

## Contents

Introduction	vii
<i>Part 1 God, Science and Philosophy</i>	
1 Has Science Disproved God? <i>Barry L. Whitney</i>	3
2 Fingerprints of the Divine Around Us <i>Danny R. Faulkner</i>	18
3 Where Did the Universe Come From? <i>Kenneth E. Himma</i>	34
4 Design by Information <i>Werner Gitt</i>	48
5 The Human Body: Evidence for Intelligent Design <i>Frank J. Sherwin</i>	75
6 Design in Nature: Evidence for a Creator <i>Ariel A. Roth</i>	99
7 The Scientific Case for Creation <i>George Javor</i>	123
8 A Question of Biology <i>David Catchpole</i>	133
9 The Geological Evidence for Creation <i>Andrew A. Snelling</i>	150
10 Where Do Thoughts Come From? <i>Charles Taliaferro</i>	184

11	The Question of Moral Values <i>Steven B. Cowan</i>	195
12	The Problem of Evil <i>Jon Paulien</i>	212
13	Who Is God? What Is He Like? <i>Steven Thompson</i>	238
14	Will the Real God Please Stand Up? <i>Eric Svendsen</i>	245
<i>Part 2 God, History and the Bible</i>		
15	Can the Bible Be Relied On? <i>Stephen Caesar</i>	269
16	Historical Evidence for the Biblical Flood <i>Jerry Bergman</i>	290
17	Archaeological Evidence for the Exodus <i>David K. Down</i>	306
18	The Historical Reliability of the Old Testament <i>Paul Ferguson</i>	326
19	Archaeology and the Reliability of the New Testament <i>John McRay</i>	352
20	What about the Bible's Scientific Reliability? <i>Timothy G. Standish</i>	368
21	Amazing Biblical Prophecies That Came to Pass <i>William Shea</i>	374
22	The Messianic Prophecies Fulfilled in Jesus <i>Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum</i>	400
23	The Evidence for Jesus' Resurrection <i>Michael R. Licona</i>	428
<i>Conclusion</i>		
24	The Absurdity of Life Without God <i>Phil Fernandes</i>	450
	The Contributors	469
	Notes	473

## Introduction

Imagine you are a brain surgeon in an operating theatre surrounded by some of the latest and most sophisticated medical equipment available. You are leading a medical team operating on a ten-month-old baby girl. Her brain has been growing faster than her skull, and the increasing pressure on the brain will eventually kill the child if she does not have this operation. You are about midway through the procedure—part of the skull has been removed—when your attention is distracted by the rapidly moving fingers of the anaesthetist adjusting his controls. Your eyes meet his as the words ‘the patient’s blood pressure is falling’ are pronounced. The team pauses momentarily, then the anaesthetist urges, ‘The patient is in cardiac arrest’.

With the help of your assistant you hurriedly pull the rolled-back scalp over the gaping wound and secure it with clips so the child can be rolled over for cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). You and your highly trained and experienced team take turns. Five minutes of CPR pass but there has been nothing but

# 1

## Has Science Disproved God?

*Barry L. Whitney*


The vast majority of human beings have always believed in God. It is a testimony to the depth of this belief that it has persisted despite a new and aggressive challenge, one which has become increasingly prevalent in contemporary society. This challenge presents itself as science, but it is in fact a perversion of modern science more properly called 'scientism'.

By 'scientism' I refer to the ideology based on an anti-religious bias which presumes, without proof, that human rationality and the empirical method of science are the sole means for determining what is true about reality. Ironically, there is no scientific proof for this assumption. Scientism fails to consider seriously whether there are other means for discovering truth, ignoring what theologians have argued for centuries and religious believers intuitively know: that besides empirical evidence (and rationality based largely on reflection on the empirical evidence), truth is revealed by God to our inner experience and accepted in faith. Human rationality and

empirical verification, in themselves, are not the means for determining God's existence since, of course, God is not a physical object that can be observed and studied by science, or fully understood by human reason. In focusing solely on such rational empiricism, scientism has overreached the proper limits of science and misunderstood the nature of religious belief.

Despite the fact that scientism has an alarming number of adherents in the scientific and philosophical communities, it has not prevailed. Religious belief has withstood scientism's aggressive challenge not only by a convincing theological defence of belief in God, but by the contemporary revival of spirituality, especially its focus on seeking God's presence inwardly. This revival is a direct reaction to the meaninglessness and despair brought into society by decades of sceptical, anti-religious scientism.

It is important to note that science, unlike scientism, should not be a threat to religious belief. Science, to be sure, advocates a 'naturalistic' rather than a 'supernaturalistic' focus, and an empirical verification method for determining truths about the physical world and the universe. Yet the proper mandate of science is restricted to the investigation of the natural (physical, empirical) dimension of reality. It is this restriction that scientism has violated, replacing proper science with an illicit ideology that not only seeks to explain all things naturalistically, but assumes—without proof—that the spiritual realm is irrelevant, indeed non-existent. This unproven assumption is based on the mistaken belief that nothing exists unless it can be verified by the empirical scientific method. Such a belief is an invalid reductionism that reduces the explanation for all of



In *The Big Argument*, a team of international experts tackles the biggest question of all: Is belief in God plausible in the 21st century?

Many people assume that science and scholarship have disproved God and made him irrelevant. But cutting edge research and the latest discoveries are pointing in the opposite direction. In recent years compelling evidence has emerged that points towards an incredibly complex universe with a purposeful and intelligent Creator. This book explores these discoveries and their personal implications for living a hopeful and meaningful life.

Drawing on such diverse fields as ancient history, anthropology, archaeology, biochemistry, biology, cosmology, geology, information science, human consciousness, philosophy and theology, *The Big Argument* asks provocative questions like these:

- » Has science disproved God?
- » Where did the universe come from?
- » Is there really evidence of design in nature?
- » Are science and faith compatible?
- » Do the discoveries of archaeology discredit the Bible?
- » Who is God and what is he like?
- » Is the Bible a reliable spiritual guide?
- » Does the Bible really contain accurate predictions about the future?
- » What is the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus?

This book is for everyone who wants to join in the big argument and find intellectually and spiritually satisfying answers to where the universe came from and why we are here.

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