all things had been settled with a wonderful arrangement, He determined to prepare for Himself an eternal kingdom and to create innumerable souls, on whom He might bestow immortality. ...

Anticipating the Kingdom of God, eternal life, proves to give us the valuable time necessary to prepare and secure it, through living a Godly life and the through the example in the Garden of Eden and the forbidden fruits. What are your preparations—I pray they are not alcohol and drugs, instant gratification, lottery, popularity at any cost, deceit and lying to parents, skipping confession for a movie theater? Are these preparations or forbidden fruits? Take note of your preparations and secure a place accordingly in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Glory be to the Creator NOW and FOREVER and unto the ages of ALL ages,

Amen.

Bishop Youssef,

Bishop, Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the United States

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Editors note

To our readers around the globe,

As you read this issue of *Mighty Arrows*, you'll notice a complete change in the magazine layout. Allow me to give you the grand tour. As we begin, you'll notice that the cover shows a theme for the featured articles you'll be reading. Actually, it is a question that the youth told us they want to find answers for. We have articles throughout the magazine to address this question from all different angles.

There are also sections of the magazine that are not related to these articles. Like this one, **Inbox**. This is where all your suggestions and opinions appear. We want to hear from you. Did you read any books lately that captured your attention, changed your life, or that you want to have everyone read? Is there a saint that you really connect with or ask for his or her intercessions? Tell us why. Is there a prayer you wrote or a bible passage or a psalm you love to pray? Do you want to share with us the events going on in your local church or with your friends and family? Did you read anything in our magazine that you want to comment on? Do you have any suggestions for our staff? We want to hear it all! So here's how you do it, email mightyarrowsmagazine@suscopts.org. In the subject line give us a hint of what it's about, like "Question for the ladies" or "Prayer I wrote" or "Burning questions." You get the idea. We only ask that you include your first name, city and state.

After the **Inbox**, you'll see **News and Happenings**; this is where we'll post all your pictures and the amazing activities going on in our churches and around our Diocese. A few pages after that you'll see our **Q&A FAITH** section. Ask anything about bible study, church tradition, confusing passages, or our faith and you'll get your answer in the next issue. Next, you'll see what was a suggestion become a reality, a question and answer section, one for guys and one for gals. The questions submitted are answered by "**Mary**" and "**Mike**." This is your chance, guys and gals, to ask about personal issues, friendships, relationships, anything that you want to ask a godly mentor. Gals, do you have any burning questions to ask our "Dear Mary?" Guys, are there questions on your mind that only a guy can answer? Mike and Mary will introduce themselves in



their pages and answer a few of your questions. Look for their section halfway through the magazine.

If you write to us about a saint that really touched your heart, you'll come across your comments in our **Voice of the Saints** page. There, you'll see how we can relate and learn from the pillars of faith in our church, as it is our hope to one day stand in heaven next to them. Continuing with our tour, if you sent us a prayer you wrote during a time of meditation and quiet time, you'll see it published in the "**Quiet Walk**" or "**Prayer Warrior**" pages. These are some of our spiritual diet articles, so to speak.

If you've seen a movie, heard a song or read a book that you want to tell us about, here's your chance. "**Book Expo**" is the section where we'll share with you books in our library and for you to share books from your library. Tell us why this book meant a lot to you and we'll post your recommendation to let everyone know about it. "**Plugged In**" is where all your thoughts and opinions about movies, songs, and TV shows are posted. Last but not least on your tour, is the "**90 Day Challenge**." Our magazine staff challenges you to the next step in your spiritual life. Find

out more on the two-page spread in the middle of the magazine. As we end our tour, we the staff, ask each and every one of you to remember this magazine in your prayers.

We love to hear what you think, so without further adieu, happy reading...

LET US KNOW

Let us know what you think about articles from our previous issues

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Happenings

Egypt Youth Trip 2007

by Christy Azer

The Egypt Trip officially began on May 4th and lasted until May 19th. But most everyone flew to Egypt from Orlando on April 29th and had the choice to do whatever they wanted but had to stay with friends or relatives in Egypt until May 4, when the trip began. Everyone flew in with one suitcase that was packed with their own clothes and another suitcase with new clothes, toys, school supplies, etc. for the poor kids and adults in Upper Egypt. On the first week, we visited the Pyramids and the Sphinx. We visited many many monasteries all over the country including, El Baramous, El Muharrak, St. Pishoy, El Souryan, St. Mina, Zieton, Mokattam, Monastery of Ekhmeem, and many more. We also stayed in Upper Egypt in an area called Nakada where Amba Biemen is bishop. The three pharmacists, and one doctor that were with us visited many sick families and helped them by trying to diagnose them and giving them medications from a local pharmacy. The rest of us helped unpack, sort, and make bags of items from the luggage that contained the clothes, toys, bags, and school supplies for the people of Nakada. We also visited nursing homes and mentally disabled homes. While in Upper Egypt, we went on a Nile Cruise for four days and three nights. While on the cruise, we visited many pharonic sites. We all had a great time and saw God in our lives and in the lives of so many around us. It was a very blessed experience.



Picture legend

- 1.0 Most of the whole gang with Father Shenouda at the Pyramids of Giza
- 2.0 Spending time with the mentally disabled kids (left to right: Gigi Farag, Mark Guirguis, Christine Farag)
- 3.0 Some gathered and praying around Amba Wanis's body (left to right: Merna Abraham, Irini Koriakos, Maryam Mishrigi, Magdi Bishara)
- 4.0 The group at the Mokattam Monastery
- 5.0 We were handing out gifts to the kids at the hafta or gathering (left to right: Michael Azer, Abouna Shenouda, Maryann Mansour)
- 6.0 At the gathering, passing out more gifts and toys to the kids.
- 7.0 Abouna Shenouda putting the chain that St. George was tortured from around Matt Rodriguez
- 8.0 This is the entire group at a hafta for 3,000 kids in Nakada with Anba Biemen (Bishop of Nakada)

News and happenings at your local church?



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Christianity & Science

Friends or Foes?

By George Bassilios

Science has become man's greatest endeavor to discover truth. Today, people tend to equate science with truth and other kinds of knowledge with imagination. Atheists have used this mind set to their advantage by claiming that science has disproved God. The tendency has been to think that man's knowledge and ability know no limits. In fact, that very idea was echoed by the eminent evolutionary paleontologist, Richard Leakey, in his book *Origins*:

The fruits of intellectual and technological endeavor in this latter quarter of the twentieth century give us just an inkling of what the human mind can achieve. The potential is enormous, almost infinite. We can, if we choose, do virtually anything; arid lands will become fertile, terrible diseases will be cured by

“The fruits of intellectual and technological endeavor in this latter quarter of the twentieth century give us just an inkling of what the human mind can achieve.”

-Richard Leakey

genetic engineering; touring other planets will become routine; we may even come to understand how the human mind works (1977, p. 256).

groping for the truth. Science deals only with the natural, with things that can be apprehended by the sense organs. Science deals with those things that can be measured” (1970, p. 11).

What is Science?

Geneticist John Klotz, in his text *Genes, Genesis and Evolution*, stated that “science is man's

The goal of Science

The goal of science is to investigate matter and energy and discover their properties and behavior patterns. If a

particular thing is neither matter nor energy, then it cannot be investigated in a laboratory. For example, love is a fact of life, but since it is neither matter nor energy it cannot be investigated by science. There is no gadget to measure the mass, length, breadth, or temperature of love.

Science, therefore, cannot be used to investigate all reality, but rather those realities that are seen in the form of matter and energy. The investigation takes place with the help of repeated experiments. All negations and affirmations depend upon experimental observations, and nothing can be established without relevant experiments. Physics investigates the physical properties of matter and energy. Chemistry, biology, astronomy, and the various scientific disciplines known to us investigate the physical behavior of things pertaining to their respective fields.

The Limits of Science

As great as science is, the scientific method nevertheless is subject to certain limitations. Three readily come to mind.

The scientific method is limited to what can be observed with the five senses.

George Simpson, the renowned evolutionist of Harvard, wrote: "It is inherent in any acceptable definition of science that statements that cannot be checked by observations are not really about anything—or at the very least they are not science" (1964, 143:769).

It is only through use of the five senses that this observation takes place. If something can be seen, heard, touched, smelled, or tasted, then science can deal with it. But to expect science to investigate something in the proverbial "sixth sense" is to demand too much of the scientific method, and lays it open to charges of abuse or misuse.

The scientific method is limited to telling us "how" a process works, not "why."

In his book, *Questions of Science and Faith*, J.N. Hawthorne remarked:

"Science can give us the 'know-how' but it cannot give us the 'know-why'" (1960, p. 4).

James D. Bales noted: The

scientific method is incapable of dealing with the realm of purpose. It can deal with cause and effect relationships. It cannot deal with the "why" (1976, p. 37). Science deals with mechanism, not purpose. "Why"—in regard to purpose—is not a question science is equipped to answer.

The scientific method is limited in that it is non-moral.

Nobel Prize winner Jacques Monod once stated that "science is ignorant of values" (1969, p. 21). There is nothing inherent in the scientific method that provides for the definition or study of morals. Paul Little, in *Know Why You Believe*, was correct when he said:

It should be recognized that science is incapable of making value judgments about the things it measures. There is nothing in science itself which will determine whether nuclear energy will be used to destroy cancer or to destroy cities. This is a judgment outside the scientific method to determine (1967, p. 105).

Thornton Whaling, in his book, *Science and Religion*, wrote:

"Physical science knows by

experimentation and observation; historical science knows through credible testimony; psychology, by immediate consciousness of freedom and personality; philosophy through the universal laws of pure reason or thought; religion, by the answer of the infinite Personality to the call of moral and spiritual need. And to claim that knowledge

Science can give us the 'know-how' but it cannot give us the 'know-why'"

- J.N. Hawthorne

belongs alone to any one of these fields is to ignore the breadth of possible knowledge and the high endowments of human nature, through a certain concealed Pharisaism which is the essence of conceit and obscurantism. For natural science, history, psychology, ethics, philosophy, or religion to affirm that there is only one mode of cognition, and that way its own, is to betray a fatuous pride which convicts of lack of real culture in the court of high reason (1929, pp. 12-13)."

Science is not the only means of giving us true information about the world; its methodology limits it significantly. One thing science cannot do, even in principle, is disprove the existence of anything. So when people try to use science to disprove the existence of God, they're using science illegitimately. Such a claim would require omniscience.

Can Science Disprove God?

It should be clear by now that the purpose of science is to study matter and energy, and nothing beyond that. God is neither matter nor energy. Therefore the methods of experimental sciences cannot be

applied to disprove His existence. If anyone claims that science has disproved the existence of God, he must be asked to defend his position. He has to explain the experiment, the place where this was performed and the place where the results

antagonists, but sisters. Both seek ultimate truth. Science helps to reveal more about the creator through His creation.... But it still bothers some people that we cannot prove scientifically that God exists. Must we light a

Science is a marvelous enterprise that has benefited mankind in more ways than would be possible to list. But its continued success is dependent in large part on an understanding of its proper nature and correct use. An understanding of what science is, how it works, and its inherent limitations will not only help us appreciate science, but prevent its abuse as well.

To suggest that knowledge can be acquired solely on the basis of science, and that empirical observation is the “court of ultimate appeal,” is to err. Such an attitude ignores other numerous, significant avenues of human endeavor, as well as additional means of coming to knowledge and truth.

In closing, I want to affirm that there is no real conflict between true Science and Christianity. The conflict arises when one does not recognize the inherent limitations of science due to our human finitude. The Bible reveals that the cosmos indeed declare the Creator. The Psalmist writes, “The heavens are telling of the glory of God and their expanse is declaring the works of His hands” (Psalms 19:1). And as Paul tells us, everyone knows that there is

an omnipotent, omniscient Creator through observing His creation and that God has given His image bearers an awareness of absolute morality and ethics. He goes on to warn that

it is man’s sinfulness, his rebellion, that suppresses these truths (Romans 1:18-25; 2:14-16). That is the presupposition that we operate from in the apologetic enterprise of reasoning in the marketplace (Acts 17:16-34).

Notes:

Science vs. Christianity, *Craig Branch*
What Is Science?, *Bert Thompson*
Scientific Facts and Christian Faith, *Otto J. Helweg*

“Both, science and religion, seek ultimate truth”

- Wernher von Braun

were published. Anyone can make any claims saying that science has demonstrated this or that fact, but then he should be able to support his claims by pointing to relevant experiments. No one claiming that science has disproved God has ever come up with experimental evidence to support this claim. This is because they are using the name of science to intimidate the ignorant. There is no truth in their claims, but they will continue repeating this false claim as long as they can successfully disturb people.

Edmund W. Sinnott has observed:

“Science and religion, ministering so diversely to the life of man, will necessarily follow different roads, but they still can powerfully reinforce each other. Surely they should enlarge their boundaries together. Both church and laboratory will be more effective in their service through such mutual aid. They must both be strong, but neither can be so without the other’s help. Between them they hold up the hopes of man today as he strives to fulfill his splendid destiny (1953, p. xi).”

Wernher von Braun, the foremost missile expert of the 20th century, declared

“Through a closer look at creation, we ought to gain a better knowledge of the Creator; and, as a result, a greater sense of man’s responsibility to God will come into focus.

Science and religion are not

candle to see the sun? (as quoted in Warner, 1972, p. 314-317).”

Science from a Christian Perspective

Science is one of the means by which man may glorify God. This is because God is the creator of all that is. He has hidden the treasures of his glory in the very universe in which we exist.

The atom, momentum, energy, mass, time, etc. are all creations of God and, therefore, under his authority. The more the Christian learns of these things, the more He can glorify God.

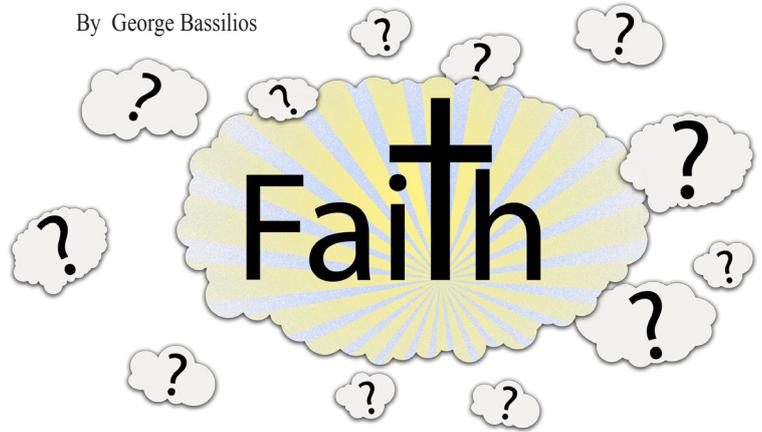
Science must be subservient to Him, not the other way around.

English

philosopher Herbert Spencer acknowledged that science is divided into five basic fundamentals: time, force, action, space, and matter. That is exactly what Moses wrote in Genesis 1:1—“In the beginning (time) God (force) created (action) the heavens (space) and the earth (matter).”

“Science is a marvelous enterprise that has benefited mankind in more ways than would be possible to list”

By George Bassilios



Q Would you happen to know the history of the Introduction to the Creed, “We exalt you mother of True Light...”

A In the year 428, Nestorius the archbishop of Constantinople taught that there were two distinct persons in Christ. One is divine and beyond the reach of human frailty, and the other is human and susceptible to all the fragility of the flesh. The divine Christ could neither suffer nor die, and therefore, on the Cross it was the human Christ alone who suffered and died apart from the divine Christ. As a consequence, he denied the Virgin Mary the title “Mother of God” (Theotokos), declaring her instead to be “Mother of Christ” (Christotokos).

When reports of this heretic teaching reached St. Cyril, the 24th Patriarch of the Church of Alexandria, he ordered an emergency meeting with the Holy Synod. A unanimous agreement was reached. St. Cyril sent a letter to Nestorius known as “The Third Epistle of St. Cyril to Nestorius.”

“St. Cyril ordered an emergency meeting with the Holy Synod.”

In it he wrote “The Twelve Anathemas of St. Cyril.” In these anathemas, St. Cyril excommunicated anyone who followed the teachings of Nestorius. For example, “Anyone who dares to deny the Holy Virgin the title Theotokos is Anathema!” Nestorius however, would still not repent and so this led to the convening of the First Ecumenical Council of Ephesus (431 AD), presided by our Patriarch St Cyril.

This council confirmed the teachings of St. Athanasius, that there is “One Nature and One Hypostasis for God the Word Incarnate” and confirmed the title of the Holy Ever-Virgin Mary as “Mother of God”. It also stated that anyone who separated Christ into two hypostases was anathema. As a result the introduction to the creed was formulated as follows:

“We magnify you O Mother of the True Light and we glorify you O saint and Mother of God (Theotokos) for you have borne unto us the Saviour of the world. Glory to you O our Master and King: Christ, the pride of the Apostles, the crown of the martyrs, the rejoicing of the righteous, the firmness of the churches and the forgiveness of sins. We proclaim the Holy Trinity in One Godhead: we worship Him, we glorify Him, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord bless us, Amen.”

Q “Is it not written in your law, ‘I have said Ye are gods’” My question is concerning John 10:30-36 Why did Christ quote Psalm 82 in defense of the Jews’ charge of blasphemy against Him? I’ve heard many alternative Christian interpretations as well as the heretical ones. Please share your ideas with me.

A This text should not be used to support the view that we are (or can become) little gods, for such an interpretation is contrary to the overall context. Christ was not speaking to pantheists (who believe that God is everything and everything is God) or polytheists (who believe in many gods). Rather, he is addressing strict Jewish monotheists who believe that only the Creator of the universe is God. So, his statement should not be taken out of this monotheistic context and given a pantheistic or polytheistic twist.

Jesus’ statement must be understood as part of his overall reasoning here which is an *a fortiori* argument: If God even called human judges ‘gods,’ then how much more can I call myself the Son of God. Christ had just pronounced himself one with the Father, saying, “I and My Father are one”

(John 10:30). The Jews wanted to stone Him because they thought He was blaspheming, making Himself to be equal with God (John 10:31-33).

Jesus responded by quoting Psalm 82:6 which says, “I said, “You are gods” So, Jesus reasoned, if human judges could be called “gods,” then why couldn’t the Son of God be called “God”?”

Note that not everyone is called “gods” but only a special class of persons, namely, judges about whom Jesus said, they are those to “whom the word of God came” (John 10:35). Jesus was showing that if the Old Testament scriptures could give some status to divinely appointed judges, why should they find it unbelievable that he should call himself the Son of God?

These judges were “gods” in the sense that they stood in God’s place, judging even life and death matters. They were not called “gods” because they were divine beings. Indeed, the text Christ cites (Psalm 82) goes on to say, that they were “men” and would “die” (Psalm 82:7).

It also affirms that they were “children of the Most High,” (Psalm 82:6) but not because they were of the essence of God Himself.

It is possible, as many scholars believe that when the psalmist said to the unjust judges, “You are gods,” He was speaking in irony. He was saying, I have called you ‘gods,’ but in fact you will die like the men that you really are. If this is so, then when Jesus alluded to this psalm in John 10, He was saying that what the Israelite judges were called in irony and judgment, He is in reality. Christ was giving a defense for His own deity, not for the deification of man.

St Augustine says: “If the word of God came to men, that they might be called gods, how can the very Word of God, who is with God, be otherwise than God? If by the word of God men become gods, if by fellowship they become gods, can He by whom they have fellowship not be God? If lights which are lit are gods, is the light which enlightens not God? If through being warmed in a way by saving fire they are constituted gods, is He who gives them the warmth other than God? If, then, the word of God makes you gods, how can the Word of God be otherwise than God?”

“These judges were “gods” in the sense that they stood in God’s place, judging even life and death matters.”



If you have a question about our faith, send it

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“Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know!”

(Job 38:4,5)

The Evolution Controversy

THE THEORY

The theory of evolution has two major aspects. The First is the ‘Origin of Species’ which is the title of the famous book by Charles Darwin (1859) in which he suggested that simple creatures have evolved into more complex (higher) creatures over a long period of time. Fish supposedly evolved into amphibians. Amphibians evolved into reptiles. Reptiles evolved into birds and mammals. Darwin hoped that this discovery of ‘Transitional Species’ would support his theory.

The second aspect is the ‘Origin of Life’ in which evolutionists suggest that the first single-celled organism evolved on the primitive earth due to a variety of processes leading to the formation of simple organic compounds. These compounds combined together to give more and more complex structures until one was formed that could be called living (Chemical Evolution). The problem with all the aspects of ‘Origin’ is that if they occur by evolution they occur too slowly to be observed today. The best one can do is hypothesize, or speculate as to how life *could* have happened. Based on current knowledge and laboratory results, to get proof on how it actually happened is not possible.

But as far as evolutionists are concerned, the fact that we are here means evolution *must* have happened. In doing so God is automatically eliminated as a possible cause. This is precisely what evolution does, it claims that, instead of being created by God, we have evolved from

animals, instead of being created in the Image of God, we have descended from the apes. The theory of evolution has been the source and inspiration of a number of sinful philosophies including *Humanism*, which effectively makes man his own god. Our Lord said: “For a tree is known by its fruit” (Matt. 12:33) and “Every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit” (Matt. 7:17). So if we judge the tree of the theory of evolution by its fruits, then we are left with no other conclusion than that tree needs to be “cut down and thrown into the fire” (Matt. 7:19).

THE ARGUMENTS

1. There is no scientific law that allows something to evolve from nothing. On the contrary, the law of conservation of energy states the exact opposite. If there was nothing in the universe to begin with, obviously nothing could happen to cause anything to appear. Juggle the figures any way you like, but without a CREATOR you are not going to get anything, let alone everything.
2. No scientific law accounts for non-living things coming to life. The soil in your garden didn’t turn into trees and flowers. The plants came from seeds, cuttings, or grafts from other trees and flowers. Chemical evolution has not yet determined how the first single-celled creature could have evolved. Suppose that man was able to make a living cell in the test tube from raw chemicals, what does that demonstrate? Simply that intelligence is required to create life.
3. Darwin suggested that all the forms of life we see on earth today have descended from more primitive

ancestors by gradual change over millions of years. This is so slow that it would be impossible to observe during our lifetime. If this actually happened (Also known as the ‘missing links’ between different species) then the fossil evidence should show a gradual change from one species of animal into another. In Darwin’s days, and still today, the fossil evidence does not show these intermediate life forms. It shows the final species that would be expected with special creation.

4. Why if species have descended from other species by insensibly fine gradations, do we not everywhere see innumerable transition forms? Why is nature not in confusion instead of the species being, as we see them, well defined? Darwin’s theory of natural selection is incapable of finding the link to prove how one kind of creature could evolve into a completely different kind when it doesn’t have the genetic coding to do so (mutations overwhelmingly destroy genetic information and produce creatures more handicapped than the parents. Bacteria may be an exception to this rule because they benefit from mutation, but a bacterium remains a bacterium after mutating).

5. In his book, *Material basis of evolution*, Goldschmidt says, “To suppose that the eye with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting its focus to different distances, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correction of spherical and chromatic aberration, could have been formed by natural selection, *seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest degree.*”

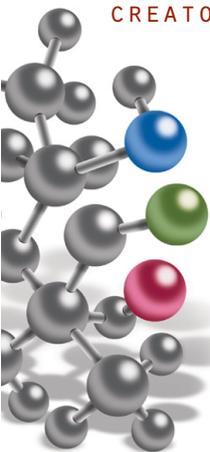
6. The inability to explain how

the first living organism evolved and the lack of transitional forms demonstrates that evolution is at best ‘a hypothesis’, it is not a proven fact. Despite this, the majority of people believe evolution to be a proven fact. Faith, rather than facts, is the basis of the evolution theory. If we therefore adopt a forensic methodology and look at the evidence that is before us, then the belief in evolution, as a mechanism for our origin, *requires far more faith* than the belief in a Creator simply because of the ample evidence all around us that there is indeed a Designer. “The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork.” (Ps. 19: 1)

7. Sir Fred Hoyle said about the theory of evolution: “*That is about as ridiculous and improbable as the proposition that a tornado, blowing through a junk yard, could assemble a Boeing 747.*”

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH?

THE BIBLE STARTS AND ENDS WITH GOD AS CREATOR:



“The Things which are seen were not made of things which are visible”

(Heb. 11:3)

The Book of Genesis of course describes the creation and in the Book of Revelation it is written: “You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.” (Rev. 4:11) “Worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.” (Rev. 14:7)

FAITH IS THE KEY: Scientists and evolutionists confess that there are many things about

the origin of life that they don’t understand but we say with St. Paul: “*By faith we understand* that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.” (Heb. 11:3)

THERE IS NO EXCUSE: There is no excuse to those who don’t believe in God as the Creator. St. Paul said: “For 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*” (Rom. 1:20).

THE DAYS (PERIODS) OF CREATION: We need to realize that the word ‘day’ used in the first two chapters of the Book of Genesis doesn’t mean a ‘24 hour day’ but rather a period of time that could extend millions of years. The solar system and the stars were not created until the fourth period (day) therefore time, as we now know it did not exist until then. The Holy Scripture uses the word ‘day’ in different meanings, “The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome *day* of the Lord” (Acts 2: 20). Here ‘day’ means eternity. Also St.

Peter said: “with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” (2 Pet. 3: 8)

THE SEVENTH DAY: Notice that it wasn’t said about the seventh day ‘so the evening and the morning were the seventh day’ that means that this seventh ‘day’ (period) extends from the creation of Adam and eve until today. In other words all the years from the creation of man until today are actually the seventh day!

Q & A:

Q: Could God have created through evolution?

A: God *could* have used evolution to create. *But He didn’t.*

In spite of the fact that the creation could have taken millions of years, Holy Scripture states that God created every living thing that moves, every winged bird that flies, and every plant ‘according to its kind’ (Gen. 1:11, 21). This means that God created mature animals and plants ready to reproduce more of their own kind. Also Holy Scripture tells us that the first man was created from dust not from an ape-like creature. Theistic evolutionists (those who believe that God used evolution to create the world) are really stretching the facts by supporting a theory that is not in harmony with textbook evolution nor with the Bible.

Q: What is the difference between evolution and adaptation?

A: Adaptation occurs within the same species to accommodate to its outer environment. This process doesn’t lead to the formation of a new species as evolution suggests. For example, human beings were created vegetarians (Gen. 1:29) and it wasn’t until after the flood, when all the crops were destroyed (Gen. 9:3), that God permitted them to eat meat. Therefore, the digestive system of man ‘adapted’ to the new type of food but he remained a human being.

Q: I have a classmate who is really convinced that humans evolved from apes. What can I do to help him?

A: Pray for him, give him a copy of this lecture, give him a book from the list mentioned below.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

Evolution: The Fossils still say No! Duane T Gish, Creation-Life Publishers.
The Controversy. Donald E Chittick, Multnomah Press.
What about Origins. Dr. A J Montey White, Dunestone Printers Ltd.
True science agrees with the Bible. M Bowden, Sovereign publications.

Hey Mike,

There was a scenario that happened among some friends and I and it has caused much hurt and pain. I have apologized for my portion and have asked for forgiveness from the others. In turn, I have forgiven them for the actions and words that were spoken by them. However, I am finding that the others will not forgive me and choose not to talk about it (and have moved on although we are not talking) and I am finding that I am having episodes of anger against them because of their unwillingness to solve things. Does this mean that I have not truly forgiven them and that I am fooling myself? Also, does this mean that I continue to try to get their forgiveness or do I let them have their space?

It is difficult to admit an error and take responsibility. You have already taken this very important step. When we pray the Lord's Prayer, we ask Him to forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. We cannot ascertain the degree of forgiveness others have for us. Rather, focus on the sins you want God to forgive for you. If the mistake you made is repetitive, work on it so it does not become a character flaw. Ask God to help you overcome any residual bitterness you may have in your heart regarding this matter so it does not interfere with your spiritual life. You can give your friends some space but still remain kind and friendly. Continue this dialogue with your spiritual father in confession. Your personal relationship with God is far more important than any other.

What is the churches view on playing Karate? Can I take it as a sport or hobby? Can I join a club that might even have an evil dragon sign? If I do not care about their philosophy/ religion or whatever is it okay? Can I join a club that does not have an evil sign on the karate outfit?

It is commendable that you are concerned about the choices you have before you. Prayer and asking for spiritual advice is the right track to follow. As a rule, any activity that compromises or diverts you from your spiritual path is not worth traveling.

Involvement in sports is generally a good pastime. Sports can help to build teamwork, leadership, and good sportsmanship. Karate is different, in that regard, because it is for the most part an individual sport. To attract and excite customers, some clubs do promote evil logos. It is advised that if this is the sport in which you want to participate, research a facility that does not use negative ads or promotions, neither imposes a particular questionable philosophy.

A background check on the history of Karate identifies it mainly as a self-defense sport which does not employ the use weapons. Martial Arts, in general, include disciplines which exercise physical and mental energy as self-defense or relaxation techniques. The purpose of the symbolic use of animals, such as, the dragon, cheetah, snake, etc., stress the methods used by these animals in battle and for survival.

There is some concern regarding this sport when it goes too far. Participants are deceived about their own ability, becoming self-absorbed, self-sufficient, self-confident, self-reliant, and independent of God. Rather than imitating the gentleness and meekness of Christ, the angels that praise Him, and the saints who trusted in Him, they resort to the tactics of animals. See the real inner strength of the Three Youth (The Book of Daniel) who had the greatest confidence in God. You, too, can be more like them.

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king (Daniel 3:16-17). Look! He answered, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God (Daniel 3:25).

Ask Me.

if you have a question
about ANYTHING,

send it to:

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mightyarrowsmagazine@suscopts.org
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ATHEISM

THE DEVIL'S WELL WEDGED BATTLE

By H.H. Pope Shenouda III

A believer once asked His Holiness, "The idea of atheism contends with me, and I struggle against it, but it returns with doubts in the existence of God. Please help me to confirm my faith: I am afraid that these doubts will prevail against my faith." His Holiness replied...

This is a well-known battle waged by the devil. These tempting thoughts do not emanate out of you or else you would not have been struggling against it. The devil is persistent and stubborn, and does not rest or despair. The more humans react against any of his temptations, the more he keeps trying. St. Peter says,

"Resist him firm in your faith ..."
(1 Peter 5:9).

Nevertheless, there are many proofs of the existence of God in this universe. Without God, there is no explanation as to how the universe came to being. Along the same line, there is no explanation as to the existence of life, matter, humans, or nature, except that God existed

and created them. We start with the main point, and that is the existence of life.

The Existence of Life

The question is: how was life found on the earth? According to scientists, there was a time when the earth was part of the solar system, at a burning temperature degree, that does not allow human, animal or plant life. So where did life come from? Who created it? And how? Atheists and other scientists have been confounded at the existence of life. Here is not only meant the life of advanced mammals such as man, but even the life of a creature as small as an ant, or any insect that sets foot on the face of the earth. The existence of any one of those insects proves the existence of God. The existence of one living cell, of plasma, proves the existence of God, because there is no other interpretation. Life is a fairly new concept on earth. Before, the earth was a burning mass, where life was not possible.

Then, life came about with the cooling of the earth's crust. The burning center of the earth, from where volcanoes and hot eruptions come, is not fit for life. So how did life start on earth after the crust of the earth cooled down?

Normally, rigid lifeless matter could not have created life. Therefore, the puzzle remains in front of scientists! The only solution is that God, in His supreme power, was the One who created life.

A living being has to come forth from another being. And however the scientists try to bring any of their imaginary hypotheses, they remain hypotheses, never achieving scientific status. Next on our list is the existence of matter.

The Existence of Matter

By this we mean rigid nature and whatever matter it contains. Matter did not create itself. The expression, itself, does not make sense, for how can it create itself, when it is non-existent? How can it have the power

to create, before it is created? The hypothesis is impossible. Therefore, the only possibility is that someone must have created it. Who is that, but God? It did not exist by chance, as is alleged by some! Chance does not create things. The word "chance" is a non-scientific and illogical word. It needs a definition. So what is chance? What are its powers? And does chance have characteristics such as the capability to create?

We also cannot say that matter or nature is eternal. It is impossible for matter to be eternal, because being eternal proves power, whereas matter is weak. It changes from one state to another: water changes to water vapor, and it could freeze, and turn to ice; wood can burn and turn into coal, or change into smoke and disappear in the atmosphere. Many forms of matter are compounded: and a compound is the combination of two or more elements, and it may dissolve, and return to its former constituents. Nature, then, is changeable, and inconsistency shows weakness, and therefore it cannot be a source of creating new matter. Therefore rigid nature, devoid of thinking, cannot be capable of creating.

A general question to pose is: what is meant by the word "nature"? Is it rigid matter? Is it the mountains, the rivers, the earth, and the atmosphere? If so, then it cannot create humans because the non-living cannot create something living, and the non-thinking cannot create the thinking being. So has human nature created man? This is not logical, because man did not have any nature capable of creating him before he came to existence. Or does the word "nature" tell of a huge power that is inconceivable? If so, then maybe this inconceivable power is God, and has been called "nature" by some. Then the difference would only be an utter of name calling, and not of essence. All the atheists, who

said that nature created the universe, did not provide a clear meaning to the kind of nature they meant. The next point to prove the existence of God is Man.

The Existence of Man

Man is this marvelous being that possesses a mind, a soul, a conscience, and a will. There must have been another being who has a much elevated power to create man, another being who possesses ultimate wisdom, power and will to enable Him to create man. This is God. This is especially

It is impossible for matter to be eternal, because being eternal proves power, whereas matter is weak.

amazing when we consider the complex features of man. It is enough to mention man's fingerprints, or pitch of voice. There may be tens of millions of humans coexisting in one country, and each of them has an individual fingerprint that differentiates him/her from another's. Who is this who can draw fingerprints that are individualized for each person? These lines change from one person to another, amongst thousands of millions on one continent like Asia, or Africa. This is marvelous! The Creator of all this must be someone with limitless power. God's unlimited power is demonstrated in the formation of man with the variety and complexity of parts, each having its own unique function.

The brain, for example, has centers for sight, hearing, movement, memory, and understanding, etc., so that if one of these centers is destroyed, a person loses his ability to work this center forever! How many scientists around the world can create a brain, or even one

center in the brain? This can only be accomplished by God. This brings us to the next item to prove the existence of God.

The Structure of the Universe

If you see a bunch of stones laying somewhere, you might say that they were found there by chance. However, if you see a number of those stones, arranged beside and above each other to form rooms, halls, with doors to divide them, and windows to look out of them, then you would say that was definitely the work of an engineer or builder who would have put them together. It is the same thing with the universe in its structure. God must have organized it so well that philosophers have called Him "The Greatest Engineer." Let us give as our first example the laws of the galaxy: by this we mean the marvelous system that connects the sun and the moons, the system which organizes the directions taken by the stars, and the huge numbers of their satellites and meteors. The earth itself turns around once every day, resulting in day and night. It also turns around

the sun once every year, resulting in the four seasons. This system does not change, and has been in place for thousands of years, since these heavenly orbits have been created, and laws were put to organize them. This is the reason the study of the universe is taught in the colleges that teach theology; the universe proves the existence of God. As well, medicine is taught in those colleges, for the same reason. The

The organization created by God is not limited to heaven and its constituents only, but also includes things that pertain to the temperature, pressure, winds, and rain.

law of the universe is also observed in the relationship between the moon and the earth, from which resulted the series of shapes of the moon from crescent to a full moon. This is what makes us appreciate the words of the psalmist:

“The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims His handiwork” (Ps. 19:1).

The organization created by God is not limited to heaven and its constituents only, but also includes things that pertain to the temperature, pressure, winds, and rain. These factors are different from one country to another, yet they are harmonious and organized, so they have the best effects in the fields of agriculture and plants. What a marvelous example we get from examining bees and their production! A bee is only an insect but it works in an astonishingly organized fashion, as if it were in an organized army, whether that it is the queen bee or the workers. The product is the sweet honey to which is attributed so many nutritious benefits, especially that honey produced by the queen bees, known as “Royal Jelly,” and sold in pharmacies. The bee in its extreme organization proves the existence of God, and so does its sweet nutritious product. Another way to prove the existence of God is miracles.

Miracles

Miracles are not against the mind; they transcend what the mind knows. They are called miracles because the human mind is unable to understand or interpret them. The only interpretation for them is the unlimited power of God, mentioned in the Bible: “With men it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God” (Mk. 10:27); or as Job put it, “I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted” (Job 42:2). Miracles are not limited to what has been related in the Holy Bible. They are found in our practical life, especially to the saints. If no miracles happened in your life, or to any of your relatives or acquaintances, then read about them in those books that have registered some of the miracles that happened in our days, or in the lives of saints that lived before us. Some of these

may be Abba Abraam, Bishop of Fayoum, or Abba Sarabamon, Abou Tarha, or any of the miracles that recur on the days commemorating these saints. These commemorations confirm faith in your hearts. The next point to prove the existence of God is common belief.

Common Belief

The belief that God exists is common among all nations, even to atheists. They have faith in the existence of godliness, but err in their knowledge of WHO is God.

They have gone as far as to believe in the existence of many gods. Some of them believe in a god for every quality by which godliness is known. They even know that they need to offer prayer, sacrifices, and oblations to God.

Belief in God is implanted even in children. If you talk to a child about God, he/she does not ask you who He is; and if you tell him/her not to do something or else God will be angry, he/she will not argue with you. A child’s instincts tell him/her about the existence of God, and this faith does not waiver in the child’s heart or mind, except with doubts that come to him/her from outside factors. That could be in the form of temptation from the devil or someone’s thoughts, when the child grows up and is old enough to start doubting.

In fact, atheism has many reasons, not all religious. In communist countries, the reason for atheism is the faulty political upbringing, the pressure on the part of the government, as well as the fear on the part of the people. Once fear is removed, with the elimination of the political pressure, tens of millions in Russia, Romania, Poland and other countries accepted the faith; or they professed the faith that they would not allege earlier out of

fear of their governments. Another kind of atheism in Marxism. This has been described by some authors as refusing God but not denying the existence of God. Economic problems and the poverty of which many people suffer, in contrast with the life of luxury and lavishness, has convinced those atheists that God lives in an ivory tower not caring for the suffering of the poor, toiling class. Therefore, they refused God, and called religion the “opiate of the masses”, in an attempt to anesthetize them, so that they do not feel the

miserly in their lives.

Another kind of atheism is that of existentialists who want to wallow in the enjoyment of their sinful desires forbidden to them by God. They state that “it is better that God does not exist, so that we may exist!” By this they mean that the only way they can exist

The belief that God exists is common among all nations, even to atheists. They have faith in the existence of godliness, but err in their knowledge of WHO is God.

is satisfying their sinful passions. They even made fun of Our Lord’s Prayer by saying, “Our Father Who is in Heaven,” yes, may He remain in heaven, and leave the earth to us. Thus it is a belief that is not built on solid grounds, but on running after their own cravings.

Finally, I would like to tell you this story. One day a believer and an atheist met. The atheist told the believer: “How would you feel if, after death, you discovered that there is no heaven or hell, no reward or punishment, after you have spend your life in prayer, fasting and abstinence in vain?” The believer answered: “I will lose nothing, because I find pleasure in spiritual life. But how would you feel if, after death, you discovered that there is a reward and punishment, heaven and hell?”

As for you, my beloved son, may God confirm your faith +

90 Day Challenge

The Exercise of The Arrow Prayer

by H.G. Bishop Moussa

It consists of repeating many times this short prayer: "My Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon me, a sinner." This is all the practice consists of. Although it seems simple, it needs some effort of concentration and a lifting of the heart to God.

The Concept Behind this Exercise

These prayers are called "arrow-like prayers" by the Church for they are, in a manner of speaking, spiritual arrows that penetrate the thick veil that can exist between man and God, rises to the pinnacle of heaven and enters the sanctuary of the Lord and is most effective.

When you repeat this prayer with concentration, you will experience the following:

1. You will feel that the Lord is opening your eyes while you talk to Him.
2. You will realize your

sins and weaknesses, and lay them in His Hands, 3. You will humble your heart as you ask for mercy and the forgiveness for the many sins you commit against the Lord, against others, and against yourself, and 4. Your heart rejoices when you feel the consolations of God's Spirit who comes near you and comforts you. You then feel that the Lord Jesus Christ enters into your feelings and emotions.

Practical Application

1. You should choose an appropriate time to carry out this exercise. You can, for example, repeat this prayer several tens of times in a few minutes before the morning prayers (Prime), before the evening prayers (Vespers), when you lie down for a nap at noon, or when you go to bed at night.

On all these occasions, you either get ready for prayer or you protect your heart and mind from being immersed in thoughts or images of evil.

2. You will initially feel somewhat bored and that it is a monotonous routine. This feeling, however, will

disappear if you concentrate on what you are saying and if you visualize the Lord Jesus Christ before you.

3. At the beginning, the words will be uttered by your mouth; then your mind will pay attention to them and you will feel that you are engaged in a humble dialogue with the Lord because of your sins. Next, your feelings are stirred and the prayer is entrenched in your heart in joy and the awareness of the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. What is joyful is that this "storing up" in your heart will be very important for your daily life. You will discover that this prayer will leap from your heart to your lips thoughtlessly and you will find yourself saying: "My Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon me...". This will alert you to the presence of the Lord and to the possibility of repeating it several times. If you are in a sinful situation, you will correct it quickly, and if you are upset for any reason, you will quickly be comforted by the Lord.

The Purpose of the Exercise

The significance of any spiritual exercise resides its purpose. Is the aim of the exercise to become a spiritual hero who does exercises that other young people


"Spiritual
arrows that
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between man
and God"

do not do, or is the aim simply to unite with the Lord Jesus Christ because of your pressing need for Him, to forgive your sins, sanctify your life, and comfort your spirit as you travel in the valley of tears? This is the objective, the need of a weak man for a loving God, for a spiritual breath of fresh air or a dose that energizes your feelings for the Lord Jesus Christ who did not hold back His divine blood from you.

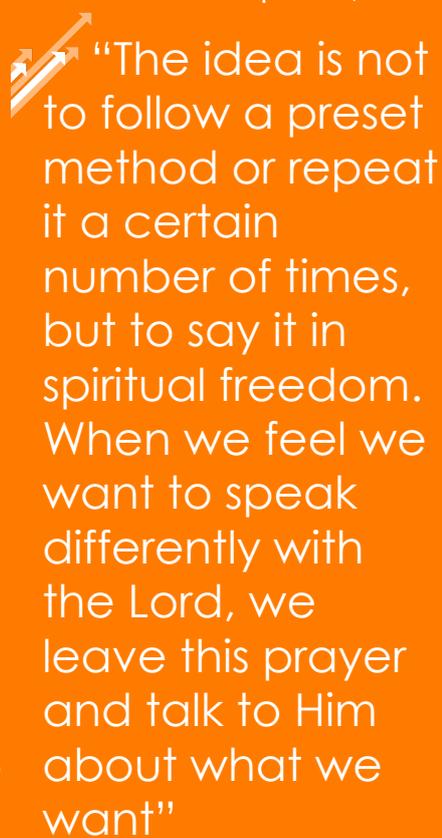
The validity of the objective, therefore, is basic and the guidance of your spiritual father guarantees the clarity of the purpose and the soundness of the way: A Gospel

Exercise. This exercise has its roots in the gospel because it is taken from the prayer of the tax collector who stood afar off and would not so much as lift his eyes to heaven, but smote his breast saying: "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Lk. 18: 13), and who went down to his house justified. Its roots are also in the Old Testament, for David, the prophet, said: "O, how I love Your Name; it is my meditation all the day" (Ps. 119:97), and "I remember Your Name in the night, O Lord" (Ps. 119: 55).

Has not St. Peter said: "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk..." And "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 3: 6, 4: 12)?

Did not Isaiah the prophet say:

"The desire of our soul is for Your Name" (Isa. 26: 8)? It is the name of salvation: "and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Mt. 1: 21). A Coptic Patristic Exercise was an exercise which St. Augustine advised his disciples to do asking them to repeat always: "My Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me; my Lord Jesus Christ, help me; I praise You, My Lord Jesus Christ." The Psalmody gives us the same feeling when we repeat continuously: "My Lord Jesus Christ, my good Savior." What is important is that the call to the Lord Jesus Christ be repeated, even if only in short



"The idea is not to follow a preset method or repeat it a certain number of times, but to say it in spiritual freedom. When we feel we want to speak differently with the Lord, we leave this prayer and talk to Him about what we want"

requests as the need arises, and any number of times in a way that aims at bringing us into the presence of God. The idea is not to follow a preset method or repeat it a certain number of times, but to say it in spiritual freedom. When we feel we want to speak differently with the Lord, we leave this prayer and talk to Him about what we want. It is only a "key"

that enables us to come to the Lord. In a State of Tranquility, the fathers say that this exercise puts you in a state of "tranquility of the heart", or spiritual, intellectual, psychological, and nervous peace which we need urgently in our era that is full of causes for worry. What is most wonderful about this exercise is that it goes with you everywhere: when you are among people,

on the bus or waiting for the bus, before going to bed and when getting up. It is an exercise for every time and every place.

Let us repeat together, my dear brother: "My Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me; my Lord Jesus Christ, help me; I praise you my Lord Jesus Christ."

May the Lord be with you.

The Challenge

We, the magazine staff, would like to challenge you to try the "arrow-like prayer" until you feel the Lord opening your eyes and you start to lay your sins and weaknesses in His Hands, you humble your heart as you ask for mercy and forgiveness, your heart starts to rejoice when you feel the consolations of God's Spirit, and He enters into your feelings and emotions. Pick a time of day to do this and try to concentrate on what you are saying by visualizing the Lord Jesus Christ before you. If you find yourself struggling, talk about it with your father of confession and take his advice and guidance. We also encourage you to memorize psalms, committing these prayers to memory will help you in calling on God constantly.

Beloved, I do not wish to weary you with a story you know all too well. Or rather, you *think* you know it well; for your minds are often sated with knowledge while your actions and attitudes are empty. Forgive me if I sound sharp; but as a farmer must prick a slumbering ox to begin its work, so must I prick your drowsy consciences to begin the spiritual effort of listening. Come then, let us begin. What relevance, you may ask, has the account of Creation? Remember the verse in Wisdom (13:5), “The Creator is perceived by analogy in the immensity and beauty of created things.” Why was the universe made as a vast and colossal entity? So that when it awes you, you might remember that our God is even more awesome. Why are flowers and birds and rivers and lush fields so beautiful? So that through their lowly beauty you may recognize the greater beauty of God.

At the outset we must mention, unfortunately, the fooleries spoken by many in our day regarding the beginning of the universe. You have philosophers like the Pythagoreans, who say there always existed plain old, generic matter, which with the passing ages slowly developed and self-organized into the world and life. Again, you have the Manicheans and Gnostics, who believe that a bad god created all material things, while the good God created only spiritual things. Then you have the Stoics who see God as a sort of chef, who took

the raw ingredients (which he did not create) of the universe and prepared a very fine cuisine—earth. Worst of all, there are those Epicureans who deny every concept of God or creation, and whose life slogan is, “Eat, drink and play: for tomorrow we die!” I wonder how long such vulgar notions will last. Until the end of time? May God save us.

So, passing on from the empty guesses of the world, let us dive into the wisdom of God’s word. At the dawn of time, God communicated rather directly with humans. This He did when, for example, he strolled with Adam in Eden in blessed conversation, or when he rebuked Cain, or when he was received hospitably by Abraham. But then something happened. Man drove himself into an abyss of sin and cut off his dialogue with God. What was God’s response? As if man were a dear friend who had been away on an extended leave, God desired to reestablish the friendship through an “epistle.” And just as St. Paul wrote a letter and sent it to Philippi by Epaphroditus, so God wrote His own and sent it to all mankind by Moses.

Well then, what does the letter say? *In the beginning God made heaven and earth.* How brief this statement is—a single sentence—but how capable of overthrowing the dishonest shams of the adversary! Take an example. A Stoic comes and tells you,



“Matter was never created.” Say to him, *In the beginning God made heaven and earth.*

But he doesn’t believe in the Bible, you retort. Then on the same grounds you may ignore his words: for who can believe in ever-existent matter? It requires a clear breach of logic, more startling even than the meek faith you need to believe Genesis.

Remember, “The reasoning of mortals is worthless, and their designs insecure” (Wis. 9:14). If any person approaches you with the sickness of unbelief and coughs it onto you, use this verse as an antibiotic, even if silently in your heart. And if he laughs at you as a lunatic in mind, weep for him for being a lunatic in soul. He may even seem humble and try to persuade you of his folly out of goodwill. But while he seems to you a friend, to our all-knowing Lord he is like a serpent. Beware of his venom.

But we must save the unbelievers, you cry. Yes, God desires the repentance of a sinner. But as the old adage goes, “Save yourself, and you will save everyone around you.” Do not throw yourself into an unneeded debate with a hard, crusty old atheist when your own confidence wobbles. Make sure first that you yourself are planted firmly in God’s soil. Draw close to God, and others will be drawn with you. Evangelism is often the product of unwitting magnetism.

Let us skip to another verse: *Let Us make man in Our image and likeness.* Here is a curious thing. Why is the expression “Let there be...” used when speaking of the creation of light, earth, water, and everything else, but with the creation of man He says, “Let Us make...”? It is to show us that we are a creation of special esteem, of unique value in God’s sight. The entire universe simply shoots into existence, simply “be’s,” while man is specifically “made,” and carefully handcrafted by the Creator. It was for the sake of humans that the rest of creation was made, whose salvation God so loved as not to spare His only-begotten Son. God did not desist, in fact, from performing everything required to lead them up and seat them at His right hand. St. Paul even cries out, “With Him He has raised us up and seated us at His right hand in the heavenly places through Christ Jesus” (Eph. 2:6).

Go out into nature, then, and enjoy its beauty – it was made for you. For God’s handwriting is displayed large and clear in His creation: “I love you.” Let us then, admiring His loving kindness, do His will to the utmost of our ability, that having both in this life and in the coming one received abundantly the loving kindness of God, we may be able to enjoy the good things promised to us, through the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and world without end.
Amen.

A MIGHTY PREACHER On A Mighty Theme

by J.M. Stephanos

A sermon by our Holy Father St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople

Based on his *Eight Sermons on the Book of Genesis*

Digging Deeper

Kindness

The Lord Jesus Christ, while upon this earth, was the type of individual who could make the common person feel special, the unbeliever believe, and the unrighteous desire for righteousness. The Lord Jesus Christ showed many kindnesses to others, did many good things for the unfortunate, did not neglect the poor and suffering and, when preaching and teaching, did not avoid those who were outside his cultural understanding. Through His enduring loving kindness the Lord Jesus Christ neither boasted of his self-worth nor ridiculed or belittled an individual because of the burdens carried within their hearts and minds, which weakened their nature. By His loving kindness he not only relieved them of their challenges in life but also restored them so that they could further exemplify the kindness He bestowed upon them to others in need, rekindling the kindness over and over again -so great was the effect of THE TREE that bore the fruit of kindness.

The Lord Jesus Christ's kindness must have branched forth from Him as the sun radiates from the heavens. His Kindness and favor were renowned and His reputation preceded and followed Him wherever He journeyed. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself said,

"I am the good shepherd, I know my sheep and My sheep know Me." (John 10:14)

Thus, He knows our need for His kindness and favor and, most importantly, He bestows it upon us. **He is good to us.**

The fruit of kindness is abundant in its effects as it can also bring forth comfort. It signifies a comforting deed performed from the heart. St. Clement of Alexandria said, *"Fear works abstinence from what is evil, but love exhorts to the doing of good, by*

building up to the point of spontaneity." (c. 195)

There are many symbolic inferences in the Holy Bible which allude to the Lord Jesus Christ's kindness in bringing comfort to others, such as in the beloved Psalm of David,

"Your rod and Your staff they comfort me." (23:4)

A rod and a staff to the multitudes of sheep in a shepherd's flock meant caring, guidance, and safety. Used correctly it could be a kind act which saved the lives of his herd which could, in ancient days, incorporate the young, the middle aged, and the elderly among the sheep. The herd could be comprised of a ram or lamb, a pure bred or mixed, a sickly or healthy one, one that frequently strayed or one who always obeyed the commands of the shepherd. But the rod and staff meant the same to them all, an act of kindness, caring, and comfort. For us an act of kindness can also be in simple teaching, in redirection, and in an act of faith.

"When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes Lord you know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed My lambs.'" (John 21: 15)

What is the Lord Jesus Christ saying to Simon Peter? The Lord is instructing him to do works of kindness: feed the hungry; minister to the sick, the handicapped, and terminally ill; remember those others have forgotten (the sick and shut-in perhaps); care for those without homes; love those whom others do not; and take the love and kindness of the Lord to all those who will listen.

St. Peter certainly did not expect to take the Word of God to the Gentiles. Most probably, the thought did not cross his mind or enter into his heart for consideration. But being provoked by a dream and receiving visitors sent by Cornelius (Acts 10), St. Peter understood the need to cross boundaries of culture and his own weak understanding. With courage, he ventured forth to extend the Lord's loving kindness and teachings to all those people in need of it and who would listen.

The opposite of kindness is hate. Often,

The Branch that Holds
the Fruit to THE TREE

By H.G. Bishop Youssef

in visiting families I hear “I hate you” frequently and liberally used. Those who say “I hate you” to their parents or brothers and sisters, are developing a deep seated problem in their personality. It is both wrong and unhealthy. Hating one another is not alluded to anywhere in the Holy Bible as acceptable or beneficial. It leaves no doubt that one person hating another is wrong. The Holy Bible rather teaches us that hating sin is proper hatred.

Therefore, when you tell someone, parents, or siblings that you hate them, you are committing a very sinful act. The wrong action here is telling the person you hate them not for the wrong or perceived wrong you believe to have happened. A second wrongful action would not have occurred if the person had chosen kindness rather than hate to approach the problem at hand. The Lord often hated the sin but He did not hate the sinner. Kindness can defuse hate; it can defuse the sinful nature of man. Kindness is most often the right thing to demonstrate in any given situation, and it is proven both psychologically and physically to be the healthy thing to do. Hate and bitterness can lead to heart disease, ulcers, and somatic pain. It can lead to many physical complaints. It increases our internal stress level, leads to premature aging, and can ultimately lead to premature death, a severe price to pay for hatred. We are taught an exact act of kindness to perform for those whose acts we oppose and that is prayer.

“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” (Matthew 5:43-44)

Polycarp (c. 135) taught, *“He that has love is far from every sin.”* We must put forth the image of God.

“The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God.” (Exodus 34:6)

The Lord Jesus Christ exhibited His loving kindness with every opportunity and situation, and those of desperation and courage it was often recognizable by the look of compassion upon His holy face. For the hemorrhaging woman, suffering with the most untoward situation imaginable by Jewish law, was condemned unclean. For twelve years she was labeled as an outcast because of an illness that she had derived, most

probably through no fault of her own. The Lord Jesus Christ entered her life en route to bringing a young girl back from earthly death. The Lord Jesus Christ was assumed to be surrounded by His chosen disciples and an ensuing crowd of people thickly gathering around them. He was preaching and teaching. She reached out only to touch the hem of His cloak. Her bravery and her courage cannot be put into words. Where did she find it? What made her take this leap of faith often spoke about in sermons? Most probably the kindness upon the face of the Lord Jesus Christ gave her the faith to become not only physically well but also changed her spiritual life and gave clarity to her strength of faith. The Lord Jesus Christ had made an outcast into a woman of great faith, and history would make her an example for others. The despicable woman with a bleeding disorder, an

“Kindness can be heard in one’s voice as well as seen upon one’s countenance.”

outcast of her own culture, would be a chosen example of the kindness of heart of the Lord Jesus Christ. This example would live on in history, outlasting even her earthly existence. She did not die an outcast of Jewish law but as an example of kindness shown directly upon her by the Lord Himself.

Kindness can be heard in one’s voice as well as seen upon one’s countenance. It is an old adage that some people are unable to see because of egotism, materialism, prejudice, greed, fear, love of power or revenge, and sometimes because of self-hate. Blindness can indeed also be of a physical nature. The voice of kindness is more readily listened to willingly and can often be better understood without defense. The voice of kindness can induce someone to inspect and see the damage or defect in them and want to correct it.

“Jesus stood still and ordered the man to be brought to him, and when he came near, He asked Him, ‘What do you want Me to do for you?’ He said, ‘Lord, let me see again.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Receive your sight, your faith has saved you.’ Immediately he regained his sight and followed him, glorifying God, and all the people when they saw it, praised God.” (Luke 18:40-43)

The blind man it can be asserted could definitely not see the cause of the excitement around him when he was told Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. But could the blind man discern the voice of the Lord when he actually did pass by? We know he added his voice to the crowd. Did the Lord Jesus Christ happen to stop at just the right moment in His lengthy and unceasing travels, and/or did the blind man recognize and relate to a kind voice with great faith? It was clearly documented that the Lord Jesus Christ directly and purposefully asked the blind man what he wanted and the blind man gave him a direct answer, the blind man asked for his physical sight (it is almost obvious that the man possessed the ability to see spiritually in recognition of his ability to ask the Lord for sight and expect to receive it). The Lord Jesus’ kindness, giving sight to a blind

man, increased his followers that day by another faithful one, one now prepared to follow Him. His kindness had made a willing heartfelt follower out of a blind man.

Kindness affects many people in different ways but it typically AFFECTS people. These are but a few effects of kindness. Other acts of kindness included preventing the stoning of a woman, causing a sinful man to give half his goods to the poor, restoring fourfold to those he had taken from with false accusations. Kindness can change the lives of others and we should and can serve as the branch to produce its fruits in the lives of others today.

“Lord You know the alertness of my enemies; and as for my weakness, You are aware of it, My Creator. Therefore, I, hereby, place my soul into Your Hands. So cover me with the wings of Your goodness (kindness), lest I might sleep to death. Enlighten my eyes by the greatness of Your sayings, and raise me up at all times for Your glorification, for You alone are good and a lover of mankind.”
--Blessed Prayer of the Veil



Glory be to God forever.

Dear Mary,

I'm a new member of the Coptic Church. I didn't grow up in church, quite the opposite. Speaking of God or even a higher power was forbidden. I got to know a friend in High school and we became instant best friends. I got to spend lots of time with her and her family. Two years later, I'm calling myself a Copt. Now that I'm "IN," my eyes are opening up to lots of hypocrisy that I could never have ever imagined, especially in the teen circles. What should I do? I believe in the doctrine but not the people. Newby.

Dearest Newby,

You are very wise not to believe in people; people will always disappoint us and fall short of our expectations. Our faith is not based on the behavior or integrity of people, thankfully or we'd be sunk! But hypocrisy is a difficult thing to bear. Even our Savior Jesus Christ addressed this very issue in Luke 12:1-3:

He began to say to His disciples first of all, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops.

This is my advice to you. Keep your eyes on God and experience Him personally through His revealed word in scripture, through your personal prayer life, and through the teachings and mysteries of the Church. Go directly to the source of life. . . Do not allow yourself to be distracted by the corrupt image that is coming through rebellious and/or unenlightened lives. If you focus on your direct relationship with God, you will be transformed and in so doing, fulfill the words of Scripture: Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:16

God has blessed you with eyes that see. Use this gift to pray for your brothers and sisters to love the Lord and abide in Him. Also, ask Him to reveal any areas of hypocrisy in your own life. May God continue to bless you. Welcome home!

Is there a difference between stressed and too stressed? At which point does one's life become overruled by to do lists? Where is the stopping point? I'll start off by telling you why. First is the "I Can't say No" problem but know, it's becoming the "I can't get anything done" disease. Worst off, I know my spiritual time with God is nonexistent. Can serving God take you away from actually knowing God? Could one reach an overloaded sense of NO GOD while actually serving Him? Awaiting your response, Gasping for Air

Dear Gasping for Air:

First of all, there are many components to your question. Let's start by clarifying the word stress. Many times we view stress as negative, yet stress can be positive or negative. Stress is a necessary part of life. Can we overwhelm ourselves with stress and perceive it as negative, i.e. be too stressed and overwhelmed with to do lists - yes.

We can actually use stress in a positive sense to move us towards God. For example, when feeling stressed we should truly believe I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Philippians 4:13) and practice repeating this verse. Also when we are feeling overwhelmed we should exercise periodically, throughout the day, connecting with God through prayer and meditation. Now that is not to say, say yes to everything and test God by saying I can do all things...

In response to the second part of your question, I would like to clarify what you mean by serving God, since serving God brings peace. So in serving God one should ask - is it a feeling of obligation or is it truly serving God? This is something to be prayed about and discussed with your father of confession. May you experience His amazing peace.

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You

The Object of His Attention

by Mimi Ignatius

Do you just want to understand? Do you just want to believe? Would you rather believe and understand? St. Augustine, being the intellect that he was, wanted to explain God in such a way that all could understand. He marveled as he observed a child innocently attempting to empty the ocean into a hole dug in the sand. That child was actually an angel disguised. He enlightened the saint by explaining that the same concept applies to our Creator. The limited, you and me, cannot contain the unlimited, Almighty God. With limits, you were already granted much understanding. Many of the answers to your questions, who, what, where, when, why, and how, are already at your fingertips. There is a manual for life, and it starts with: "In the beginning, God created." It is the Holy Bible. Skeptics are troubled by this concept of faith, which is accompanied by understanding. They find an incompatibility, an improbability, an incapability of science to be linked to a Supreme God. They are baffled because they leave you out of the equation. It could

not have been mere happenstance. Each day of creation had a master plan that consisted of scientific and mathematical formulas. Each day prepared something else that would be required for your quality of life, even after being expelled from paradise. The laws of nature were established to support you. All the other creatures were created to sustain you. You were always the object of creation. It is all about *you*.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day. (Genesis 1:1-5)

It is all about you. He created the earth, the place of your future habitation. He gave you light so you would have night and day, a time to work and a time to rest. There is no mention of angels because

He had already created them, and yet darkness still existed. Some of them had already disappointed Him. Chapter 3 confirms that evil existed. We learn the serpent, Satan in disguise, is a liar and a sneak (Gen. 3:1). God must have had hope in you to be faithful and resilient, and to willingly choose Him.

Then God said, “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.” Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day. (Genesis 1:6-8)

It is all about you. The Great Inventor is your Amazing Creator who produced atoms and molecules, and gave you the substance of land and earth and a sky above. You see, He also created the formula of gravity because you would one day walk on the face of the earth. The atmosphere would have to sustain you. After He breathed life in you, oxygen would continue to keep you. Water had to support you because you needed to drink, bathe, and feed the crops and livestock that

He would also create for you. He made sure that science would be organized and over the years you could solve

complicated equations to help you maintain a reasonable quality of life.

Then God said, Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear”; and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters He called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth”; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the third day. (Genesis 1:9-13)

It is all about you. With you on His mind, He considered this day to establish the skill and discipline of agriculture. Herbs and vegetation were necessary for the cattle and beasts that were yet to be created. More so, you would find this diet of preference when you would fast and it would become a source of nourishment and spiritual strength for you. Daniel and his three strong young companions, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah would not defile themselves by eating from the king’s table, but rather chose vegetation and water. Their beauty shined all the more. “And at the end of ten days their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king’s delicacies.” (Dan. 1:15). Best of all, yet to come, was the Finest Wheat that would finally rest on the altar and become His Holy Body.

Then God said, “Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and

years; and let them be for lights in the firmament to give you light on the earth; and it was so. Then God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also. God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the fourth day. (Genesis 1:14-19)

It is all about you. He was concerned about you and your future. Because of your father Adam, whom He knew would willingly disobey Him, you would one day tend the ground. So God gave you signs and astronomy and the ability to reason in a scientific way so you could determine when to sow and when to reap. Times of famine and abundance were in store for you. You were granted the ability to understand and anticipate nature’s role. You could understand nature. Nature did not have to understand you, but was ordered to produce for you. “To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven” (Eccl. 3:1).

Then God said, “Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens.” So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” So the evening and the morning were the fifth day. (Genesis 1:20-23)

It is all about you. God’s blessings began to be apparent. He delighted in the increase and in procreation. He reminded you of this first blessing when He, in the flesh, blessed the fish and the loaves

which increased in His holy hands, so He may feed the multitudes (John 6:1-14).

Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its kind"; and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

Then God said, Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

And God said, "See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food"; and it was so. Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day. (Genesis 1:24-31)

It is all about you. He prepared the entire universe for your arrival. With mercy, He sheltered you. He prepared the beast that would cover your shame with their own skin, give support to your feet with sandals, warmth of blankets in cold winter nights, a meal at your table, and an opportunity to offer a sacrifice of repentance until you were able to offer Him a sacrifice of praise. Again, He promised you

that He will go to "prepare a place for you" (John 14:2). Next time, it will be in heaven.

Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which He created and made. (Genesis 2:1-3)

It is all about you. He chose the seventh day to be the day of His rest because creation was completed. So, He commanded you to have a special day for that. You needed Him and He knew it. To help you fulfill His law, He gave you Ten Commandments. "Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8). You, too, needed to rest from your work and to glorify Him. When the time was right, He gave you holy Sacraments, so that you could be united with Him. It was all part of the plan. He prepared for your creation and He prepared for your salvation. With love He created you, with pain He lost you, with death He redeemed you, with power He lifted you, and with grace He restored you. He never abandoned you. "You arouse us so that praising you may bring us joy, because you have made us and drawn us to yourself, and our heart is unquiet until it rests in You" (St. Augustine).

You see; *it really is all about*

You

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“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and respect”- 1 Peter 3:15

Book

EXPO

THE CASE FOR CHRIST BY LEE STROBEL

Lee Strobel was the former legal editor for the Chicago Tribune during which time he was an avowed atheist. When his wife suddenly announced that she had become Christian, Strobel set his investigative skills to work in the attempt to prove the Gospels unreliable in their portrayal of Jesus. Using investigative techniques applied on a daily basis to legal scenarios, he consulted numerous scholars, confronting each with sharply aimed questions striking at the core of the Gospels' accuracy and reliability. The Case For Christ consists of those interviews and their outcome.

Below is a sample of Strobel's questions:
1. Since evil and suffering exist, a loving

God cannot

2. Since miracles contradict science, they cannot be true

3. Evolution explains life so God isn't needed

4. God isn't worthy of worship since He kills innocent children

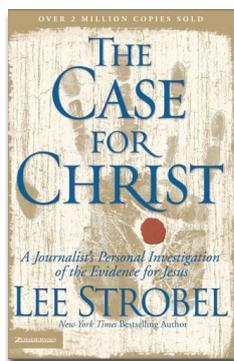
5. It is offensive to claim Jesus is the only way to God

6. A loving God would never torture people in Hell

7. Church history is littered with oppression and violence

8. I still have doubts so I can't be a Christian

The book is divided into three sections. Part One examines



the historical reliability of the Gospels themselves (as humanly authored and historically transmitted texts). Part Two examines the person of Jesus, analyzing his words and deeds against the backdrop of the claim that he is the divine Son of God. Part Three examines the evidence for the Resurrection.

This book is a fantastic read for Christians who are interested in learning more about the origins, accuracy and uniqueness of the Bible. It is also an excellent choice for anyone seeking to know more about Christianity and wishing to undertake an examination of the case for Christ.



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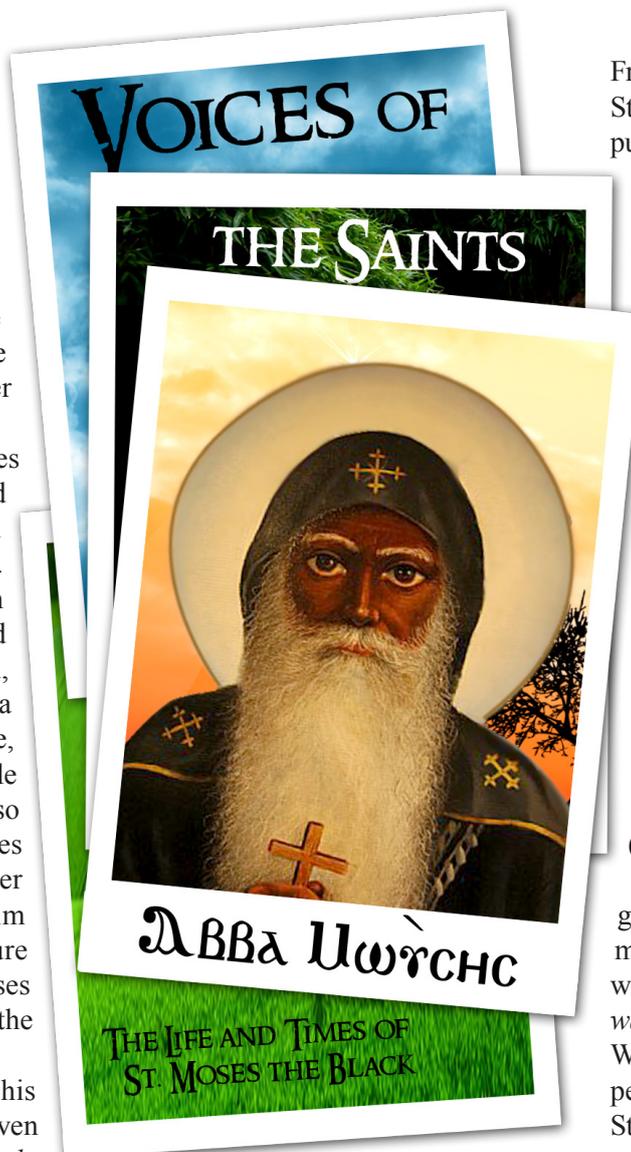
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St. Moses the Black (also called “the Strong” or “the Ethiopian”) is one of the most beloved saints in our Coptic Church. His life inspires all of us as Christians to put temptations behind us and die for what we believe. However, there is more to contemplate on his life than simply the story of a sinner turned saint

As a young man, St. Moses had been estranged from God, and his heart was extremely far from Him. Sold into slavery, young St. Moses worked for a man in high authority in Egypt. This man and his household worshipped the Sun, so St. Moses also took up the idea that the Sun is God. As a slave, St. Moses developed a horrible reputation and was suspected so often for committing local crimes that his master could no longer control him and eventually let him go. Because of his imposing figure and reckless way of life, St. Moses then joined a gang and became the leader of seventy bandits.

Now, St. Moses had questioned his God (the Sun) many times, and even said “O God, whom I do not know, let me know you.” One day, however, his life changed drastically. A man informed the saint that the monks of Shiheet knew the true and only God. St. Moses did as the man said, and eventually came to Der El-Baramouse at Wadi El-Natroun. The monks were shocked and terrified when he entered in, but he let them know that he came seeking the real God, the Creator. St. Isidoros the Priest was at first fearful of his appearance, but gladly took St. Moses under his wing. St. Isidoros then took St. Moses to the great father Anba Macarius, who instructed him on the faith of the Coptic Church, baptized him, and received him as a fellow monk in the monastery.

St. Moses endured a brutal spiritual fight against the devil, encountering him in Satan’s own wretched and gruesome form. He tempted his former slave with his old habits of gluttonous eating and drinking. According to *The Paradise of the Holy Fathers*, St. Moses, in order to fight off his bad habits, made a promise to God



by Joshua kladius

that he wouldn’t sleep the entire night or bend his knees in his cell, where he remained for seven years. He slept standing up with his eyes open for the entire night. St. Moses fought diligently and received regular advice from St. Isidoros on how to conquer evil. He excelled in fasting, prayer, and humility, as his heart advanced closer to God. One story regarding the saint said that at night, while the other monks slept, St. Moses would collect the water pots from each cell and return them full of water from a well far away.

Along with his devotion to God and spiritual matters, these acts he performed outraged Satan. The devil caused a sore to appear on St. Moses’ foot that made the saint extremely ill. Fortunately, the strong saint realized that this ailment was given to him from Satan; so, St. Moses prolonged in his prayers and humility, to the point that it is written, “his body became as a burnt wood” (*Coptic Synaxarium Volume IV*).

From that moment on, the strong St. Moses would no longer be pursued by the devil.

After some time in the monastery, St. Moses became a mentor and spiritual captain for more than 500 monks. His disciples nominated him for the priesthood. After speculation by the patriarch at that time, it was apparent that St. Moses should be granted the position. On another day, St. Moses set out with some elders to visit Anba Macarius the Great. He notified them that one of them would die for Christ as a martyr. St. Moses stood up among them and said “Probably it is me, for it is written: *‘for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.’*” (Matthew 26: 52).

Shortly thereafter, a group of Barbarians attacked the monastery. The saint told those who were with him, “*Whoever wants to escape, let him escape.*” When they heard this, they tried persuading him to escape as well. St. Moses refused, however, and was martyred by the Barbarians with seven other brothers. A certain monk who was hiding saw an angel in the midst of his brethren, holding a crown and waiting. The monk went out and also gained the Kingdom and the crown of martyrdom. This occurred on the 24th day of Baouna.

What a great marvel it is, to have such a remarkable saint belong to our Faith. St. Moses the Black was an aggressive slave to the devil and to others, but now is a humble and willing servant to God and His people. He came to the wilderness black as coal in his sins, but left it with his soul as white as snow. He entered the monastery a leader of seventy criminals, but left the world a father of 500 stewards of the Lord. You do the math.

May his prayers, and the prayers of all the saints be with us, and glory be to God forever. Amen.



Quiet Walk

THE HEAVENS DECLARE THE GLORY OF GOD; AND THE FIRMAMENT SHOWS HIS HANDY WORK

(PSALM 19:1)

BY MARIA MANSOUR

David the psalmist wrote such an amazing psalm about the wondrous work of God, He reveals to us the beauty of the creation and the wisdom of its creator, that we are often too busy to discover it ourselves. We are living, but until when? We are laughing, but for how long? We are rich, but is it always? Our busy life, that is full of problems and afflictions, tends to blind our eyes from seeing the Lord's wondrous work. We think that our problem is the worst and that there are no solutions to it or any answer from God that will comfort us. Job was in the same situation like us, busy in his own affliction. He was just waiting to talk to God and defend himself in front of Him. However, when God answered Job, it was a different story. Let us learn together from Job the Righteous, after all, he did not get that title for nothing!

When Job was busy looking for God in order to defend himself, Our Lord had another plan. He wanted to teach Job how to trust in Him by showing him some secrets of His creation and how everything does work according to the will of God for those who love Him. If we read together Chapter 38 from the book of Job, we will find that God answered Job's request and appeared to him in the mighty strong wind, as He previously appeared to Moses. "Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind" (Job 38:1). First, God started preparing Job's heart by sending him the mighty winds to calm his pride and self-righteousness, to make him aware of the presence of God, and to prepare Job to hear His voice.

"Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, when the morning stars sang together, And all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (Job 38:4-7)

Since Job claimed to know everything and that he could answer God in everything (Job 33:32). God asked him a series of questions about the earth's creation and its essence to teach him how to be humble. Job lived on this earth for years and years

but did he ever know the secrets of its creation, or was he there when God created the earth? God here uses the imagery of someone who is building a house to resemble the creation of the earth; first He took the necessary measurements needed to lay the foundation and then began building a strong house. The magnificence of God's works appears when He created the earth stable on a good foundation with a corner stone so it does not fall from space. All of this was done while the angels "morning stars" singing songs of joy.

"Or who shut in the sea with doors, When it burst forth and issued from the womb; When I made the clouds its garment, And thick darkness its swaddling band; When I fixed My limit for it, And set bars and doors; When I said, 'This far you may come, but no farther, And here your proud waves must stop!'" (Job 38:8-11)

God proposed another question for Job about the oceans and the seas; it is a question that challenges Job, since he does not know the depth of the sea or what it encloses. Our Lord's creation of the sea is like a baby being birthed and clothed with garments; so was the sea surrounded with clouds as its garments and darkness as its swaddling band. However, this strong child gets so angry when just the wind hits it that it can destroy cities and create fear in human hearts. Even though science is now able to explain some of the ocean's secrets, human beings still cannot control the ocean nor avoid its destruction. Here, the wondrous and tender mercies of God tell us that just by a command from Him, He sets gates and doors to the sea for our protection so that it cannot pass its borders. All those mighty winds, unlimited space of water, and thick darkness that cause fear in human hearts are just like a small baby that God can control anytime and anywhere. After all those wondrous works, don't you think that God can take care of your life too?

"Have you commanded the morning since your days began, And caused the dawn to know its place, That it might take hold of the ends of the earth, And the wicked be shaken out of it? It takes on form like clay under a seal, And stands out like a garment. From the wicked their light is withheld, and the upraised arm is

broken.” (Job 38:12-15)

Job questioned why the light also shines upon the wicked (Job 24:13-17). This might be a question that we ask in our life when there is unfairness, so why does God shine his light upon those who do not fear Him? God created this world for everyone and we choose how we live and whether we expect a blessing or a curse from God. Sometimes, we take God’s position on judging people on their actions, even judging God himself for his reasoning. Here God asks Job if He created the light for Job only or if it rises by Job’s command. Our Lord explained to Job that He is the light of the world and that the only light for the wicked is darkness. Through God’s light it will be revealed to us the wickedness of those people as it happened to Satan and his army. “Through the tender mercy of our God, With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace.” (Luke 1:78)

“Have you entered the springs of the sea? Or have you walked in search of the depths? Have the gates of death been revealed to you? Or have you seen the doors of the shadow of death? Have you comprehended the breadth of the earth? Tell Me, if you know all this.” (Job 38: 16-18)

Since Job claimed to know everything, God asked him about the location of the source of the springs of the sea. Does he know where it is hidden and what is in its depths? If Job does not know what is hidden in the sea, how would he know the will of God the creator? The ancient people believed that the place of death is under the seas and earth. But, they claimed their uncertainty since no one from the dead told them where the door to death is located. God asked Job, since he claimed to be knowledgeable, to tell Him where to find that door. Then God tried to make it even easier on Job since he had not been to Hades before, but rather asked him again about the earth – since Job lived on it. During that time no one had traveled around the earth and earth was still thought to be flat, so would Job know as he claimed?

“Where is the way to the dwelling of light? And darkness, where is its place, That you may take it to its territory, That you may know the paths to its home? Do you know it, because you were born then, Or because the number of your days is great?” “Have you entered the treasury of snow, Or have you seen the treasury of hail, Which I have reserved for the time of trouble, for the day of battle and war? By what way is light diffused, or the east wind scattered over the earth?” (Job 38: 19-24)

God posed several questions for Job to answer, but He used the earth, light, darkness, the seas, and the snow to make His point simple. Furthermore, God spoke in parables to help Job understand, “And with many such parables He spoke the word to them as they were able to hear it.” (Mark 4:33)

“Who has divided a channel for the overflowing water; Or a path for the thunderbolt, To cause it to rain on a land where there is no one, A wilderness in which there is no man; To satisfy the desolate waste, And cause to spring forth the growth of tender grass? Has the rain a father? Or who has begotten the drops of dew? From whose womb comes the ice? And the frost of heaven, who gives it birth?” (Job 38:25-29)

The question here is about the rain, does the human being have any control on the rain, where it drops and how much? God explained that for those rains there are channels controlled by Him, sometimes there will be enough rain to water the ground and other times it might cause hurricanes that drown the earth. All of these are controlled by God who not only takes care of human beings, but also every living creature on the face of the earth, even the drop of dew is counted so it won’t harm anyone.

Then God again assures us that He is the father of all creatures and that He controls everything, even the small drops of dew. He is the source of those wondrous and amazing creatures. “He sends out His command to the earth; His word runs very swiftly.” (Psalm 147:15)

Wouldn’t God then be able to control your problems??

“Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades, or loose the belt of Orion? Can you bring out Mazzaroth in its season? Or can you guide the Great Bear with its cubs? Do you know the ordinances of the heavens? Can you set their dominion over the earth? “Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, that an abundance of water may cover you? Can you send out lightnings, that they may go, and say to you, ‘Here we are!’? Who has put wisdom in the mind? Or who has given understanding to the heart?” (Job 38:31-36)

The cluster of the Pleiades are the seven sisters of stars, and Mazzaroth is a plural name for the Hebrew term Mazzel that means lots of light in the sky. So what does this have to do with us? God created the sun to light our day and the moon and stars for the night; everything has its season determined by God. They were set to help mankind achieve the order that God has created for them, working in the morning until the dawn of the sun and time for rest. “He appointed the moon for seasons; the sun knows its going down. You make darkness, and it is night” (Psalm 104:19, 20). Then God reveals the weakness of the human being for not having the ability to have dominion over nature and creation, not because He is injustice but rather out of His love for us, He wants us to be humble. “The LORD lifts up the humble; He casts the wicked down to the ground” (Psalm 147:6).

“Who can number the clouds by wisdom? Or who can pour out the bottles of heaven, when the dust hardens in clumps, and the clods cling together? “Can you hunt the prey for the lion, or satisfy the appetite of the young lions, when they crouch in their dens, or lurk in their lairs to lie in wait? Who provides food for the raven, when its young ones cry to God, and wander about for lack of food?” (Job 38:37-41)

God teaches us about the formation of a good soil for planting and the unity of His creation to help form it. He describes to us how the rain is counted according to the amount of dust needed to mix them together, and then how the sun rises to solidify them to form natural soil. Not only does our awesome God take care of the earth, rain, stars, soil and so on, but he also takes care of the animals and their creation. He feeds the lions in their dens and the birds of the air and the ravens in their nests. God asked Job if he would provide food for the lion or any other animal on a daily basis. God has chosen the lion, which the humans fear, and the ravens, which the humans hate, to show that even though no one takes care of them, God does not forget them but brings them their food. So don’t you think that God can take care of you, after all He takes care of the animals, even the dangerous ones?

When Job saw the awesome creation of God His magnificent work and realized that everything was created in order and with specific measurements, which is hard for human beings to understand due to their limited knowledge, he humbled himself in front of the Lord. When he humbled himself in front of the Lord, God blessed him and gave him twice as much as he used to have. God also rewarded him for the loss of his children by giving him children of such beauty that it was known in the land that there were found no women so beautiful as the daughters of Job. That is the reward of those who trust in the Lord. Isn’t it time my brethren to trust in the Lord the creator of all things? The one and only one that can take care of all your needs: spiritually, physically, emotionally, and mentally. “He who is of a proud heart stirs up strife, but he who trusts in the LORD will be prospered.” (Proverbs 28:25).

PRAYER WARRIOR

The Song of the Jesus Prayer

by Mena Rizkalla

A spiritual song to the tune of "Qalby el Khafaqu".

Part 1: The Sinner's Prayer

My Lord Jesus Christ,
Thou True Son of God,
Have Mercy upon me,
I the sinner.
(*2)

I am weak and frail Lord,
And I cannot fight;
Grant me strength my Savior,
Lord I need Thy might!

Lord the righteous suffer,
So then what of me?
Lord I fall more often,
What victory can I see?!

I sometimes feel forsaken;
I feel I cannot cope.
Where is Thy aid, Lord?
In what can I hope?

Out of the great depths,
To Thee cries my soul,
It doth wait upon Thee,
Longing to be whole.

If Thou didst count sins, then
My God, who could stand?
Yet Thou loveth perfection -
It Thou dost demand.

My Lord Jesus Christ,
Thou True Son of God,
Have mercy upon me,
I the sinner.

Lord I need an answer
And I need Thy aid
Do not let me despair Lord,
While in the pits I wade.

Verse 2: God's Response

Good and faithful servant,
Come ye unto me.
Hear my words of comfort,
My peace with you be.
(*2)

Cast your net with faith and
Stretch your palsied arm,
Show me you believe
I will keep you from harm.

Trials you shall meet,
Of that you can be sure.
Is there a strong foundation
Not built to endure?

As one fallen in war,
You cry out, distressed.
Child have you forgotten,
My Name my Father blessed?

Child, My name is victory,
My name is a sword -
Satan falls before It,
On him my wrath is poured.

To you my name is sweet and
It is a fountain,
Sweeter more than honey:
A hope that grows not thin.

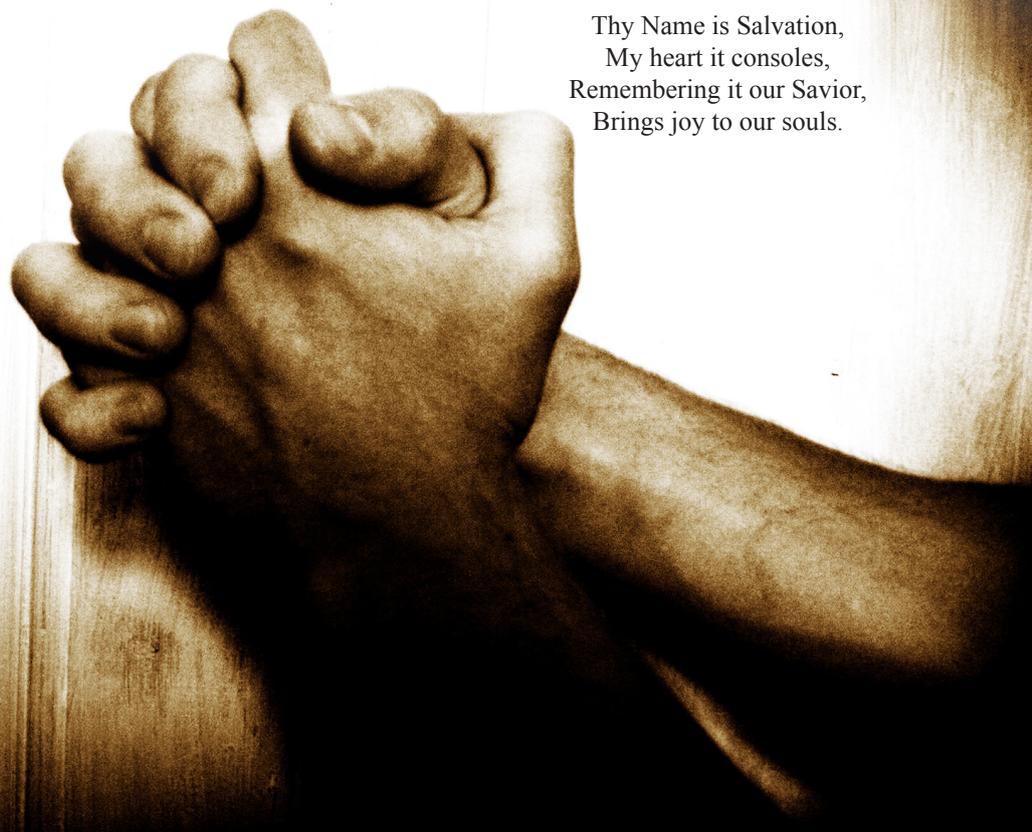
Good and faithful servant,
Come ye unto me.
Hear my words of comfort,
My peace with you be.

Gird your loins with truth, Child
Go stand up and fight,
Behold I go before you,
My Name is your might

Conclusion:

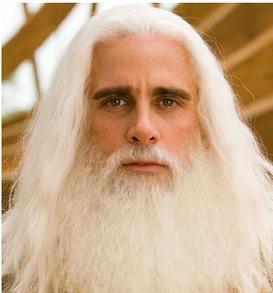
My Lord Jesus Christ,
Thou True Son of God,
Have mercy upon me,
I the sinner.

Thy Name is Salvation,
My heart it consoles,
Remembering it our Savior,
Brings joy to our souls.





Evan **ALMIGHTY**



RATING: PG

DISTRIBUTED BY: Universal Pictures

DIRECTED BY: Tom Shadyac (*Bruce Almighty*, *Patch Adams*, *The Nutty Professor*)

STARRING

Steve Carell as Evan Baxter; Morgan Freeman as God; Lauren Graham as Joan Baxter; John Goodman as Congressman Long; John Michael Higgins as Marty; Wanda Sykes as Rita; Molly Shannon as Eve Adams; Johnny Simmons as Dylan Baxter; Graham Phillips as Jordan Baxter; Jimmy Bennett as Ryan Baxter; Jonah Hill as Eugene

His GEN brand alarm clock went off at exactly 6:14 AM, Evan Baxter jumps out of bed, annoyed and distinctly remembering he had set the alarm for 7 not 6:14. This, once Bufflo's leading News caster, is now a congressman. New house, new car, new this, new that and oh... a house warming gift sent to 614 prestige court... His first day at work is great, a big huge office, a great assistant (played by Wanda Sykes) walks in. She hands him the mail and today's schedule and tells him her new phone extension. You guessed it 614. It takes Evan took but half a day to realize that all the signs point to Genesis 6:14 "And you shall build me an ark."

The story continues with Evan at first rejecting God's command, played by Morgan Freeman whose script was well crafted to include the greatest answer of all, "Because I love you." He also had a moving seen with Joan Baxter, played by Lauren Graham; struggling with the idea of her husband wasting their dreams to build an ark. We are reminded, as Morgan said, that God gives us opportunity to be what we asked

him to be. For example, to ask to be strong in love, God will simply provide opportunity when it is difficult to do so to allow us to learn. The movie ends with some unexpected turns of events, yet God's word never fails, it came to pass as he described it. A flood came and only those on the ark were saved.

Many spiritual meanings and messages from this movie, we encourage you to go back and read over the creation encounter. God's great and awesome power is shown through these words.



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