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The National Geographic Jesus — Is He Your Jesus?

**Christopher Hitchens and
Richard Dawkins**

Redoing The Tree of Life—Again

Evolution Under Attack for Links to Racism

LUTHERAN SCIENCE INSTITUTE, INC.

4130 Harvest Lane
Racine, Wisconsin 53402-9562
<http://www.lutheranscience.org>

The mission of the Lutheran Science Institute is to learn, share, and promote the glory of God as revealed in His holy Word and demonstrated in His created world, beginning with the pastors, teachers, and laity of the WELS (Wis. Ev. Lutheran Synod) and the ELS (Ev. Lutheran Synod).

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- ◆ 4th Saturday in January, 1:00 p.m.
- ◆ 2nd Saturday in June, 1:00 p.m.
- ◆ Last Saturday in October, 1:00 p.m.
- ◆ Saturday *after* Thanksgiving in November, 1:00 p.m.

*Dates, times, and locations subject to change. Additional meetings may be scheduled. Check with the president, secretary, or editor or see our web site for verification.

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The National Geographic's Jesus was a mere mortal, easily influenced by the people around him and the events of his time. He didn't become Son of God until he was baptized. He may have been an important figure in his day, but he was the Christ only in the minds of his followers.

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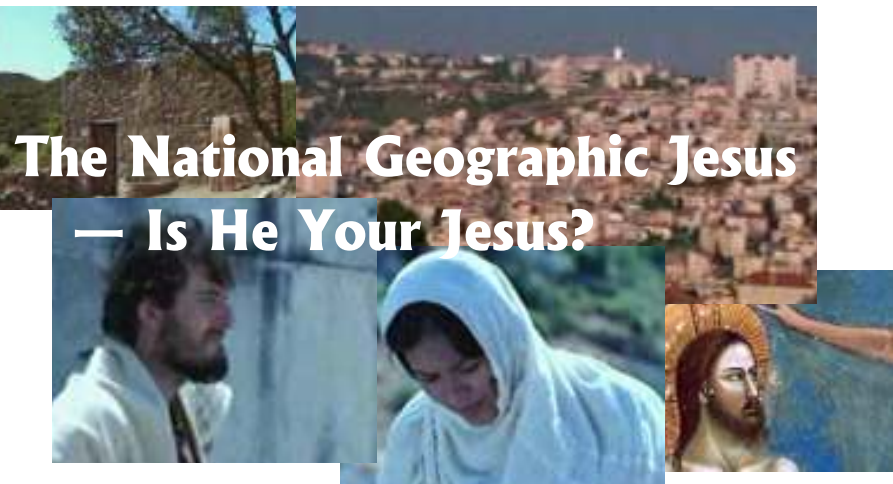
Coming

The National Geographic Jesus-Part 2

The real Jesus is a far more beloved and impressive Jesus than the one portrayed by the National Geographic documentary.

The Gap Theory

The Gap Theory is devoid of linguistic and grammatical support. Genesis 1 portrays only one creation, not two creations.



Jesus was a mere mortal, easily influenced by the people around him and the events of his time. He didn't become Son of God until he was baptized. He may have been an important figure in his day, but he was the Christ only in the minds of his followers. He was like everyone else—in need of purification.

This is the Jesus of the National Geographic Channel. Some time ago this cable channel presented “Science of the Bible: The Lost Years of Jesus”, a documentary which sought to investigate what the years between his birth and the beginning of his public ministry were like, years about which the Bible is basically silent.

As might be expected from a TV show associated with a secular and pro-evolution magazine, the Jesus the National Geographic Channel presents is not the Jesus Bible-believing Christians can recognize. The theologians and scientists interviewed during the 60-minute production all seem to be of the religious liberal persuasion. Still, there were a few points made in the program with which we might agree, and a certain amount of respect is given to the Scriptures regarding geographical and historical matters. Other than verses from the Bible (quoted here from the NIV), mostly all the quotations that follow are verbatim

The author is the editor of the LSI Journal.

from the show.

Introduction

Jesus' young life is a total mystery, we are told, but he became “the most famous man of his age.” Most famous man of his age? That surely is a gross understatement.

“Now we go beyond the Gospels...to paint a shocking new portrait of a boy who had brothers and sisters, of a man who was not a carpenter, and we uncover new archaeological evidence of a ritual that lets us see into the mind of Jesus.” See into the mind of Jesus?

The narrator says Jesus was “born in a manger.” Actually, Jesus was born in a *stable* and laid in a manger. “He died on a cross. He created a new religion but most of his life remains shrouded in mystery.” In the sense that Christianity is a fulfillment of the Old Testament, it is *not* a new religion. And everything we need to know about the life of Jesus is plainly stated in the Bible.

The Baptism of Jesus

John the Baptist is given almost as much attention in this production as is Jesus. He was a “radical preacher” whose name would have been long forgotten were it not for his baptism of Jesus. But John's baptism of Jesus was important because it “was

the spiritual turning point in Jesus' life.”

“(John's baptism of Jesus) is the moment when Christians believe Jesus became Christ, the Anointed One,” claims Prof Carolyn Osiek of the Brite Divinity School. “It was the beginning of Jesus' relationship to God as son, as Son of God.”



This is the only time in the program in which Jesus is called Christ and it is, of course, qualified by the phrase “Christians believe.” And this is the only time Jesus is referred to as God or Son of God, but it appears that Prof. Osiek hardly means the *divine* Son of God.

As for the baptism being the beginning of Jesus' relationship to God as Son of God, Prof. Osiek probably gets this idea from Matthew 3:17 in which the Father called Jesus “my Son, whom I love.” However, while Jesus may have begun his public ministry when he was baptized, John 1:1 tells us, “In the beginning was the Word (Son of God), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Jesus is and

always has been the One and Only Son of God (John 3:16).

It is interesting that the National Geographic program mentions the Spirit descending on Jesus at his baptism in the form of a dove. However, neither Osiek nor the narrator quotes or refers to Matthew 3:17, John 3:16 or any of the many other verses which establish Jesus' divinity.

Why did Jesus come to John the Baptist to be baptized? The narrator says, "The Bible gives us no clue."

For some reason, John's "draw must have been strong enough to pull Jesus from a distant village in Galilee," says Prof. Jonathan L. Reed of the University of La Verne.

"If we can understand what John was preaching, perhaps we can discover why Jesus came to his pivotal decision to be baptized." So states Prof. Stephen Patterson of Eden Theological Seminary.

However, the Bible does give the reason why Jesus came to John to be baptized. When John out of humility tried to discourage Jesus from being baptized by John, Jesus said, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." (Matthew 3:15)

Albrecht and Albrecht (*The People's Bible: Matthew*) explain Jesus' answer: "Jesus was simply saying that this was what the

Father wanted them to do, and that was enough explanation for John."

John's Relationship to Jesus

The documentary has no problem accepting the Bible's description of John the Baptist as a rugged individual living in the wilderness, dressed in camel's hair, and eating locusts and wild honey.

But it pictures John as very much a revolutionary man, the creator of a radical new sect of Judaism, and someone who may have had a lot to do with forming Jesus' philosophy.

However, can we accept the suggestion that Jesus sent by His heavenly Father to become our Savior would base his ideas and teaching on anything that John was preaching?

The book of John says about the Baptist, "He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light." (John 1:7-8)

Still, Osiek thinks that Jesus prior to beginning his own ministry may have sought out John the Baptist and become his disciple.

Patterson contends it is most certainly a "Christian invention" to think that John saw himself as a precursor to Jesus although he offers no evidence for thinking as he does.

However, the Bible plainly says in referring to John, "A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" (Matthew 3:3 Isaiah 40:3) And in Matthew 3:11 John says to the Pharisees, "But after me will come one who is more powerful than I."

John recognized he was nowhere near the equal of Jesus. Besides feeling that he needed to be baptized by Jesus more so than the other way around, John also said about Jesus, "He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me." (John 1:15)

The Boy Jesus

Admittedly the Bible says little about the boyhood of Jesus, other than his presentation in the Temple on the 8th day and his trip to Jerusalem when he was 12. (Luke 2)

We could agree it's likely that Joseph's family was low on the social scale. Joseph is called a *tekton* in Greek which is usually translated as "carpenter."

However, Reed says that a *tekton* is simply a person who works with his hands. While Joseph and Jesus may at times have worked with wood, they more likely, he claims, to have shaped stone, repaired houses, or even worked in the fields.

Patterson says that being a



tekton means Joseph owned no land and was a step below that of a normal peasant.

We do know Jesus was born in a very humble abode and lived in poverty as an adult, at least after starting his ministry. "The Son of Man has no place to lay his head," Jesus says in Matthew 8:20.

Jesus grew up in a fairly sizeable family. He had brothers and sisters. (Mark 6:3, Galatians 1:19, Matthew 12:46, Mark 3:31, John 2:12) The fact that he had brothers and sisters is not a problem for Lutherans and Protestants, but, as the program indicates, it is a problem for Catholics. The Catholic Church, which believes Mary never lost her virginity, argues that "brother" and "sister" do not necessarily imply blood relations.

Having large families was necessary, according to Prof. Marcus J. Borg of Oregon State University, because of the high death rate. He says roughly 40% of peasant children died by the age of 5. ❧❧

Next: Part 2—Nazareth, the Zealots, the mikvah, and more.

REVIEW OF
Christopher Hitchens, *God is not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*
and
Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*
By Jeffrey Stueber



Hitchens



Dawkins

If you wanted two big-mouth atheists to critique, you could not choose any better candidates than Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins. Dawkins is the author of the famous *Blind Watchmaker* book and numerous others; Hitchens is somewhat new on the scene but no less boisterous. Their books attack theistic arguments and beliefs while providing background reasons for accepting secular ideals.

Hitchens, early in his book, mentions a challenge given to him by Dennis Prager, one of America's best known religious

broadcasters, that asks the rhetorical question whether, if you walked past some young men at night, you would feel more or less safe knowing they just came from a prayer meeting. The theist expects an unqualified "yes," but Hitchens says in cities Belfast, Beirut, Bombay, Belgrade, Bethlehem, and Baghdad (just to stay in the letter "B") he would fear for his life because in those cities terrible violence has been done in the name of religion. His point is that religion is bad and secularism is good, certainly not life

The author, a frequent contributor to the Journal and a member of the LSI Board of Directors, lives in Watertown, Wisconsin.

threatening. Yet, I live in a community where there are many Christian churches (none of any other faiths that I know of) and I would feel absolutely safe walking past a group of men coming out of a prayer meeting at any one of those churches.

Being religious doesn't guarantee one's intelligence improves or that the religious will choose the correct religion. They may even choose to persist in believing a dangerous one while the opportunity to believe a different docile one remains open to them, such as in the Islam belief system. There has to be a serious reason why Hitchens would fear for his life in those cities but I can walk down any street in the town I live in and not fear young men coming from a prayer meeting.

Hitchens tries his hand at explaining the origin of religion when saying "Religion comes from the period of human history where nobody – not even the mighty Democritus who concluded that all matter was made from atoms – had the smallest idea what was going on. It comes from the bawling and fearful infancy of our species, and is a babyish attempt to meet our inescapable demand for knowledge (as well as for comfort, reassur-

ance, and other infantile needs). Today the least educated of my children knows much more about the natural order than any of the founders of religion." Even if we grant this fact, this doesn't mean the religious believe because of lack of knowledge *now*; Hitchens knows this otherwise he would not take the effort to critique theistic arguments in his book. If a study of the religious does not now reveal that believers adopt religious explanations because they do not know enough about the natural world, what convictions can we affirm about the truth of Hitchens' theory?

Dawkins doesn't like religion any better and attempts to explain its origin by offering numerous theories, shuffling between them as if pulling them each successively out of a hat and tossing them aside in search of another, and each one can be discarded by us as well. Perhaps, he thinks, religion originates as a by-product of a misfiring in the brain of a useful impulse to believe without question what one is told to do much as children obey their parents unquestioningly. How then does this explain the fact the majority of people (much to the disappointment of Dawkins) have this impulse – unbelievers also? Are we really to believe the majority has a misfiring in the

brain? Also, why would we attribute the origin to a misfiring when people generally consider religious belief consoling? Dawkins later suggests belief in religion is a by-product of romantic love. Certainly love for a god compares somewhat with love for a wife or child, but just because two things share common facets does not mean one is a by-product of the need for the other. (The love for a friend is close to the love of a spouse, but nobody would thus imagine love for a friend was an unfortunate misfiring brain by-product of spousal love.) Perhaps religious ideas are nothing but memes (ideas in the brain) that have survived. However, as I have noted in my book *Refuting Atheism*, religious ideas like heaven would not survive given their lack of referents. Why, for instance, would a desire for survival after death survive when one knows it wouldn't happen and this knowledge would produce stress even in the presence of what he calls a "memplex"? How about other ideas such as a virgin birth, triune god, angelic figures, and hell (an idea that is sure to be undesirable and hence eliminated by any mematic natural selection)?

What one notices while reading this chapter is the musings of a man who is vividly upset at the

fact the data does not fit the theory of which he is so impressed. It's almost like a man, who claims men salespeople sell the most cars and then finds women are outselling them at every turn, grovels about looking for an explanation for this and cannot tolerate his inability to find one. It simply doesn't, and can't occur to Dawkins that evolutionist theory cannot explain the origin of the religious impulse and desire much less its tenets.

Dawkins takes us through an explanation for our moral instinct also and at one juncture talks as if he were offering an explanation for it that jives with creationist theory. He is speaking of Harvard biologist Marc Hauser's book *Moral Minds* detailing studies done about how people respond to moral dilemmas using questionnaires on the internet when we join Dawkins' thoughts in progress.

From the present point of view, the interesting thing is that most people come to the same decisions when faced with these dilemmas, and their agreement over the decisions themselves is stronger than their ability to articulate their reasons. This is what we would expect if we have a moral sense which is built into our brains, like our sexual instinct or our fear of heights or . . .

. our capacity for language . . . As we shall see, the way people respond to these moral tests, and their inability to articulate their reasons, seems largely independent of their religious beliefs or lack of them. The message of Hauser's book . . . is this: 'Driving our moral judgments is a universal moral grammar, a faculty of the mind that evolved over million of years to include a set of principles for building a range of possible moral systems. As with language, the principles that make up our moral grammar fly beneath the radar of our awareness.'

What better description of a moral awareness that is "written in the heart" (to use a Biblical phrase) can we get?

Dawkins does find a Darwinian explanation for the moral impulse when noting that genes are selfish and therefore would work to enhance the survivability of the individual, not the group. But our human moral intuition has us working toward the good of the group, not necessarily the individual. This is where the group selection and reciprocal altruism he speaks of come into play. While natural selection and selfish genes favor the individual, evolution has fostered cooperation that favors the group.

I guess the first question is this: where along the evolution-

ary line of descent did we suddenly switch from a selfish nature to a cooperative one and why would we if selfish behavior favored the individual? I rather like the commentary on this by critic of Darwinism, but not creationist, David Stove who says, quite succinctly, "If Darwin's theory of evolution were true, there would be in every species a constant and ruthless competition to survive: a competition in which only a few in any generation can be winners." The human, race, however, is not like that and this fact he dubs "Darwin's dilemma." In fact, altruism has always been a problem for Darwinism, he says. Until the mid-1960s Darwinism continued to say organisms behave in a way that maximizes individual fitness after which evolutionists added the idea of group selection and inclusive fitness where an organism tends to maximize the fitness of the group to which it belongs. Kin altruism is strong, of course, but altruism shows itself the strongest among people who have no genetic ties: Mother Teresa, for instance. If Darwinian sociobiology makes it out to be that people like this are a "problem" for Darwinian theory, then the problem, Stove says, is not the people but the theory. Perhaps we should consider the human race has never evolved out of competition

into a cooperative race and has always been cooperative with a moral code that reinforces that cooperation. Evolutionists might be squeamish about such an idea, but one cannot let biases like those of Hitchens and Dawkins prevent one from seeing the truth.¹

Hitchens, late in his book, defends secularism against the arguments of theists that assert that evolution-based belief is to blame for social ills. Hitchens doesn't so much defend secularism as try to find minute contributions of religions to tyranny. Yet, the reign of Nazism was totally based in evolution even though Hitler was more an occultist pagan than secularist. Communism was totally based in evolution and atheism. Marx's intellectual pupil Lenin announced that:

Just as Darwin put an end to the view of animal and plant species being unconnected, fortuitous, "created by God" and immutable, and was the first to put biology on an absolutely scientific basis by establishing the mutability and the succession of species, so Marx put an end to the view of society being a mechanical aggregation of individuals which allows of all sorts of modification at the will of the authorities . . . and which emerges and changes casually, and was the first to put sociology on a scientific basis by establish-

ing the concept of the economic formation of society as the sum total of given production relations, by establishing the fact that the development of such formations is a process of natural history.²

One additional note needs to be made: Dawkins has obviously divorced himself from any pretensions at being just a scientist. He is a biased propagandist and is looking to find a way to destroy belief in religion as much as Hitchens. This is noted in his frequent allusions to belief in evolution as consciousness raising.

There is more to peruse in these books, but for now I think I have shown there are serious problems with their methodology, as is all atheist works. It would have been better had Dawkins and Hitchens gone back to the drawing board and crafted their arguments again – this time without the bias and ignorance of the data they would rather ignore.

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1. David Stove, *Darwinian Fairytales: Selfish Genes, Errors of Heredity, and Other Fables of Evolution*, (New York, Encounter, 1995), p. 3 and Essay #8
2. K. Marx, F. Engels, V. Lenin *On Historical Materialism*, (Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1972), p. 320



Redoing the Tree of Life, Again

One of the best-known images in the study of biological origins is the Tree of Life, which portrays the theorized evolutionary journey of all life forms from a single-celled organism. According to this model, life evolved in a linear fashion from the first life form and branched out into the separate kingdoms, phyla, and so forth that we see today. However, as with so many other theories regarding the origins of life, this famous image has proved incorrect.

W. Ford Doolittle, professor of biochemistry and molecular biology at Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia and director of the Program in Evolutionary biology of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, wrote in *Scientific American*:

"Charles Darwin contended more than a century ago that all modern species diverged from a more limited set of ancestral groups, which themselves evolved from still fewer progenitors and so on back to the beginning of life. In principle, then, the relationships among all living and extinct organisms could be represented as a single genealogical tree.

"Most contemporary researchers agree. Many would even argue that the general features of this tree are already known, all the way down to the root—a solitary cell, termed life's last universal common ancestor, that lived roughly 3.5 to 3.8 billion years ago. The consensus view did not come easily but has been widely accepted for more than a decade.

"Yet ill winds are blowing. To everyone's surprise, discoveries made in the past few years have begun to cast serious doubt on some aspects of the tree, especially on the depiction of the relationships near the root." (Doolittle 2000:90)

According to prevailing theory, the common ancestor of all living things spawned both the kingdom of bacteria and the kingdom of archaea. The archaea in turn gave rise to the eukaryotes (Ibid. 93). However, in Doolittle's words, genetic studies have shown that "the pattern of evolution is not as linear and treelike as Darwin imagined it." (Ibid.)

At this point we must pause to explain terms. In the 1960s, genetic studies by Carl Woese of the University of Illinois showed

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that living things could be classified into two groups: eukaryotes and prokaryotes. Eukaryotes, which include humans, animals, plants, fungi, and some single-celled organisms, are composed of cells that contain a true nucleus, which houses the cell's chromosomes (Ibid. 91) Eukaryotic cells also possess a cytoskeleton, a complex system of internal membranes, and mitochondria (organelles that use oxygen to extract energy from nutrients). Prokaryotes, on the other hand, consist of smaller and simpler cells without a nucleus, and are usually enclosed by a membrane and a rigid outer wall. Most prokaryotes are bacteria (Ibid 92)

By the late 1970s, Woese's ongoing studies led him to alter this model of the tree of life. He found that certain prokaryotes that he had thought were bacteria were genetically much different, in addition to displaying vastly different behavior from bacteria. Woese proposed that these strange one-celled creatures were actually a third branch to add to the prokaryotes and eukaryotes, the archaea, "as different from bacteria as bacteria are from eukaryotes", in Doolittle's words (Ibid.)

Evolutionists theorized that he archaea evolved in linear fashion into day's eukaryotes. However, thanks to the discovery of "gene-swapping" among different spe-

cies of bacteria, microbiologists now know that this straight, linear tree-pattern is incorrect. "Gene-swapping" occurs when the DNA of one species of bacterium is transferred to another, greatly altering the receiving species without any evolution being involved. In fact, gene-swapping is how some disease-causing bacteria pass on antibiotic resistance to other species of infectious bacteria (Ibid. 94)

This phenomenon has shown that the traditional model of the universal tree of life, with its pattern of linear evolution, must be replaced. Prof. Doolittle comments:

"What do the new findings say about the structure of the universal tree of life? One lesson is that the neat progression from archaea to eukaryote in the consensus tree is oversimplified or wrong...[W]e must now admit that any tree is at best a description of the evolutionary history of only part of an organism's genome. The consensus tree is an overly simplified depiction." (Ibid.)

It is amazing to think that one of Darwin's most prominent concepts, and one of evolution's most widely recognizable images, has been disputed by these discoveries. This sea change in the search for origins shows how easy it is for widely held theories to be overthrown despite having been adhered to by so many scientists for so long. ☞

—Stephen Caesar
Associates for Biblical Research

► LSI News

2008 Creationism Conference Announced

We have been asked to announce the upcoming 2008 International Conference on Creationism to be held in Pittsburgh in August. The announcement is printed below.

Still Accepting Manuscripts

The LSI Journal is still soliciting and accepting manuscripts for possible publication in the Journal. The manuscripts should be written for a lay audience, be of a scientific or health nature, and, of course, reflect our position that the Scriptures are the Word of God and completely true in all

matters including science and history.

For a complete Author's Guide, please write or visit our Web site, www.lutherscience.org, and click on the Author's Guidelines button.

We are still paying 3 cents a word for each article we accept for publication.

Vacancy on the Board

If you would like to assist LSI in getting out the message, to those who may have been led to question their faith, that the Bible is trustworthy in all matters, please join. We have a vacancy on our Board of Directors which we would like to fill with someone who is interested in this cause. Expertise in science is definitely not a requirement.

Creation Science Fellowship of Pittsburgh and the Institute for Creation Research

PROUDLY ANNOUNCE

The 2008 International Conference on Creationism

August 3-7
Radisson-Greentree Conference Center
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

The premier scientific conference featuring 40+ original peer-reviewed papers and special evening presentations by the world's leading creation science researchers and speakers; including Andrew Snelling, Russ Humphreys, John Baumgardner, John Sanford, John Whitmore, John Hartnett and many more...

Early Registration and Conference details at
www.icc08.org





Divorce Bad for the Environment

Divorce rates have been rising around the world, and that's bad for the environment, says a Michigan State U. ecologist. A divorce usually leads to two households were formerly there was one, and that means more use of land, water and energy. The U.S. had 16.5 million households in 2005 headed up by a divorced person and just over 60 million with a married person as head of the house.—*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (12/4/07)

Study Hints at Health Benefits of Fasting

Mormons have long been known to have less heart disease than the general public—something doctors have credited to the Mormon ban on smoking. Now a study in Utah possibly adds a second reason—the Mormon practice of fasting one day each month. The study found that Mormons and non-Mormons alike who took regular breaks from food were 40% less likely to have clogged arteries.—*(Racine) Journal Times* (12/11/07)

Bible Written on a Pinhead-Sized Chip

Researchers in Israel have written a version of the Bible on the silicon surface of a chip smaller than a pinhead. The 0.01 sq. in. nano-Bible was written using a device called Focused Ion Beam (Fib). Scientists said the aim of the project is to increase students' interest in nanoscience and nanotechnology.—*news.bbc.co.uk* (12/24/07)

Man in Trouble over RU-486

A Wisconsin man who laced his girlfriend's drink with the abortion drug, RU-486, in an attempt to end the woman's pregnancy, was charged late November under Wisconsin's fetal homicide law. Darshana Patel, a 39-year-old Kaukauna woman, miscarried in September after consuming food and drinks prepared for her by the man. A hearing to determine whether Manishkuma M. Patel, 34, should face trial is scheduled for January 30.—*Clearly Caring* (January/February, 2008)

Men Protest Abortion

A growing movement of "post-abortion men" is calling attention to the role of men in abortions and the grief many feel over the lost fatherhood. About 150 anti-abortion activists gathered recently in San Francisco and heard men talk of having abortions, the pain and depression they felt after their partners aborted, and the need for "forgiveness therapy." Similar accounts of a post-abortion syndrome suffered by women were cited by the Supreme Court a year ago when the Court banned "partial-birth" abortions.—*(Racine) Journal Times* (1/10/08)

'Creationists Ignorant' John Hopkins President

The president of the John Hopkins U. chose the commencement exercises in May to speak about willful ignorance, which he equated with creationism. He said creationists ignore or subvert facts and the findings of science. In his speech, he blasted the new Creation Museum in Kentucky.—*Answers* (October-December, 2007)

One-Third of Americans Believe in Ghosts

One-third of Americans believe in ghosts according to a recent Associated Press-Ipsos poll. The poll also found one-third believe in unidentified flying objects, 19% accept the existence of spells and/or witchcraft, and 48% think there's something to extrasensory perception or ESP. The 23% of respondents who said they had actually witnessed a ghost were more likely to be single, Catholic, non-churchgoing, and politically liberal than the average.—*(Racine) Journal Times* (10/26/07)



Scientists Close to Creating Life—Again

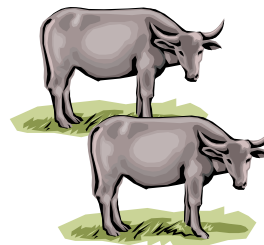
Scientists in the U.S. once again have said they are close to creating artificial life. This time, after five years of research, they have synthetically reproduced the DNA of a bacteria. An artificial life form based entirely on a man-made DNA genome has tantalized scientists and sci-fi writers for years. However, the work is only at stage two of a three-step process in creating a synthetic organism. A debate over the ethics and possible ramifications of such an advance is expected.—*news.yahoo.com* (1/25/08)

Human-Animal Hybrids OK in the UK

Regulators from U.K.'s Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority gave the go-ahead Sept. 5 that allows British scientists to create human-animal embryos, sometimes known as hybrids or chimeras. The experimentation permits the fusing of human cells with animal eggs to develop embryonic stem cells for research purposes. British fertility experts downplay concerns raised by right-to-life advocates that the mixture of human and animal materials is ethically repugnant and unlikely to show practical value.—*Clearly Caring* (November-December, 2007)

Foods From Cloned Animals OK in the USA

Foods from healthy cloned animals and their offspring are safe, the Food and Drug Administration has reported. Aware that a majority of consumers are wary of food from clones, the agency included hundreds of pages of raw data in a 968-page "final risk assessment" so people could see how it arrived at its conclusions. The FDA noted that "moral, religious and ethical concerns have been raised," and it said its report was strictly a "science-based evaluation."—*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (1/15/08)



Young Adults Oppose Abortion and More

A newly-released Harris Poll finds that young adults are most likely to oppose abortion, embryonic stem cell research, and assisted suicide. The August survey fielded opinions on eight issues of interest to the pro-life community. Adults in the 18 to 30 year range (so called "echo boomers") stated they opposed abortion, assisted suicide, and embryonic stem cell research by a wider margin than the other subgroups.—*Clearly Caring* (November/December, 2007)

Obtaining Stem Cells From Human Egg Cells

Researchers in Russia and the U.S. have created stem cells that look and act like embryonic stem cells but which are obtained from human egg cells rather than from embryos. Researchers in California hope to create a bank of tissue-matched stem cells that could be used on specific patients that the patients' immune systems would accept. "The process is efficient, it is relatively safe and it is ethically sound," said a spokesman.—*news.yahoo.com* (12/20/07)

New Stamp Approved Despite Error

The Postal Service is going ahead with plans for a commemorative stamp honoring biochemist Gerty Cori despite an error on the stamp. Cori discovered cori ester, a derivative of glucose, but what was supposed to be the formula for the chemical printed on the stamp had a line misplaced. The Cori stamp is among a set of four honoring American scientists.—*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (1/16/08)

Flu Vaccine Needles May Be Eliminated

The flu vaccine needle may soon be replaced by a drop of the vaccine placed under the tongue. South Korean researchers say the new procedure and vaccine worked in mice, and they are turning their attention now to people. Placing drops of the liquid under the tongue gets the vaccine directly to mucus membranes and prompts responses in mucus tissues throughout the body and in the immune system itself.—*(Racine) Journal Times* (1/29/08)

Multivitamins Help Depression in Elderly

Elderly patients faced with depression can benefit from using multivitamin/mineral pills. An international study showed that acutely ill, older medical patients improved with the supplements compared with those who took placebos. Symptoms of depression include sleep problems, loss of appetite, fatigue, and feelings of worthlessness.—*USA Weekend* (1/30/07)

Urge Screening of ALL Children by Age 2

A leading group of pediatricians is urging that all children be screened for autism twice by the age of 2. The advice by the American Academy of Pediatrics is meant to help both parents and doctors spot autism sooner, which if treated early could lessen its severity. Early signs of possible autism include babies not babbling at 9 months, 1-year-olds who don't point at toys and 4-month-olds never smiling. One in 150 U.S. children are autistic.—*(Racine) Journal Times* (10/29/07)

Americans Told to Lower Salt Intake

Americans must lower their salt intake if they want to lower their blood pressures, says the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. In a strongly worded statement, AMA officials called on restaurants and companies that process food to reduce the amount of sodium they add to foods. About 80% of salt in the U.S. diet comes from processed and restaurant foods. The upper recommended limit on daily sodium intake is 2,400 mg but some restaurant meals contain that much by themselves or even much more.—*Mayo Clinic Health Letter* (January, 2008)



Australian Teen Changes Blood Type

A teenage girl from Australia has become the world's first known transplant patient to have changed blood groups and taken on the immune system of her organ donor. Doctors called her a "one in six-billion miracle." The girl was 9 when she received a donor liver due to the failure of her own liver. Her body changed from O negative to O positive after she became ill while on drugs to avoid the rejection of the organ by her own immune system.—*news.yahoo.com* (1/24/08)

Vitamin D Deficiency Creates Many Problems

The lack of enough vitamin D in one's diet not only can lead to rickets but has been linked to other ailments such as colon cancer, cancer of the prostate, breast cancer, tuberculosis and even schizophrenia. It appears that most tissues and cells in the body have receptors for vitamin D, suggesting the vitamin is needed for overall optimal health. Vitamin D can be obtained from exposure to the sun, foods such as fatty fish and fortified cereals, and supplements.—*Discover* (January, 2008)

African-American Reporter Turning White

An African-American TV reporter in Detroit is turning white right before the eyes of his viewers. Lee Thomas has vitiligo, a skin condition in which the pigment-making cells are being destroyed. White patches are appearing on different parts of his body. There is no known cause and no cure, and he expects to turn mostly white or even "all the way white."—*www.cnn.com* (12/18/07)

Trading Sleep for Study Doesn't Help Students

Students who stay up all night studying have poorer grades than those who never rely on all-nighters. That was the result of a study of 120 students at New York state's St. Lawrence U. which discovered a 2.95 average GPA for the former group but a 3.2 GPA for the latter. Conducted by psychology students and a clinical psychologist, the thinking is that sleep deprivation interferes with concentration for most students.—*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (12/16/07)

Collapse of Ice Sheet Caused 'Noah's Flood'

Some researchers believe the collapse of the Laurentide Ice Sheet led to major floods that raised global sea levels 4.5 feet and inspired the story of Noah's Ark. So claims a report in the journal *Quaternary Science Reviews* which used radiocarbon dating and shoreline reconstructions to estimate that 28,000 square miles of coastal land in the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions was lost to the floods." People living in what is now southeast Europe must have felt as though the whole world had flooded," said one of the researchers.—*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* (12/10/07)



Nature Plays Role in Arctic Thawing

Nature and not only man-made global warming is responsible for the alarming thawing of the Arctic region. New research shows there's a natural and cyclical increase in the amount of energy in the atmosphere moving around the Arctic Circle. Computer models based on global warming alone do not show the Arctic should be warming as fast as it is. In September, the Arctic Ocean had 23% less sea ice than the previous record low.—*(Racine) Journal Times* (1/3/08)



Astronomer Sees Possible Life on Mars

A German researcher has taken another look at data obtained from a Viking Mars landing in 1976 and claims to have discovered evidence of possible life on the planet. Joop Houtkooper says 0.1 percent of Martian soil could be of biological origin. If confirmed, the "weird life form" would be based on hydrogen peroxide, which would act as a natural anti-freeze on the subfreezing Martian surface.—*news.yahoo.com* (7/23/07)

Monkeys Compete in Math Against Students

Can monkeys add like humans? A mathematical competition between two rhesus macaques and 14 college students showed that both groups handled basic addition in a similar manner. The students beat the monkeys 94% to 76% in accuracy but response times were similar and both groups were more likely to stumble when the magnitude of the sums increased. But the monkey math isn't "math in the sense of a symbolic procedure, the way humans think of math," said a researcher.—*www.nature.com* (12/18/07)

Haiti Losing Vegetation

Just 2% of Haiti remains covered with plants after years of deforestation. Trees and bushes are routinely cut down and used for cooking fuel. Most Haitians live on less than \$2 a day and need the wood for fueling fires for cooking. UN officials are pressing the Haitian government to quickly begin reforestation and run-off control programs before the crisis becomes even worse.—*news.yahoo.com* (12/20/07)

Chinese Scientists Put A Halt to the Rain

Scientists in Beijing, China, have had success in managing to stop light rainfall in experiments. Their goal is to guarantee a dry opening ceremony at August's Olympic Games. For cool clouds they used a coolant made from liquid nitrogen to decrease the size of drops, making them less likely to fall. For warmer clouds they used silver iodide to accelerate the droplets' collision and produce a downdraft that suppressed cloud formation. They admit it would be very difficult to prevent a heavy rain.—*news.yahoo.com* (1/30/08)

Pandas May Be Taught by Dogs How to Fight

The first artificially bred panda has been apparently killed in China after a battle with other animals. As a result, Chinese scientists are thinking about using police dogs to help pandas fight better. Four pandas raised in captivity may live with a specially trained police dog or other animals at a panda breeding center. It is hoped the pandas will learn how to protect themselves by observing the dog, thus increasing their chances of survival after being released into the wild.—*news.yahoo.com* (12/22/07)



Inventors Look to Nature Again

There's another new product available that has been invented only because scientists studied nature first. Geckel is a new glue that works like the adhesive on a Post-It note but which can also work on wet surfaces. The inventors studied lizards called geckos, which use tiny hairs with adhesive to allow the creatures to stick to walls and ceilings. But they also studied shellfish called mussels, which use an adhesive protein to attach firmly to wet surfaces.—*Discover* (January, 2008)

Scientists Say They Have Created Antimatter

In science fiction antimatter has been used to power spaceships, but in real life physicists have struggled to create even fleeting particles of antimatter. However, a U. of California at Riverside scientist recently joined two positronium atoms (formed by the union of an electron and its antiparticle, the positron) into the first antimolecule. A short-lived molecule like that doesn't have any direct uses, but the technique may bring us closer to creating a powerful gamma-ray laser.—*Discover* (December, 2007)

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FLEAS

“Against whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog? A flea?” 1 Samuel 24:14 (NIV)

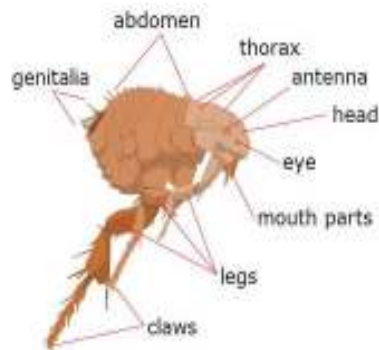
These words were spoken by David before he became king of Israel. They were spoken to King Saul who was fearful of David and was chasing after him to kill him. But David told Saul that he was no danger to the king, no more dangerous than a dead dog or a tiny flea!

What is a flea? A flea is one of a group of very small wingless insects that are parasites.

What is a parasite? A parasite is a living thing that lives in or on another living thing, called a host. The host may provide food and shelter for the parasite, but the parasite does nothing good for the host.

Fleas live on many animals such as dogs, cats, chickens, squirrels and rats. They can even live on humans.

What do fleas look like? Fleas are very tiny (1/16 to 1/8 inch) and usually dark-colored. Their bodies are flat from side to side to make it easy for them to move through the fur of animals.



Their long back legs help them easily jump. Fleas can jump up to 200 times the length of their bodies, making them the best jumpers of any animal.

Their bodies are shiny and very hard. It is difficult to kill a flea by scratching or squeezing it.

What and how do fleas eat? Fleas love blood. They have tube-like mouthparts that help them get blood from their hosts.

What is the life cycle of a flea? Fleas go through four stages in their life cycle: embryo, larva, pupa and adult. A female lays tiny white oval shaped eggs. Inside an egg an embryo begins changing into a larva which looks like a small, pale worm covered with bristles. Soon the larva will spin a silk cocoon—



the pupa stage. Inside the cocoon the larva changes into an adult flea, a process that takes one to two weeks. The adult flea will have only about a week to find food.

How can the itching that comes from a flea bite be treated? Anti-itch creams can help humans. Some

insecticides can kill fleas on animals, but fleas seem to be developing a resistance to flea collars or flea powders.

A parasite like a flea takes food and shelter from its hosts but offers nothing in return. Let it not be said of us that we are like parasites. Remember the saying, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” And it will remind us of Jesus who gave so much to us.

Source: www.en.wikipedia.com

Activity: See if you can find the 14 words underlined in the story in the word search below.



► My View



Evolution Theory Under Attack for Links to Racism

Ken Ham, the founder of the Creation Museum in Kentucky has been in the news again. Ham has co-authored a new book along with Charles Ware, an African-American, which charges that Darwin's theory fuels racism and genocide.

Titled *Darwin's Plantation: Evolution's Racist Roots*, the book says the theory of evolution puts some races "higher on the evolutionary scale" and other races "closer to the apes."

Those who think this accusation is an overreaction should start by taking a look at the full title of Darwin's classic book, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*.

There is plenty of evidence to support the notion that the evolution theory, in the past at least, has led to racist views and actions: the kidnapping of African pygmies in the early 1900s so that they could be studied by Western anthropologists; the

views of Ernst Haeckel, "Germany's Darwin", that he considered "the Negro to be a lower species of man" and that Australian Aborigines were really animals; the views of American evolutionist Henry Fairfield Osborne that the different "races" should be put into different "genera", not just different species; and, of course, the evolution-based racist views of Hitler, Stalin, and Mao.

Even some Japanese during World War II considered the Japanese to be a more highly evolved race than Europeans with their long arms and hairy chests.

Christians though shouldn't get too smug. In the past, some Christians have misinterpreted the "curse on Ham" (Gen. 9:20-25) as an excuse to look down on African-Americans. Actually, the curse was on Ham's son, Canaan, and Canaan's descendents were not black.

Really, there is but one race—the "human race." Acts 17:26 tells us, "From one man he made every nation of men." Genetics shows us there is far more variation *within* any group of people than *between* groups of people.

May we look forward to that endless day when prejudice will be a thing of the past and we will see but one race, those who are wearing a crown of life. 🙏

—Warren Krug

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