

ANSWERS



FROM  THE

Bible Answer Man

HANK HANEGRAFF



Answers from the host of the *Bible Answer Man* broadcast—Hank Hanegraaff

Larry King has had the opportunity to pose questions perhaps to more famous people than anyone else in history. Yet, if you listen carefully you'll discover that a handful of questions take precedence over all others. King once said that Jesus Christ was the person he would most like to interview — and the question he would most like to ask Christ is "*Were you indeed born of a virgin?*"

Like King, we too have pressing questions. Some want to know who created God, or whether the doctrine of the Trinity is truly biblical. Others want to know why God allows bad things to happen to good people. Still others want to know what happens to people who have never heard of Jesus Christ, or whether evolution is compatible with Christianity.

For the last two decades, I have had the opportunity to answer thousands of such questions on a live nationally syndicated radio broadcast called the *Bible Answer Man*. Additionally, I've answered thousands more in venues around the world. In the process, I've gained a good grasp on the questions people most want answered. It is my prayer that my answers to the questions below will stimulate you to seek more answers as well as to serve as a treasure you can share with family and friends.

That said, let's turn to the answers I promised to provide.

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Is the virgin birth miracle or myth?

“The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”—which means, ‘God with us.’”
(Matthew 1:23)

In an op-ed piece published by the *New York Times*, columnist Nicholas Kristof used the virgin birth of Jesus to shamelessly promote the Enlightenment’s false dichotomy between faith and reason. In his words, “The faith in the Virgin Birth reflects the way American Christianity is becoming less intellectual and more mystical over time.” Kristof ends his piece with the following patronizing comment: “The heart is a wonderful organ, but so is the brain.” Those who have a truly open mind, however, should resist rejecting the virgin birth before examining the evidence for it.

Several lines of evidence support the miracle of the virgin birth (technically it should be called the virgin *conception*). First, miracles are not only possible, but they are necessary in order to make sense of the universe in which we live. According to modern science, the universe not only had a beginning, but it is unfathomably fine-tuned to support life. Not only so, but the origin of life, information in the genetic code, irreducible complexity in biological systems, and the phenomenon of the human mind pose intractable difficulties for merely natural explanations. Reason, therefore, forces us to look beyond the natural world to a supernatural Designer who periodically intervenes in the affairs of His created handiwork. In other words, if we are willing to believe that God created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1), we should have no problem accepting the virgin birth.

Furthermore, reason and evidence compel us to acknowledge that the Bible is divine rather than merely human in origin. Manuscript evidence, archaeology, and predictive prophecy together provide a persuasive case for the reliability of Scripture; thus, we may legitimately appeal to the Word of God as evidence for the virgin birth. Christ, moreover, who demonstrated that He was God in human flesh through the undeniable fact of His resurrection, pronounced the Scriptures infallible (John 10:35; 14:24–26; 15:26–27; 16:13; Hebrews 1:1–2). If Christ concurs with the biblical record, therefore, no one should have the temerity to contradict its claims.

Finally, while it is currently popular to suggest that the Gospel writers borrowed the virgin birth motif from pagan mythology, the facts say otherwise. Stories of gods having sexual intercourse with women—such as the sun god Apollo becoming a snake and impregnating the mother of Augustus Caesar—hardly parallel the virgin birth account in the Gospels. Moreover, given the strict monotheistic worldview of New Testament authors, it should stretch credulity beyond the breaking point to suppose that they borrowed from pagan mythologies, especially myths extolling the sexual exploits of pagan gods! It has become all too common for people to buy into what has been well described as “a unique brand of fundamentalism”—a skepticism that values rhetoric and emotion over reason and evidence. Those who suppose that the virgin birth is mythological would be well advised to carefully consider defensible arguments rather than uncritically swallowing dogmatic assertions.

For further study, see “Was Christianity Influenced by Ancient Pagan Mystery Religions?” in Hank Hanegraaff, *The Bible Answer Book* (Nashville: J. Countryman, 2004), 203–205; see also Hank Hanegraaff, *Resurrection* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 2000). These books are available through the Christian Research Institute. To order, call toll free 1-888-7000-CRI or log onto www.equip.org.

Does the Bible claim Jesus is God?

*“We wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”
(Titus 2:13)*

Many biblical texts can be used to demonstrate that Jesus is God. Three, however, stand out above the rest. Not only are they clear and convincing, but their “addresses” are easy to remember as well—John 1, Colossians 1, and Hebrews 1.

First, is *John 1*: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (v. 1). Here Jesus is not only in existence before the world began but is differentiated from the Father and explicitly called God, indicating that He shares the same nature as His Father.

Furthermore, *Colossians 1* informs us that “all things were created by him” (v. 16); He is “before all things” (v. 17); and “God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him” (v. 19). Only deity has the prerogative of creation, preexists all things, and personifies the full essence and nature of God.

Finally, *Hebrews 1* overtly tells us that according to God the Father Himself—Jesus is God: “But about the Son he [the Father] says, ‘Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever’” (v. 8). Not only is the entirety of *Hebrews 1* devoted to demonstrating the absolute deity of Jesus, but in verses 10–12 the inspired writer quotes a passage in Psalm 102 referring to Yahweh and directly applies it to Christ. In doing so, the Scripture specifically declares Jesus ontologically equal with Israel’s God.

Many similar texts could be adduced. For example, in *Revelation 1* the Lord God says, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty” (v. 8). In the last chapter of *Revelation*, Jesus applies these self same words—“Alpha and Omega”—to Himself! Additionally, in *2 Peter 1* Jesus is referred to as “our God and Savior Jesus Christ” (v. 1). In these passages and a host of others, the Bible explicitly claims that Jesus is God.

For further study, see Bruce Milne, *Know the Truth: A Handbook of Christian Belief*, revised edition (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1982, 1998). This book is available through the Christian Research Institute. To order, call toll free 1-888-7000-CRI or log onto www.equip.org.

Did Jesus claim to be God?

"I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever!" (Revelation 1:17–18).

When Jesus came to Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples the mother of all questions, *"Who do you say I am?"* (Matthew 16:15; Mark 8:29; Luke 9:20). Mormons answer this question by saying that Jesus is the spirit brother of Lucifer; Jehovah's Witnesses answer by saying that Jesus is the archangel Michael; New Agers say Jesus is an avatar or enlightened messenger. Jesus, however, answered by claiming that He was God.

First, Jesus claimed to be the unique Son of God. As a result, the Jewish leaders tried to kill Him because in "calling God his own Father, [Jesus was] making himself equal with God" (John 5:18). In John 8:58 Jesus went so far as to use the very words by which God revealed Himself to Moses from the burning bush (Exodus 3:14). To the Jews this was the epitome of blasphemy, for they knew that in doing so Jesus was clearly claiming to be God. On yet another occasion, Jesus explicitly told the Jews: *"I and the Father are one."* Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, *"I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?"* *"We are not stoning you for any of these,"* replied the Jews, *"but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God"* (John 10:30–33).

Furthermore, Jesus made an unmistakable claim to deity before the Chief Priests and the whole Sanhedrin. Caiaphas the High Priest asked Him: *"Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?"* *"I am,"* said Jesus. *"And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven"* (Mark 14:61–62). A biblically illiterate person might well have missed the import of Jesus' words. Caiaphas and the Council, however, did not. They knew that in saying he was *"the Son of Man"* who would come *"on the clouds of heaven"* he was making an overt reference to the Son of Man in Daniel's prophecy (Daniel 7:13–14). In doing so, He was not only claiming to be the preexistent Sovereign of the Universe but prophesying that He would vindicate His claim by judging the very court that was now condemning Him. Moreover, by combining Daniel's prophecy with David's proclamation in Psalm 110, Jesus was claiming that He would sit upon the throne of Israel's God and share God's very glory. To students of the Old Testament this was the height of "blasphemy," thus *"they all condemned him as worthy of death"* (Mark 14:64–65).

Finally, Jesus claimed to possess the very attributes of God. For example, He claimed *omniscience* by telling Peter, *"This very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times"* (Matthew 26:34); declared *omnipotence* by not only resurrecting Lazarus (John 11:43) but by raising Himself from the dead (see John 2:19); and professed *omnipresence* by promising He would be with His disciples *"to the very end of the age"* (Matthew 28:20). Not only so, but Jesus said to the paralytic in Luke 5:20, *"Friend, your sins are forgiven."* In doing so, He claimed a prerogative reserved for God alone. In addition, when Thomas worshiped Jesus, saying *"My Lord and my God!"* (John 20:28), Jesus responded with commendation rather than condemnation.

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What credentials back up Jesus' claim to deity?

"When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples to ask him, 'Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?' Jesus replied, 'Go back and report to John what you hear and see; the blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.'" (Matthew 11:2-5)

Not only does the Bible explicitly teach that Jesus is God, but Jesus Himself also has provided many convincing proofs that He indeed is divine.

First, Jesus demonstrated that He was God in human flesh by manifesting the credential of sinlessness. While the Qur'an exhorts Muhammad to seek forgiveness for his sins, the Bible exonerates Messiah, saying Jesus "had no sin" (2 Corinthians 5:21); and this is not a singular statement. John declares that "in him is no sin" (1 John 3:5), and Peter says Jesus "committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth" (1 Peter 2:22). Jesus Himself went so far as to challenge His antagonists, asking, "Can any of you prove me guilty of sin?" (John 8:46).

Furthermore, Jesus demonstrated supernatural authority over sickness, the forces of nature, fallen angels, and even death itself. *Matthew 4* records that Jesus went throughout Galilee teaching, preaching, "and healing every disease and sickness among the people" (v. 23). *Mark 4* documents Jesus rebuking the wind and the waves, saying, "Quiet! Be still!" (v. 39). In *Luke 4* Jesus encounters a man possessed by an evil spirit and commands the demon: "Come out of him!" (v. 35). And in *John 4*, Jesus tells a royal official whose son was close to death, "Your son will live" (v. 50). In fact, the four Gospels record how Jesus demonstrated ultimate power over death through the immutable fact of His resurrection.

Finally, the credentials of Christ's deity are seen in the lives of countless men, women, and children. Each day, people of every tongue and tribe and nation experience the resurrected Christ by repenting of their sins and receiving Jesus as Lord and Savior of their lives. Thus, they not only come to know about Christ evidentially, but experientially Christ becomes more real to them than the very flesh upon their bones.

For further study, see Hank Hanegraaff, *Resurrection* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 2000). This book is available through the Christian Research Institute. To order, call toll free 1-888-7000-CRI or log onto www.equip.org.

How can we be sure about the resurrection of Christ?

"If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep."

(1 Corinthians 15:13-20)

If devotees of the kingdom of the cults, adherents of world religions, or liberal scholars are correct, the biblical account of the resurrection of Christ is fiction, fantasy, or a gargantuan fraud. If, on the other hand, Christianity is factually reliable, His resurrection is the greatest feat in human history. No middle ground exists. The resurrection is history or hoax, miracle or myth, fact or fantasy.

First, as noted by philosopher and apologist William Lane Craig, liberal and conservative scholars alike agree that the body of Jesus was buried in the private tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. As a member of the Jewish court that condemned Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea is unlikely to be Christian fiction (Mark 15:43); Jesus' burial in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea is substantiated by Mark's gospel (15:46) and is, therefore, far too early to have been the subject of legendary corruption; the earliest Jewish response to the resurrection of Christ presupposes the empty tomb (Matthew 28:11-13); and in the centuries following the resurrection, the fact of the empty tomb was forwarded by Jesus' friends and foes alike.

Additionally, Craig points out, "when you understand the role of women in first-century Jewish society, what's really extraordinary is that this empty tomb story should feature women as the discoverers of the empty tomb....The fact that women are the first witnesses to the empty tomb is most plausibly explained by the reality that — like it or not — they *were* the discoverers of the empty tomb. This shows that the gospel writers faithfully recorded what happened, even if it was embarrassing." In short, early Christianity could not have survived an identifiable tomb containing the corpse of Christ.

Furthermore, Jesus gave his disciples many convincing proofs that He had risen from the dead. Paul, for example, points out that Christ "appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:6). It would have been one thing to attribute these supernatural experiences to people who had already died. It was quite another to attribute them to multitudes who were still alive. As the famed New Testament scholar of Cambridge University C. H. Dodd points out, "There can hardly be any purpose in mentioning the fact that most of the five hundred are still alive, unless Paul is saying in effect, 'The witnesses are there to be questioned.'"

Finally, what happened as a result of the resurrection is unprecedented in human history. In the span of a few hundred years, a small band of seemingly insignificant believers succeeded in turning an entire empire upside down. While it is conceivable that they would have faced torture, vilification, and even cruel deaths for what they fervently believed to be true, it is inconceivable that they would have been willing to die for what they knew to be a lie. As Dr. Simon Greenleaf, the famous Royall Professor of Law at Harvard put it: "If it were morally possible for them to have been deceived in this matter, every human motive operated to lead them to discover and avow their error...If then their testimony was not true, there was no possible motive for this fabrication."

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Is the Trinity biblical?

*“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.”
(Deuteronomy 6:4)*

*“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”
(Matthew 28:19)*

While it has become increasingly popular to suggest that the doctrine of the Trinity is derived from pagan sources, in reality, this Christian essential is thoroughly biblical. The word “Trinity” — like “incarnation” — is not found in Scripture; however, it aptly codifies what God has condescended to reveal to us about His nature and being. In short, the Trinitarian platform contains three planks: (1) there is but one God; (2) the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; (3) Father, Son and Holy Spirit are eternally distinct.

The first plank underscores that there is only one God. Christianity is not polytheistic but fiercely monotheistic. “You are my witnesses, declares the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. *Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me*” (Isaiah 43:10, emphasis added).

The second plank emphasizes that in hundreds of Scripture passages the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are declared to be fully and completely God. As a case in point, the apostle Paul says that “there is but one God, the Father” (1 Corinthians 8:6). The Father, speaking of the Son, says, “Your throne, O God, will last forever and forever” (Hebrews 1:8). And when Ananias “lied to the Holy Spirit,” Peter points out that he had “not lied to men but to God” (Acts 5:3–4).

The third plank of the Trinitarian platform asserts that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are eternally distinct. Scripture clearly portrays subject/object relationships among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For example, the Father and Son love one another, speak to each other (John 17:1–26), and together send the Holy Spirit (John 15:26). Additionally, Jesus proclaims that He and the Father are two distinct witnesses and two distinct judges (John 8:14–18). If Jesus were Himself the Father, his argument would not only have been irrelevant but it would have been fatally flawed; and if such were the case, He could not have been fully God. It is important to note that when Trinitarians speak of one God they are referring to the nature or essence of God. Moreover, when they speak of persons they are referring to personal self-distinctions within the Godhead. Put another way, we believe in one *What* and three *Who’s*.

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What happens to a person who has never heard of Jesus?

"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

One of the most frequently asked questions on the *Bible Answer Man* broadcast is "What happens to those who have never heard of Jesus?" Will God condemn people to hell for not believing in someone they have never heard of?

First, people are not condemned to hell for not believing in Jesus. Rather they are *already* condemned because of their sin. Thus, the real question is not how can God send someone to hell, but how can God condescend to save any one of us?

Furthermore, if ignorance were a ticket to heaven, the greatest evangelistic enterprise would not be a Billy Graham crusade but a concerted cover-up campaign. Such a campaign would focus on ending evangelism, burning Bibles, and closing churches. Soon no one will have heard of Christ and everyone will be on their way to heaven.

Finally, it should be emphasized that everyone has the light of both creation and conscience. God is not capricious! If we respond to the light we have, God will give us more light. In the words of the apostle Paul: "From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us" (Acts 17:26–27).

For further study, Hank Hanegraaff, "Is Jesus the Only Way," available at www.equip.org.

Is Mormonism Christian?

“You are my witnesses,’ declares
the LORD,
‘and my servant whom I have
chosen,
so that you may know and believe
me and understand
that I am he. Before me no god was
formed,
nor will there be one after me.’”
(Isaiah 43:10)

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the LDS or Mormon Church) was birthed in 1820 by an alleged vision in which two celestial personages appeared to Joseph Smith claiming *all* existing churches were wrong, *all* their creeds were an abomination, and *all* their professors were corrupt. According to these personages, Smith had been chosen to *restore*—not *reform*—a church that had disappeared from the face of the earth. The Mormon doctrines that evolved from this vision compromise, confuse, or contradict the nature of God, the authority of Scripture, and the way of salvation.

First, while Christians believe that God is spirit (John 4:24), Joseph Smith taught, “God Himself was once as we are now, and is an exalted man, and sits enthroned in yonder heavens!” Mormonism also holds to a plurality of gods and contends that “as man is, God once was; as God is, man may become.” Additionally, the Latter-day Saints compromise the nature of the God-man, Jesus Christ. In Christianity, Jesus is the self-existent creator of all things (Colossians 1:15–20). In Mormonism, he is the spirit brother of Lucifer who was conceived in heaven by a celestial Mother and came in flesh as the result of the Father having sex with the Virgin Mary.

Furthermore, in sharp distinction to orthodox Christian theology, Mormons do not believe that the Bible is the *infallible* repository for redemptive revelation (2 Timothy 3:16). In their view, the Book of Mormon is “the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion.” Two further revelations complete the Mormon “quad,” namely, Doctrine and Covenants and The Pearl of Great Price. Doctrine and Covenants is a compilation of divine revelations that includes the doctrine of polygamy. Not until threatened by the federal government did Mormon president Wilford Woodruff receive a revelation relegating polygamy to the afterlife. The Pearl of Great Price is no less troubling; Mormonism used this extrabiblical revelation to prevent African Americans from entering the priesthood and from being exalted to godhood.

Finally, while Christians believe that they will stand before God dressed in the spotless robes of Christ’s righteousness (Romans 3:21–22; Philippians 3:9), Mormons contend that they will appear before Heavenly Father dressed in fig-leaf aprons holding good works in their hands. According to the Latter-day Saints, virtually everyone qualifies for heaven. Murderers, unrepentant whoremongers, and the world’s vilest people make it into the *Telestial heaven*; lukewarm Mormons, religious people, and those who accept the Mormon gospel in the spirit world typically enter the *Terrestrial heaven*; and temple Mormons make it to the *Celestial heaven*. Only those who are sealed in secret temple rituals, however, will make it to the third level of the Celestial kingdom and become gods of their own planets. These and many other doctrinal perversions exclude Mormonism from rightly being called Christian.

For further study, see Hank Hanegraaff, “The Mormon Mirage: Seeing through the Illusion of Mainstream Mormonism” (Charlotte, NC: Christian Research Institute, 2008). This booklet is available through the Christian Research Institute. To order, call toll free 1-888-7000-CRI or log onto www.equip.org.

Is the Book of Mormon credible?

"I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!"
(Galatians 1:6–9)

In 1823, the angel Moroni allegedly visited Mormon prophet Joseph Smith and divulged the location of some golden plates containing the "fullness of the everlasting gospel." These plates—abridged by Moroni and his father, Mormon, 1,400 years earlier—were written in "reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics." Along with the plates, Smith found a pair of magical eyeglasses that he used to translate the cryptic writing into English. The result was a new revelation called the Book of Mormon and a new religion called Mormonism.

How millions can take the Book of Mormon seriously is almost beyond comprehension. First, although Smith referred to the Book of Mormon as "the most correct of any book on earth and the keystone of our religion," its flaws run the gamut from the serious to the silly. In the category of serious, the Book of Mormon contains modalistic language that militates against the biblical doctrine of the Trinity (Ether 3:14). In the category of silly, a man struggles to catch his breath after having his head cut off (Ether 15:31).

Furthermore, while archaeology is a powerful testimony to the accuracy of the Bible the same cannot be said for the Book of Mormon. Not only is there no archaeological evidence for a language such as "reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics," there is no archaeological support for lands such as the "land of Moron" (Ether 7:6). Nor is there any archaeological evidence to buttress the notion that people groups such as the Jaredites, Nephites, and Lamanites migrated from Israel to the Americas. On the contrary, both archaeology and anthropology demonstrate conclusively that the people and places chronicled in the Book of Mormon are little more than the product of a fertile imagination.

Finally, Joseph Smith asserted that the golden plates were translated "by the power of God" and produced "the most correct of any book on earth." Joseph F. Smith, the sixth president of the Mormon church, went so far as to say that the words were not only correct but "every letter was given to [Smith] by the gift and power of God." In reality, however, the Book of Mormon has had to be corrected thousands of times to compensate for Smith's poor grammar and spelling.

The Book of Mormon is fraught with other errors as well. For example, "Benjamin" was changed to "Mosiah" when Mormon leaders realized that in the chronology of the Book of Mormon King Benjamin had already died—thus he would have been hard pressed to "interpret" the engravings mentioned in Mosiah 21:28.

Perhaps the greatest crack in the credibility of the Book of Mormon is that whole sections were derived directly from the King James Version of the Bible—this despite the fact that according to Mormon chronology, the Book of Mormon predates the King James Version by more than a thousand years. Little wonder that Mormons accept the Book of Mormon based on a "burning in the bosom" rather than on history and evidence.

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Can chance account for the universe?

*"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."
(Genesis 1:1)*

Astronaut Guy Gardner, who has seen the earth from the perspective of space, points out that "the more we learn and see about the universe the more we come to realize that the most ideally suited place for life within the entire solar system is the planet we call home." In other words, life on earth was designed by a benevolent Creator rather than directed by blind chance.

First, consider the ideal temperatures on planet Earth — not duplicated on any other known planet in the universe. If we were closer to the sun, we would fry. If we were farther away, we would freeze.

Furthermore, ocean tides, which are caused by the gravitational pull of the moon, play a crucial role in our survival. If the moon were significantly larger, thereby having a stronger gravitational pull, devastating tidal waves would submerge large areas of land. If the moon were smaller, tidal motion would cease, and the oceans would stagnate and die.

Finally, consider plain old tap water. The solid state of most substances is denser than their liquid state, but the opposite is true for water, which explains why ice floats rather than sinks. If water were like virtually any other liquid, it would freeze from the bottom up rather than from the top down, killing aquatic life, destroying the oxygen supply, and making earth uninhabitable.

From the temperatures to the tides and the tap water, and myriad other characteristics that we so easily take for granted, the earth is an unparalleled planetary masterpiece. Like Handel's *Messiah* or da Vinci's *Last Supper*, it should never be carelessly pawned off as the result of blind evolutionary processes.

For further study, see Hank Hanegraaff, *Fatal Flaws: What Evolutionists Don't Want You To Know* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003, 2007). This book is available through the Christian Research Institute. To order, call toll free 1-888-7000-CRI or log onto www.equip.org.

How many explanations are there for the existence of our universe?

“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.” (Romans 1:20)

Philosophical naturalism — the worldview undergirding evolutionism — can provide only three explanations.

First, the universe is merely an illusion. This notion carries little weight in an age of scientific enlightenment.

Second, the universe sprang from nothing. This proposition flies in the face of both the laws of cause and effect and energy conservation. As has been well said, “Nothing comes from nothing, nothing ever could.” Or, to put it another way, there simply are no free lunches. The conditions that hold true in this universe prevent any possibility of matter springing out of nothing.

Third, the universe eternally existed. The law of entropy, which predicts that a universe that has eternally existed would have died an “eternity ago” of heat loss, devastates this hypothesis.

There is, however, one other possibility. It is found in the first chapter of the first book of the Bible: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” In an age of empirical science, nothing could be more certain, clear, or correct.

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Who made God?

*“Before the mountains were born
or you brought forth the earth
and the world, from everlasting to
everlasting you are God.”
(Psalm 90:2)*

None of the arguments forwarded by philosophical naturalism — (1) the universe is merely an illusion; (2) the universe sprang from nothing; (3) the universe eternally existed — satisfactorily account for the existence of the universe. Logically, we can turn only to the possibility that “God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). If that’s the case, however, it immediately brings up the question — Who made God?

First, unlike the universe, which according to modern science had a beginning, God is infinite and eternal. Thus, as an infinite eternal being, God logically can be demonstrated to be the uncaused First Cause.

Furthermore, to suppose that because the universe had a cause, the cause of the universe must have had a cause simply leads to a logical dead end. An infinite regression of finite causes does not answer the question of *source*; it merely makes the *effects* more numerous.

Finally, simple logic dictates that the universe is not merely an illusion; it did not spring out of nothing (nothing comes from nothing, nothing ever could); and it has not eternally existed (the law of entropy predicts that a universe that has eternally existed would have died an “eternity ago” of heat loss). Thus, the only philosophically plausible possibility that remains is that the universe was made by an unmade Cause greater than itself.

For further study, see Hank Hanegraaff, *Fatal Flaws: What Evolutionists Don’t Want You To Know* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003, 2007). This book is available through the Christian Research Institute. To order, call toll free 1-888-7000-CRI or log onto www.equip.org.

Can we be certain that evolution is a myth?

*“The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they display knowledge.
There is no speech or language
where their voice is not heard.
Their voice goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.”
(Psalm 19:1-4)*

The arguments that support evolutionary theory are astonishingly weak.

First, the fossil record is an embarrassment to evolutionists. No verifiable transitions from one kind to another as yet have been found. Charles Darwin had an excuse: in his day fossil finds were relatively scarce. Today, however, we have an abundance of fossils. Still, we have yet to find even one legitimate transition from one kind to another.

Furthermore, in Darwin’s day such enormously complex structures as a human egg were thought to be quite simple—for all practical purposes, little more than a microscopic blob of gelatin. Today, we know that a fertilized human egg is among the most organized, complex structures in the universe. In an age of scientific enlightenment, it is incredible to think people are willing to maintain that something so vastly complex arose by chance. Like an egg or the human eye, the universe is a masterpiece of precision and design that could not have come into existence by chance.

Finally, while chance is a blow to the theory of evolution, the laws of science are a bullet to its head. The basic laws of science, including the laws of *effects* and their causes—*energy conservation* and *entropy*—undergird the creation model for origins and undermine the evolutionary hypothesis. While I would fight for a person’s right to have faith in science fiction, we must resist evolutionists who attempt to brainwash people into thinking that evolution is science.

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What about theistic evolution?

“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.” (Acts 17:24–27)

Under the banner of “theistic evolution,” a growing number of Christians maintain that God used evolution as His method for creation. This, in my estimation, is the worst of all possibilities. It is one thing to believe in evolution; it is quite another to blame God for it.

Not only is “theistic evolution” a contradiction in terms—like the phrase “flaming snowflakes”—but in the words of the Nobel-prize-winning evolutionist Jacques Monod:

“[Natural] selection is the blindest, and most cruel way of evolving new species. . . . The struggle for life and elimination of the weakest is a horrible process, against which our whole modern ethic revolts. . . . I am surprised that a Christian would defend the idea that this is the process which God more or less set up in order to have evolution.”

First, the biblical account of creation specifically states that God created living creatures according to their own “kinds” (Genesis 1:24–25). As confirmed by science, the DNA for a fetus is not the DNA for a frog, and the DNA for a frog is not the DNA for a fish; rather, the DNA of a fetus, frog, or fish is uniquely programmed for reproduction after its own kind. Thus while the Bible allows for *microevolution* (transitions within “the kinds”) it does not allow for *macroevolution* (amoebas evolving into apes or apes evolving into astronauts).

Furthermore, evolutionary biology cannot account for metaphysical realities such as ego and ethos. Without data demonstrating that physical processes can produce metaphysical realities, there is no warrant for dogmatically declaring that humans evolved from hominids.

Finally, an omnipotent, omniscient God does not have to plod painfully through millions of mistakes, misfits, and mutations in order to have fellowship with humans. As the biblical account of creation confirms, He can create humans instantaneously (Genesis 2:7). *Evolutionism* is fighting for its very life. Rather than prop it up with theories like theistic evolution, thinking people everywhere must be on the vanguard of demonstrating its demise.

For further study, see Hank Hanegraaff, *Fatal Flaws: What Evolutionists Don't Want You To Know* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2003, 2007). This book is available through the Christian Research Institute. To order, call toll free 1-888-7000-CRI or log onto www.equip.org.

Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people?

“We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”
(Romans 8:28)

This is perhaps the most common question Christian celebrities are asked to answer on shows such as *Larry King Live*. At first blush, it may seem as though there are as many responses as there are religions. In reality, however, there are only three basic answers, namely, pantheism, philosophical naturalism, and theism. *Pantheism* denies the existence of good and evil because in this view god is all and all is god. *Philosophical naturalism* (the worldview undergirding evolutionism) supposes that everything is a function of random processes, thus there is no such thing as good and evil. *Theism* alone has a relevant response — and only *Christian* theism can answer the question satisfactorily.

First, Christian theism acknowledges that God created the *potential* for evil because God created humans with freedom of choice. We choose to love or hate, to do good or evil. The record of history bears eloquent testimony to the fact that humans of their own free will have actualized the reality of evil through such choices.

Furthermore, without choice, love is meaningless. God is neither a cosmic rapist who forces his love on people, nor a cosmic puppeteer who forces people to love him. Instead, God, the personification of love, grants us the freedom of choice. Without such freedom, we would be little more than preprogrammed robots.

Finally, the fact that God created the potential for evil by granting us freedom of choice ultimately will lead to the best of all possible worlds — a world in which “there will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain” (Revelation 21:4). Those who choose Christ will be redeemed from evil by his goodness and will forever be able *not* to sin.

For further study, see Joni Eareckson Tada and Steven Estes, *When God Weeps* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997). This book is available through the Christian Research Institute. To order, call toll free 1-888-7000-CRI or log onto www.equip.org.

—Hank Hanegraaff

Hank Hanegraaff is president of the famed Christian Research Institute and host of the *Bible Answer Man* broadcast (to listen to the broadcast online, log onto equip.org). Hank is the author of many best-selling books, including *The Bible Answer Book* and *The Bible Answer Book Volume 2*.

¹All Questions and Answers are adapted from Hank Hanegraaff, *The Bible Answer Book* (Nashville: J. Countryman, 2004). All Scripture quotations are from The New International Version (NIV).