

Stephen Hawking didn't believe he'd go to heaven, a place for 'people afraid of the dark'

15 March 2019, by Ashley May, Usa Today

World-renowned physicist Stephen Hawking, who died March 14, 2018, didn't believe in God and called heaven "a fairy story."

Hawking, who died at 76, wrote "there is no God" in his final, posthumous book "Brief Answers to the Big Questions." He also wrote that "no one directs the universe." It wasn't the first time Hawking rejected the idea of a higher power. He had disputed the existence of God for years before his death.

"The question is: Is the way the universe began chosen by God for reasons we can't understand, or was it determined by a law of science? I believe the second," Hawking said on the TV show Genius of Britain, the Telegraph cites. "If you like, you can call the laws of science 'God', but it wouldn't be a personal God that you could meet, and ask [questions](#)."

In his 2010 book "The Grand Design," Hawking and co-author Leonard Mlodinow credit "spontaneous creation" with the reason for existence, writing "it is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the universe going."

As for [life](#) after death, Hawking told the Guardian he believes the brain is like a computer that will simply shut off.

"There is no heaven or afterlife for broken down computers; that is a fairy story for people afraid of the dark," he told the Guardian.

Hawking lived with [amyotrophic lateral sclerosis](#) (ALS), or Lou Gehrig's Disease that impacts movement, and used a wheelchair most of his [adult life](#). He was diagnosed with the neurological disease at 21 and was given only years to live.

He was best known for his discoveries involving [black holes](#), his best-selling book "A Brief History of Time" and his dry wit. He was also candid about his theories on the future of life on Earth, saying the planet could turn into a "ball of fire" within a few hundred years and artificial intelligence could wipe out the human race.

(c)2019 USA Today

Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

APA citation: Stephen Hawking didn't believe he'd go to heaven, a place for 'people afraid of the dark' (2019, March 15) retrieved 22 May 2019 from <https://phys.org/news/2019-03-stephen-hawking-didnt-hed-heaven.html>

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.