



*“The heavens declare the glory of God” (Psalm 19:1)*

# REASONS TO BELIEVE - SEATTLE AREA CHAPTER

NEWS AND VIEWS

DECEMBER 2003

## WHAT'S HAPPENING?

### Outreach Events

We are in the process of planning a spring visit by Dr. Ross to the Puget Sound area. If your church or group is interested in sponsoring a speaking engagement, contact the chapter for more information.

### Apologetics Training

Serious about apologetics? In January, RTB is launching a brand new course that will be available at half price through the chapter. For more information, see page 3 of this newsletter.

### Help Wanted

We're looking for people who want to help spread the word that science and Bible agree. Regardless of your age, background or skills, we invite you to join us. Contact us at [seattle@reasons.org](mailto:seattle@reasons.org).

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

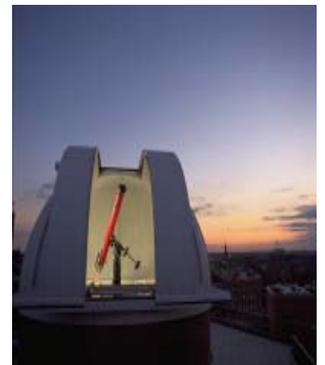
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## Life on Other Planets

PASTOR GARY JENSEN

Life on other planets is a theoretical possibility. Although some Christians reject it on the basis of Genesis 1, I do not. The God of the Bible can create whomever and whatever He pleases and He is not obligated to tell us what He may be doing in another corner of His creation. Some express concern life on other planets would undermine Christ's sacrifice as "once for all" (Hebrews 9:26). But this seems to overreach the scope of biblical concern, which is the salvation of *our* world. Silence from Scripture about other worlds does not preclude their *possibility*. God is big enough to care for creatures beyond us earthlings.

The question of whether life actually *does* exist on other planets, however, is another matter. What can be said about this issue? I recently had a "conversation" with a relative who told me there is nothing we can know about it. He was adamant and didn't wish to discuss it further. Yet he is wrong. Even though our knowledge is, and probably always will be, limited, it doesn't follow that *nothing* can be known at all.



On the one hand, the universe is huge. Terrence Dickson's book, *NightWatch*, has us imagine a sandbox. He states one thimble-full of sand represents the number of stars we can see on a clear night with the naked eye, while the entire sandbox represents the number of stars in our galaxy (200 billion). If each person on earth had their own sandbox, each representing a separate galaxy, we would still fall short, by many billions, the number of galaxies in the universe (50 to 100 billion). It would *seem*, then, the universe is so large there *must* be life on other planets.

Yet there is a growing recognition that the set of demands required for advanced life is an enormous problem and the mere existence of billions of galaxies will not solve this problem. Here are just a few of the things that are necessary for complex life to

See OTHER PLANETS, page 5

# Contradiction in the Gospels?

JOHN BATTLE, Th.D.

Critics of the Bible often claim the Bible contains contradictions and, therefore, cannot be the Word of God. Many point to discrepancies in the Gospel accounts of Jesus' life to support this claim. One event the Gospels appear to disagree about is the story of Jesus being anointed by a woman with costly perfume, found in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

## THE PROBLEM

When the stories are compared, there are obvious similarities, but also differences. Here are the key elements of the four accounts:

- Matthew 26:6-13 – The setting is Bethany, two days before Passover (26:2), at the home of Simon the leper. A woman pours perfume on Jesus' head. The disciples say it is a waste—the perfume could have been sold for a high price and the money given to the poor. Jesus tells them it is a beautiful thing, to prepare Him for burial.
- Mark 14:3-9 – The setting is Bethany, two days before Passover (14:1), at the home of Simon the leper. A woman pours perfume on Jesus' head. Some of those present say it is a waste—the perfume could have been sold for a year's wages and the money given to the poor. Jesus tells them it is a beautiful thing, to prepare Him for burial.
- Luke 14:3-9 – The setting is Galilee (part of Jesus' Galilean ministry), at the home of Simon the Pharisee. A sinful woman, wets Jesus' feet with her tears, wipes them with her hair and pours perfume on them. Simon complains that Jesus would let a sinner touch Him. Jesus tells him to those who love much, much is forgiven.
- John 12:1-8 – The setting is Bethany, six days before Passover. Mary, Martha and Lazarus are there. Mary of Bethany pours perfume on Jesus' feet and wipes them with her hair. Judas Iscariot says the perfume should have been sold and the money given to the poor because it is worth a year's wages. Jesus tells him to leave her alone, it is to prepare Him for burial.



These differences have led many to conclude that one or more of the gospel writers were mistaken in at least some details.<sup>1</sup> Others have suggested that Luke and John record two true and different accounts, and Matthew and Mark have erred by combining them into one.<sup>2</sup>

Is it reasonable to try to harmonize these four accounts? Some would say no, we must allow the Gospels to contradict each other. However, for believers in Christ, we are to accept his judgment that “the Scripture cannot be broken,” and that he told his apostles, “the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, will teach you

See CONTRADICTION, page 6

## SEEING THE LOCAL IMPACT OF RTB

As 2003 draws to a close, it's a good time to review the progress we've made as a chapter. One of our goals is to increase awareness of the RTB ministry. Our chapter mailing list has now grown to over 500 people. A second goal is to build a local team of trained apologists. We now have about 40 people who are taking, or have completed, the RTB apologetics training program. A third goal is to connect Christian teachers and homeschoolers to the RTB Ministry. This year we attended the WHO Conference for Christian educators and we are registered to attend four such conferences next year. We are also in the process of developing materials to assist Christian educators in the classroom.

But our most important goal is to use the RTB Ministry to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the Puget Sound. I'm proud to say this is also our greatest accomplishment. With the help of our many supporters, we were able to bring Dr. Ross up to the area for presentations in Everett, Seattle, Renton, Poulsbo and Sequim. Through these events, over 2,500 people were exposed to the message that science and the Bible agree and the creation points to the Creator—the God of the Bible.

It's amazing to see the impact RTB can have in removing the doubts of unbelievers and strengthening the faith of believers. With the leading of the Holy Spirit, we look forward to continued success in 2004. As you ponder your New Year's resolutions, consider taking a more active role in the local chapter. Together, we can help the lost find true hope and joy—Jesus Christ.

On behalf of the Seattle Chapter, merry Christmas and may God bless you in the new year!

Greg Moore, President  
Seattle Chapter of RTB

# The Cambrian Explosion

GREG MOORE

Life has been on the Earth around three billion years, but for most of that time, it was simple bacteria and algae. Then, about 550 million years ago, life began to blossom. It started with the appearance of simple sponges, worms and a primitive mollusk. This mollusk had a strong, limpet-like shell and crept along the sea floor. The appearance of these creatures was quite a jump in complexity, but 10 million years later—far too little time to explain it by natural process—an explosion in the complexity of life occurred.



540 million years ago, nearly every animal phylum ever to exist in Earth's history appeared suddenly. (A phylum refers to the level in the biological classification system describing an organism's body plan). More than 70 animal phyla appeared within a narrow window time of less than 2-to-3 million years. While this sounds like a long time, compared to the 3 billion year history of life on Earth, it is like one minute in a 24-hour day.

Scientists refer to this as the Cambrian Explosion—biology's "big bang."

The significance of the Cambrian explosion cannot be overstated. The creatures appeared suddenly, not gradually, and with no obvious evolutionary ancestors. They were complex life forms with complex interactions, such as predator-prey relationships, thought by naturalists to have taken millions of years to evolve. Not surprisingly, most biology textbooks avoid any mention of the Cambrian Explosion, and the few that do mention it, try to dismiss it.

Until recently, paleontologists had thought the Cambrian Explosion only brought forth invertebrates (organisms lacking a backbone). However, the discovery of jawless vertebrates (jawless fish with a backbone) from the lower (earlier) Cambrian fossil beds in China has now changed this view. This discovery goes contrary to the evolutionary model on how the chordates (which includes all vertebrates) arose. Researchers must now account for the simultaneous appearance of both groups.

According to the most widely accepted evolutionary model, echinoderms (sea stars, sea cucumbers, etc.) gave rise to chordates over millions of years. This model posits that an echinoderm attached to the sea floor and brought forth a urochordate (a creature whose larvae are free-swimming and have a simple backbone in their tails). The urochordate then gave rise to a free-swimming cephalochordate (a creature with a simple backbone running the full length of its body), which in turn produced jawless vertebrates (jawless fish), followed by jawed vertebrates (fish with jaws).

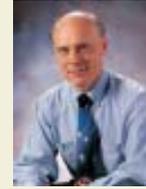
The evolutionary model says echinoderms, urochordates, cephalochordates

See EXPLOSION, page 7

## APOLOGETICS TOOL KIT

### [Weekly Creation Update](#)

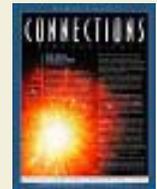
Join Hugh Ross each Tuesday for an exciting discussion about how the latest scientific discoveries provide powerful new evidence for the God of the Bible. Listen to the webcast live and ask questions, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (PT), at [www.oneplace.com/ministries/creation\\_update](http://www.oneplace.com/ministries/creation_update).



Past episodes are available free through on-demand audio streaming for a limited time.

### [Connections Magazine](#)

RTB's free *Connections* newsletter is packed full of great articles on a wide range of science and theology issues. To subscribe, phone RTB at 626-335-1480 or go to the RTB website and click on the newsletter icon. You can browse past issues and search and download articles at: [www.reasons.org/resources/connections/index.shtml?main](http://www.reasons.org/resources/connections/index.shtml?main).



### [Message of the Month](#)

Through the M.O.M. program, you can receive a fresh, faith-building message each month discussing the latest scientific discoveries. At the same time, you'll helping to support the RTB ministry. Available as audio cassettes or CDs (MP3 format). For more information on the M.O.M, or to subscribe, go to [www.reasons.org/donate/mom.shtml?main](http://www.reasons.org/donate/mom.shtml?main).



### [Apologetics Training Program](#)

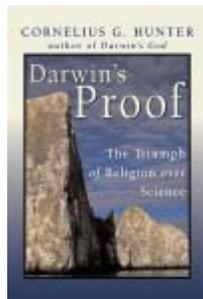
In January, RTB will launch a brand new training program called the "Science and Evangelism Correspondence Course." This course is designed to help lay people to use the ever-growing evidence from science to defend Christianity and point non-believers to the God of the Bible. RTB will be offering the course for \$129 which includes the course materials and five books. The chapter will be offering the course at a special price of \$65. For more information, contact the chapter at [seattle@reasons.org](mailto:seattle@reasons.org).

## Book Reviews

### Darwin's Proof

Cornelius G. Hunter  
Brazo Press, 2003

Reviewer: Dave Ouellette



This book comes on the heels of Hunter's first book, *Darwin's God*, published in 2002. In that book, Hunter argued that Darwin's theory was based his view of God—namely, that a loving God could not be the author of the natural evil (tooth and claw) we see in nature. In *Darwin's Proof*, Hunter sets out to show how Darwinism is wrong scientifically, as well as philosophically and theologically.

In the first part of the book, Hunter discusses the fundamental arguments against evolution. He examines such things as DNA, protein building, enzyme pathways and complexity, and explains how evolutionists address these difficulties. He also introduces the reader to the common evidences for evolution—the fossil record, vestigial organs and molecular clocks—and gives brief rebuttals to each of these supposed evidences.

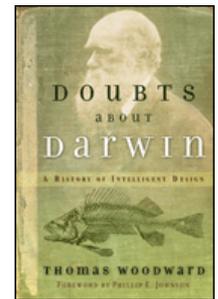
In the latter chapters, Hunter provides a background on the social environment that shaped Darwin's thinking and the people that influenced his views, like William Paley and David Hume. He also discusses the theological aspects of evolution and documents how scientists perceive the evidence for evolution based on their perception of God. According to Hunter, this is illustrated by such things as Stephen Gould's claim that "God would not have created species in these sorts of sequences [in the fossil record], and therefore evolution must be true."

*Darwin's Proof* is a good introductory book for anyone who is new to the creation/evolution debate. In areas where Hunter tries to discredit Darwinism, other books are available which provide a more detailed examination of the issues—for example, Michael Behe's *Darwin's Black Box* and Lee Spetner's *Not by Chance*. This book's main contribution is the latter chapters, which deal with the issue of how scientists' preconceptions of God shape their views and the way they interpret the physical evidence.

### Doubts About Darwin

Thomas Woodward  
Baker Books, 2003

Reviewer: Mike Brown



During the last decade I have read several books by the pioneers of the Intelligent Design movement. The new *Unlocking the Mystery of Life* video helped me understand a little more about who these people are and what their contributions have been. Now, Thomas Woodward's book has put all the pieces together. His book helped me appreciate even more the significant work these people have done in shaking up the scientific community and bringing about, as the jacket cover says: "paradigm shifts in both the scientific and public arenas."

Dr. Woodward is a professor at Trinity College of Florida, where he teaches the history of science, communications, and systematic theology. He is founder and director of the C.S. Lewis Society, and loves astronomy.

In his rhetorical history of the movement, he dedicates separate chapters to the four major players in the order they appeared on the scene. He begins with Michael Denton, followed by Phillip Johnson, Michael Behe and finally William Dembski. Johnson provided the forward to the book and Behe and Dembski gave it glowing reviews.

Dr. Woodward admits that as a theist he is sympathetic to the thoughts and theories of the ID movement. In the introduction he points out that:

"...the point of telling history is not to avoid taking a position but to make a conscious effort to maintain as much objectivity and balance as possible—and to substantiate one's viewpoint clearly, with compelling evidence and analysis."

He goes on to point out that while many critics of the ID movement want to put a religious spin on it, the pioneers of the movement developed their views based on the scientific evidence, not religious motives.

The book is very readable and balanced. One reviewer referred to it as the best available guide to the ID movement and the best primer on the issues and arguments in the origins debate. I agree.



all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”<sup>3</sup> For us, it is necessary to dig deeper and try to resolve these apparent contradictions. Believing each account to be true, it is not difficult to do so.

#### THE SOLUTION

There are significant differences between Luke and the other accounts. Luke places the event in Galilee and in the middle of Jesus’ ministry, the others place it in Bethany and at the end of His ministry. The issue in Luke is that Jesus touches a sinner, while in the others the act is seen as a waste of money. Jesus’ response is also different in Luke than the other accounts. We can conclude, then, that Luke must be referring to a different event. It is not surprising that two different women would have anointed Jesus in this special way.

The other three accounts take place in Bethany near Jerusalem shortly before Jesus’ crucifixion. Therefore, it is reasonable to suppose that they refer to the same event. If this is the case, the events can be harmonized as follows:

- The Place – The house of Simon the leper (Matthew and Mark) was in Bethany. Since Bethany was a small village, it would have been near the house of Mary and Martha. Therefore, it is quite plausible they were helping with the dinner and Lazarus, their brother, was a guest (John).
- The Time – John 12:1 (“six days before the Passover”) could refer to the time of Jesus’ first arrival in Bethany, not the dinner. Or, John 12:1 could be translated “before the six days of Passover.”<sup>4</sup> In either case, John would not be specifying the day on which the dinner was held and there would be no contradiction with Matthew or Mark (two days before the Passover).
- Other Details – The woman is unnamed in Matthew and Mark, but John names her as Mary of Bethany (not Mary Magdalene, as some have mistakenly assumed). She anointed both Jesus’ head and feet. The main critic was Judas Iscariot but others also joined in. And, Mary’s anointing of Jesus prepared him for his burial and would also be told as a memorial to her. The three accounts simply supplement each other.

#### A RELIABLE TECHNIQUE

For two thousand years the Bible has withstood criticism and attacks. When someone suggests there is an error or a contradiction in the Bible, we can be confident that further study will reveal a solution to the difficulty, which will actually help us to understand the Bible better. In the case of the four Gospels, they present four different pictures of the life of Jesus Christ. They complement each other, but they do not contradict each other.

*John Battle is a trained apologist and coordinates the chapter training program. He is president of Western Reformed Seminary in Tacoma.*

See CONTRADICTION, *next page for notes*

## THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM

The Gospel of Matthew speaks of a star that appeared in the sky at the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. We are told when the magi (wisemen) saw the *star*, they knew the king of the Jews had been born and they set off to Judea to worship him. Later, while they traveled from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, they saw the star again and it stopped over the place where the Christ child was.

What was this strange star? Was it a real astronomical event?

Many doubters dismiss the account of the star as a fable or myth. For many believers, it’s a mystery that must be accepted on faith. But what if it could be demonstrated the star was a real event? Check-out a great website that addresses this issue: [www.bethlehemstar.net](http://www.bethlehemstar.net).



The site examines the biblical record and the works of Roman and Jewish historians to determine the real date of Jesus’ birth. Next, it establishes nine qualities any celestial phenomenon must meet to be considered the Star of Bethlehem. Finally, it examines the options for what the “star” might have been and uses astronomical facts to determine the best candidate. The conclusion? It was an unusual appearance of the planet Jupiter.

Is this the correct answer? Who knows, but the site he has received accolades from both scientists and theologians. Incidentally, the author, Fred Larsen, is a devoted Christian. In the final section, *What does this mean?*, he uses the historicity of the Star of Bethlehem as a witnessing tool to proclaim the truth of the Bible and the Gospel.

EXPLOSION, *Continued from page 3*

jawless vertebrates and jawed vertebrates should appear in the fossil record sequentially. Give the extensive differences among the groups, they should be separated by long time periods, much longer than the 2-to-3 million years shown by the Cambrian Explosion. The Chinese discoveries show instead that these creatures appeared at the same time.

While naturalistic explanations for life are crumbling, this matches the biblical creation model with the divinely orchestrated introduction of complex animal life on Earth. The Bible tells us that, over six creative “days” (i.e., long periods of time), God introduced new creatures to fit the changing conditions on the Earth. All of this was done to provide the perfect habitat for humanity.

*Greg Moore is a trained apologist and president of the Seattle Chapter. Adapted from an article by Cathy Bakken in the April 2003 issue of the Spokane Chapter's monthly newsletter.*

#### RESOURCES

1. *The Cambrian Explosion: Biology's Big Bang* by Stephen Meyer, [www.discovery.org/articleFiles/PDFs/Cambrian.pdf](http://www.discovery.org/articleFiles/PDFs/Cambrian.pdf)
2. *Chordate Fossils Foil Theory* by Fuz Rana, biochemist at RTB, [www.reasons.org/resources/fff/newsarticles/index.shtml?main#chordate](http://www.reasons.org/resources/fff/newsarticles/index.shtml?main#chordate)
3. *Extinct Shell Fish Speaks Today* by Fuz Rana, [www.reasons.org/resources/connections/2001v3n2/index.shtml?main#extinct\\_shell\\_fish](http://www.reasons.org/resources/connections/2001v3n2/index.shtml?main#extinct_shell_fish)

CONTRADICTION, *Continued from page 6*

#### NOTES

1. For example, W.F. Albright and C.S. Mann in the *Anchor Bible* commentary on Matthew state: “It is entirely possible that Luke’s researches misplaced the incident” (Garden City, N.Y., 1971) 315.
2. William Ramsay, *Was Jesus Born in Bethlehem?* (1898; reprinted; Minneapolis: James Family Publishing Co., 1978) 91-91.
3. John 10:35; 14:26
4. This translation is favored by Nigel Turner, *Syntax*, (vol. 3 of *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*; ed. James Hope Moulton; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1963) 248.

## REASONS TO BELIEVE SEATTLE-AREA CHAPTER



### Who Are We?

The Seattle-Area Chapter of Reasons to Believe is a local extension of the worldwide, interdenominational Reasons to Believe ministry. We exist to support our parent organization and foster local involvement in Reasons to Believe. We serve the Puget Sound area and we are composed of Christians of different ages and backgrounds.

It is our conviction the same God who created the universe inspired the Bible. Therefore, what God says through His written word must agree with the facts of nature. We reject the notion that science and the Bible are at odds and provide a scientifically-sound and Biblically-faithful alternative to Darwinian evolution and young-Earth creationism.

### What Do We Do?

The Seattle-Area Chapter exists to remove the doubts of skeptics and strengthen the faith of believers. We provide scientific, historical and philosophical evidence that supports the Christian worldview and helps remove the barriers to a belief in God, the Bible and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We carry out this mission by:

- Helping people access RTB and other resources that are scientifically and biblically sound.
- Bringing nationally-known speakers into the area to promote the scientific reliability of the Bible.
- Providing a local team of trained apologists to address questions about science, the Bible and related topics.
- Training Christians to shed their fear of science and use science to spread the Gospel.
- Working with teachers and school administrators to achieve a balanced approach to the teaching of origins.
- Building alliances with local churches, ministries and groups to maximize the exposure of the RTB ministry.
- Reaching out to unbelievers with gentleness and respect, encouraging them to evaluate their worldviews.

## Questions? Get Answers.

Whether you are looking for scientific support for your faith or answers to questions about God, the Bible, and science, contact us at [seattle@reasons.org](mailto:seattle@reasons.org). You can also call the RTB hotline seven days a week, 5:00 to 7:00 PM at 626-335-5282.