

House on Fire!

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by Pauline Holmes PhD

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Table of Contents

Introduction: 5

Chapter One: Why are we here? 14

Chapter Two: Is there really a lake of fire? 27

Chapter Three: What makes the Bible different? 35

Chapter Four: Is Jesus really the son of God 44

Chapter Five: Creationism versus evolution 50

Chapter Six: What happens when you know you are safe 65

House on fire!

Introduction

If you saw a house on fire and knew someone was inside, what would you do? Would you mind your own business and walk away? Not likely. You'd try your best to get them out. Well, the bad news is that there is something a lot worse than a house on fire ahead of us. The human race is in a terrible bind. Humans enter this world destined for the lake of fire simply because they are not 100 percent perfect.¹ Please don't think this is some crazy idea you only find in the Bible. It's in all major religions in some fashion.

But it's the bad news *and* the good news. The good news isn't just good; it is wonderful, and it really *is* only to be found in the Bible. The good news is that a "fire

¹ We use the "lake of fire" and "hell" interchangeably from a biblical point of view, to refer to the "second death" (Rev 2:11) awaiting those who do not avail themselves of God's gift of a way out. Though the picture in the Bible is unclear, there is reason to believe a period of burning in the fire precedes final destruction.

escape” is available at no cost to us, right in front of our very eyes, free for the taking.

Once you come to believe this, you want to spread the message. Not because you’ll be punished for keeping your mouth shut. No, you do it out of urgent concern for your fellow men. You want to tell the news, both the bad and the good. Yes, both, because nobody cares about being rescued until they know they are in terrible danger.

Telling the bad news is not pleasant. Nobody wants to hear it, and everyone hates to be a doom-sayer. But if nobody waved the red flag, people probably would not see the trouble they are in. And once a person hears—really hears—how wonderful the good news is, that can change everything. There is the sense of having dodged the worst imaginable bullet.

A war is going on for humans’ eternal souls. A war and a very real enemy, although most of us will never see him. But if humans woke up they would know the war has already been won.

I’d rather be in “de Nile”

As far as telling the bad news, the job is already partly done. That is, people already have a sense of the bad news, they feel guilt and apprehension about their future, a sense that something bad lies ahead, but they try to stay in denial about the whole thing. Who

wants to think about the lake of fire? If they could be sure of a no-cost fire escape and were to take advantage of it, the denial would be replaced by peace of mind.

So where can anyone find that fire escape? The Bible. The Bible is the only place. People don't know they can go to the Bible for it because its message has been distorted. Yet the Bible offers the single source of safety. Once a person comprehends that, the only question is whether or not the offer is legitimate.

I used to buy all the anti-Bible ideas myself until my head got turned around. And now, as one of the rescued—and believe me, nobody is more surprised about it than me—I have to stick my neck out and tell what I know, regardless of how it might go over. I can't worry about how unpopular the message might be in some quarters.

Somebody said the job of telling the Gospel is like putting a message in a bottle. You write the words and have no idea where they will go, or whether they will reach anyone. But you do it, anyway. Of course, in that situation you are the castaway, desperate for help. In this situation you are the safe one writing to the castaways.

How can I *not* tell what I know when the matter is more serious even than life or death?

I am not telling you to clean up your act

Don't think this is a lecture on morality. In spite of what you might hear in the churches and other centers of worship, staying out of the lake of fire has nothing to do with whatever limited amount of goodness and righteousness humans can muster.

Nobody escapes the ugly place that way. The fire escape is not something a person has to earn—nor can they. The model is absolute purity, total flawlessness. Nobody born of man and woman has ever attained this standard themselves. None of us can ever make ourselves perfect, and that is what it would take to escape the lake of fire through our own efforts.

Our outward behavior is not the only problem. Our thought life is an even bigger obstacle because it is far less controllable. We would somehow have to fix it so that every single thought that ran through our minds would be unselfish and loving from conception until death. When you look at it that way, you see how impossible it is.

The score must be 100 percent errorless

However, sin, imperfection, uncleanness—whatever it is called—is the issue. Deep down inside us, in a place that is usually unconscious, we humans know that total purity in thought, word and deed is essential if we are to connect with God and escape the

lake of fire. But we can't reach that standard ourselves, no matter how long we live or how hard we try. No human ever merits the essential perfect score. The standard is absolute; even 99 and 99/100ths percent won't do. A trillion lifetimes would not be long enough to make ourselves clean. The task is simply impossible—for us, that is.

The nitty gritty problem

Personally, I was astounded when I first learned that human imperfection is the nitty gritty problem all religions try to solve. They all try to get out of the same jam but only one offers a viable solution. Thankfully, the God of the Bible gives us a way to attain perfection without having to do it ourselves. He solves the problem by allowing us to take on the perfection of Christ.

The free gift

The rescue is a present from God. All we do is claim the gift of God's own perfection in the form of Christ. He will receive us if—and only if—we put on His perfection as if it were a raincoat, a cover. Wearing that cover is like being stamped with the words “perfect in God's eyes.” Once we step under the mantle of His perfection, we become His children. He loves us

unconditionally and accepts us in spite of all our impurity. We're not separated from him any more; hell is no longer our final destination.

Under that cover we get His “immediate approval,” as they say in the furniture stores. It is hard to grasp that no purchase is necessary on our part. *Where's the catch?*, we think. But there is no catch. On the contrary, we get the benefit of something He has already paid for.

The choice is very clear. Claim the gift and be connected with God forever, here and in heaven. Refuse the gift and stay on the road to the lake of fire.

Whatever your position...

Maybe you are an agnostic: you neither believe in a supernatural creator nor disbelieve in one. Maybe you are an atheist; for you there is no god. Maybe you are a deist, not believing in a specific god. Maybe you ascribe to some particular non-Bible religion. And maybe you have some background in the Bible but are skeptical. Whatever your position, you have probably heard the many popular criticisms of the Bible and Bible-believers, who are depicted as ignorant, stupid, and bigoted.

I messed around with several “spiritual” disciplines earlier in life—rejecting the Bible in my teens and then flirting with zen

buddhism, atheism, humanism and the “new age.” All that time I was a ridiculer of the Bible and Bible-believers. Until I was thirty five, the last thing I thought I’d ever do is accept the Bible as truth. I was influenced by all the negative stereotypes of Christians; I was far too “enlightened” and very arrogant. Believing myself wise I had become a fool (Romans 1:22).

However, after years of spitting at the Bible, after years of feeling entitled to a charmed life—and being furious when I didn’t get it, after years of sneering at images of Jesus on the cross, after years of sniggering at the “idiots” who believe in the lake of fire, I saw the light. I was forced to look at the Bible in a new way, and I realized that everything else, every other doctrine, has to be tossed out.

The most important thing a person can do

I know that nothing is as important as spreading the Gospel, because death is ahead, no matter what, and then what? It’s either up or down for humans. The “down” side is the problem. Down could be a lot worse than death. Down could be a period of consciousness in the lake of fire.

This lifetime is short and eternity is, well, eternal, infinite, beyond what any of us can imagine. If the God of the Bible offers a way to avoid the ugly place, why not take a

look at it? No choice a person can make is more important. All other creeds have the same useless recipe for uniting humans with God: the myth of human perfectionism. Perfectionism demands the impossible, keeping people busily on track for eternal separation from God in the lake of fire. The Bible stands alone as the place where human perfection is not required and God gives you His.

I hope you will consider...

I am not trying to sell you anything—a cemetery plot, or a nice funeral. Nor am I asking for a donation to a ministry. Nor am I deludedly trying to earn salvation for myself. I’ve already claimed my free ticket.

I don’t get any benefit from telling you about the bad and good news other than a feeling of satisfaction that I have done my job...and joy in my heart if you board the salvation “ship.”

Thanks to God, I escaped the burning house before it was too late. Now I can’t stop myself from running round the neighborhood shouting “fire,” and pointing out the fire escape.

Whatever your point of view, I ask you to read this book and consider what it says. It will not take very long and it could make the difference for you between eternity in a very good place or, well, you know the

alternative. It is so easy for us to avoid the fire. God has gone to great personal expense to provide all of us a free ticket out, just because He loves us. Why not take him up on it?

Chapter One

Why are we here?

Why are we here? Most people don't give a thought to the matter: *I'm here, and that's it.* Maybe they were curious about it as children but that got drummed out of them by the complacency of the adults around them or by the demands of living in the world.

But some people stay curious and continue to ask the question: *Was I purposely put here or did I arrive by a huge cosmic accident? In other words, did I get here by the design of a Supreme Being or by some random process?*

If you think that your being here is just an accident, you're saying life is meaningless, pointless, and purposeless; that your existence is irrelevant and nobody but you truly cares about you. Oh, the few people in your life care to some extent, but you could just as easily not exist as far as the rest of the world is concerned, and nothing you do really matters. If that were true, it would be a sad situation.

Eternal life in our offspring?

Humans seem to have a drive or instinct for survival. Some say that the drive can be satisfied merely by having offspring and perpetuating our species. But that does not gibe with a human nature that is primarily selfish and wants to survive endlessly itself.

If the Creator² made humans in His image, did He do it to insure the survival of His own species—to produce a line of deities for other universes? No. He made everything, including humans, for His pleasure (Rev 4:11). Just like Him, we want the pleasure of raising a child. But even more than that, we want eternal life as individuals. We want to be ourselves, forever.

The circular goal of existing just to exist

It is circular reasoning to say, like the atheists and evolutionists, that you survive just to survive, you live just to live. It does not explain how you got here in the first place, why you are here, or why you would want to live.

When you look at the incredible complexity of all forms of life, you see there has to be a goal beyond mere survival.

² When we talk of the Creator or God, this refers to the God of the Bible.

Need to believe life has purpose and meaning

Humans cannot help but feel life has a purpose. Psychologists talk of an inborn “effectance motivation,” a desire to make an impact, a difference.³ This is why a book called “The Purpose Driven Life” is a best seller.⁴

On the other hand, atheists hold to *nihilism*, the belief that nothing matters, that there is no purpose to life. People who hold this view are depressed and angry, because deep down they really do care. They want their lives to matter. There was a time when life seemed meaningful to them—it does to all of us when we are young—but they lost this feeling and became disillusioned. Misery may love company, but ultimately *nihilism* is not an attitude that is attractive to people. Nobody would clamor to read a book entitled “The Purposeless Life.” Everybody wants to know their life counts, and not just to other people. Our next door neighbors are usually too busy wishing somebody cared about *them*.

³ White, R. (1959) “Motivation reconsidered: the concept of competence.” *Psychological Review*, 66, 297-333.

⁴ Warren, Rick (2002) *The Purpose Driven Life*. New York, New York: Zondervan.

Higher needs versus eternal survival need

Humanistic psychologists are right when they say we are born with certain “higher” needs, including order, rules, values, a purpose, to create, aesthetics, to love and be loved, and “spirituality.” They are also right in saying that a person cannot exercise these higher needs until they are sure of survival. But what kind of survival? The humanistic psychologists don’t talk about eternal survival, and they should. Only when humans know they have escaped the ugly place do they feel safe enough to care about higher needs. Nobody feels free while they are on the brink of the lake of fire.

Why is human life so short?

Did you ever wonder why human life has to be so short? Think of the beauty and complexity of a human being, and then consider how short our lives are. From an evolutionary point of view, the brevity of life is out of place. Natural selection and survival of the fittest, if such a thing existed, would be pretty rigorous, allowing only the very best to continue. We should last much longer than we do under that system, because a wiser, more experienced person would be better at survival. If brute strength trumped intellect, humans would have been consumed by lions and tigers a long time ago.

The human brain

The brevity of human life is particularly incomprehensible when we look at the human brain. Most researchers say that our brain only uses a small fraction of its capacity. Why? Is it because there is not enough time in our short lifespan to fill it up to its full potential? It is like having a moon rocket just to jet your way to the grocery store once a week. Or a computer with a zillion bytes on it so you can e-mail your uncle now and again.

How can evolutionists argue that natural selection “favors” a larger brain, when much of its capacity is wasted? Why would evolution produce something this complex and kill it off so soon? An asset has to be used if it is to produce a greater likelihood of survival, but the human brain is vastly under-utilized.

Does a short life mean there is no God?

It might appear that the brevity of our lifespan also argues against the existence of a Supreme Being. Why would a loving Creator make anything as marvelous as a human just to have it die at the age of seventy? When you invent something a thousand times better than a Mercedes or a microchip, is it with the idea that it should only last a short time and then crumble apart? Of course not. Yet the human body

begins to decay right after it reaches full adult development.

Why is there death, period?

This leads to the question of why there is death, period. What benefit would death have from an evolutionary point of view? One bright idea of the evolutionists is that a built-in drive to die makes room for new species—the better ones that supposedly come down the pike. Yet the same evolutionists contradict themselves by saying that life is about survival, the very opposite of a genetic death wish.

On the other hand, why would a Supreme Being let everything die? If there is a God, He can create life, He can keep us all alive, can't He? So why does He let us die?

The Bible has the answer to the short lifespan and death

Well, evolutionists have no viable explanation for the brevity of life and for death but the Bible does. There was no plan for humans to die when God created them in the Garden of Eden. They had free access to the Tree of Life, which would have kept them alive forever. But once they had broken the one and only law in the Garden they were lost. By eating the forbidden fruit of the deadly Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, they were lawbreakers,

separated from the perfection of God and destined for the lake of fire. In fact, the entire creation was corrupted by that one transgression, destined for eventual destruction.

We see in Genesis that at first, the human lifespan was about a thousand years. Human rebellion led God to cut it down to seventy by approximately the year 1000 B.C. when King David was on the throne of Israel (Psalm 90:10).

So death and a short life-span are consistent with the Bible, and inconsistent with the mechanism of evolution. Our deadly situation makes sense when we look at Genesis and the consequence of human rebellion. We are born in a state of separation from God, headed for the lake of fire.

Who really believes there is no afterlife?

Then there is the matter of whether or not there is an afterlife. Is this all there is? Is this lifetime an end in itself? If we just evolved there would be only death ahead of us. But if we are created beings, it is reasonable to think that this lifetime is a prelude to a larger existence.

When people say they accept that this life is all there is and that when you die you're just dead—do they really believe that? More likely they just say it because they

lack a reason to expect eternal life and don't want to seem irrational. They want to think they are being scientific, saying that the absence of evidence is the evidence of absence. They have intellectually convinced themselves that life ends here, but there is a part of them that secretly wishes to go on.

Humans want eternal survival as individuals but don't dare hope for it. There is this inner voice that says we're doomed, that we don't deserve eternal life, that, in fact, we deserve eternal punishment for being imperfect. So defense mechanisms like denial keep us unconscious about the whole matter, but stress can make those defenses rupture. Then the sense of being doomed surfaces, and it has to be dealt with in a new way—either an opening to God's grace or just stronger denial.

But is there really an absence of evidence?

If there is no life after death, why is an afterlife central to most religions? And why do 70 percent of people in the US believe in an afterlife.⁵ Of course, the fact that people believe something does not mean it is true.

⁵ Harley, Brian Harley and Glen Firebaugh
“Americans’ Belief in an Afterlife: Trends over the Past Two Decades.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (Sept, 1993), pp. 269-278.

However, it is not as if belief in an afterlife is promoted in the schools or popular media like the theory of evolution, which is fully accepted by only 14 percent of people in the US.⁶ The fact that so many more people think there is an afterlife suggests we know about it innately, that it is not a culturally influenced belief but something we are born with.

Oh, everyone wants to go on living, they want death *not* to be the end of their existence. When somebody close to you dies, the finality of it feels unbelievable. *It just cannot be that old Fred is simply gone, snuffed out, just like that. This morning you ate breakfast with him and felt he was always going to be there. He seemed an unending part of the world, your world. Tonight he no longer exists on this earth and he's not coming back through that front door. Surely it is a great big, bad joke and tomorrow he'll return. Part of you is waiting for him to walk in again just as if nothing happened.*

A short lifespan as a time of testing?

The thing is, if life here is not an end in itself but a prelude to something else, then a short lifespan makes sense as a time of

⁶ Internet article: www.nationalgeographic.com, James Owen, August 10, 2006.

testing. Who would be testing us and for what? The tester would have to be the Creator. Why would he inflict this testing on us? Because he is a bully? Because He is power-tripping? No, he has no need to do that. He has no need to prove he is the head honcho. He told Moses: "I am that I am" (Exodus 3:14). He is the pre-existing One, the Creator of the heaven and the earth, and there is no doubt about it in His mind.

What would God want to know about us? What could He not see without testing us, assuming He is omniscient? If he knows everything, He knows us through and through, and He knows the future. So surely He knows how we will respond to being tested.

But let's say He *chooses* not to know everything. He is omniscient, yet He lets Himself have some surprises. Human creators can understand that. Surprise is an element of the creative, experimental process. Maybe it is blasphemous to speculate like this, but I don't think so. These are questions that should and do occur to humans, questions that can lead us to the truth.

At any rate, the Creator would not give us a test that is impossible to pass. What would be the point of that? He would give us a fair test and keep us here just long enough to pass or fail.

That, incidentally, would explain why He cut down the lifespan to 70 years. Maybe we are only educable until that age. But again, what is He selecting for? And what would constitute a pass or a fail?

What would God want to know about us?

Could it be that God is checking us out, testing our mettle, before giving us the freedom of eternal life in heaven? It would make a lot of sense if that were the case. After all, God created Satan and all the angels. He gave them the freedom of heaven, yet Satan led a third of the angels to rebel against Him (Isaiah 14:12; Rev 12:4, 9). That got them all evicted from on high. They are destined to be thrown in the lake of fire after God has finished using them to mess with us as part of His testing process. So this lifetime could be the trial run. How will we handle the kind of freedom there is in heaven?

God doesn't want to destroy any human

The fact is, God wants humans with Him forever. Why? Some think it is because He is lonely, or that He needs us to do something for Him. However, it is not because of any need on His part; He is omnipotent. No. He wants us with Him forever because He loves us more than any human father ever could.

And yet, He cannot allow a bunch of rebels to hang around eternally creating havoc. He does not *want* to destroy anyone, He “takes no pleasure in the destruction of the wicked” (Ezekiel 18:32, 3:11). That is why He commands us to take His gift of free passage out of the lake of fire.⁷

Couldn't He have made us obedient?

Why does He give us freedom? He could have avoided trouble by creating obedient little robots. But what fun would there be in that for anyone? When you love someone, you don't tie them up and make them a slave to your will. You give them what you want for yourself, which is freedom. Without it there is none of the creativity that is so exciting to watch. If you have been a parent you might remember how you felt when you saw your child's first piece of art work.

The squeeze

You could say God puts us through a wringer. The squeezing is achieved by the reality of the situation—if we face it. Going unconscious about it does not help us except in the very short term. Putting our heads in the sand might make us less consciously

⁷ The book of Leviticus contains many commands for sinners to make sacrificial offerings and thus be forgiven by God for sin. Those laws stand today, only Christ is now the offering.

afraid but it has a very deadly side effect. It keeps a person on track for the lake of fire.

Bail money

We have to admit God's dominion if we are to avoid the lake of fire, but He is looking for a response more specific than that. The test involves claiming the "bail money" He has provided to get us out of eternal separation from him.

We all need that coin because we're imperfect, can never be otherwise, and therefore face spiritual and physical death. The bail money is the payment God made on our behalf with the death of perfect Jesus. Essentially, we make a swap with Jesus, a very uneven one, with all the benefits going our way. He got the death we deserve, and we get His perfection attributed to us. That's the only way humans can escape.

The test is not even as complicated as a multiple choice. Just yes to Jesus. Failure to respond has the same effect as a "no" vote. Either way, you stay on track for the lake of fire.

Chapter Two

Is there really a lake of fire?

Is there really a lake of fire? This is really the “sixty-four thousand dollar” question. If there is no lake of fire, nobody has too much to worry about. One day you die and that is the end of it.

That is merely a depressing thought, and not a horrifying one like the prospect of going into the fire for an unknown amount of time. Besides, you might tell yourself you are a pretty good person so God will let you into heaven if there is one—as if absolute perfection were not essential.

But can you be sure there is no lake of fire? The prophets talked about it. Jesus talked about it. But if you don't believe the Bible there is no reason to accept what they say...or is there?

Fear of the ugly place

Deep down inside, humans have enormous fear about being separated from God. Few recognize it. Under the surface lurks a sense of being doomed, the unconscious origin of anxiety, depression, and rage. A host of psychological defense mechanisms stop people being conscious of being damned.

That way they don't get overwhelmed. They can function, somewhat, in this world but remain lost.

When people get in touch with the fear, most will say it's about some worldly thing, or even fear of death. The mental health profession will help them believe this. However, the despair and panic attacks go way beyond death terror. It is a sense of the ugly place, accompanied by a feeling of hurtling towards it.

Atonement is the goal of all religions

This fear explains the universal need for religions and rituals. All are attempting to atone—to become “at one” or unite—with deity. They are misdirected, one, because they aim at false gods or a generic spirit world and not specifically at the God of the Bible, the only One with a remedy; and two, because the efforts are human ones.

A vast supernatural realm includes not only God and His angels but also demons, the fallen angels. Anyone familiar with the common ouija board parlor “game” has had a chilling encounter with those evil forces at one time or another.

Atonement can only be made with God, never with any other spirit being, and can only occur through Jesus Christ's shed blood.

Corruption

In a sense, separation from Him is a technical matter. It is impossible for corruption to connect with absolute purity. As soon as you attach even the slightest impurity to something that is perfectly clean, the clean thing is spoiled. Even the tiniest flaw contaminates it. It is a black or white situation, no shades of grey. The Creator, the Supreme Being, or God, is absolutely flawless and perfect. Humans, on the other hand, are not. Impure humans cannot approach God in their natural state.

So when humans broke that one law, they were contaminated, no longer able to approach God. And humans did not just corrupt *themselves* by defying God in the Garden of Eden. All living things were cut off from the Tree of Life, meaning that they became finite. The entire Creation was defiled, separated from God by one act of human rebellion. Since then, everything has been doomed, awaiting destruction.

The lake of fire and the unconscious

The frequency with which dark underworlds come up in mythology points to an innate sense of its reality. Theorists such as Joseph Campbell, Carl Jung and Bruno Bettelheim have said such myths derive from the species-wise collective

unconscious: deep inborn truth embedded in the human psyche.

A Bible-believer would not interpret inborn material the same way as these theorists, who refuse to see hell as a real place. However, there probably *is* a collective unconscious in the human race containing truths about certain things, one of them being a literal lake of fire.

Afterlife and hell in all religions

All religions have some version of an afterlife. Most have a good one versus a bad one, and there are hells in all the major religions. Buddhism and Hinduism have temporary ones, whereas the Bible and Islam have permanent ones.

The mildest version of hell is being forced to live in this painful world over and over again. But there is a widespread idea of something a lot worse, a dark world full of torment. So when hell is central to religions and mythology all over the world, you have to think there is something to it—no smoke without eternal fire.

Hell is the reason for religions

The sense of being doomed to burn in the lake of fire explains the very existence of religions, and why people cling to them tenaciously. Why would a person fight to the death for their beliefs unless they

believed their religion protected them from something even worse? All doctrines, the Bible included, have arisen out of the need to escape eternal damnation by attaining perfection. Only total purity enables a person to avoid the nasty place on the other side of death.

The mental health profession and hell

The mental health profession, with its very low percentage of Bible believers, commonly promotes the notion that the dark place, hell, or the lake of fire, is just an evil fantasy or an unconscious part of the self that a person must learn to accept. They say we should dismiss the idea of an actual place of eternal darkness as the tool of a corrupt, manipulative, church hierarchy: *follow our moral edicts or you will go to hell*. But wherever this idea comes from, it is not what the Bible says. God's word shows us that we enter this world already on the road to the lake of fire,⁸ and that getting off it has nothing to do with following moral teachings.

⁸ There may be an age of accountability. Children who die before that age—possibly twenty years old—may be automatically saved like the offspring of those God punished for rebellion in the account of the Israelites under Moses in the book of Exodus.

What is the purpose of the lake of fire?

The purpose of the fire appears to be to destroy anyone who rejects God's authority, specifically by refusing Christ's atoning payment for sin. He cannot give the freedom of eternal life in heaven to anyone who is at war with Him.

Does everyone burn eternally in the fire?

The lake may burn eternally but probably everyone thrown into the fire does not spend eternity burning. There are many pictures of extinguishment in the Bible. For example Jesus, talking of unbelievers, says: "he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:12).

Perhaps the degree of corruption in a person's life determines how long they will burn in the fire. Some will be destroyed quickly; others, such as cruel despots, might take much longer; and still others will burn forever. Satan, the beast and the false prophet will be "tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Rev 20:10).

Another purpose to the fire?

The lake may have another purpose. Perhaps it will exist as a warning to those living eternally, just in case they get any of those wrong ideas that Satan had (if that were possible). The last verse written by the prophet Isaiah gives us a picture of people in

the new heaven and the new earth looking at those burning in the fire (Isaiah 66:24).

Is heaven going to be boring?

A lot of people say they don't want eternal life because they think heaven will be boring—as if there is a third option somewhere between heaven and hell. Even if heaven turned out to be one eternal yawn, surely it would be better than any amount of time in hell.

Where does the idea of a boring heaven come from—is it from people who find life boring now? We humans have an amazing lack of imagination about what heaven could really be like. Were Adam and Eve bored in the Garden of Eden before the Fall? Are the godly angels bored? We are not told but it seems unlikely.

Surely life could be tremendously enjoyable and interesting if we didn't have to work for a living, were not threatened with death and disease, had loving relationships with everyone, and were engaged in interesting activities—all of which are suggested by the Bible. Boredom will not be there.

Do you hate the idea that God threatens people with the lake of fire?

I have heard this from many people. They ask what kind of a god would use a threat

like hell. They see that kind of god as one of violence and not a god of love.

The distaste comes more from an offended ego than anything else, the common resentment about God's power. The people who cannot stomach a god who lets people go to hell are the same ones who won't look at the rescue. Aside from all those in false religions, many are in some nominal form of Christianity. Few in the church have grasped the truth.

We should look at the big picture. It was human rebellion that got us on the road to hell. And it was the love of God towards us that provided a means to get off that road. Until you face the reality of the fire, and appreciate God's mercy in saving you from it, you will have no love in you for God or other people. But that will change when you look at the fire and grab the fire escape.

Chapter Three

What makes the Bible different?

Some say that all religions are basically the same. They just have a different name for the deity and a few different rituals. That was the way I used to think—the differences were just cultural so I could pick the one that felt right to me. One thing I was sure of: my religion would certainly not have a bad afterlife.

Later I found out that all major religions are designed to solve the “bad afterlife” problem, but there is a profound doctrinal difference between the Bible and all the others. The others tell adherents they can, and must, do the impossible: escape eternal separation from the “deity” through their own efforts. In other words, adherents must, and can, make themselves totally pure in thought, word and deed from conception to death. Their doctrinal statements might not come right out and say this but one can find it in the fine print.

The God of the Bible, alone, offers a viable way for humans to attain the essential standard of purity. The difference between the Bible and all the others is that they say *you* must make yourself totally clean, pure

and holy, whereas the Bible says *God* has done it for you, and for free. In other words, all the false religions tout perfectionism whereas the Bible offers salvation as a gift.

God who?

To return to basics again, if there is an actively involved supernatural being, a Creator who did more than make everything and then just step back and watch, who or what is it?

An impersonal force?

Is there an impersonal force, like “the great white light” or “the universe” of the “new age” movement?

An impersonal force would not be purposeful, it would not think for itself, nor would it create. You could pray to it and it might respond robotically, like a supernatural gofer, but it would not feel, nor offer you understanding and compassion. It would not care about you, nor would it love you. And it would need someone behind the scenes controlling it, like the wizard of Oz.

I have found that people whose idea of deity is a mere force don't really relate to “it” that way. They subconsciously address “it” as a person. I used to do that myself. Then one day I realized what I was doing and said: *I'm not going to call you the “great white light” anymore. I'm going to*

call you God. But God who? I soon got my answer. It was the God of the Bible. At first I was very resistant. I was way too mature for this now, I had known better for too long. But little by little it made sense; the scales fell from my eyes and I saw how blind I had been.

Is God good? If so, why does He punish us?

It might seem silly to ask the question of whether God is good, but there is a common delusion out there that the God of the Bible is evil. People direct a lot of self-righteous anger at Him. They think that the Bible and those who believe it are corrupt. *No fair. The Bible calls everything we like to do a sin, then we get sent to hell for not being good.*

With regards to the hell part, let's remember that everyone is already on track for hell from birth. And let's also remember that human goodness plays no part in salvation from the lake of fire.

Contrary to what many think, the God of the Bible is the One who offers a no cost way to avoid it.

Is everything we like a sin?

And then, is really it true that everything humans like is sinful? Not when you pit long term against short term. Many of the

things we like turn out to be no good for us, or even harmful in the long term, and are ultimately un-enjoyable. On the other hand, the practices God advocates are a recipe for well-being and happiness. One can certainly acquire a taste for things that lead to peace of mind.

God and punishment

What parent would not enforce consequences for bad behavior? God punishes for educational reasons—for our own benefit or as an example to others. It may seem counter-intuitive, but it is only out of His goodness that He bothers to discipline us.

Some think He enjoys punishing us, that He is a sadist. Far from it, He wants us not to go to the lake of fire. That is His ultimate goal. He often has to treat us roughly to make us pay attention to the bad and good news. When our lives are going well, we ignore Him. I know I did. So He had to use “plan B” on me, and things were tough for a few years. But no matter, that got me to the fire escape.

We humans are in such denial about our bad behavior that we see no reason why God should be anything other than soft and generous with us. The human ego hates the idea of a higher power giving judgments. There will come a time when a vile person

shall be no more called a liberal (Isaiah 32:4-5), but that is not now, for sure.

Perfectionism

Is He good? Phew...all we need do is consider the pain God suffered to save us. To see how good God really is, let us look at His salvation plan. To re-cap: Human imperfection is the problem, separating us from God, destining us for the lake of fire. All religions but one put people in the position of trying to reach perfection through their own efforts. Humans know, deep down, that they can't do it, but that does not stop them trying. They deny it on the surface but inside they are frantic to escape. Their compulsive behavior is driven at an unconscious level by guilt, the sense of deserving eternal damnation—but let's not forget that this also appeals to the prideful do-it-yourselfer human ego.

Grace

The Bible tells the same bad news as all the perfectionist religions: that the price (or penalty) for sin (or imperfection) is death, not just physical death but spiritual death involving some form of hell.

But the Bible, alone, provides a viable means of escape. The God of the Bible offers us His own purity; He promises to attribute his own perfection to humans if

they choose to cover themselves with it. This is a total no-strings-attached gift, the only realistic option that exists.

The wonderful thing is that God does not test us using the standard of absolute human perfection like the gods of other religions. He knows we can never reach that level. Instead, He tests us with whether or not we accept His gift of a *substitute* death to pay our penalty. He gives us the payment with His sacrifice of Jesus, consistent with the system ordered in the Law God gave Moses. Blood alone atones for the soul.

All we must do is, figuratively, put on Jesus' perfection like a coat, a garment of "fine linen, white and clean" (Rev 19:14). We get to wear His purity as if it were our own. Of course we should know, and He certainly knows, that it is *His* perfection—imputed to us, not indwelling. Many in the church wrongly think that accepting Christ ends all their sinning. No, that is a form of perfectionism. We do not earn the clean, white linen, could never deserve it, and are still the same old unrighteous people underneath it. But the wonderful thing is that when we wear it—and we should never take it off—He will look at us as if we were as perfect as Jesus.

He has given us something easy to do but we often forget how painful this was for God. He had to kill Jesus, His only son,

whose entire reason for coming here was to die, to be the essential blood payment for us, “bailing” us out of the lake of fire.

From the Law of Moses

The written promises of salvation are in The Law God gave Moses. In that Law, God commits to forgive all our sins and put them out of His mind when we cover ourselves, figuratively, with the payment Christ made. Before Christ, God accepted the blood of a sacrificed sheep, goat, bullock, dove, or pigeon as payment of the penalty for a person’s sin.

One picture of this in the book of Exodus is the Israelites remaining inside their houses during the Passover to keep away the Angel of Death from their first born. If they killed the Passover lamb and painted its blood on the lintel and door posts of the house, they were safe as long as they did not go outside—they were “under” the blood of the lamb.

Now we humans are safe under the blood of Jesus Christ, the lamb of God. God will impute, or attribute, the perfection of Christ to those under its cover.

The glassy mountain

All the religions except the Bible offer only perfectionism, the human erasure of every flaw. It will seem doable if you don’t look

closely. It is one of those situations where the harder you try, the more you know deep inside that you will never be able to do it, yet you still cannot stop yourself from making the attempt. In fact, you strive all the harder, getting increasingly desperate. Your anger and resentment about the situation push you further and further from perfection. Sadly, you are too busy to notice there is an easy no-cost route that will really get you there.

It is like trying to scale the vertical slope of a glass mountain when you have not got the right equipment. There is no way to gain even an inch. You are so locked into the idea that you must climb the mountain yourself that when somebody tells you about a free elevator, you don't want to hear it. You will not even go and look. Instead, you become increasingly fanatical and compulsive in your efforts to scale the wall; your ego has taken over.

What is this elevator? Jesus Christ.

Blood sacrifices

Humans appear to have innate knowledge that a blood sacrifice pays the penalty for sin. In various cultures all over the world, throughout history, humans have offered blood sacrifices to appease what they considered to be deities. But these “gods”

were often just lumps of rock, many of them inhabited by demons.

Not human blood

Human sacrifices are still common in many parts of the world, but we go wrong in thinking the death or shed blood of a *human* will atone. God does not demand that, nor accept it. It has to be the blood/death of a “clean” (sinless) individual. Humans are inherently unclean; the book of Leviticus shows that even barnyard animals are cleaner than we are for God’s purposes.

Jesus was sinless

It is important to see that Jesus is just as sinless as God. If Jesus had committed even one tiny sin, He would be on the wrong side of the Law, just like us, and His death would not cover us.

Nothing virtuous about escaping hell

God does not demand that we be virtuous to escape hell. There is nothing honorable about grasping the shed blood of Christ, nothing whatsoever about it is sacrificial on our part. God knows us only too well, and He appeals to our selfish need for a rescue. Jesus is our “free elevator.” We have a choice in the matter. Take the free ride and live forever in heaven. Refuse it and go to the ugly place.

Chapter Four

Is Jesus really the Son of God?

When you hear of an extraordinary gift like a free ticket out of hell, it seems too good to be true. This is what the God of the Bible offers us, but can we rely on it? Is the Bible true? If so, is all of it true or just parts of it?

The myth that the Bible is man-made

The idea that the Bible is just a bunch of man-made lies is widespread. Popular books and movies depict Jesus as a regular human being like you and me. What is the purpose of that? To make us sneer at the Bible and miss out on the one and only “fire escape.” If Jesus is not the son of God, he is not sinless, and his death cannot pay the penalty for our sins.

Who is behind that kind of thinking? Satan and his realm of demons. Plenty of those who reject the Bible believe in a spirit realm, but one of their own choosing. It is some unsubstantiated notion of the supernatural—aliens, souls of trees, spirits of dead loved ones, etc. Angels are a popular alternative to God, especially the supposedly “cherubic” baby ones. In reality, cherubs are not cute winged babies; they are

the awesome adult angels guarding the Ark of the Covenant inside the Holy of Holies. However, angelic protection does come to us when we establish a connection with God through Christ.

As for bad spirit beings, demons, there seems to be widespread denial about their existence. And yet, why do we like scary ghost stories? Who do people think they are placating by offering the candy at the door on Halloween? Why arrange the furniture not to interfere with the *feng shui* “spiritual” energy? Even though our movies and fantasy comics are full of demons, we refuse to see that they really could exist; and that they could be evil invaders of our external and internal space. Satan, the great deceiver, can appear as an angel of light.

Prophecy about Christ

Why should anyone believe in Christ? What made me believe, what really nailed it for me, scientist and empiricist that I am by training and probably by nature, was all the prophecy in the so-called Old Testament. If you are interested and want more details you can read books by people like Josh McDowell. But let us look at some of the evidence now. We have to keep in mind that all these predictions were made hundreds of years before Jesus was actually born of a woman. The actual events are

recorded in the Gospels. When you see the sheer number and accuracy of fulfilled prophecies, it makes you pay attention.

1. Christ's birth

Christ born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2); born of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14); Christ would live in Egypt (Hosea 11:1); Christ would live in Galilee (Isaiah 9:12); Herod would kill children at the coming of Christ (Jeremiah 31:15).

2. Prophecies about the role of Christ's atoning death

Genesis 3:15 mentions the seed of the woman (Jesus) who destroys the head of the seed of the serpent (Satan). The Passover lamb is a picture of Christ (Exodus 12:11); blood is said to be essential as atonement for the soul (Lev 17:11). The entire Chapter 53 of Isaiah, written in approximately 700 B. C., depicts Christ, the suffering servant whose death pays the penalty for human sin.

3. Prophecies fulfilled during the week of the crucifixion

Christ entering Jerusalem on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9). Christ betrayed by a friend (Psalm 41:9). Christ sold for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12). Christ accused by false witnesses (Psalm 35:11). Christ silent before his accusers (Isaiah 53:7). Christ spit

on and smitten (Isaiah 50:6). Christ hated for no cause (Psalm 35:19). Christ sacrificed on behalf of humans (Isaiah 53:12). Christ crucified with criminals (Isaiah 53:12). Christ pierced through hands and feet (Zechariah 12:10). Christ scorned and mocked (Psalm 22:7-8). Christ given gall and vinegar (Psalm 69:21). Christ praying for his enemies (Psalm 109:4). Soldiers gambling for Christ's clothes (Psalm 22:17-18). Christ's bones remain unbroken (unlike typical crucifees) (Psalm 34:20). Christ's side pierced (Zechariah 12:10). Christ buried with the rich (Isaiah 53:9). The messiah to be "cut off" 69 "weeks" from the decree to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem (weeks of years or $69 \times 7 = 483$ years, exactly fulfilled) (Daniel 9:24-26); Christ raised from the dead (Psalm 16:10,11).

4. Prophecies about the lineage of Christ

God promises a special blessing, referring to salvation from hell, to all the families of the earth through the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah (Genesis 12:3; 18:18, 49:10; Numbers 24:17-19); Christ's line through Jesse (Isaiah 11:1-5) and David (Psalm 89:3-4, 110:1, 132:11; Jeremiah 23:5-6). Consistent with these prophecies, the actual detailed lineage of

Christ is given in the first chapter of the book of Matthew.

5. Other roles for Christ

Christ anointed by the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11:2, 61:1, Psalms 45:7-8); Christ as priest (Psalms 110:4); Christ as prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15-19); Christ as Son of God (Psalms 2:7, Proverbs 30:4); Christ as king (Psalms 2:6); Christ as eternal, reigning forever, identified with God (Isaiah 9:5-7, Jeremiah 23:5-60); Christ teaching in parables (Isaiah 6:9-10; Psalms 78:2); kings would bow to Him (Psalms 72:10-11); Christ as sinless (Isaiah 53:9), Christ as humble (Isaiah 42:2); Christ as tender (Isaiah 40:11, 42:33); Christ as the Jubilee (Isaiah 58:6, 61:1).

6. Unfulfilled prophecies concerning Christ

There are also many prophecies concerning a future role for Christ that do not belong here because they have not yet been fulfilled.

What convinced me

These fulfilled prophecies were not the only thing that convinced me that Jesus really is the son of God who paid for my sins. But they are a big part of it. Another factor is that all the doctrines outside the

Bible are perfectionist—every single one. Apparently Satan was not clever enough to come up with a false religion that would offer salvation as a gift.

Another reason I was convinced by the Bible was through my work as a psychologist. I witnessed the prevalence of potentially overwhelming guilt in the human psyche. Theorists who address unconscious phenomena are unable to explain this guilt, but it makes perfect sense as the awareness of deserving eternal separation from God. I found that after a person assimilates the Gospel deep inside them, the guilt gradually dissipates. Fear and depression are replaced by peace of mind and hope.

Other aspects of my conversion are ones that I do not comprehend, perhaps because they are the work of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter Five

Creationism versus evolution

Do you have to believe in creationism if you are to escape the lake of fire? Perhaps not, but it puts clouds on the horizon. For many people, what stopped them believing in the God of the Bible was all the hype about evolution.

The thing is, if you reject creationism, you are rejecting part of the very same document that is the source of the one and only viable rescue. That is a slippery slope. You wonder: *If the creation account is untrue, what else might be untrue?* Where do you stop discrediting what you are reading?

The basic question is: Did God create everything in its present form or did it just somehow appear by accident?⁹ If you are not ready to hear arguments against

⁹ The fact that there are theologians who promote evolution is not relevant here. Some of them say God is the watchmaker who stepped away once he finished his invention and just observes it all evolving. Others say there is a continual God-guided evolutionary process. This is the position of some in the Catholic church, influenced by the theologian Pierre Teilhard De Chardin. However, neither of these positions is consistent with the Bible, and both fall into the category of evolutionism.

evolution, there is no reason to read this section.

The theory of evolution

The most popular theory of evolution today is based on unproven ideas that contradict scientific laws. We are talking about Darwin's concept of natural selection and the notion of accidental genetic mutation. Even if these mechanisms were feasible, it would take many billions of years for a series of tiny, unplanned incremental changes to produce an entire new species. The irony is that the theory of evolution has been popularly accepted as if it were true, yet the anticipated physical evidence has never been found.

Science is established through experiments, and there is no way to experiment on evolution—or creation for that matter—but evolutionists like to point that out about creationism and ignore the unscientific aspect of their own position. The phony evidence for evolution—the charts and diagrams—are presented in the schools and universities as if it is not only a valid theory but the only one worth considering.

I know how effective all this misinformation can be; it certainly had an effect on me. It can squash any inclination to believe in a divine origin for the universe, especially the one depicted in the creation

account in the Bible. If you teach the theory of evolution as if it is established truth, using diagrams of the branches of life from simple to complex, talking about mechanisms for natural selection and survival of the fittest, it can trick people pretty well. I was fooled for many years.

But eventually I learned something different. The evidence for the theory of evolution is full of holes, although you will not hear that from the popular media, or from the scientific journals. That is because scholarly journals refuse to publish anything that contradicts evolution. Let's look at some of the flaws in the theory of evolution.

Some basic flaws in the Darwinian theory of evolution:

- i. Evolution contradicts the first two laws of thermodynamics.
- ii. There is no physical evidence for evolution.
- iii. Human-chimp similarity has been disproven.
- iv. Mutations do not reproduce.
- v. Big problems with the dating methods used by evolutionists.
- vi. Evidence for a young earth.
- vii. The survival goal.
- viii. Play.

i. Evolution contradicts the first two laws of thermodynamics

The first law of thermodynamics states that something cannot come out of nothing, that **energy is always conserved**. This is a big problem for those who deny a supernatural creator. Evolutionists who like to say that the sun provides that essential continual source of new energy are not looking far enough—a solar-centric point of view. What about the universe itself? How did it arise if something cannot come from nothing? Did the material involved in the supposed Big Bang pop out of nowhere?

Evolutionists have a further problem when the first law of thermodynamics is coupled with the second one, the Law of Increasing Entropy. The second law states there is **decreasing complexity in a closed system**—although evolutionists use the flawed argument of the sun's energy again here to say the earth is not a closed system.

In reality, when the two laws are put together, it is apparent that if there were no supernatural creator, there would be no material to form the building blocks of life, and even if the material did exist, it would not become increasingly complex. Amoebae would not lead to homo sapiens. There would be devolution, not evolution. If matter somehow appeared, it would not

last. Everything would return to whatever was before the fabled Big Bang.

The reality is that the energy in the universe does appear to be winding down, and there is no evidence that life forms become increasingly complex and “better.” In fact, what we see is the opposite. There appears to have been a gradual increase in genetic disorders as the gene pool becomes more corrupt and worn out over time. This is in keeping with these first two laws.

If there was, in fact, a continual source of new energy coming into the universe, where would that power come from? It would occur outside of natural laws—the laws of thermodynamics. Therefore, the source for the incoming energy would be *supernatural*. But if you are an evolutionist, you cannot afford to go there.

ii. There is no physical evidence for evolution

The lack of fossil evidence also works against the theory of evolution, especially the absence of intermediate forms between species. Charles Darwin assumed that these transitional forms would later be discovered but that never happened.

iii. Human-chimp DNA similarity has been disproven

For several years evolutionists have bolstered their argument with some incomplete DNA research that appears to show that human and chimp DNA is 98 percent similar. From this they conclude that if man is so close to his ape “cousins,” he must be descended from them. However a recent article in a secular magazine based on more complete DNA data shows this to be untrue, and that man shares only 70 percent of his genes with chimps.¹⁰

In reality, the sharing of genes says nothing about origins. Genes are basic building blocks of life just as chemical elements are building blocks of matter. Can we say that humans evolved from rocks because they share the same chemical elements? Of course not.

iv. Mutations do not reproduce

Evolutionists lean heavily on genetic mutation as the mechanism of evolution. They say that a mutant gene can accidentally produce better offspring more capable of survival. If that supposedly better offspring were able to reproduce, then mutation—plus survival of the fittest—would explain how superior and fancier life forms could develop over time—a whole lot of time—by accident.

¹⁰ Nature, 463, (7280): 536-539.

In theory, several statistically unlikely sudden “good” mutations in one individual could produce a whole new species. There would also have to be the equally unlikely event that a genetically identical mate for that individual lived somewhere in the neighborhood—unless there was mating among offspring from the same litter, thereby magnifying whatever genetic defects might also exist.

This is not to say that genetic mutations in offspring do not happen. They do, and they can produce individuals that are slightly different from parents. The problem is that mutations are not better forms of a species, they are corrupt or incomplete forms that produce either impaired offspring or none.

For sure, there is evidence for micro-evolution, involving changes within a species. But there is no evidence for macro-evolution, where a new species materializes. It appears that micro-evolution is not the result of new genetic material but is due to the “turning on” of pre-existing genes as an adaptation to local conditions. All the genes are already present, passed from generation to generation, some of them lying dormant as if they were waiting for future environmental changes—impossible to explain without a Master Planner.

v. Big problems with the dating methods used by evolutionists

In order for all the assumed changes in species to occur, evolution would have to take place over a long, stable period of time, requiring billions of years. This requires a very old earth. To try to prove that the earth is old, evolution-minded scientists have used several different techniques for dating rocks and have come up with various figures suggesting great age. However, the dating methods that are used are inappropriate.

For example, radio-carbon dating cannot be used on rocks or fossils, only on organisms that have recently died and therefore still contain carbon. Another method, argon dating, is unreliable due to the presence of unknown sources of argon in rocks. There are similar problems with all the other dating methods.

There are also observable phenomena that conflict with previous assumptions. For example, stalactites, stalagmites and coal that were formerly thought to take thousands of years to form have been found to develop in just a few years.

vi. Evidence for a young earth

The supposed slow, gradual, uniform process of evolution over billions of years is inconsistent with all the evidence of catastrophic changes in the earth's surface

and the existing signs of a young earth. Many of the catastrophic changes can be explained by a world wide flood with associated volcanic activity.

Although evolutionists like to argue against it, there are many reasons to believe the earth is relatively young—in the region of thousands of years, not millions or billions. When you see how much evidence there is for a young earth, it is compelling.

The following suggest the earth is not old: the galaxies are wound up too fast; there are too few supernova remnants; comets disintegrate too quickly; there is not enough mud on the sea floor or sodium in the sea water; the earth's magnetic field is decaying too fast; many rock strata are too tightly bent; soft tissues remain in fossils; there are radio-haloes in Jurassic, Triassic and Eocene formations; there is too much helium in minerals; there is too much carbon 14 in deep strata; there is not enough moon dust; the earth's spin is slowing down too fast; and the sun is losing heat and size too fast.¹¹

vii. Modern man existed from the start

What about the evolutionists' idea that simple forms came first and that life

¹¹For more on this look at D. Batten: 101 evidences for a young age of the earth and universe. Creation Ministries International. Posted on www.creation.com, June 4, 2009.

gradually became increasingly complex? They say that the rock layers provide evidence for this, with “primitive” forms only in the Pre-Cambrian layers and man only in much “later” rocks. However, the actual fossil evidence indicates that all major branches of life have existed from at least the Cambrian period.

And there is no reason to believe that “hominids” and Neanderthals pre-existed *homo sapiens*. Given the huge variety of human forms that currently exist in the world, there is every reason to consider so-called “hominids” as one of the many types of “modern” man.

Also, although evolutionists say that the supposedly less intelligent “first” humans were merely savage hunter-gatherers just like the “other” apes, there are signs of agriculture in earliest remains of man. This is consistent with the Genesis account of Cain and Abel.

vii. The survival goal

If our existence is random, why does there seem to be a survival goal in all the life forms? This is something evolutionists seem to agree with when they talk about “survival” of the fittest even if they do not acknowledge that they see it as a goal. They cannot talk about an urge or a *desire* to

survive if their theory depends on survival purely as an accident.

For evolutionists, the fittest individual survives merely because it is better suited to the world; it happens to be able to live longer and, therefore, breed more. Evolutionists must uphold the idea that living organisms have no purpose for existing or surviving, and that nothing matters, nothing has any ultimate purpose. To say anything is planned implies, oops, the existence of the Master Planner.

We have already stated that the concept of increasing complexity and differentiation over time goes against the Law of Entropy. But if there was a tendency of life forms to become more specialized and fancy over time as evolutionists state, there would have to be a purpose for it other than survival. Otherwise, what's wrong with stopping at the amoeba, if survival is the only important thing? An amoeba can survive very well, and have offspring any time it likes without having to have a relationship with another amoeba, so why not just end there? Why evolve further?

Well, the reality is that the amoeba did not evolve further, and that is why the ones we have today are genetically identical to the fossil ones.

Clearly creatures want a lot more than mere survival. The fact that the human

brain is capable of abstract thought and creativity shows there is much more to life than staying alive. Such facets do not exist just for the purpose of survival.

Does the ability to write poems, rather than be physically tough and virile, secure a man a stronger mate who will produce healthier offspring and promote the survival of the species? Probably not. So there must be a higher purpose to poetic talent. The complexity of the brain, particularly the cerebral cortex, makes it capable of a vast number of functions beyond mere survival and reproduction.

One of the first “natural” wonders I remember seeing in movies as a child was chameleons changing the color of their skin to blend in with their background, green by a green leaf and red by a red one. So many highly complicated changes are involved that the likelihood that this arose from a series of accidents is infinitesimally small.

What is more, we find that survival depends on cooperation and interdependency among and between species, even in simple lichens. My survival depends on your survival. If there were “co-evolution,” it would hardly be accidental.

Reason for evolutionists to exist?

Everyone wants to think there is a reason for their own existence, including

evolutionists. Evolutionists care about their work, their research, their theorizing—and certainly about keeping their jobs. They surely do not want to die. Yet they spout the idea that everything is one big accident, everything could just as easily not *be*.

Is it easy for evolutionists to think that they, themselves could just as easily not be? If so, why stay alive? Why not volunteer to die for the sake of the environment? If humans were to opt for early death it would leave not only more room for “new” species but also for all those species that are about to go extinct.¹²

The point is that evolutionists do not know themselves. They rarely see all the implications of their theory. Rarely do they look at the inconsistency between their own motivations and their ideas on the meaninglessness of human existence.

viii. Play

Evolutionists cannot get around the evidence for play, creativity and higher goals in animals as well as humans. My dog loves a game. He brings me the ball

¹² Or would it? Have we not found out the greater spotted owl has been disappearing due to feathered predators rather than the encroachment of man? And that human fishermen are less a factor in the disappearance of salmon than the fact that the sea lions that eat them have been protected?

regardless of what I am doing in the yard and gets very animated when I kick it across the grass so he can run after it and bring it back. He will do that many times until he temporarily tires of it. You could say that play is merely part of what develops his ability to survive, it helps him hunt, etc., which may be true to some extent. But that is not all. Play also seems to give him pleasure, which suggests he is attracted to it as an end in itself, nor merely for survival.

Creationism cannot be dismissed lightly

The point is that with all the evidence in favor of creationism, it is impossible to dismiss it lightly. The more one looks at it, the more evolution seems to be the fantasy. Why, then, accept evolution as truth? Politics, unfortunately, play a big part. The fact that the scientific evidence gives far more support to creationism is treated as a dirty little secret by evolutionists, who do their best to suppress it. Their entire careers would be ruined and their tax-payer supported federal funds would dry up if this research became well known—a real tenure killer.

So far evolutionists have done a pretty good job of covering up studies that refute evolution and support creation, smearing its researchers as unscientific, maintaining tight control over graduate schools and journals to

keep such findings from being published, and legislating within the public school system to keep creationism from even being mentioned except as a slur. The lack of scientific evidence for their theory puts belief in evolution in the category of a religion, yet nobody is crying “separation of church and state” in this case.

Stephen Jay Gould tried to save the day for evolution by inventing an explanation for the absence of intermediate forms. He came up with the theory of “punctuated equilibrium,” according to which new species just pop out of nowhere, as an exciting facet of the process of evolutionary change. But this is just an invention, the provision of a name for an unproven, nonexistent process.

However, the situation regarding the lack of published research supporting creationism has been changing. Organizations such as the Institute for Creation Research have been publishing some first class studies that point not only to a recent, supernatural creation,¹³ but also to a world wide flood.

¹³ www.icr.org

Chapter Six

What happens when you know you are safe?

The deeper we humans take in the gift of a rescue in the shed blood of Christ, the more are we transformed by it.

Seems too easy?

However, the cost-free aspect of the rescue can seem ripe for abuse if you look at it superficially. Every so often I get in trouble with some listener to our weekly radio program who calls in to say I make salvation sound too easy and that what I say is unscriptural. They insist that a person must repent from all sin first. This is something they hear in church and even from some respected televangelists.

The meaning of the word “repentance”

The thing is, the critics are confused about the word “repentance,” meaning “to turn 180 degrees,” or “to have a change of heart.” Yes, repentance is necessary to escape the lake of fire, but not the kind where you turn from worldly sins. Repentance that saves is the kind where you turn towards God and

claim the gift of Jesus' blood to pay for your sin.

Some people like to say you must both turn towards God *and* turn away from worldly sin to be saved. But that is not true. *The* sin, the only sin that really matters, is the sin of being turned away from God, and from Christ. By definition, that keeps you on track for hell. When a person claims Christ's shed blood to pay their way out of hell, the fact that they believe it is sufficient. **To repeat: all you must do is turn towards the gift of Jesus' blood and claim it as your cover.**

Jesus earned salvation for us because the penalty for sin is death, and only perfect, sinless blood could buy us out. If Christ had sinned in any slight way His blood would be useless to us. Death alone, atones (Lev 17:11), and "clean" animals preceded Christ as acceptable coin in the Law God gave Moses

Then what about repentance from sin?

Unfortunately, just like all the other religions, the Christian church emphasizes repentance from worldly sins, sins of the flesh, as the requirement for escaping the lake of fire. That is wrong

So are worldly sins irrelevant? No. *After* you are saved from the fire and see that you in no way deserved it, thankfulness to God

bubbles up inside you. You feel safe with Him, you want to make Him happy, and it is then that you begin to become aware of, and repent of, your worldly sins. It will be a process that does not stop while you are in this world, because you will not stop having that selfish, corrupt human nature. It is born in us. The French child psychologist, Jean Piaget, observed and described human egocentricity, i.e., self-centredness, even in infants.

Confession is the opposite of denial

The more you appreciate God's gift of salvation, the more you will find yourself willing to tell God the truth—to confess—and respond to His moral prompting.

You will not like what you see when you look at yourself honestly but you won't be scared to admit it when you know all is forgiven, paid for by Jesus' shed blood.

Love for God and other humans

However, your relationship with God has to be established before He sends the Holy Spirit to open up your heart. And it stands to reason that only *after* you know you are eternally safe do you have room in your heart to love Him and love your neighbor. Only then do you see that his rules are for your benefit. You stop wanting to rebel as

you see yourself thrive by staying within the boundaries God gives you.

Will you obey God every time?

No. You will not always obey God, because you have a corrupt nature and denial tends to cling. You often won't see yourself in the wrong, you'll be blind to who you are...but less and less so as you open up to God.

Will you always operate out of love for Him?

No. When you do obey Him, you will not always do so out of love. Much of the time it will be because you are afraid. Although you understand that you will not lose your place in heaven or your connection with him by breaking a rule, you know there will be a worldly consequence, a punishment, for disobedience. The more you know His rules, the more He will expect you to keep them, and the worse off you will be if you don't. Moses was kept out of the Promised Land because he hit a rock when God had told him to speak to it.

And, by the way, it is not a good idea to deliberately stay ignorant, thinking that makes you unaccountable to God. You can run into a lot of trouble that way.

But you can be encouraged by the fact that, whatever the nature of the punishment, it is

temporary, and you have not lost out on your free ticket out of hell. Moses appeared to Jesus during the Transfiguration, so we know he went to heaven.

The loving father and rules

For our benefit, God has given rules for living in this world. The nutshell version is the Ten Commandments. Like a loving father, He is pleased when you keep His rules and displeased when you break them.

And like a loving father, He will punish you for breaking the rules; He can make you reap what you sow. Just remember, His punishment is never out of hatred, always out of love.

Also remember, He will not kick you out of the house unless you whole-heartedly reject him. You can feel safe confessing to Him when you know He will never abandon you. He has committed himself in writing to forgiving you unceasingly through Christ's atoning death.

The thing is, when you love someone, you want to get to know them better and please them. You want to be in a state of harmony with them. And you find that the more you keep the rules, the more comfortable you are with God and with yourself.

However, you will continue to mess up consciously and unconsciously all your life

because human nature is inherently selfish and rebellious.

The truly purpose driven life

Eternal life begins the moment a person puts on Christ's perfection as their cover. The deeper that truth sinks in, the stronger is a true sense of purpose, of having a task to accomplish and a desire to do it. It stops being "all about you" because you're safe now. You are safe but others are out there in danger.

The resurrected Jesus commanded His apostles to feed his sheep. What is the food? It's not literal bread and soup, nor is it any of the myriads of other possible worldly good deeds. It's the Gospel, the good news of a free rescue from the pathway to hell. You will want to warn people about the fire and point out the fire escape.

Truth in the Old Testament

In spite of all that Jesus said about the importance of Scripture, i.e., the Old Testament, there is a powerful bias against it in the Christian church. What Jesus calls "Scripture" is the first five books in the Bible, i.e., the Law (or Torah, or Pentateuch) and the books of the prophets. These writings are the very foundation of Christianity.

We cannot appreciate the bad and good news without the foundation of the Law. The Pentateuch gives a clear picture that God accepts the shed blood of a lamb as payment of the penalty for human sin—the price for sin is death, spiritual and physical. The lamb sin offering was burnt after its death, representing spiritual death in the lake of fire.

At first, human sinners had to sacrifice a succession of their own lambs for a succession of sins. But now, God has given us the one Lamb He sacrificed to atone for all the sin for all time for all those who claim its coverage. That is why Jesus is called the “Lamb of God.”

Please consider...

Please consider the choice you have. The fire escape is free for the taking. Can you afford to refuse it? There is a huge consequence to your decision. Pascal’s wager says that if you don’t avail yourself of the free rescue—Christ—you might be very, very sorry one day. On the other hand, if you claim the atoning death of Christ and there turns out to be no lake of fire after all, would you have lost anything? No, you would have had peace of mind during your life on this earth.

You might think you can hedge your bets by adopting both Christ *and* perfectionism.

But that does not work; those are two opposing points of view. There is a point where you have to put all your “money” on Christ.

I would hate for you to miss out on the fire escape. I’m not telling you to go to church, nor am I necessarily telling you not to—you have to be careful to find one that tells the Gospel as it really is, where Jesus’ concept of Scripture is studied and revered.

You can do your own reading of the Bible—a King James version is very straight. It really is possible to get used to the “thees” and “thous” of the Old King James, but if not there is a newer version. The Bible is not something theologians have to decipher for you. It gives wisdom even to the simple. Maps, dictionaries and other aids can help you and they are easy to come by, new or used. The Bible gives the facts to keep you out of the fire.