

# Heaven is a 'fairy story', says Stephen Hawking

May 16 2011

---



British scientist Stephen Hawking attends a graduation ceremony in Cambridge in 2008. Hawking has branded heaven a "fairy story" for people afraid of the dark, in his latest dismissal of the concepts underpinning the world's religions.

British scientist Stephen Hawking has branded heaven a "fairy story" for people afraid of the dark, in his latest dismissal of the concepts underpinning the world's religions.

The author of 1988 international best-seller "A Brief History of Time" said in an interview with The Guardian published on Monday that his views were partly influenced by his battle with motor neurone disease.

"I have lived with the prospect of an early death for the last 49 years. I'm not afraid of death, but I'm in no hurry to die. I have so much I want to do first," he told the newspaper.

"I regard the brain as a computer which will stop working when its components fail. There is no heaven or afterlife for broken down computers; that is a fairy story for people afraid of the dark."

Hawking's stance on religion has hardened significantly in the nearly quarter century since the publication of his seminal work on the cosmos.

In "A Brief History of Time" he suggested that the idea of a divine being was not necessarily incompatible with a scientific understanding of the Universe.

But in his 2010 book "The Grand Design" he said a deity no longer has any place in theories on the creation of the universe in the light of a series of developments in physics.

Hawking has achieved worldwide fame for his research, writing and television documentaries despite suffering since the age of 21 from [motor neurone disease](#) that has left him disabled and dependent on a voice synthesiser.

(c) 2011 AFP

Citation: Heaven is a 'fairy story', says Stephen Hawking (2011, May 16) retrieved 4 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-05-heaven-fairy-story-stephen-hawking.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--