



Think & Believe

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Preach the Gospel

by Dave and Mary Jo Nutting

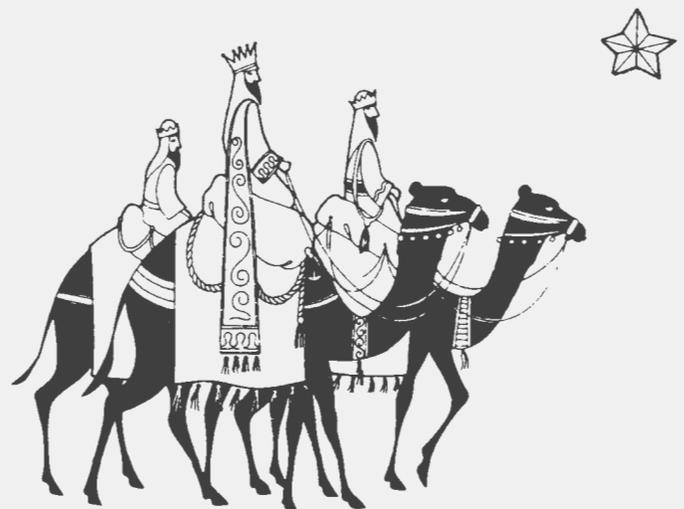
Every so often someone says something like this to us: "What's the big deal? Why do you waste your time on creation? Why don't you just go out and preach the gospel?" Since it is approaching the Christmas season and since Christmas is indeed a celebration of the Gospel, just what is the gospel message? A thorough understanding of the "whole" gospel clarifies why we are doing what we are doing.

Of course, the centrality of the gospel is Jesus' life, death and resurrection and many come to God on the basis of this knowledge alone. However, to truly understand the message of salvation, a person needs to come to grips with some very important foundational truths. The Bible teaches that man is a fallen creature who has rebelled against his Creator and cannot save himself. His only hope is to humble himself, cry out for mercy to his Creator, and come to Him on His terms. The gospel, the "good news," is that this Creator is a God of love and mercy Who longs to fellowship with man and that He Himself has provided the way to restore the broken fellowship. The gospel is that the Creator took the form of a man, lived a sinless life, and suffered an awful death in man's place. But since He was the Creator, death could not hold Him and He rose again, having paid in full man's debt of sin. Thus, the gospel is entirely interwoven with the doctrine of creation. (See also Acts 14:15 and Rev. 14:6.)

The gospel makes no sense at all in an evolutionary framework. In the evolutionary scheme of things, man is just a highly developed animal. He has ascended to his dominant position by "survival of the fittest," being fortunate enough to have stumbled upon a highly developed brain and efficient grasping hands. Supposedly this evolutionary process is still continuing and some even believe that man is now able to control his own

future evolutionary progress. So, according to evolutionary thinking, man is getting better and better, more and more advanced. He is responsible to no one but himself and can turn to no one but himself for solutions to life's problems. (As the Humanist Manifesto puts it, "No deity will save us. We must save ourselves.")

Many Christians today have been confused by evolutionary teaching, but even those who defend evolution are not consistent evolutionists, since there is no concept of sin or a need for a Savior in evolutionary thinking. Creation is the only foundation consistent with the whole teaching of scripture. So what is the gospel? It is the Creator dying and rising again for His sinful, fallen creatures. To make sense, it must encompass the creation and the fall, the birth, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the final restoration as described in Revelation when that which was lost by sin is restored again.



*We have seen His star in the east.
(see Spotlight on Science)*

NOTES & QUOTES

■ EUROPE! The very word brings to mind visions of castles, cathedrals and romantic vacations. It also stirs up thoughts of the Reformation and the faith of our Pilgrim fathers. However, although Europe was once the center of Christianity, it is now a very spiritually needy continent. Today the vast majority of Europeans never attend church, and in fact most have never even heard the gospel. Thus, while we're excited about the opportunity to spend the next 5 months in Europe, vacation is not our purpose. We believe that "intellectualism" and the strong teaching of evolutionary humanism have contributed greatly to the weakening of the church in Europe. Look what one opponent of creationism says:

- In Europe, religion has long had a fairly intellectual tradition, so the popular outburst against evolution subsided within a few decades after *The Origin of Species* [1859], and evolution has not been a noticeable subject of public debate since then. But in the United States, fundamentalist religion, holding a literal interpretation of the Bible, has proved a more tenacious and powerful opponent . . . Futuyama, Douglas. 1983. *Science on Trial*, p. 6)

■ Josef Ton, formerly the pastor of the largest Baptist church in Romania, now in exile in America, agrees:

- I came to the conclusion that there were two factors which destroyed Christianity in Western Europe. One was the theory of evolution, and the other, liberal theology . . . Liberal theology is just evolution applied to the Bible and our faith. (Australian Christian newspaper, *New Life*, Thursday, April 15, 1982)

■ We hope to use our time in Europe to help counteract this trend by instructing European Christians in the evidences supporting creation. We have found that such information helps to spark an interest in the gospel and to ground Christians in their faith, giving them new confidence in the Scriptures. Often this foundational approach results in a new boldness in preaching the gospel to a lost world. Paul understood this foundational nature of the doctrine of creation in the preaching of the gospel. Note what he told the people of Lystra:

- We . . . preach the gospel to you in order that you should turn from these vain things to a living God, Who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that is in them. (Acts 14:15)

■ Christians have weakened their position by accepting evolutionary doctrine. Many missionaries in Europe now recognize the tremendous negative impact of evolutionary teaching and the need for the creationist alternative.

- This [Biblical and scientific evidences for creation] is indeed an urgent need in Europe and around the world. Having served in Europe, directly or indirectly, for almost over thirty-six years, we have realized that the whole subject of creationism is considered incompatible to national schools. (Missionary, The Netherlands)
- I was glad to hear that you had been thinking of coming over to Europe. There is a real need on that continent for creationism teaching to counterbalance the evolutionary trend, especially among believers. If you think it's bad in the USA and Canada, you haven't seen anything. (Missionary, formerly stationed in England)
- The evangelical church, both at home and abroad, need to hear well developed information on creationism and also need to have adequate answers to evolutionism. I am convinced of that. (Missionary, Portugal)

■ Our itinerary includes Bible Institutes, Discipleship Training Schools, Schools of Evangelism, a missionary conference, churches, schools, and universities in at least 8 countries. While our primary emphasis will be to train and equip European Christian leaders in presenting the scientific and Biblical evidence of creation, we are praying for many opportunities to reach non-believers as well. We'd appreciate your prayers. We have enclosed a prayer card to help you remember us.

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SPOTLIGHT ON SCIENCE

Stars

On a clear night, an unaided observer can see somewhere around 2000 stars. With a telescope multitudes more become visible. How many are there in all? No one really knows, and yet the Bible records God's promise to Abraham thousands of years ago: "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore" (Gen. 22:17). Just as no man could ever count the grains of sand on the sea shore, none could count the stars. But the Bible says that God not only numbers them, but calls them all by name.

Though the stars all look much alike to the human eye, scientific studies based on light analysis show that they differ from one another in size, composition, and distance. Scientists have grouped and categorized them according to their brightness and assumed surface temperature. These categories range from blue-white (bright, hot) to red (cool, dim). The categories are not distinct, however, and the dividing lines seem to be rather arbitrary. Even our estimates of distances which are frequently based upon star brightness are speculative since we can only measure directly out a very short way into the universe. We are only beginning to learn about our universe, but long before modern telescopes and other sophisticated instruments, the apostle Paul recognized the fact that stars differ from one another. In I Cor. 15:41 he wrote, "One star differs from another star in glory."

Where did all these fantastic stars come from? Evolutionists have come up with a very elaborate story describing the evolution of stars — yet it is merely speculation and is based upon many assumptions. The Bible too has an explanation. In Genesis 1:16 it says, "He made the stars also." That's all, as if an afterthought, "Oh, yes. He made the stars too!" Isn't that characteristic of our God? Myriads and myriads of stars, and just a simple statement of fact. Is anything too difficult for God? Then He goes on to describe in detail the object of His central concern — man. David said, "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy finger, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained; What is man that Thou dost take thought of him? And the son of man that Thou dost care for him?" (Ps. 8:3-4). To God, it is not the stars that give Him great pleasure — it is man. We are the recipients of His special love and concern. What a privilege!

(For more information see Morris, Henry. 1984. *The Biblical Basis of Modern Science*)

For Signs and For Seasons

The Bible tells us that God made the lights in the heavens "for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years" (Gen. 1:14). Since the dawn of recorded history, people have studied the stars. Interestingly enough, cultures all around the world have identified and named the same constellations, though the groupings of stars bear little or no resemblance to the creatures they supposedly represent. Is this merely coincidence or does it indicate a common origin for their names and meanings?

Various authors have studied ancient star charts and name meanings and claim that the constellations originally served as a visual aid in telling the gospel message. For example, according to Howard Rand (*The Stars Declare God's Handiwork*, 1944, Destiny Publishers, Merrimac, MA), a well-known eastern prophecy had indicated that when a new star appeared in the constellation Coma (The Woman and Child), it would be a sign that the "desired son" or "Christ" had been born. Perhaps it was this prophecy which impelled the wise men to follow the star to Bethlehem to worship the newborn King.

If these authors are right, and God really did tell the story of redemption via the stars, this original account has been **grossly corrupted** in the widely accepted astrological system. The belief in astrology and various forms of worship of "the host of heaven" has been prevalent since ancient times. Frequently it is associated with other forms of witchcraft, idolatry, and spiritism. Many of the stars, constellations, and planets have been named after pagan gods, and millions of people over the years have looked to the stars, trying to predict the future.

God strictly forbids the use of astrology and other such practices, so we as Christians should have no part in them. However, that does not mean we should not study the stars — both from a scientific and a Biblical perspective. God had a purpose for everything He created. He tells us the sun, moon, stars and planets were created for "signs and for seasons." Have their original meanings been lost somewhere along the way? If so, perhaps they could be recovered through diligent research.

However, even if we are never able to uncover the original meanings, we can still learn much about God through His creation — His power, His creativity, His love of diversity, His immensity, His glory. "The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge." (Psalm 19:1,2) We have so much to learn!



Recent Events



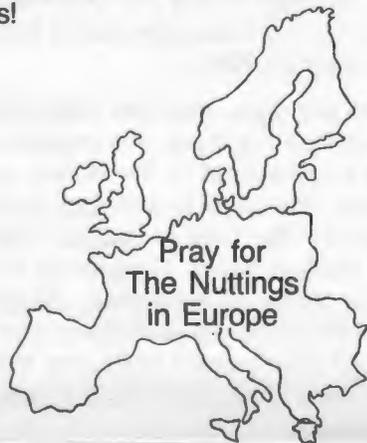
Much of the last 2 months has been spent trying to anticipate and complete all the business needed to "hold down the home fort" and also prepare for the upcoming 5 month speaking outreach to Europe. Besides that, a major speaking trip in September included a 3 day "Science and Scripture Forum" at Ozark Christian College, 2 radio interviews, several school presentations (including an entire public middle school assembly), and 3 college programs as well as presentations and seminars at 9 different churches, 2 homeschool organizations, and a regional Lutheran teacher's conference. It's been a busy 2 months to say the least!



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IMPORTANT NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

Several have asked if they should send donations while we are in Europe. YES! Otherwise we won't be able to publish your next issue of Think and Believe. Besides that, if we don't get paid, our house will be repossessed! Your regular contributions are much needed throughout this time. Please keep sending them to Alpha Omega Institute. They will be receipted. Thanks!



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