

No Dead Atheists

by Tricia Berg

For Sheol does not thank you; death does not praise you; those who go down to the pit do not hope for your faithfulness. Isaiah 38:18

What an odd thing to say, right? No dead atheists? We know there are plenty of live atheists, and that they do die eventually. But the reason there are no DEAD atheists, is that the moment we die, our spirits return to God, the giver of life. (Ecc. 12:7, quoted later.) We see then with our spiritual eyes what is true: There is ONE God—He exists! But what happens after that depends upon whether or not a person accepted the gift of salvation during their lifetime.

For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home [our body] is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this tent we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed, but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil. 2 Corinthians 5:1-10

Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe." Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe." Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." John 20:24-29

Jesus was crucified for the “crime” of claiming to be the Son of God, sent by Father God to take away the sins of the world. (John 3:16-18, 1John 4:9-10, John 1:29, Matt. 1:21, Rom. 3:21-26, Matt. 26:26-28, John 8:24, John 10:24-39, Matt. 26:63-66, 1John 1:10-2:6, Acts 3:17-21, Acts 17:30-31, Acts 10:34-43, Acts 26:15-18, Rom. 4:7-8, 1Cor. 15:1-7) When one of the thieves who was crucified at the same time acknowledged who Jesus really was, Jesus assured him that he would be with Him THAT SAME DAY.

One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, “Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!” But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are receiving the due reward of our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.” And he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” And he said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.” Luke 23:39-43

Jesus also taught that those who lived their lives solely to please themselves, rather than according to God’s ways (not even repenting at the very end like the thief on the cross did), are fully conscious after death—including knowing why they ended up where they are. Those who believe we just “cease to be” are sadly mistaken. We don’t make our own reality. God does.

“There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried, and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.’ But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.’ And he said, ‘Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father’s house—for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.’ But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.’ And he said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ He said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.’” Luke 16:19-31

Not only do our spirits live on, but also our physical bodies will be resurrected eventually (except for those who are still alive at the time of Jesus' return. 1Thess. 4:16-18, 1Cor. 15:50-57)

Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me. For I am the least of the apostles, unworthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me. Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed. Now if Christ is proclaimed as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified about God that he raised Christ, whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised. For if the dead are not raised, not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are of all people most to be pitied. But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all. 1 Corinthians 15:1-28

The difference between the resurrection of believers and unbelievers is that those who were saved by the precious blood of Jesus dying on the cross to

wash away their sins will live with God forever. Those who rejected the ONLY way to be saved will go in the Lake of Fire, which is where hell will be thrown in the end.

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire. Revelation 20:11-15

"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, 'where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.'" Mark 9:47-48 (Quoting: "And they shall go out and look on the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against me. For their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh." Isaiah 66:24)

Don't be confused by the term "dead." We are born with a sinful nature and we all do sin once we are able, despite having a conscience telling us not to. Our sins are not counted against us until we are mature enough to understand right from wrong. Despite knowing better, we think that we can get away with doing wrong things and that doing them will make us happy. Once we give in to the temptation to sin, we "die" spiritually. We break our fellowship with God, just like Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden. (Gen. 3:1-24) They believed the lies of the devil, which are the very same ones that are being used against us today. "Did God really say?" (Or many fall for, "Does God really even exist?" If not, no need to obey Him.) Adam and Eve were kicked out of the Garden for disobeying God. Ever since then, we have all inherited a sinful nature with a propensity to rebel against God. ALL have exercised their God-given free will to sin against Him. But God promised a way to restore fellowship, and that way is Jesus. (John 14:6)

I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. Romans 7:9-11

For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. Romans 8:7-8

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it—the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Romans 3:21-26

Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. Romans 5:12-19 (Also see 1Cor. 15:35-49.)

People in the Bible are frequently referred to as "sleeping" when they have actually died. (Dan. 12:2, John 11:11-15, Psa. 13:3, Jer. 51:39, 57) What do we do when we sleep? We dream. I believe this is God's way of teaching us that we are not without thoughts after death. Another interesting thing I personally believe that He teaches us is that just as He made our autonomic systems run our bodies without our having to consciously control them (such

as our heart beating, lungs breathing, etc.), He is able with His great power to effortlessly maintain the universe He created. He has shown us by the wonders of all He made that He exists. Whoever denies it is deluding themselves. The problem is that the saying "be careful what you wish for" applies here. Those who insist that there is no God may be left to their own evil devices without His restraint. The result is not pretty. Sin always has ugly consequences.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. Romans 1:18-32

Those who do not profess faith are the unwitting recipients of God's goodness nevertheless. Not only is the world a better place because of those who TRULY obey God and follow His ways, but God blesses everyone with sunshine and rain. He doesn't pull up the "weeds" from His garden until the entire crop is ready to harvest. We have until we die or until Jesus returns to get "right" with God by acknowledging and repenting of our sins, and admitting Jesus is the Son of God, our Lord, who died for our sins and rose from the dead. (Rom. 10:8-10, Col. 1:15-23)

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Matthew 5:43-48

He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?' He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn." Matthew 13:24-30

Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear. Matthew 13:36-43

At some point in the future, the "restrainer" of evil will be removed from the earth, and things will get REALLY ugly. We haven't seen anything like it yet, nor will there ever be anything like it again after Jesus returns. (Matt. 24:7, 21, Luke 21:11, 25-26) During that time, God will let each one go their own wicked way according to the desires of their depraved hearts.

Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of

destruction, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship, so that he takes his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you I told you these things? And you know what is restraining him now so that he may be revealed in his time. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work. Only he who now restrains it will do so until he is out of the way. And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing by the appearance of his coming. The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are perishing, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends them a strong delusion, so that they may believe what is false, in order that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. But we ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the firstfruits to be saved, through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth. 2 Thessalonians 2:3-13

Then I saw another beast rising out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb and it spoke like a dragon. It exercises all the authority of the first beast in its presence, and makes the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose mortal wound was healed. It performs great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people, and by the signs that it is allowed to work in the presence of the beast it deceives those who dwell on earth, telling them to make an image for the beast that was wounded by the sword and yet lived. And it was allowed to give breath to the image of the beast, so that the image of the beast might even speak and might cause those who would not worship the image of the beast to be slain. Revelation 13:11-15

On Pi (π) Day of this year (the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter, which starts with 3.14, observed on March 14, 2018), a well-known scientist named Stephen Hawking died. For most of his life, he suffered from ALS—a severe disorder that ravaged his body—but he lived much, much longer than doctors originally estimated. What a blessing to have received so much unexpected time from God to come to a knowledge of the truth about Him and His offer of salvation through His only begotten Son, Jesus.

Remember also your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come and the years draw near of which you will say, "I have no pleasure in them"; before the sun and the light and the moon and the stars are darkened and the clouds return after the rain, in the day when the keepers of the house tremble, and the strong men are bent, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those who look through the windows are dimmed, and the doors on

the street are shut—when the sound of the grinding is low, and one rises up at the sound of a bird, and all the daughters of song are brought low—they are afraid also of what is high, and terrors are in the way; the almond tree blossoms, the grasshopper drags itself along, and desire fails, because man is going to his eternal home, and the mourners go about the streets—before the silver cord is snapped, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher is shattered at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern, and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher; all is vanity. Besides being wise, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs with great care. The Preacher sought to find words of delight, and uprightly he wrote words of truth. The words of the wise are like goads, and like nails firmly fixed are the collected sayings; they are given by one Shepherd. My son, beware of anything beyond these. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh. The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil. Ecclesiastes 12:1-14

Hawking was a professed atheist at the time he gave an interview to El Mundo magazine. He was quoted in an article on Time.com (Time Magazine, on the day of his death) as saying in that interview:

"Before we understand science, it is natural to believe that God created the universe. But now science offers a more convincing explanation," he said. "What I meant by 'we would know the mind of God' is, we would know everything that God would know, if there were a God, which there isn't. I'm an atheist."

Many people think they're pretty intelligent—too smart to believe in anything "blindly," but they "believe" in things they can't see every day, like gravity. Hawking "believed" in black holes that he was never able to see. Some will say, "but you can see the EVIDENCE of the existence of those things." And so it is with God. We can see by the amazing complexity and infinite variety of all He created that it was made by someone incredibly powerful and intelligent. Or do we have enough sense to know that someone built something as simple as our house, but still think that no intelligence was involved in making the universe?

For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. Hebrews 3:4

Any statistician can calculate that the odds of a perfect solar system, ecosystem or any of the various systems functioning in our bodies developing

on its own over time is basically zero. But even if we said it were hypothetically possible, for that to happen there has to BE something to start with. Where did that first particle come from? Doesn't that take FAITH to believe that all of these things happened so long ago when no one was there to document it? So is it science, or religion? Is faith really irrational and ignorant? Or is that the case only if it's in God, but not if it's in science?

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good. The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God. They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one. Have they no knowledge, all the evildoers who eat up my people as they eat bread and do not call upon the LORD? There they are in great terror, for God is with the generation of the righteous. You would shame the plans of the poor, but the LORD is his refuge. Psalm 14:1-6

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever! Psalm 111:10

Has anyone thought about who made the "laws of nature" that scientists love to study? Shouldn't they be called the "coincidences of nature" if that's what they really are? We know that our criminal and civic laws were made by men (and those were based on the Ten Commandments of the Bible, whether people are willing to admit it or not. Exo. 20:1-17)

God has not left himself without a witness. In addition to all creation, He has given us the Bible, which He inspired men to record—it has been preserved all these years for our benefit. In it, multitudes of predictions were made which came true (and He warns us of many other events yet to come).

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. Romans 15:4

For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. And if those days had not been cut short, no human being would be saved. But for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There he is!' do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. Matthew 24:21-25

Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, "As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest,'" although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all his works." And again in this passage he said, "They shall not enter my rest." Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, again he appoints a certain day, "Today," saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Hebrews 4:1-13

Furthermore, God indwells believers during this age and bears fruit of His Spirit in them (if they are truly saved and thus behaving like His adopted children should - Gal. 5:16-25). God is not dead, nor is it possible for Him to die, for which we can all be thankful. He has been forever and always will be—in fact, His very name attests to this fact, since it means "I AM" - present tense, without any limitations. Time is His creation and will eventually cease. (Gen. 1:14, Rev. 22:5)

"The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." John 3:8

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:9-14

"You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven." Matthew 5:13-16

I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made." Bring out the people who are blind, yet have eyes, who are deaf, yet have ears! All the nations gather together, and the peoples assemble. Who among them can declare this, and show us the former things? Let them bring their witnesses to prove them right, and let them hear and say, It is true. "You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. I, I am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior. I declared and saved and proclaimed, when there was no strange god among you; and you are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "and I am God. Also henceforth I am he; there is none who can deliver from my hand; I work, and who can turn it back?" Isaiah 43:6-13

Stephen Hawking was quoted on Newsweek.com (Newsweek magazine, article dated March 14, 2018) as saying:

"I believe the simplest explanation is, there is no God. No one created the universe and no one directs our fate. This leads me to a profound realization that there probably is no heaven and no afterlife either. We have this one life to appreciate the grand design of the universe and for that, I am extremely grateful."

The question remains: Grateful to whom or what? As the verse at the top indicates, there is NO HOPE after death, just as Hawking believed. Those who heard the truth during this life, but rejected it have sealed their own fates. He is quoted by Newsweek.com also as saying:

"There is a fundamental difference between religion, which is based on authority; science, which is based on observation and reason. Science will win, because it works."

We have already talked above about how no one was there to observe the so-called "big bang" theory (now taught as fact) and so that claim cannot honestly

be applied, nor can it be applied to the theory (also now taught as fact) of "evolution over millions of years." Not to mention the fact that scientists are constantly finding out they were previously wrong as they make new discoveries, which might be thought of as more of a "fail" than a "win" to an unbiased person. But what really stands out about the above-quoted statement by Hawking is the word "authority." That is the crux of the problem right there. People do not want anyone they can't see having the ultimate authority over them (and many times, they don't want anyone they CAN see exercising authority over them, either—especially if they disagree with them, but see 1Pet. 2:13-25, Dan. 2:20-22). I pray that Hawking was able to humble himself at some point between the time when that statement was made and before his death. God is not impressed with our "wisdom." Our intelligence, talents, etc. are gifts from HIM. In order to please Him, we must believe He exists and give Him the glory.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. James 1:17

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. Hebrews 11:6

I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols. Isaiah 42:8 (In America, we don't literally carve idols with our hands and worship them, but we have other "idols" such as education, science, celebrities, sports, fame, success, money, power, possessions, etc.)

You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. James 4:4-10

For the truly humble, it's easy to admit we are not God and submit to the control of the One who is. The problem is that so few are truly humble. It's not easy to let go of our self-perceived "sovereignty" and lower ourselves in our

own minds to accept that we are created beings, and that our Creator has absolute power and authority to rule over us along with else He made.

For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite. For I will not contend forever, nor will I always be angry; for the spirit would grow faint before me, and the breath of life that I made."
Isaiah 57:15-16

Who gave [the LORD] charge over the earth, and who laid on him the whole world? If he should set his heart to it and gather to himself his spirit and his breath, all flesh would perish together, and man would return to dust. Job 34:13-15

The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. Acts 17:24-25

The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, Psalm 24:1 Also see Psalm 104, Zechariah 12:1 and Genesis 2:7.

People have lots of ideas on how they would rule the world if they were in charge, but God has made it clear that He does not need our advice. (Job 38:1-42:6, Isa. 29:11-21, 1Cor. 10:6-15, Isa. 40:12-31, Rom. 11:33-36) Those who succeed in overcoming their natural desire to rule, who place their trust and hope in God alone, receive much-needed help from God. (Eph. 6:10-20, Psa. 147:10-11) The devil is real, and every rebellion against God has its start with him. (Isa. 14:12-14)

Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 5:5-11

Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here. I came not of my own accord, but he sent me. Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me. Which one of you convicts me of sin? If I tell the truth, why do you not believe me? Whoever is of God hears the words of God. The reason why you do not hear them is that you are not of God." John 8:42-47

It's not for any of us to say where anyone went after they died—we can't know for sure since we are not God, and it wouldn't change anything either way. We HOPE that each soul finds mercy, and we leave it in the hands of our awesome, just God. We can and should, however, examine the message that a person passed on to the world before their death. If they were misled, we can attempt to correct their errors so that those still living are not deceived in the same way. And so this article has been written for those who looked up to Stephen Hawking and may have embraced his view on eternity. It's a call for each one to give their future eternal state some thought while it can still be changed. As the rich man in Luke 16 (quoted earlier) discovered, there is NO party in hell, and we do not simply "cease to exist" when we die. Trust God, not men—not even well-respected, "nice" scientists.

Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks that he is wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is folly with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their craftiness," and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile." 1 Corinthians 3:18-20

For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart." Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is

foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." 1 Corinthians 1:18-31

This is now the second letter that I am writing to you, beloved. In both of them I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder, that you should remember the predictions of the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles, knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation." For they deliberately overlook this fact, that the heavens existed long ago, and the earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God, and that by means of these the world that then existed was deluged with water and perished. But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly. But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed. Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. 2 Peter 3:1-13

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