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Topic: Intelligent Design

A Case for A Creator Misrepresents
Science and Perverts Philosophy to
Justify Dangerous Theism
- Part 1, Introduction

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by Nate A. Lindell, 15 Sept. 2016

the chaplain here in my prison

invited me to come out of my cell to visit with a lady who comes in and tries to save prisoners' souls. I agreed, intending to save her from the ideology that crippled her mind; and I immediately told her so.

I challenged her to read Lawrence Krauss's A Universe from Nothing, in exchange for me reading any book she chose that scientifically demonstrated that God created the world (i.e. Creationism).¹ I promised to study her book, because I intended to critique it here..

As I chatted with her I realized my reason was wasted on her. Matter didn't matter to her. So, for example, despite the very book she referred me to acknowledging that the Earth is at least millions of years old,² she stubbornly parroted the Christian Fundamentalist/
Literalist³ belief that the Earth is only around 7,000 years old.⁴ She believed that several thousand years ago⁵ Noah crammed seven pairs of every kosher animal and one pair of non-kosher animals⁶ on an ark that was 155 meters by 26 and 15.5 meters high, which floated for 150 days, fed those millions of animals for 240+ days, then released them to repopulate a wiped out planet, creating all the animals now existing.⁷ No scientist, not even one believing in Intelligent Design,⁸ can seriously argue that either of those beliefs are possibly true; evidence shows they're fantasy.⁹

There was no way for me to communicate with the lady on this topic, because she disbelieved any evidence contrary to her religion. Her defense to evidence that showed her beliefs were false was "A miracle happened!" Her religion defended itself by threatening severe, eternal punishment to disbelievers¹⁰ and eternal life in paradise to blind believers.¹¹ The truth that God did not exist promised nothing... but freedom and

responsibility.⁽¹²⁾

You can carefully explain to someone that two plus two equals four all you want, but if either a) they don't want to believe, or b) their mind isn't capable of grasping the concept, you'll never convince them that two plus two equals four, especially if miracles can happen. So, I stopped visiting with that lady but did study the book she recommended, A Case for A Creator, by Lee Strobel.

The science and philosophy in A Case for A Creator is complex. People without the right education will inevitably be impressed by the explanations given by supposed experts... even if their claims are false, as some are in Strobel's book. Yes, Christians who claim to be scientists try to deceive people into believing in intelligent design of the Biblical variety. So I'm writing this series of articles, primarily for those without a college education, to expose the dirty "science" and tricky philosophy that Strobel's book (and those like it) uses to try and bamboozle people into believing that science supports their religious beliefs.⁽¹³⁾ (Some Muslims claim the same about Islam.)

The Theism promoted by Strobel and his kind is dangerous.

Consider this analogy - Your house is on fire, but instead of trying to put it out with water you pray that God will do it, or dump buckets full of "spirit" on it. This happens in real life when Christians deny medical care for their diabetic children,⁽¹⁴⁾ instead praying for God to heal them. It happens when exorcisms are performed on mentally ill people,⁽¹⁵⁾ instead of properly treating them. It results in some Christians holding poisonous snakes,⁽¹⁶⁾ praying if bit, with bad results. It results in ruining our environment⁽¹⁷⁾ and our society⁽¹⁸⁾ - believers don't care about the extinction of animals, global warming, pollution or social ills,⁽¹⁹⁾ because one day Jesus is gonna return and create a new Earth.⁽²⁰⁾ Satan rules the world,⁽²¹⁾ they believe, so of course it's gonna be messed up - no sense trying to fix things because it's the eternal after life, not this life, that matters.⁽²²⁾

By now you've noticed an excessive amount of footnotes in this article. Makes it look more scholarly, more supported by facts, more credible. It's a tactic Lee Strobel used in A Case for a Creator. The difference between his use of footnotes and mine is that I'm not misrepresenting the beliefs or intent of people quoted out of context, while Strobel did multiple times. I'm not trying to confuse people into believing a "supreme being" must have created the Universe and life on Earth.

Thus the anti-bamboozlement begins.

Notes:

1. There are multiple versions of Creationism, a belief that life on Earth was created by some being. Here I'm referring to the Judeo-Christian belief based on Genesis chapter one in The Bible, which says that the Universe and life on Earth were created by God in six days. (See note 4, below, for clarification.)

2. One of the experts cited by Strobel acknowledged that the Universe is billions of years old (p. 128) and another states that life on Earth is at least 500 million years old. (p. 51)

3. Christian Fundamentalists are Biblical Literalists. They believe that what The Bible says is literally true, such as Genesis 1:31's statement that the Universe and life on Earth were created in six days. (But see note 4, below.)

4. This belief of Christian Fundamentalists is based on several Bible verses: Genesis 2:17 (God told Adam that if he ate from a particular tree, "on that day you will certainly die!"), Genesis 5:5 (After Adam ate from the forbidden fruit he lived 'til he was 930 years old); 2 Peter 3:8 ("a thousand years is like a day to God"). A fine example of how people make the Bible say whatever they want it to say.

5. Literalists determine this time based on Genesis chapters 5-6, and 8:13, which describe Noah's lineage back to Adam and

his approximate age when the Flood occurred.

6. This is according to Genesis 7:2. The popular belief that Noah only brought one pair of all animals onto the ark is wrong.

7. Genesis 6:15 and 8:3-4, 13, 17 say so.

8. Intelligent Design is another name for Creationism. See note 1, above.

9. Google the number of existing animal species - mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians (many can't swim as long as the flood lasted), insects. There are thousands of species of large animals alone, many of which prey on other animals. It'd be impossible simply to fit all of those animals, just pairs of them, in a boat that's 62,965 cubic meters (with no space subtracted for the boat's internal timbering/structure). And there'd be no room to hold the food for those animals (elephants alone eat hundreds of pounds of vegetation each day) for the over 240 days they - according to Genesis 6:15, 8:3-4, 13-17 - floated in the ark.

10. This is stated in Revelation 20:7-10, 14-15; 21:8, and elsewhere.

11. This is stated in Revelation 22:1, 2, 14, and elsewhere.

12. With no God to worry about impressing, one is free, but is to blame for the results of their actions. An Atheist can't pray for God's help but must solve their own problems. Nor can an Atheist blame a God or a Devil for bad things that happen.

13. All of Strobel's experts are Creationists. Throughout the book they make unjustifiable claims that "science supports the existence of God." For example, in pp. 134-135, William Lane Craig claims that "the cause of the universe must be personal," created by a "personal Creator" with "volition or will," because science can't see into the reality before the Big Bang that caused it. But just because one can't see under a volcano doesn't mean that the lava spewing from it is being flung out by an angry demon, or a "personal Creator." What is proven is that we creatures of this Universe with limited perceptions cannot see into the reality prior

to the Big Bang. Theists may claim that they can perceive into that prior reality, but they can't prove so. Theoretical cosmologists at least may have their theories about the universe's origins scrutinized by mathematical laws that are provably true.

Craig goes on to claim in page 148 that Atheists can't believe in the Big Bang and must believe that the universe is eternal because only a supernatural being, a being beyond our reality could have caused the Big Bang. That's no more true than someone claiming that only an angry demon could cause lava to erupt from volcanoes, but Craig's meritless claim is agreeable to those who yearn to believe in a personal God whom they might appease and gain miraculous assistance ^{from} in their instinctive drive to survive. (Gustave Jahoda excellently explains this need to believe in The Psychology of Superstition.) Craig overlooks — because he wants to do so, in order to protect his belief in a personal God who promises him eternal survival for his belief — the unrefutable possibility that our universe is the product of natural processes that occurred in a pre-Big Bang reality that we can never experience, prove or understand; and just because we can't experience, prove or understand something doesn't mean a personal or aloof God did it.

Not understanding something is not proof that a miracle is responsible for it. It's proof that we don't understand something.

14. Several years ago the Wisconsin media reported a story about Christian Scientists with an ill child praying for healing rather than providing medical care, resulting in the child's death. I've seen stories like this discussed on national news too. Incidents like that, I suspect, are more common than reported, and occur more often the more rural and uneducated people are, as such people are vulnerable to the irrational claims made in The Bible because they lack the education and peer support that can protect them from embracing outrageous beliefs.

15. As a child and as an adult I witnessed Christians trying to exorcise demons from mentally ill people. The victims were terrified and the exorcisms failed.

16. "Snake shakers," a sect of Pentacostal Christians based in America's rural southeast, regularly pick up and dance with poisonous snakes, based on Mark 16:18 (says believers will drink poison and pick up poisonous snakes and not die). They drink poison too, which is diluted. The snakes are often ill, defanged, milked of poison, and when someone's bit and gets ill or dies congregants deem the victim a sinner or to have ^{had} weak faith.

17. Most of the Republican politicians who loudly denounce the belief that people are causing global warming also claim to be very Christian. E.g., Sen. Ron Johnson, who is a rabid anti-environmentalist, is also an outspoken advocate for/of "faith-based programs" supported by taxpayers. He's a Christian. Donald Trump's V.P., Mike Pence, is strongly a Fundamentalist Christian, and anti-environmentalist. The pastor of a Pentacostal church I once was part of in Onolaska, WI, Richard Eastman, once dumped a can of used oil into the church's backyard rather than properly disposing of it at a gas station, so it didn't pollute wells like the church's own - he justified it to me by saying he didn't believe the oil'd go down that far and "God is gonna make a new heaven and earth", as Revelation 21:1-2, 5 says.

18. Because Christians believe in free will - that those who do "evil" choose to do so - they believe it's right to punish evil doers rather than trying to understand the reasons for the doer's actions so as to remove or treat those factors (e.g. poverty, ignorance, abusive parent(s), mental illness) so people can see and make better "choices". (See "Do We Really Have a Choice?" posted on my blog Oct. of 2011, for an explanation of how free our will is & isn't.) This has resulted in a costly, ineffective and needlessly cruel criminal justice system and a lot of broken people. It has resulted in the abuse

of children by parents who cite the Bible's remark in Proverbs not to "spare the rod" — such Christians have fought in court for the "right" to beat their children.

The belief that people have a miraculously free will that isn't influenced by environmental (e.g. a violent neighborhood, poverty, lead poisoning — things which many prisoners have in common in their backgrounds) factors or even genetic factors (e.g. the warrior gene, the gay gene — google 'em) has led to the persecution of LGBTQ people, those with ADHD/ADD, etc, which continues to this day.

19. Why should they worry about those things when Revelation 21:1-2, 5 says God's gonna fix everything when he returns? And when bad things happen they drive people to call to God for help, as was the case with Jonah in the whale's belly, the Israelites when sent into exile, etc.

A Jehovah's Witness once gloated to me about disasters happening, because he felt they'd make people turn to God for help. Pat Robertson, an infamous televangelist, amongst others, publicly blamed a disaster — I forget what it was, maybe Sept. 11 attacks — on the rampant godlessness and homosexuality in America, which he said we could prevent from happening again by fervently turning to God. The 9/11 attacks happened because Theists, Muslims, wanted us to obey their religion. Theists, historically, have shown themselves to be willing to inflict disasters on people, if nature doesn't provide them, so they can coerce people to convert to their religion in hopes of relief.

20. Revelation 21:1-2, 5.

21. Luke 4:6; Ephesians 6:12 and other verses in The Bible make clear that Christians believe that Satan currently rules the world, yet Romans chapter 13 commands believers to obey government agents, as they were appointed by God.

22. As stated in 1 Corinthians 15:12-57; 2 Corinthians 4:17-18, and elsewhere in The Bible.