

God in the details

GOD: FACT OR FICTION? REVEALING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCIENCE, RELIGION AND THE ORIGIN OF LIFE, by Brendan Roberts. Kiwi Graphix, paper USD \$19.95.

If the maxim "the devil is in the details" is in any way true, then I conclude God must have been in the details first. Therefore, it follows that the devil cannot be in the details.

Working from the premise that God is in the details, specifically the details of scientific research, as well as the details of theological and philosophical investigations, New Zealand author and missionary Brendan Roberts in his latest book **God: Fact or Fiction?** has attempted to establish the factuality of the existence of God in a technological age.

In part he reiterates the ongoing debate on creation versus evolution; and in part he initiates a new discussion, based on evidentiary proofs for articles of Christian faith.

For example, as might be of interest to us during the present Lenten and coming Easter seasons, Roberts considers whether any secular evidence confirms the existence of Jesus.

Quoting Josephus, a Jewish historian who wrote in the last decades of the first century, and Tacitus, a Roman historian who wrote in the



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second decade of the second century, Roberts cites compelling non-Scriptural evidence for the Existence of Jesus, from His public life as a rabbi or teacher to His trial and Crucifixion.

Next, faced with proving (or disproving) the resurrection, Roberts, drawing in part on the eye-witness accounts of the crucifixion recorded in the New Testament, first considers whether Jesus actually died on the cross, whether the injuries He sustained during crucifixion would have been sufficient to kill Him.

Citing legal, military, and medical data, the latter coming from the Journal of the American Medical Society, he concludes that "there is overwhelming evidence outside Sacred Scripture of the existence of Jesus and Christianity; and that Jesus was a historical figure, performed wonders, and was crucified."

After conceding, "This chapter does not give evidence of spiritual truths, such as whether Jesus was the Son of God, whether He ascended into heaven," he sets about

proving the divinity of Christ and the actuality of the resurrection by indicating the scientific basis of spiritual truths and faith.

Exploiting a rigorous scientific methodology, Roberts does not simply accept Scripture as the only source of evidence in these matters, but he seeks to corroborate it by discerning within Scripture some hard empirical evidence.

He ascribes significance to the fact that after His resurrection scripture records Jesus as having appeared to more than 500 people on several different occasions over a 40-day period. He also recognizes as significant some anecdotal evidence that Jesus predicted He would rise from the dead (Mk. 10:32-34) and that the resurrection was also predicated in the Old Testament (Ps. 118).

Roberts concludes, "No other historical figure has ever had all the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah attributed to them - only Jesus Christ has. The evidence is compelling."

So is Roberts's book. □