

After taking a wrong turn, the team ends up in the middle of Roswell, NM, famous for a UFO sighting in 1947.



Discussion Leader: Dr. Stan Hudson was a geology major at the University of California at Riverside before becoming a Christian. He then shifted his studies to theology, eventually earning a Doctor of Ministry degree at Fuller Theological Seminary. Today he combines both interests, co-hosting the weekly radio program “Sink the Beagle,” a light-hearted approach to creationism and evolution issues. He currently pastors two churches in the university towns of Moscow, Idaho and Pullman, Washington.

1 QUESTION:

In Roswell Matt and Tiffany came upon some Christians who were especially motivated to straighten Matt out on some things. And for Matt it seemed to bring out some strong feelings. One gentleman assured Matt he could take some things “to the bank.” What were those things?

ANSWER:

Several things—that the Bible has answers to the big questions of life, if you didn’t give your life to Jesus you’ll burn in hell for eternity, that Cain married his sister....

2 QUESTION:

For Matt and many of us, these dedicated and well-meaning Christians almost fit a stereotype that some think of when they think of Christians—kind of pushy, “believe or else” thinkers. Was their witness effective in making people want to be Christians, too?

ANSWER:

Their confidence was OK, but maybe the way they pushed the gospel with the threats of eternal punishment wasn’t the most appealing portrait of a Creator God who is love. Also, a combative spirit often brings out the same spirit in those who listen...it certainly did in Matt!

Today’s program took Matt and Tiffany to two different locations: Roswell, New Mexico (where UFO sightings had supposedly been made) and South Dakota’s Crazy Horse Monument. Two locations, but just one question: why are we here on planet earth?

DEFINITION:

NEANDERTHAL—Popularly believed to be an extinct species (or at least subspecies) of Homo sapiens. The most famous early remains were found in a cave in the Neander Valley in Germany in 1856 (“Neanderthal” means “Neander Valley” in German). Because early backbones suggested a forward curvature, first artist renditions depicted a hairy apelike human. Some feel mistakes were made with this, because the curvature was possibly caused by arthritis; others dispute this. In any case, a caveman stereotype was established at the time Darwin’s theory was being introduced, fueling arguments about the origin of man. Interestingly, Neanderthals had larger brains on average than we have today..





3 QUESTION:

This sparked an argument between Matt and Tiffany. Matt was uncomfortable with, even skeptical of, Tiffany's confidence in her beliefs. Matt asked Tiffany if she ever doubted God's existence. What was her answer?

ANSWER:

She said that she did sometimes have questions about it, but that her faith and confidence in God was firm.



4 QUESTION:

This wasn't what Matt wanted to hear. He said, "Tell me you struggle sometimes, too." This brings us to where we might ask this question: is it more effective in sharing your thinking with others when you admit to the difficulties you've had in your own life? Is it easier to relate to someone who has problems than to someone who hasn't?

ANSWER:

Jesus told someone whom He had delivered demons out of to go and tell what things God had done for him. He did, and it was very effective in helping people learn about God. He had to talk about her problems to talk about how God had helped him. The turn around in his life was probably more dramatic than would be in most people's lives (how many are demon-possessed?), but people who express themselves humbly and as less-than-perfect are usually listened to more.

5 QUESTION:

Dr. Jim Gibson expressed that he has struggled, too, with big and unanswered questions as a scientist. But since there exists no model for origins that doesn't have problems, he says he puts unanswered questions on a "list to yet be answered." And he keeps his eye open for possible solutions. Then he added that we can depend on another source of information that helps with some of these questions. What was that source?

ANSWER:

The revelation of God; that is, the Bible. For him it is a source of information that helps make sense of what he sees in the natural world.

6 QUESTION:

When Matt and Tiffany asked a Native American chief at the Crazy Horse monument about what their culture believed about origins, the guide replied with two great and wise beliefs. First, he said that since man is dust and water, he returns to dust and water...and his spirit returns to the Creator. That sounds like the Biblical story! Second, he said that man's great journey in life is 18 inches long! What did he mean by that? Did it make sense?

ANSWER:

The 18 inches part was the distance between our head and our heart. In other words, our personal journeys involve a deep searching of our souls to find out who we are and where we're truly going. We can arrive at a healthy place when we get our heads and our hearts to agree on how and why we got here...sounds like science (head) and faith (heart)??

DEFINITION:

THEISM—The belief that God exists. Atheism is the belief that God doesn't exist.

7 QUESTION:

Biologist Gibson expressed that for him evolution was a hard thing for Christians to believe in, particularly where it affects our view of God. If God used evolution to create new life forms, that means He purposely withheld resources so that only the strong would survive and evolve, eliminating those who were weaker and disposable. Dr. Gibson wondered if God operated like that, was *he* (Jim) *also disposable*? Believing in evolution does indeed cause Christians to adjust their view of God. Does this view agree with the Biblical view?

ANSWER:

Jesus taught that God cares for even the sparrows, with not one falling without the sad notice of the Creator. Throughout the Scriptures God is consistently portrayed as Someone who cares deeply about the suffering there is in the world...He even experienced it more personally in Jesus and the cross. The promise of a new earth where there is no "pain or suffering" anymore seems to portray God as trying to remove death and suffering from the universe...not using it to create life with (especially if He could use any other method.

Matt and Tiffany asked several people at the Crazy Horse monument about what they thought man's purpose was. The answers they gave illustrate the ways most people think. We'll take a look at five ways that we caught. Remember, the question is "why are we here?" What are your comments about each view?

1 VIEW:

"We were put here to make our mark and then go extinct like other life forms."

COMMENTS:

This is a deist view (see glossary terms). God started things and left us to go on our own. Evolution drives things. We're basically on our own...

2 VIEW:

"I don't know. I think God put us here to help each other. I think there is more than this life."

COMMENTS:

This person hadn't thought much about it, but thought vaguely there was a high purpose in life and there was probably something after this life.

3 VIEW:

"We are here to enjoy life!"

COMMENTS:

A common approach. "Eat and drink, for tomorrow we die," as the old saying goes. This is not a particularly deep or satisfying answer for many...but it is for some.

4 VIEW:

"We're here for our kids, our family. And we do believe in God."

COMMENTS:

This view is common, with people having their focus fairly inward, just around their own family. The purpose of life doesn't include much concern for the world at large.

5 PERSPECTIVE:

"We're here to serve God and mankind. We're here to do humanitarian work to relieve suffering."

VIEW:

Of all of the views expressed, this one seemed to have the 'biggest picture.' This person found fulfillment in going around the world on mission projects to help relieve suffering and hand out Bibles. And they said they received inspiration to do this kind of work from Jesus Christ.

8 QUESTION:

Dr. Gerald Winslow, an ethics professor, shared how he thought that the Spirit of God had worked among many cultures of the world, bringing about a remarkable consensus on what the true values of life were. Then he quoted the Jewish Rabbi Abraham Heschel as saying “failure to acknowledge others as our brothers and sisters equals”...what?

ANSWER:

Atheism! For we are to acknowledge that we are *all created beings*, equal before our Creator and part of the same family.

9 QUESTION:

Tiffany noted that most of the people they interviewed believed in a higher power. And Matt thought it was cool that many answers showed caring about others. Then he wondered if he was doing much to better the world (he admitted that he complained a lot!). Did the answers of these people make *you* think about Matt's concerns, too? Are you making a difference in the world?

ANSWER:

Any response is personal and correct....



10 QUESTION:

After Tiffany remarked that she hoped science wouldn't eventually say that “love was chemical.” She didn't want it reduced to just that. She wanted some mystery to remain.

And this led right into author Cliff Goldstein's closing remarks. He wondered if life was just chemistry! Could the Russian author Dostoevsky's or the English playwright Shakespeare's capacity to write so beautifully be just because of certain chemicals in their brain? Do we reduce life and creativity to mere chemicals interacting with each? For Goldstein the mystery of life remains. The more it is studied (by science) the more profoundly mysterious it becomes. He illustrates this from the Biblical story of creation. How did he see “mystery” in man's creation?

ANSWER:

When man was created by God from the dust of the earth, that was chemicals. Yes, we have chemicals! But God breathed into those chemicals “the breath of life.” And science is yet to discover what that mysterious component is. Even so, we see it all around us. Life is an unsolved mystery, and Tiffany would like it to remain that way—maybe we all would!

