

THE

Evangel

NEWSPAPER

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Continued over page ►►

When disaster strikes

Now put in place the ultimate disaster readiness plan

Jesus Christ once told his disciples the Parable of the House on the Rock. It goes like this:

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall

of it. (Matthew 7: 24-27)

The Christchurch earthquake took many lives. When shakings and storms come literally, such as in Christchurch and Nelson (2011), we may lose much of what we possess. We may even lose our lives. However, if we hear the words of Jesus and do them (that's obedience), we will be like a man who built his house on the sure, immovable rock, instead of on shifting sands.

That rock is Jesus Christ. If you let Jesus be the foundation of your life, then you have the ultimate disaster readiness plan in place. You may lose all that you own. You may even lose your life. But you will not lose your soul. Building your life upon Jesus Christ will guarantee you everlasting life. What other disaster plan can do that?

ON THE INSIDE



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Tiny biological machines could not have evolved



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Matthew 24: 7-8



SO WHAT HAVE YOU BUILT YOUR LIFE UPON?

The shifting sands of WEALTH?

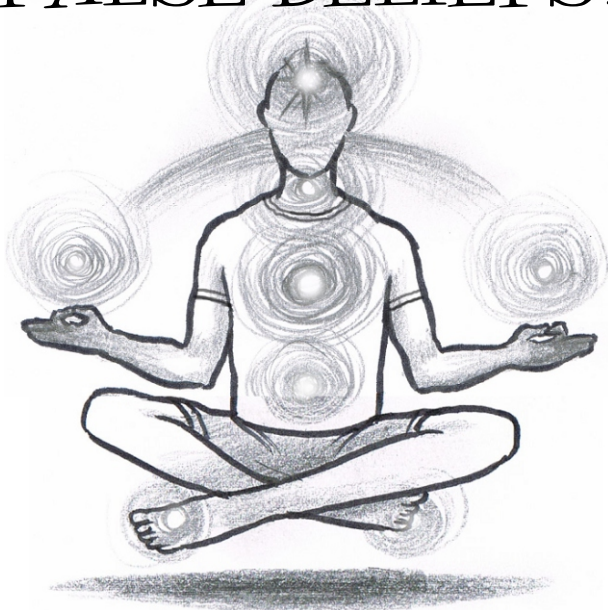


HUMAN ENDEAVOUR?



RELATIONSHIPS?

FALSE BELIEFS?



OR have you built your life upon the immovable rock of the Lord Jesus Christ?



For when all around you fails, Jesus will never let you down.

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock.” (Mt. 7: 24)

“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole

Too big to bail

The world's debts are too big to bail, not too big to let fail.



PASTOR JASON DANIELS

Is the global recession over? Perhaps, perhaps not. In some parts of the world, the after-effects of mounting debt and stalled economic growth are still resulting in a large degree of financial turmoil.

Here in New Zealand, we may seem somewhat distant from such dire woes, and we may even be certain of our own long term economic recovery. However, the various financial problems that have befallen other countries are by no means their own isolated concerns.

More than ever before, we live and do business in a global economy, so those things happening beyond our shores are not just neutral events of little consequence to us, but rather, they are things that in some way or another will ultimately shape our own economic future. In particular, I think of the problem of mounting debt.

By and large, the world has a debt problem. This, of course, should come as no surprise to us, as our whole economic system is one that chiefly relies upon debt for the supply of money. News to you? Enter the 2008 Credit Crisis.

How did we end up with a credit crisis? Simple: a whole lot of debt was created and the means to pay it back simply did not exist. When the housing bubble burst, many people, banks and lending institutions were simply left holding a whole lot of empty promises worth nothing. What followed for a lot of them was simple arithmetic: no money coming in equals insolvency. This then led to what was called the Credit Crisis,

in which a whole lot of banks and lending institutions, hitting the wall suddenly, found that all of their sources of credit, or, money to borrow, dried up. Overall, lending became very tight.

So what happens to an economy when its sources of credit dry up or lending becomes tight? It stalls because by and large, everything functions on debt.

Such was the string of events that brought the world to the brink of financial disaster.

What did governments around the world do? Basically, they said we can't let the system stall or implode, so they embarked on colossal bailouts to the tune of hundreds of billions of dollars. Where did this money come from? Again, it was supplied as further debt incurred by governments.

Now then, while the supply of more money through debt to stabilise the economy and prevent a financial meltdown might seem like a good answer to the problem in the short term, it only delays what will, in fact, be a far worse

economic correction when it comes.

Debt and inflation

Let's take America as an example. No country in modern times has ever been in debt to the extent that America is now.

The problem with mounting debt is that ultimately it always has a negative impact on the economy and particularly the currency of that economy. Chiefly, this happens in the form of inflation.

Though inflation is driven by a number of factors, a key part is the introduction of more and more money into an economy by debt. Basically, debt injects money, and more money chasing the same limited pool of goods will ultimately force the prices of goods up. Rising prices then, are heavily influenced by the inflating of the money supply, which generally leads to the erosion of the value of a currency as the prices of goods and services rise.

This fact is well illustrated in New Zealand's monetary policy. Inflation here is primarily kept in check by the Reserve Bank. This is achieved through various tools, but mostly it is governed by the regular setting of the Official Cash Rate (OCR). The OCR is simply the interest rate that is either charged or paid to banks as they transact with the Reserve Bank.

Most registered banks hold accounts at the Reserve Bank, and these are used to settle obligations with each other at the end of each day. As you can imagine, many hundreds of

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thousands of transactions are made every day, resulting in either a credit or a debit balance in each bank's settlement account. The Reserve Bank pays interest or charges interest on overnight borrowing at rates related to the OCR. The OCR then, is a tool by which retail lending rates can be governed. A low OCR means a reduced cost to the banks and therefore lower interest rates for borrowers. This in turn makes borrowing more attractive and consequently, more money lent out causes upward pressure on inflation. If inflation rises too much, the OCR is increased, driving up the cost of lending and reducing the amount of borrowing. Thus inflation is brought under control again.

Basically then, debt supplies money, and more money is a key factor influencing inflation, or, the cost of living. It is not the only factor that drives inflation, but it is a large part of it.

Inflation nation

Let us return then to our example of America and its current ballooning debt. How can America continue to pay just the *interest* on its debt? (Never mind the principal itself.) Again, it does this by borrowing and creating new money. What is the effect of this? It is the slow,

progressive devaluing of its currency, which may ultimately lead to the collapse of the US dollar.

Unfortunately, this scenario seems all too inevitable because America's ballooning debt problem means it has to keep creating money to feed the debt habit.

Is New Zealand any different? We certainly have our own fair share of debt as a nation, and I guess that when the debt time bomb goes off, it is unlikely that we will avoid the global economic carnage that will follow.

Personally, I think it is a good time to pay off debt if you can, and it is certainly a time to avoid getting into it as much as possible.

A sin debt

Having considered this, let me talk to you now about a debt of a different kind. The impossibility of America paying off the trillions of dollars in debt that it owes is not unlike a similar debt problem that each one of us faces in a personal sense. I am talking about the fact that every single one of us is born into the impossible situation of ever making good the wrongs that we have committed in the sight of God.

You see, we are all guilty of breaking God's holy law: lying, stealing,

adultery—the list could go on. The penalty of sin is death, and not just physical death, but eternal separation from God in a place called the Lake of Fire.

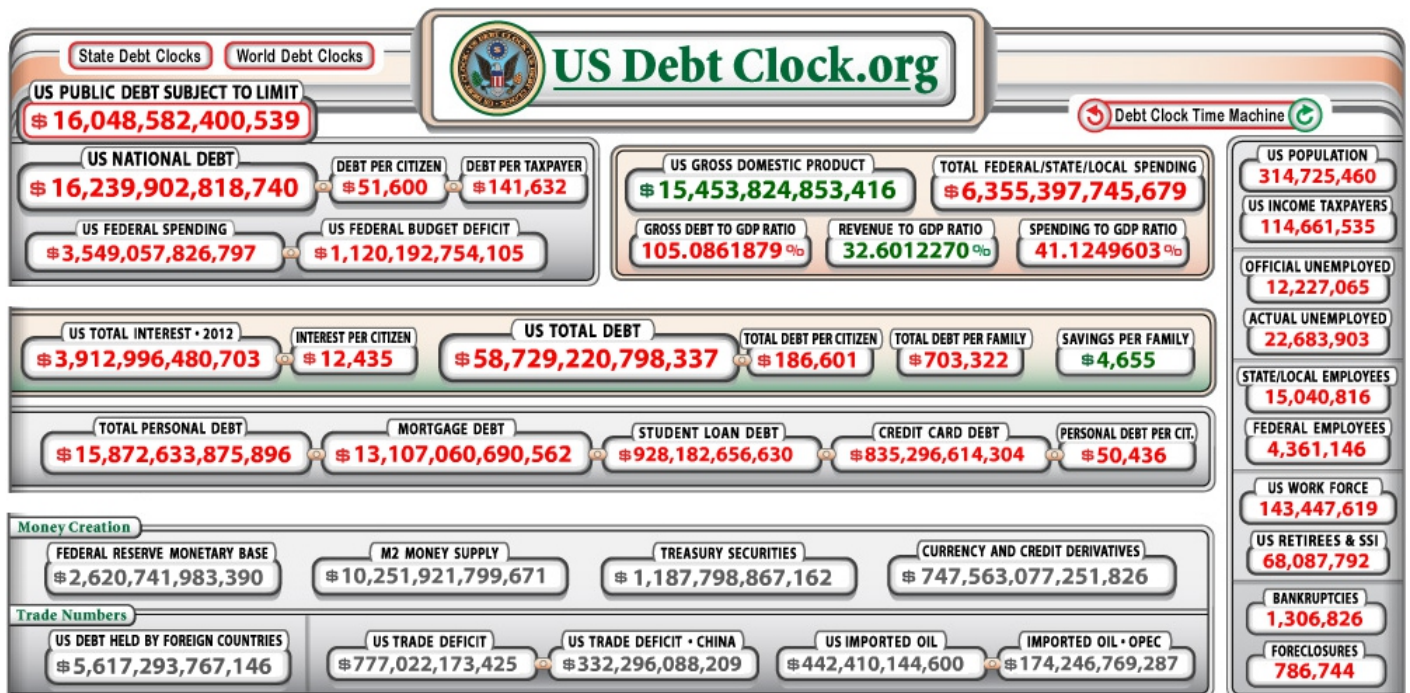
Because God is just, he must judge all sin. Justice demands that the penalty is paid. Here then we see the impossible situation that we are in: all have sinned and therefore all are guilty of death. Our debt is beyond us.

However, though this is the real state of mankind, God is merciful and loves us, desiring that none should perish in Hell. God sent his own Son into the world to die on the cross for our sins and suffer the penalty of death in our place.

You could say that Jesus came to pay our debt, and now, our sin having been punished in him, God can righteously offer forgiveness to all those who turn from a life of disobedience and believe on him.

Why not get free of the debt of sin today and find Jesus as your personal Saviour? If you would like to discover more about how you can do this, please feel free to contact us, as we would love to help you.

Jason Daniels is the pastor of the Motueka Christian Fellowship. ■



This snapshot of the US debt clock (www.usdebtclock.org) shows the way it was at 12:30 p.m. Wednesday 7 November 2012. The US public debt is over 16 trillion dollars. Are you having trouble visualising 16 trillion? Think of it this way. Imagine you save \$1 every second from the start of 2013. That's not bad: you'd be saving \$3,600 an hour and over \$31 million after one year. But how long would it take you to save 16 trillion dollars? Answer: just over 500,000 years!

world, and lose his own soul?" (Mark 8: 36) "And as it

Fallen

A popular book series for young adults features intimacy with fallen angels

If you've browsed through the young adult section of just about any major bookstore in recent years, you may have noticed a striking thing: paranormal/occult is a prominent theme.

Since the Harry Potter series took the world of children by storm in the late '90s and 2000s, this theme has gained huge popularity. With Harry, children were introduced in an entertaining way to basic concepts, both real and fictitious, of witchcraft and the occult. With Harry, evil is cute.

Now the Potter fans are growing up, developing more sophisticated and mature tastes. New books have emerged, which brew the paranormal with two winning ingredients: romance and youth culture. Some of the most popular are those of the *Fallen* series by Lauren Kate. An international bestseller, *Fallen* is about the teenage Luce (like "Lucifer"), a girl who falls in love with a fallen angel. (Biblically, a fallen angel is a heavenly angel who rebelled against God.) According to a Brisbane retailer, *Fallen* has found a following among twelve-year-olds, something many previous similarly-themed books failed to do.

The *Fallen* promotional material reads: DEFY TIME, DEFY HISTORY, DEFY GOD. Read those last two words again: DEFY GOD. Do you see the not-so-subtle message put before young readers? By mixing occult themes with a good story, humour and romance—all in light-hearted entertainment—young minds who might not otherwise be interested in such dark subjects are sipping it like syrup.

Fallen presents theology from the perspective of its characters: largely, fallen angels and demons. Here's a sample of its theology:

- Fallen angels are cool.
- *Nephilim* are cool and have special powers. (In the books, Luce goes to school with young *Nephilim*. "Nephilim" is the Hebrew term for the children of fallen angels who had relations with women in the days of Noah. The Bible shows that they were wicked and opposed to God.)
- Relationships between girls and evil spirits aren't so bad.
- The people of Sodom and Gomorrah, the ancient cities which God destroyed (for their wickedness), were poorly treated by God, the Great Tyrant.
- Reincarnation happens.

But they're only novels!

These are more than just stories. Effectively, such books seem



Sign of the times: titles involving witchcraft, vampires and the paranormal are prominent in the young adult sections of bookstores.

also to be a front for the New Age, the false doctrine permeating every level of Western societies. These ideas would not have been so readily accepted in teen fiction twenty years ago, but humanity suffers from the Slowly Boiling Frog syndrome: raise the heat slowly over several decades and the frog won't know it's being cooked.

What's the danger?

Are such stories harmless entertainment or do they pose real dangers to young people? Occult-based novels like these sow *seed ideas* and thoughts into the minds of readers. Let these little seeds find fertile ground, water them well, and they will stir people to pull down any Biblical knowledge they hold to instead build a new doctrine—a New Age

doctrine—that displaces God, sweeps sin under the carpet and encourages a reaching out to spiritual entities (read "demonic spirits") for counsel and comfort. Little seeds sown become large weeds when grown. A generation raised on these ideas will be self-righteous, haters of God and misled about spiritual and eternal truths. The result will be young people who reject the salvation offered by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and instead become ensnared in occult beliefs.

As our Harry Potter generation ages and discovers its spiritual thirst, it will turn for answers to what it already knows

is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the


through the great entertainment engines of our culture: books, film and popular music. These industries by and large rush to express their occult ideas, but they dread to approach true, Biblical Christianity.

The Bible shows that in the last days many will follow demonic teachings. Satan knows how to move young people to do this, and unfortunately, publishers and movie makers are quick to help him out. Don't let wrong ideas about spirituality and eternity penetrate your minds or your children's minds through the deceitfulness of exciting books, movies or ideas. Go instead to the Bible, which gives you the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14: 6).

Realise that when you die, you will not be reincarnated. If you die without Jesus Christ being your Lord and Saviour, you will die in your sins, having no forgiveness. You will spend eternity in Hell and the Lake of Fire (Revelation 20: 15). If you believe and follow Jesus Christ, you are forgiven of your sins, and you will spend a fantastic eternity with God and his people. This is what God wants for you. He *wants you* to know and follow Jesus. Have confidence in God's Word, the Bible. His hands are already held out in an open invitation.

Lauren Kate, author of the Fallen series, visited Nelson in 2011 and was well received by young fans. Her latest book of the series, Rapture, was released in June. ■


Want to know more?



Motueka Christian Fellowship
25 WOODLANDS AVENUE, MOTUEKA

Pastors Jason & Heather Daniels and the fellowship warmly welcome you to their services: Sunday 9:30 a.m. & 7:00 p.m.;
Wednesdays 7:00 p.m.

Where everybody is somebody and Jesus is Lord!



Are you good enough to go to Heaven?

Everlasting life is not something to be earned. Jesus offers it as a free gift.

As we grow up, we learn that our behaviour is *measured*. Children learn that if they're good, they'll receive a reward. If they're bad, then in some unpleasant way, they'll be disciplined. Even after they've grown and have come into the workplace their behaviour and performance is measured. A good worker receives a reward. A bad employee will be shown the door.

It's natural then to think that when we pass from this life through death's door, we must measure up to some standard. Most of us understand that nobody's perfect, so we reason that those who have done enough good deeds in this life will receive a reward in the next one—entry into Heaven. Those who have done more evil deeds than good simply don't qualify—they will be the ones who are punished in Hell. It's easy to think of people like this: Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin and Pol Pot come easily to mind. Yet we don't so easily place ourselves in that category.

The Bible teaches that we *do indeed* need to measure up, but it's to *God's* standard. Life is not like a school exam where we only have to get more than fifty percent to pass. God's standard is *one hundred percent*. That's how good we have to be to get everlasting life. One hundred percent good. Who do you know who is like that?

How can we receive everlasting life and escape the judgement of Hell if we have to be one hundred percent good? Who has done this? What about all the bad things I've done already? Am I already disqualified?

The answer is Jesus Christ. Jesus is the one hundred

percent good man. He is the one—the only one—who has measured up to God's standard. Not only that, but he died on the cross instead of us, which means that he took all of the penalty due to us for our own sin. If God the Father placed that penalty on God the Son, then there's no need for us to pay the penalty!

Can I be good enough to go to Heaven? The answer is No. I can't be. There is a sinful nature within me that causes me to sin over and over again and ever be disqualified.

The good news is that if I genuinely believe in my heart that Jesus died on the cross for me, and I commit to allowing God to change my heart from a position of selfishness to a position of service to him, I will be saved. We are saved *by faith in what Jesus Christ did and allowing God to convert us* from our selfish and sinful way of life to a new life—a life with Jesus within. Then our good works should be those that glorify God, not those to earn salvation. For a human race that is already condemned, salvation cannot be earned. Our sins must be *forgiven*.

Pray and ask God to forgive you for *your* sins. Give your life to Jesus today. There really is no alternative to the Gospel message. We must have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and repent (turn from) our sins if we are to be saved.

Be wonderfully released in your heart by knowing that when you die, you will go to Heaven. You don't have to strive for some pass mark that is impossible to achieve! Jesus offers you salvation as a free gift! You must take it! ■

judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of

Unlocking the mystery of life

Our ability to see inside the cell has made some scientists rethink evolution

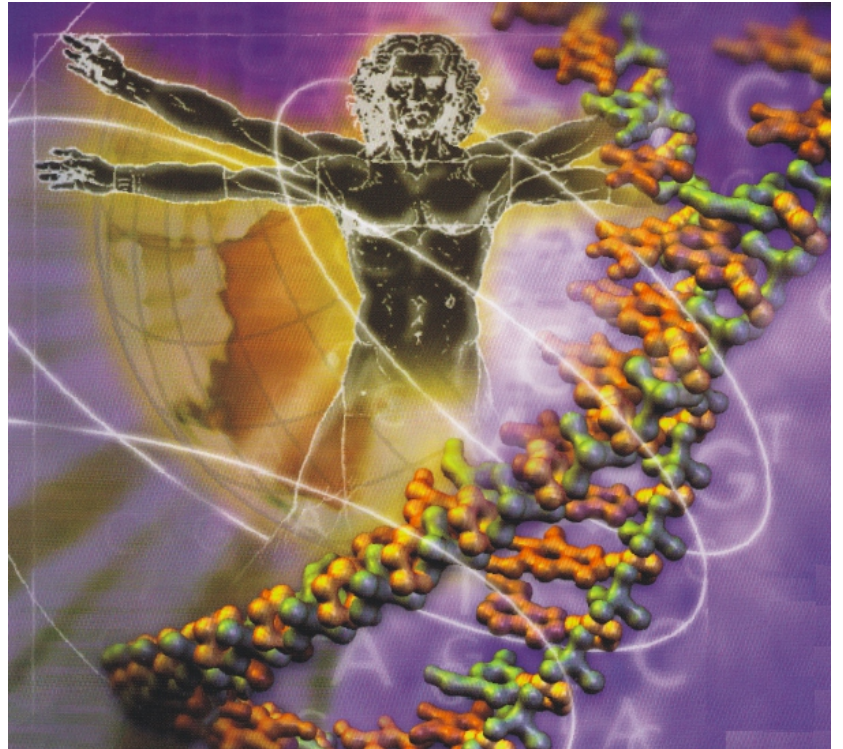
Pajaro Dunes, California is a sleepy seaside resort where waves wash a sandy shore and gulls caw over crashing surf. Here philosophers and scientists gather.

They have come to consider a perplexing question. For many, this retreat will mark a turning point academically, professionally and spiritually.

There are big names here: Dr Dean Kenyon, one of the world's leading chemical evolution theorists from the late 1960s to the early 1980s, and Dr Michael Behe, Professor of Biological Sciences at Lehigh University of Pennsylvania. Behe wrote *Darwin's Black Box*, said by *National Review* and *World* magazines to be one of the one hundred most important books of the twentieth century.

Such was the situation in 1993. Here is the problem they faced. Charles Darwin, the originator of the theory of evolution, had it easy. When he sailed to the Galapagos Archipelago in the early 1830s, he saw the diverse wildlife of these islands and theorised how entirely natural processes could change (evolve) whole life forms. He observed that Galapagos finches with long beaks were able to break through the hard shells of nuts remaining in times of drought and access the seeds inside. But finches with short beaks, unable to access the seeds, would starve and die. So, he realised, the gene that caused finches to have long beaks provided an advantage. Natural processes ensured that long beaks would survive and short beaks would die. The gene for short beaks would not continue, and thus nature “selected” one trait over another to sustain life forms that were efficient, enduring machines.

Such is the theory of evolution. It explains the diversity of life that we find on earth, from pink flamingos to elephants, to humans, without the need of God to design them. The problem



the Pajaro scientists faced, however, was that in today's world with our modern technology, we can see far more than what Darwin could see in his generation. Darwin observed the lives and basic structures of a wide variety of animals from around the world. But now we can look right inside their cells and see how they operate.

If Darwin's theory of evolution is to remain the accepted scientific dogma for the origin of life, it must not only explain life at the *macro* level—long beaks and short beaks—it must also explain how life at the *micro* level came to be—the machinations of tiny cells that are so small, they had to exist



When Charles Darwin, the British naturalist, set sail for a survey for the British Empire in 1831, he came to the Galapagos, a chain of volcanic islands six hundred miles off the coast of Ecuador. The mammals, birds and reptiles he saw there were unlike any he had ever seen before.

of many . . .” (Hebrews 9: 27-28)



with all their parts in the beginning, otherwise they could never have functioned. What the Pajaro scientists realised was that for evolution theory, explaining this is a very difficult thing to do.

Chemical evolution

Dr Dean Kenyon tried to explain how the very first, tiny life forms might have formed by the theory of *chemical evolution* in his book, *Biological Predestination* (1969; one of the two best-selling advanced level books on chemical evolution). However, later feeling unsatisfied with his explanation, with reference to Pajaro Dunes, he said:

I would have to say that this was an intense period of time in my life. It just seemed that there was something here much more intellectually satisfying than the view that I had held up until this time.

Kenyon was speaking of the growing realisation among the Pajaro scientists that the theory of evolution *could not* explain how life began and that there could be only one possible explanation for life's origin. Dr Paul Nelson put it this way:

I think Pajaro Dunes represented a turning point for many of us. Individually we all had questions



about evolutionary theory, but when we came together, each person brought something of their own to the table, and suddenly we all had a glimpse of a new way of looking at life that none of us had individually seen before.

Behe:

Looking back on it now, I think that gave me the motivation to actually look at the evidence and just see where I thought it pointed.

Where the evidence pointed, these scientists believed, was to *intelligent design*.

The theory of evolution

Charles Darwin, a British naturalist, was twenty-two years old when he left home in 1831 to set sail on a survey for the British Empire. He stayed on the Galapagos Islands for over a month, took many notes and returned home. Twenty-five years later, he published *The Origin of Species*. In this, Darwin argued that all life on earth was purely the result of natural forces—that no God had ever had a hand in the creation of the diverse forms of life that we find in the world around us.

Until this time, the idea that God had created the world and all life upon it seemed unquestionable. Yet Darwin had developed a theory supported by scientific observation and logic to explain how the varied, efficient and abundant life we find here might have formed without being designed by a Creator.

His theory was powerful: random genetic variations, which by chance gave advantages to the organism, would be maintained and inherited by succeeding generations. By this process, piece by piece, generation after generation, the physical makeup of whole populations would be altered, and over a long period of time, very different and more advanced organisms would emerge. This Darwin called “natural selection”.

His theory of natural selection (evolution) is now a basic assumption in most fields of science and academia. However, despite its wide acceptance, a growing number of scientists and scholars, including those who met at Pajaro Dunes, are challenging key aspects of Darwin's theory.

Through the magnifying glass

In the nineteenth century, when Darwin was alive, scientists thought that the foundation of life, the cell, was something like a simple glob of jelly. In the last sixty years, however, our

knowledge of the cell has exploded. Today, powerful technologies reveal elaborate, microscopic worlds. Each single-celled bacterium is packed with circuits, assembly instructions and miniature machines of a complexity that Darwin could never have dreamed.

Behe explains:

At the very basis of life, where molecules and cells run the show, we've discovered machines—literally molecular machines. There are little molecular trucks that carry supplies from one end of the cell to the other. There are machines that capture the energy from sunlight and turn it into useable energy. When we look at these machines, we ask ourselves, "Where do they come from?" The standard answer, Darwinian evolution, is very inadequate in my view.

A good example of such a tiny machine is the Bacterial Flagellum. These have molecular motors that drive them through liquid—motors that depend on a system of intricately arranged mechanical parts. Biochemists have used electron micrographs to identify the parts and structure of the Flagellum motor. They have revealed a marvel of engineering on a miniature scale. Professor Scott Minnich explains:

Howard Berg at Harvard has labelled it the most efficient machine in the universe. These machines are running at 100,000 r.p.m. and are hard-wired into a sensory mechanism so that it's getting feedback on the environment.

Dr Jed Macosko:

If this article has interested you and you would like to hear the Pajaro Dunes scientists for yourself, the *Unlocking the Mystery of Life* DVD is available from:

Focus on the Family New Zealand
P O Box 911016
Victoria Street West
Auckland 1142
www.focusonthefamily.co.nz

The DVD shows excellent computer graphics of the inner workings of a cell.

The Evangel will give away **FIVE COPIES FOR FREE**. Just post to us your name and postal address to DVD Giveaway, 9 Kowhai Crescent, Motueka 7120. Five names will be drawn from a hat on 20 January 2013.

Even though they're spinning that fast, they can stop on a dime. It only takes a quarter turn for them to stop and shift directions, and start spinning 100,000 r.p.m. in the other direction.

Behe:

Just like outboard motors on motorboats, it has a large number of parts that are necessary for the motor to work.

Behe's study of the Bacterial Flagellum led him to coin a new term to describe these miniature marvels: "irreducible complexity".

Irreducible complexity

Irreducible complexity is the idea that a cell or organism contains many parts, and all of these parts are necessary for the system to function. If only one part is removed, the function of the whole system is stopped. So the question arises, how could

an organism have formed by evolution when it needed all of its parts present and functioning in the beginning?

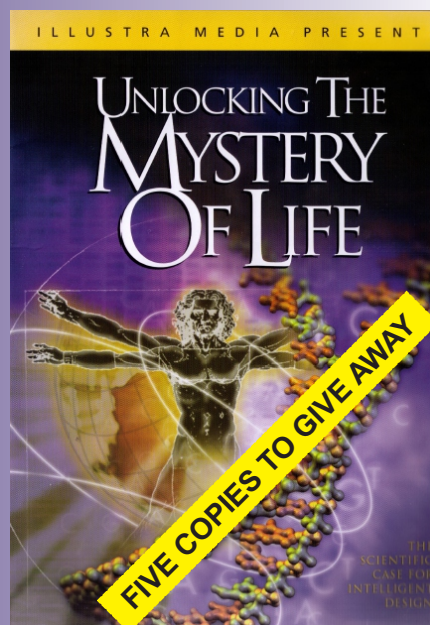
Applying this idea to the Bacterial Flagellum, Behe states:

There are about forty different protein parts which are necessary for this machine to work. If any of those parts are missing, then either you get a Flagellum that doesn't work because it's missing the hook or it's missing the drive shaft . . . or it doesn't even get built within the cell.

How to build a car

When we assemble a car, we must first have the right number of parts available at the right time and in the right place, and these parts must be assembled in a sequential order: the chassis must be welded together before fitting the wheels. There must be constant checking to know when a task is complete and when the next task can begin. The same rules apply to nature when cells are built. Cells are built from parts. These parts must be assembled. There are checking systems in place to switch on and off various tasks to complete the job.

Moreover, we know that complex robots are used to build cars. Machines build machines. So it is in the biological realm.



Biological machines build other biological machines. If any of these machines are missing, the cell won't get built. So *the whole system* of building these tiny cellular machines is itself irreducibly complex—all the parts and processes are needed along the way.

This idea is not lost on these scientists. How can such an irreducibly complex system be built by trial and error (the system proposed by Darwin)? How can evolution theory explain this? It cannot.

One hundred and fifty years ago, scientists did not know about irreducible complexity. However, Charles Darwin anticipated that such an idea could cause problems for his theory. He said:

If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed, which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down.

Charles Darwin

The evidence points to God

Scientists who believe in evolution theory must constantly remind themselves that what they see has not been designed and built by a master builder. This must be a very difficult thing to do. How did these miniature machines have their parts assembled in the first place? Who supplied the parts and the machines that made them? What assembled them, and where did the assembly instructions come from? These are questions that scientists *must* try to answer, unless they simply believe what the Bible, the Word of God says about the world's Creator.

It is much easier to believe that God created life, for when

we see evidence of such clever design, as we do in the flowers, trees and animals that we are so familiar with, we naturally think of a designer. Why then has the idea that life has *evolved* held such a prominent place in our culture? Why has it become the foundation of the sciences and academia? It is not because it has better logic than the Bible does, but because it is *convenient*—it conveniently provides an alternative for sin.

By embracing evolution theory, men can indulge their need for answers while at the same time believe that there is no God to answer to; there is no God to obey. People can then feel that they can live their lives as they please without fear of eternal judgement. Such is the deceitfulness of a man's heart, that he is willing to believe the absurd so he can indulge himself in sin.

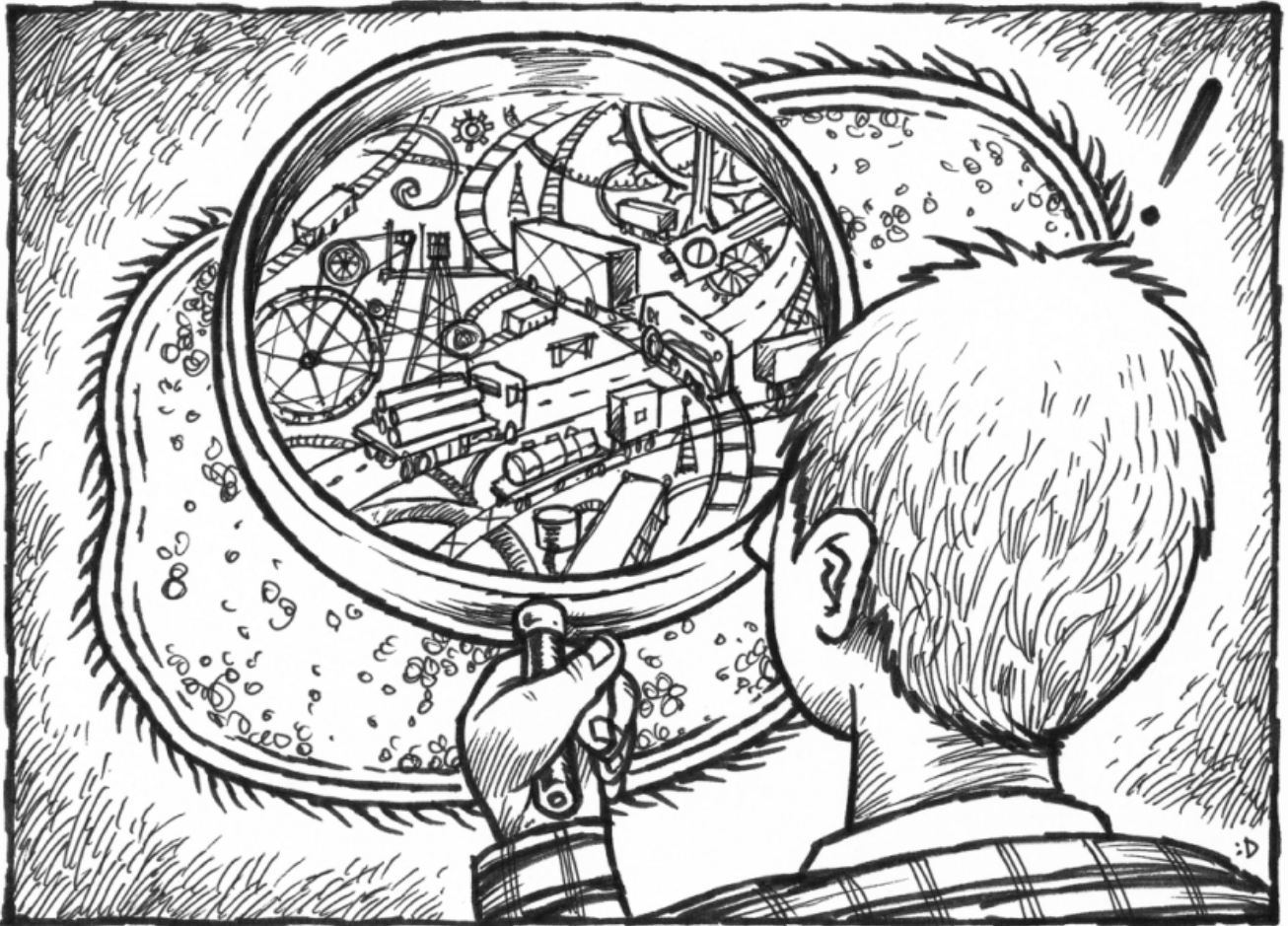
Unwittingly, the world has treated the question of life's origin as a *spiritual* one, not a scientific one, by *shutting down arguments* against evolution.

The Pajaro scientists were *open to truth*. They were willing to go to where the evidence pointed. If you don't know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, we encourage you to go to where the evidence points too. Speaking of Jesus Christ, the Apostle John wrote:

All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.
(John 1: 3)

Jesus Christ, God's Son made this world. He made all of the tiny creatures and the big ones too. He made you, and he loves you. He died for you.

If you would like to see the fascinating documentary about the Pajaro scientists, then order your copy today—see the advertisement on page 9. There are some to give away! ■



Seeing afar off

Jacob and Esau were twins. Each had a different vision. Which one are you like?

You have probably heard of Abraham. You may even have heard of Isaac. But you may not have heard of Jacob and Esau.

Abraham was the father of the Israelites and Isaac was his son. Jacob and Esau were Isaac's sons and they were twins.

There was a struggle between the two boys in the womb. This was a picture of the struggle that would occur between them in latter years.

The Bible tells the story of Rebekah, their mother, while she was carrying them. It reads:

And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to inquire of the LORD.

And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb.

And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment; and they called his name Esau.

And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel; and his name was called Jacob. . . (Genesis 25: 22-26)

Never mind being red and hairy all over like a garment. The key feature here is that as they were being born, Jacob reached out his hand and took hold of Esau's heel.

"Jacob" means "heel-catcher", or, "supplanter"—an appropriate name. By taking hold of his brother's heel, Jacob (without knowing it) showed that at some point during his life, he would supplant his elder brother as heir of the birthright—the special privileges in the Hebrew culture afforded to the firstborn son of a family.

As years passed by, the two boys exhibited quite different personalities. Esau was "a man of the field" and Jacob was "a plain man [moral and gentle], dwelling in tents." Esau liked to roam the fields shooting game for meat. Jacob, on the other hand, liked to stay around the home.

Perhaps Jacob preferred to stay near the home because he was intrigued by the stories his mother and father told him: they were Godly parents and they imparted much knowledge about their heavenly Father, God's creation of the world and



the flood in the days of Noah. All of these things Jacob carefully absorbed, and doubtless, he spent the quiet times among the tents and flocks thinking on these spiritual things.

Jacob knew that the birthright brought a special blessing, and that blessing was appointed to Esau.

One day, when Esau came in from the field particularly hungry and weak, he found Jacob cooking a pot of stew. Politely asking for a bowl of it, Esau had something like the following exchange with Jacob:

Esau Please may I have some of that stew you're cooking, for I am faint and weary.

Jacob I will give you this stew in exchange for your birthright. Sell it to me now.

Esau I am faint enough to die. What benefit will it bring me? I sell it to you.

Have you considered where you will be in five years . . . or ten years? What about in fifty years or five hundred years?

Esau carelessly traded his birthright for a serving of stew. The understanding between the brothers was plain. There would be no going back on Esau's word.

Receiving the blessing

Many years later, their father Isaac, now old, blind and unaware of the transaction, knew that he might soon die. The time had come to bestow final blessings upon his sons. He instructed Esau to fetch meat from the field and to cook and prepare it. Then, he said, he would bless him.

Behind the curtain, Rebekah listened. She knew well the

differences between her sons. What would Esau do with a spiritual blessing? Did not Jacob value these things more than he? What Rebekah did next was fraudulent, but it was her attempt to ensure that the blessing fell to Jacob, not Esau.

Rebekah told Jacob to feign himself as Esau before his blind father. *Jacob* would fetch two kids from the flock, Rebekah would prepare the meat, and Jacob would present it to him. If only Jacob would wear the garments of his brother and cover his arms with goat's skin (remember, Esau was very hairy), Isaac would be fooled into believing that Jacob was Esau.

So it happened. Initially suspicious, when Isaac felt Jacob's arms, he was satisfied that this was indeed his firstborn son, the heir of the birthright blessing. He blessed Jacob.

Now, Isaac was a man of great faith in God. When he spoke in blessing, he did so prophetically, revealing the will of God. The blessing that was intended for Esau was imparted to Jacob. Yet God knew about Jacob's deceit and he let it happen. Why did God let his blessing fall upon Jacob instead of Esau?

Seeing afar off

Jacob valued spiritual and eternal things, things to do with

God. When we think of Jacob, we think of a young man who was spiritually hungry. He realised that there was more to life than what we can see and touch in this physical world!

Then there was Esau, who received the same instruction as Jacob, but with him there was not the same respect and spiritual clinging that Jacob showed. When confronted with the sale of his birthright, he *did* sell it—for a mere bowl of stew to satisfy his appetite for a moment. A man of the field, he was always busy about worldly things, but he saw little value in Godly things.

A key fact about these two brothers is that one could see only what is now, only what is today. The other could see afar off.

There are many people in this world just like Esau. When confronted with Bible facts about eternity, sin, judgement and everlasting life, they quickly turn away. Satisfied only with what pertains to this life, to this world, to money, pleasure, possessions and careers, thoughts of an afterlife are empty to them. The farthest they can see is to the end of this life. Indeed, more often, they can only see a few years ahead if they're lucky.

Yet there are also people who are just like Jacob. To them,

How do we recognise *design*?

Take a look at this old rock on the left. Thousands of years of wind and rain have eroded it into the shape you see here. The nose, the eyes, the mouth and chin, they are all just the chance effects of nature. Aren't they? Can they be? Do you recognise special features that make you see that more than just chance is involved?

What is it that makes us recognise that this has been *designed* and *built* rather than naturally formed?



Firstly, it has a familiar pattern: we recognise two eyes, a nose, a mouth and a chin. Secondly, it is improbable that these could form by the erosion of wind and rain. Moreover, the rock is standing upright in a prominent place. If we could see more to the right, we would see other similar shapes standing beside it. We conclude that an ancient culture designed and built these figures and placed them where they stand today. Though we were not around to see them do this, none would consider a different explanation.

We recognise design whenever we see highly improbable objects that conform to a recognisable pattern.

Now see the young girl

on the right. Do you think she is the product of chance, as evolutionists would tell us, or design? She is made up of a multitude of complex parts: all are needed, all have a function. That we have come into existence by the chance effects of nature is not only improbable, but impossible. We ought to recognise that we were placed here by an *intelligence*.

That intelligence is *God*. You and I were not around to see him make the first man and woman, of course, but thousands of years later, we see evidence of his work in ourselves, in our children and in the other creatures that we share our earthly home with.

Wouldn't it be fascinating to know how the ancient culture of Easter Island formed those massive statues and transported them to where they stand today? What was their reason? Why did they go to such trouble? These questions have plagued historians for decades. Yet wouldn't it be even more fascinating to know why *God made us*?

What was his reason? Why go to so much trouble, given our track record? You can know the answers because the Bible tells you.

God made people to love him and serve him in a special way. He has given everyone a free choice. In your life on this earth, you have the opportunity to make that choice to love him.

If you have not yet asked God into your life so you can have that special relationship with him, please see the article on page 6, "Are you good enough to go to Heaven?" God would love you to get to know him. He wants to be your special friend.



You can put your own face in here. You were made by God.

there is something about God that draws them. There is something about eternity that excites them. Knowing that the end of this life is not the end of their existence, they value the understanding that the Bible gives them. Jacob was like this. He was subject to the same temptations as we all are, yet he valued eternal things more than temporary pleasures. He was willing to see afar off and stake his future in the things of God.

He sought it carefully with tears

Hundreds of years later, the writer of the New Testament book of Hebrews, drawing on Esau as an example, exhorted the Christians:

Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; . . .

Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. (Hebrews 12: 15-17)

See here that the writer calls Esau “profane”. “Profane” here means “to lack relationship or affinity with God”.

The writer also likened Esau to a fornicator. Why? “Fornicator” here is a translation of the Greek *pornos*, which means “a male prostitute, i.e. one who sells himself.” By selling his spiritual inheritance, Esau effectively *sold himself*.

For the price of stew, he sold his future.

Esau sold his birthright to satisfy his appetite because he did not value heavenly things.

Consider how many people do this very thing, for Esau is given as an example of who not to be like. Countless people, not valuing the way of Jesus Christ, sell themselves to this world, fulfilling their lusts and appetites for a brief moment of pleasure. Life is brief. Sadly, in refusing to live for Jesus Christ, they lose their opportunity of a secure future in eternity, after they have passed through the doors of death.

Like Esau, their life's end will be marked with tears. Did you know that your death will not be your end?

Look to the future

Have you considered where will you be in five years . . . or ten years? What about in fifty years or five hundred years? The Bible shows that you are an eternal being, and you will spend eternity in either one of two places: in glory with Jesus Christ or in Hell with the disobedient.

There are many distractions today: T.V., movies, cell phones, relationships, music, entertainment . . . It seems that there is always something to give yourself to for the moment, something to distract you enough to keep you from thinking about things that really matter.

This life is the only chance you have to be forgiven of your sins and be saved eternally. Don't be like Esau. Be like Jacob and see afar off. Value your eternal future. Have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and follow him, so that just like Jacob, you will inherit an everlasting, heavenly reward. ■

The Bible shows that you are an eternal being, and you will spend eternity in either one of two places: in glory with Jesus Christ or in Hell with the disobedient.

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Saved and renewed

Addictions are hard taskmasters, as **ROBBIE MOAHO** of Motueka found out. He thought his life would be cut short, *but Jesus intervened*. Robbie tells us in his own words.

ROBBIE MOAHO

I'm so grateful to God for all he's done for me. He has blessed me in so many ways: he's given me a new life, a life worth living, and an eternal future to look forward to. It was never like this for me for most of my life.

I struggled with a dysfunctional upbringing. My parents were so very different: my dad of Ngati Ruanui / Tainui descent, and my mum of Scottish Southland ancestry. My life has been through many moments, some harder than others: addictions, institutions, periods of incarceration for cannabis use, unemployment, ill health, depression and just living from a day-to-day existence with all the unique challenges that arise now and again. Children (I have seven daughters) were part of those. Now they are young adults.

I arrived at a point of decision in my life when I became unwell and my mortality hung in the balance. I could not have gone any lower than where I was. If it was not for my children, life for me was definitely over. But I think God had a plan for me because around this time I met Pastor Bill Stephen of the former Motueka New Life Church and Pastor Jason Daniels, now of the Motueka Christian Fellowship. These both supported me and counselled me in the Word of God, the Bible. I found fellowship with a new family: brothers and sisters in the Lord at our church, where I have been for eleven years now.

Eleven years ago I gave my heart to the Lord. What a journey of self discovery, patience, tolerance, forgiveness and repentance! I sought to be the best father, husband, son and friend I could possibly be. Prior to giving my heart to the Lord, I remember thinking how good I was in my own eyes. But then God took me through a continual daily process, showing me my short-comings. I saw how filthy my rags really were.

I have stood at the base of many mountains in my life and there were times when I felt they were unconquerable. But with Jesus, I have managed to get a few of those peaks behind me. Jesus helped me get there, and he helps me by letting me



know that I don't have to look back or go back. Having no shackles and chains gives one a sense of liberty . . . tobacco, alcohol, anger . . . just to mention a few. But I'm still light years away from being perfect.

I sometimes still say wrong things when I shouldn't. But I'm a lot more mindful of others and their needs than I used to be. I have no desire to impress upon others the life I lived

before I was saved; only the life I have now with Jesus as my Lord and Saviour.

I'm so thankful to Jesus for giving me a grateful and expectant heart and the desire to care and share the love of the Saviour. The Word of God has a

The Word of God has a wonderful message of salvation for the downtrodden, the unfortunates and the misunderstands of this world. ROBBIE MOAHO

wonderful message of salvation for the downtrodden, the unfortunates and the misunderstands of this world. Hope through faith in God exists! "Ask that ye will receive" is a life now worth living. Thank you. ■

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