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RESPONSES AND DIALOGUE

Written in Stone

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While the Big Bang was cooling and the laws of physics were congealing, authorities remained undecided whether God would provide comfort against the expanding darkness. To answer the question, one planet was seeded with humans equipped with conviction receptors tweaked either to an absolute faith in or complete denial of God. If, after a suitable period of mingling between the two groups, believers prevailed over doubters, God would be established in the firmament. If not, God would be scrapped.

But as random became evolution, there arose an increasing number of mutants who neither believed nor disbelieved. Some simply didn't care, while others remained steadfastly uncertain or kept changing their minds. Their ongoing indifference and nagging doubts muddied the data, preventing the possibility of a clear-cut winner.

Without a definitive consensus, positions hardened according to gut feelings, hunches, intuitions, and unshakeable beliefs. Conflict escalated. Authorities were stumped. To placate opposing forces, they provisionally assigned God the status of "maybe." But they were too late. Families crumbled, friends became enemies, wars were fought, and regimes rose and fell. Civilization teetered.

The latest iteration of mutants, attempting to fend off end times, argued that the pros and cons of God's existence arose from differing biologies rather than personal choices. Receptor bias was understood to go hand in hand with metaphysical deafness.

Other mutants hollered, screamed, and wrote tracts that chronicled the history of doubt. Some even prayed that they were wrong. But in the end, all glumly acknowledged the utter folly of thinking that it could have been different. The authorities agreed and shut down the experiment.

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