



VALOR & VIRTUE

CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS TEEN MAGAZINE

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**If God
Exists,
Why isn't
He Working
Miracles
Today?**

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Eric Lyons

Throughout the course of human history, some of God's most valuable and courageous servants have been teenagers. Our society has fed teenagers the lie that your actions are unimportant, you can wait until you are older to be a productive citizen, and your teen years are a time for carelessness and worldly fun. In contrast to this false view, God's Word explains that teens can be model soldiers in the army of the Lord (1 Timothy 4:12). In light of this truth, we at Apologetics Press diligently strive to give young people the tools you need to defend the foundational beliefs of the Christian faith. *V²*, which stands for *Valor and Virtue*, is a resource designed to provide you with exciting evidences that will strengthen your faith and give you confidence to defend it, as you sincerely strive to pattern your life after Christ.



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A.P.'s Web site





“DOES THIS OFFEND YOU?”

Kyle Butt

“I’M OFFENDED!”

**“YOU MUST NOT DO THAT,
BECAUSE IT OFFENDS ME!”**

You will often hear statements such as these on television, the radio, or any number of media outlets. Those who use these types of sentiments throw them down like a gauntlet, daring you to continue. It is as if the fact that they are offended should cause you to stop whatever it is you are saying or doing that offends them. Somehow, “I’m offended,” has become the verbal alarm that signals some sort of mistake or misstep on the part of the speaker.

The fact is, however, just because a person is offended is not necessarily a reason to stop saying or doing something. Jesus often

offended people, but that did not stop Him from preaching and teaching the truth. When a person takes offense at something, it often says much more about the heart of the one who is offended than it does about the person who supposedly “caused” the offense.

On one occasion, after Jesus taught about how the Pharisees had abused God’s Word, His apostles came to him and said, “Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?” (Matthew 15:11). It is almost as if the apostles thought like many

people today. They seemed to be indicating that because Jesus had offended the Pharisees, then He should stop teaching those ideas or change

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Valor & Virtue

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His message. Jesus, however, thought nothing of the sort. He knew that His message offended the Pharisees because of the hardness of their hearts, not because of the way the message was delivered. Jesus understood that the hearts of the Pharisees needed changing, not His message or even the way He delivered it. He responded to His apostles by saying, “Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind” (Matthew 15:14). Surely we can agree that the Pharisees would have been further offended by Jesus’ follow up comments. Their offense, however, was misplaced. They were blind to the truth. They should not have been offended at

Jesus’ message. Jesus’ message was the truth that God had sent to set them free (John 8:32).

At one time Jesus preached to a great multitude of His disciples about His being bread from Heaven. Many of His own disciples did not understand the message and “murmured” about Jesus’ preaching (John 6:61). Jesus then asked them, “Does this offend you?” (John 6:61). Many in our day would say that if Jesus offended the crowd, He was sinning and should change His message, change His delivery style, or re-word His statement to be less offensive. Jesus, however, responded by saying, “What then if you should see the



Son of Man ascend where He was before?” (6:61). What was Jesus’ point? If the people were offended with Jesus’ message that He was the bread that came down from heaven, just think how they would react if they saw Jesus ascend back into heaven, which was what He planned to do in the near future (Luke 24:50-53). Not only did He refuse to quit preaching or change His message, He added something to the message that the audience would have had **more** problems accepting! Obviously, Jesus did not feel the need to stop preaching or change His message because His audience was offended.

It is certainly true that Christians should let their speech “be with grace, seasoned with salt” (Colossians 4:6). It is also true that Christians should avoid unnecessary offense

(Matthew 17:27; 1 Corinthians 8). The Gospel, however, is exclusive and offensive to many people. Those with dishonest, sinful hearts will always be offended at the simplicity and straightforwardness of Christ’s Truth. As Christians, we should follow the example of our Lord. We must never be bullied into silence or intimidated into changing our message simply because a person or group is offended at the truth.



FAQs

Q. Do “vestigial organs” (which my science textbook discusses) really prove evolution to be true?

Jeff Miller, Ph.D.

A. If evolution were true, your great, great, great...grandfather was a creature like an ape or a monkey, and you came from him. Over the years, your ancestors gradually changed or evolved from looking like an ape to looking like humans. Your ape-like, distant ancestor, like many primates today, probably would have had a tail, a big jaw, and a lot of hair. He probably also had several other organs you either do not have today, or you have, but unlike him, you do

not really need anymore. Those organs which you would no longer need are called vestigial organs by evolutionists. If evolution is true, then such organs should exist.



Robert Wiedersheim

In 1895, an evolutionist named Robert Wiedersheim made a list of 86 different organs that he thought were vestigial—

organs that supported the idea that we evolved from ape-like creatures millions of years ago. Evolutionists were excited by this news since they believed it helped to prove evolution. Since then, evolutionists



have argued that many parts of our bodies are no longer useful, but are remains of our evolutionary ancestors: our hair, wisdom teeth, appendix, coccyx, tonsils, several genes (“junk” DNA), and even goose bumps have been called leftovers of evolution.

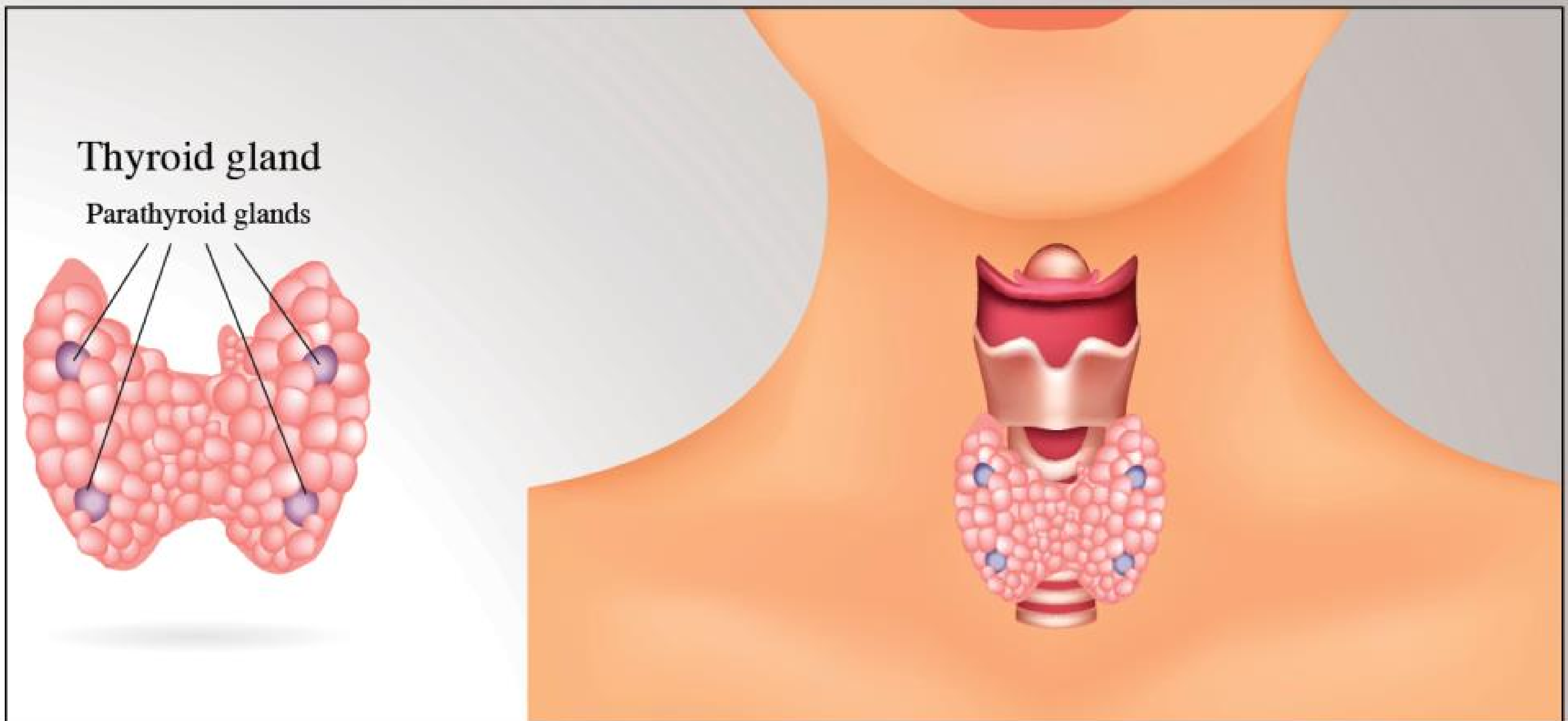
As time has passed, Wiedersheim’s list has gotten smaller and smaller. Why? Because scientists have studied more and more about the human body over the years and discovered that there are important functions for each of the organs on Wiedersheim’s list. The problem was never that there were not functions for those organs on the vestigial list. The problem

was that scientists did not know enough to figure out what those functions were. In other words, the organs on the vestigial list are not evolution’s left-overs, but rather, they highlight scientists’ ignorance about those organs.

Consider the parathyroid glands, which evolutionists long considered to be vestigial organs. These four little glands are usually found sticking to the thyroid in your lower neck, just above your collar bone. If they are functionless, or not that important, then removing the parathyroid glands should not create a problem for humans, right? Why, do you suppose, when

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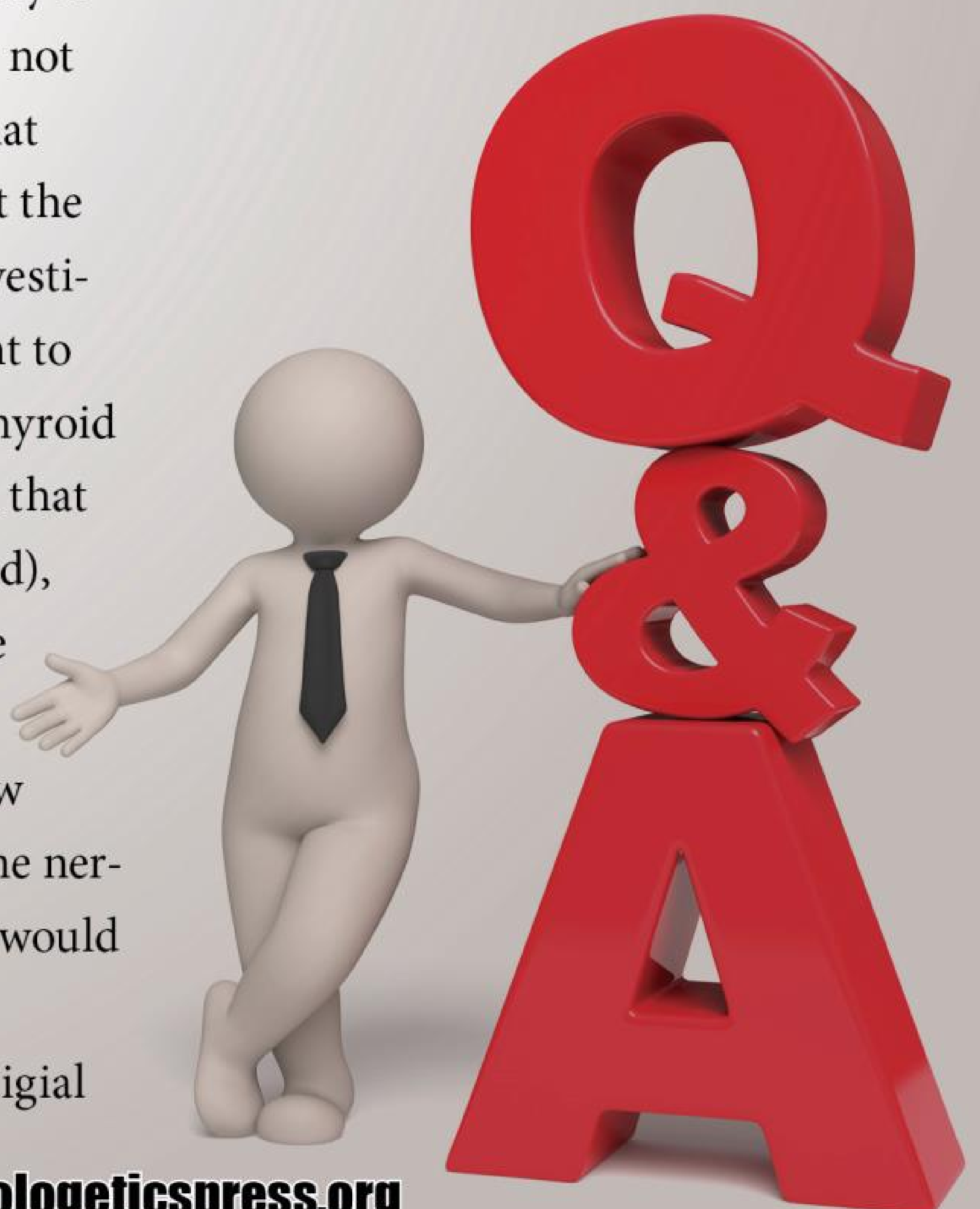




I had my thyroid removed a few years ago, my doctors were so concerned about my parathyroid glands? They went out of their way to warn me that the glands might accidentally get cut off during my surgery. Why would they want to warn me about that possibility if it did not matter whether or not I had them? The reason is that doctors have discovered that the parathyroid glands are not vestigial. They are very important to humans. Without the parathyroid glands (the last major organ that humans have ever discovered), your body would not be able to regulate its calcium levels within the very narrow range that it requires, and the nervous and muscular systems would not function properly.

People who believe in vestigial

organs would be more likely not to worry about removing “vestigial” organs, since they do not believe they are important. This makes evolution a dangerous belief, in addition to being an erroneous theory.





A BOOKMARK OF CREATION/SCIENCE REFERENCES

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EVOLUTION AND CREATION DEFINED

MACROEVOLUTION

The General Theory of (organic) evolution or Darwinian evolution—which states that all the living forms in the world have arisen from a single cell, which itself came from an inorganic form (that is to say, life arose from nonliving antecedents).

MICROEVOLUTION

States that small-scale changes do take place in nature, but within very limited parameters, disallowing change across phylogenetic boundaries (e.g., varieties of dogs, roses, cattle, etc.).

CREATION

According to the Creation model, everything in the Universe came into being through the design, purpose, and deliberate acts of a supernatural Creator Who created the Universe, the Earth, and all life on the Earth. In the evolution model, the Universe is self-contained (i.e., it is all that exists). In the Creation model, the Universe is not self-contained, since a supernatural Creator also exists.

IS EVOLUTION A SCIENTIFIC FACT?

SPONTANEOUS GENERATION

Evolution is based upon the assumption that nonliving material gave rise to living organisms—i.e., spontaneous generation occurred. If something cannot live, it cannot evolve. And this is **assumed** to have happened **only once**. But abiogenesis (spontaneous generation) never has been observed to occur. Additionally: (a) in science, any concept based on an assumption that is not capable of experimental verification never can be referred to as a “fact” (since, at best, it always rests on an unprovable assumption); (b) the scientific method is incapable of dealing with unique, one-time-only events, since, by definition, they fall beyond the scope of scientific investigation.

NATURAL SELECTION

Natural selection **does** work—but only to explain the elimination in nature of unfit, non-adapted organisms. It cannot produce totally new phyla, families, genera, etc. Natural

selection may explain the **survival** of the fittest, but it cannot explain the **arrival** of the fittest. Creationists readily acknowledge natural selection as a **conservation principle** that, as a screening device for eliminating the unfit, represents the Creator’s plan for preventing harmful mutations from affecting or destroying the entire species. But it cannot change one type of organism into another.

GENETIC MUTATIONS

Genetic mutations are spontaneous, chance alterations that rarely are beneficial, and that more often than not have either no effect or a deleterious one. Extremely rare cases of beneficial mutations still involve a loss of function (information) for the organism. The overwhelming trend is de-evolution, not evolution. Macroevolution is dependent upon the addition of **new** information and **new** genes that produce **new** proteins that are found in **new** organs and systems. **But, mutations do not add new information.** Evolutionist Stephen J. Gould correctly admitted: “A mutation doesn’t produce major new raw material. You don’t make a new species by mutating the species.... A mutation is not the cause of evolutionary change.”

TRANSITIONAL FOSSILS

Evolution requires intermediate forms between species, but paleontology has not provided them. The more scientists have searched for the transitional forms between species, the more they have been frustrated. Evidence from the fossil record is overwhelmingly in conflict with Darwinian theory, which advocates that new species evolve from existing ones by the gradual accumulation of small changes (due to mutations), each of which helps the organism survive and compete in the environment. It is not only entire “intermediate” **organisms** that are missing from the fossil record. Even individual **body parts** (such as half scales/half feathers) are conspicuously absent.

GEOLOGIC TIMETABLE AND THE AGE OF THE EARTH

GEOLOGICAL ANOMALIES

(1) In 1936, a metal hammer with a wooden handle was dug out of Cretaceous limestone (dated by evolutionists at 135,000,000 years old) in London, Texas. When the surface oxida-

(OVER)



tion was removed, the metal was still shiny.

(2) The trilobite, a small marine arthropod with a hard exoskeleton, is classified as an "index fossil" for the earliest period of the Paleozoic Era (the Cambrian—supposedly 450,000,000 years ago). On June 1, 1968, however, evolutionist William J. Meister was searching for fossils near Antelope Springs, Utah. When he opened a slab of rock, he discovered a fossilized trilobite—in a human sandal print!

(3) Evolutionary geologist Albert Ingalls was working in the coal veins in Kentucky when he discovered human-like footprints embedded in coal veins. Evolutionists suggest that coal was laid down during the so-called Carboniferous period, which allegedly is separated from man by 250,000,000 years. Dr. Ingalls did not find these footprints only in Kentucky. He also uncovered them in Illinois, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, Missouri, and elsewhere.

POLYSTRATE FOSSILS

Embedded in sedimentary rocks all over the globe are what are known as "polystrate" fossils. Polystrate means "many layers," and refers to those fossils that cut through at least two sedimentary-rock layers. Probably the most widely recognized of the polystrate fossils are tree trunks that extend vertically through two, three, or more sections of rock that supposedly were laid down in epochs covering millions of years. Even animals' bodies form polystrate fossils (like catfish in the Green River Formation in the state of Wyoming, and a fossilized whale skeleton near Lompoc, California). Trees, catfish, and the other organisms with which the fossil record abounds did not die and lie around for hundreds, thousands, or millions of years while slowly becoming polystrate fossils. Such fossils represent impressive evidence for a young Earth whose layers formed rapidly—and not all that long ago!

YOUNG EARTH EVIDENCE

(1) Niagara Falls is a waterfall located on the border between New York and Ontario, Canada. Erosion has pushed the waterfall about 7 miles upstream, forming the Niagara Gorge. Prior to water-diversion projects in the 1950s and 1960s, the falls receded at a rate of more than 3 feet per year. If the Earth were 4.6 billion years old, and if the falls have been eroding at 3 feet per year, the original location of the waterfall would have been 13.5 **billion feet** farther upstream!

(But the circumference of the Earth is only 132 **million** feet!)

(2) As the Mississippi River flows toward the Gulf of Mexico, along the way it picks up dirt and sediment from the riverbank. Approximately 300,000,000 cubic yards of sediment are deposited into the Gulf of Mexico by the Mississippi River **each year**. You do the math. If we really have been around as long as evolutionists say we have, then the sediment deposited from the Mississippi River would have filled in the Gulf of Mexico a long time ago.

(3) Evolutionists believe that the Grand Canyon was formed by the Colorado River (a very small amount of water) over a long period of time. The problem with this theory is that there are over 900 cubic miles of dirt **missing** from the end of the river. If the tiny Colorado River did form the canyon, what happened to the 900 cubic miles of dirt?

FLAWED RADIOMETRIC DATING ASSUMPTIONS

Radiometric dating techniques are typically used to date inorganic materials (e.g., rocks). These techniques analyze the breakdown of parent isotopes into daughter isotopes over time. The following are fundamentally flawed assumptions of these dating techniques:

(1) The nuclear decay rates of the elements have been constant throughout history.

(2) No daughter element existed in the specimen being measured at the beginning of its decay.

(3) The parent and daughter isotopes have not been altered by anything except radioactive decay.

Each of these assumptions has been shown to be flawed.

Radiocarbon (C-14) dating is used to date organic materials (i.e., materials containing carbon, thought to be once living). Since the C-14 half-life is only 5,730 years, the method cannot be used on anything thought to be millions of years old. Besides the above assumptions, C-14 dating must assume that the atmosphere is in C-14 equilibrium (i.e., equal amounts of C-14 are being formed and decaying). That assumption is now accepted by geologists to be false, and attempts to redeem the method through calibration have failed due to their own flawed assumptions. C-14 dating is only potentially accurate when dating objects thought to be, at most, several hundred years old.

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1 PETER 3:15

BUT SANCTIFY THE LORD GOD IN YOUR HEARTS, AND ALWAYS BE READY TO GIVE A DEFENSE TO EVERYONE WHO ASKS YOU A REASON FOR THE HOPE THAT IS IN YOU, WITH MEEKNESS AND FEAR.

ROMANS 1:20

FOR SINCE THE CREATION OF THE WORLD HIS INVISIBLE ATTRIBUTES ARE CLEARLY SEEN, BEING UNDERSTOOD BY THE THINGS THAT ARE MADE, EVEN HIS ETERNAL POWER AND GODHEAD, SO THAT THEY ARE WITHOUT EXCUSE.

PSALM 19:1-3

THE HEAVENS DECLARE THE GLORY OF GOD; AND THE FIRMAMENT SHOWS HIS HANDIWORK. DAY UNTO DAY UTTERS SPEECH, AND NIGHT UNTO NIGHT REVEALS KNOWLEDGE. THERE IS NO SPEECH NOR LANGUAGE WHERE THEIR VOICE IS NOT HEARD.



If God Exists, Why Isn't He Working Miracles

Today?

Eric Lyons &
Dave Miller, Ph.D.

THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO GOD MIRACU- LOUSLY CREATED THE

Universe and everything in it, including Earth and all life on Earth. In the days of Elijah, as well as in the time of

Peter and Paul, God occasionally raised the dead. (Remember Dorcas and Eutychus?) When

Jesus was on Earth, He miraculously gave sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf. He healed Malchus' severed ear with the touch of His hand, and changed water to wine (juice) simply by willing it to happen. The Bible makes clear that God has worked all manner of miracles in the past, and has the potential to work them at any moment. But, simply because God **can** perform miracles at any time, does not mean that He **chooses** to work such supernatural acts.



Today, the reason we do not see one-armed people miraculously given new arms, or blind people given sight supernaturally, or dead people given new physical life, is not

because God cannot do these things.

Rather, it is because God has chosen to cease working miracles during this

time period. Just as God has every right to work a miracle, He has every right to suspend the working of miracles for whatever amount of time He chooses.

Why would God choose not to work miracles for a certain period of time, even for hundreds or thousands of years? To answer this question, we first need to understand the **purpose** of miracles. Unlike magicians, who perform amusing tricks for entertainment purposes, God



did not perform miracles in the past to amuse people. The Bible teaches that miracles happened in Bible times for a very specific purpose: **to confirm the Word**. Before the New Testament was written, when the apostles and prophets were preaching the Gospel, Mark 16:20 indicates that God worked with them by “confirming the word through the accompanying of signs.” The message that the first-century apostles and prophets preached could be shown to be true by the various miracles that God worked through them (read Hebrews 2:3-4).

When a God-inspired speaker stepped forward to declare God’s

Word, God confirmed His Word by having the speaker perform a miracle to show that he was from God. The miracle showed the hearers that God was behind the speaker’s remarks. Recall how Moses’ messages to Pharaoh were accompanied by various miracles (Exodus 5-12). Miracles **authenticated** the spoken word as God’s Word. Miracles **verified** the teaching of God’s messengers in contrast with the many false teachers (read John 3:2).

However, the apostle Paul stated that miracles would cease and be done away when the “perfect” (or

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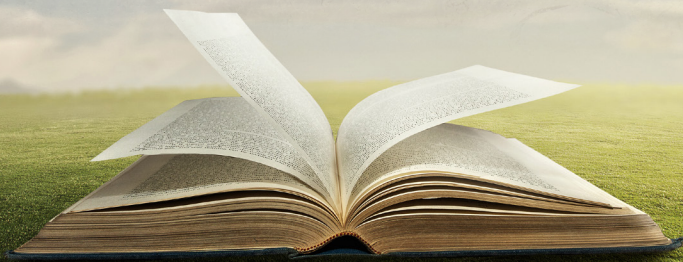


completed Word of God) had been revealed (1 Corinthians 13:8-10; James 1:25). Those things that were incomplete and partial (miraculous gifts) would be replaced by the total and complete (the fully revealed Word of God). Once God revealed all of the information that He wished to make available to people, the need for miracles to confirm the oral Word came to an end. Now, people can sit down with a New Testament, the written Word of God, and, with honest and diligent study, conclude that it is God's Word. We have absolutely no need for miracles.

Think about the Bible as a large apartment building and miracles as the scaffolding that is used in the construction of such buildings. When the apartment building is under construction, the scaffolding provides necessary assistance. Framers, steelworkers, bricklayers, and other construction workers

stand on the scaffolding to construct the apartment building. However, when the construction of the building is completely finished, there is no more need for the scaffolding (in fact, it can get in the way). People don't leave scaffolding on the sides of completed buildings for years and years. When it has served its purpose, it is removed.

Similarly, God ceased working miracles to confirm His Word because God's Word has been completely "constructed." That is, God has "given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). We have no more revelation from God than the Bible, thus we need no more confirmation than what was given in Bible times. Simply put, the Bible teaches that miracles are no longer necessary since we have everything we need to function in this life, to be pleasing to God, and to survive spiritually.



Point of View



Eric Lyons

TWICE A YEAR FOR THE PAST FEW YEARS I HAVE VISITED THE OFFICES OF A TAX advisor in Montgomery, Alabama. Since I rarely went to his place of business (or even the area in which his business is located), I had a difficult time remembering exactly what side of the road

it was on. When I expected to see it on my right, it would strangely appear on my left. Then, just as sure as I thought it might be on my left, I would find it on my right. Maybe I was just confused. Perhaps my memory was failing me. For whatever reason, I never took the time to figure out why I had the distinct impression that sometimes this building was on the right, and sometimes on the left. Whenever the time came for me to see my tax advisor, I simply headed in the

Continued on p. 18



direction of his office. I was always confident that I could find it, but unsure on which side of the road it would appear.

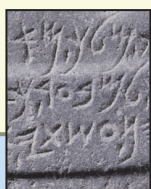
Recently, I finally learned why sometimes the building was on my left and other times it was on my right. I had not realized that the street on which this office is located is a long, slow-curving semi-circle. Both ends of the street eventually meet up at the same road, just one intersection apart from each other. Since the two intersections look very similar, I never realized that I sometimes turned left at one intersection and other times

turned left at the **next** intersection. When I took the first left, the office building always appeared on my right. When I took the second left, the building was always on my left. For whatever reason, I had never paid close enough attention. I had failed to consider that the seeming contradiction was merely the result of two different points of view: one from the North, and one from the South.

Sadly, many people approach a study of the Bible as carelessly as I approached the tax advisor's office building: they fail to see the various viewpoints of the Bible writers.

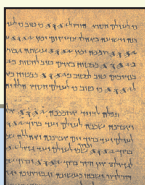
- Approximately 40 different inspired men from all walks of life wrote the Bible over a period of 1,600 years.
- Sometimes Bible writers focused on a group of people (Luke 23:55-24:1); at other times they targeted a particular person within the group (John 20:1).

Hebrew



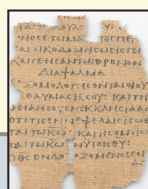
- They wrote in the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek languages.
- Sometimes the Bible writers recorded events in chronological order (Genesis 1). At other times, they were less concerned about the exact order of events, and they focused more on the main theme of the passage (Genesis 2).

Aramaic



- Bible writers lived
 - (1) at different times,
 - (2) in different places,
 - (3) among different people, and
 - (4) in different cultures.
- The original recipients of their writings varied greatly—from Jewish, to Greek, to Roman, to all men.

Greek

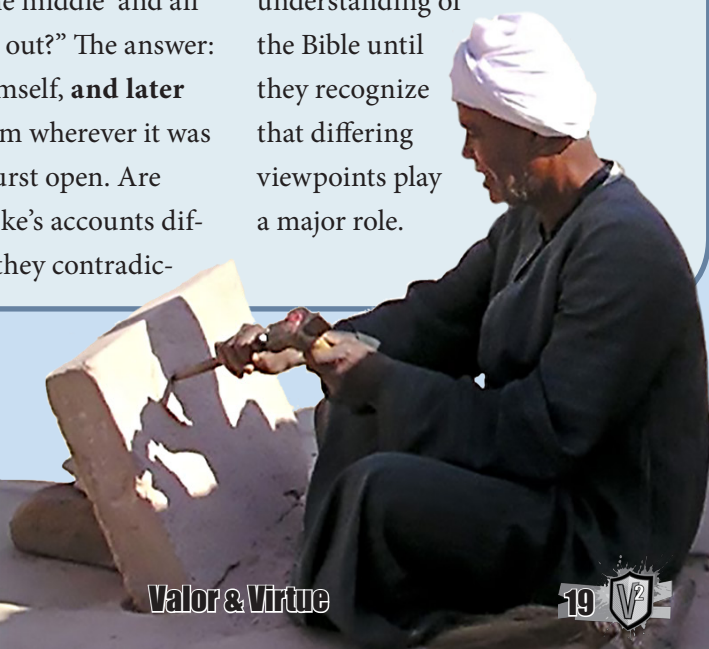




Oftentimes when two or more Bible writers differ in their description of a certain event, skeptics claim they have contradicted each other. In reality, however, the skeptics have merely overlooked the fact that the inspired penmen wrote from different viewpoints. For example, many have asked the question, “How did Judas die? Did he hang himself as Matthew wrote (27:5)? Or, as Luke stated (Acts 1:18), did he fall headlong and ‘burst open in the middle’ and all his entrails gush out?” The answer: Judas hanged himself, **and later** his body fell (from wherever it was hanging), and burst open. Are Matthew and Luke’s accounts different? Yes. Are they contradic-

tory? No. They simply wrote about two different, specific moments during the same general event.

If we fail to see the valid reasons for differences in life, we will find ourselves dazed and confused. I was perplexed for years over the exact location of an office building, because I had not taken the time to consider the exact direction from which I approached the building. Similarly, skeptics and others will never come to a proper understanding of the Bible until they recognize that differing viewpoints play a major role.

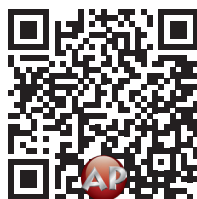


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