

Presenting creation and evolution: How? (Part 2)

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A literal interpretation of Genesis 1 affirms a personal God who created our earth and life on it in six consecutive 24-hour days. In this account, we find God acting much like a father who loves his children and therefore creates an environment of beauty and safety for His children.

Some believe that the Genesis account is symbolic, or mythological, and that human beings evolved over eons, through a gradual process that may have begun with a living cell that somehow came to lodge in a mire that through millions of years progressed to the sophisticated and complex human system we know today.

The person who has experienced God as a loving being may find it difficult to reconcile that kind of God with the impersonal, uncaring process that ends in sorrow and death for all. Thus, a basic premise for the theistic evolutionist—one who believes God used evolution as His way of creating life—is that God was dependent upon death as part of the evolutionary process. In this paradigm, God, not Satan, is the source of death. But would a God of love choose millennia of brutal and cruel death and dying, suffering and trauma, as the means of creation?

Romans 6:23 tells us that the wages, or results, of sin is death. According to Romans 5:12 (NKJV), death entered the world when Adam sinned, and thus “death spread to all

men, because all sinned.” So death entered the world, according to the biblical record, as a result of sin, not as part of God’s progressive creation.

Science and interpretation

Scripture is clear about creation and death, but what does science say? Both creation and evolution can be supported by considerable complex data. The basic difference between the two paradigms is *how the data are interpreted*.

Let’s look at a couple of examples:

1. *The fossil record.* Fossils are usually found in a stack of rock layers, one layer on top of the other. The stack is something like a history book, with the oldest page on the bottom. The fossils occur in a specific order in this sequence of rocks. The lowest layers are mostly marine invertebrates. Mammals and birds do not appear until much farther up in the rock sequence, and humans are found only in the youngest rocks; that is, the ones at the top. In other words snails, clams, and starfish were fossilized first, and humans not until the end of the sequence.

In *the evolutionist* interpretation of the data, starfish come in the fossil record before humans because they evolved 500 million years before humans did. Different animals became buried and fossilized as they evolved, and there were no humans until almost all other animal groups had already come.

The creationist, however, looks at the data and says that humans and all other major types of animals were created at the same time as starfish. But as the global flood began, starfish and other animals living in the sea were killed first and buried in the lower rock layers. Humans, though, lived on land, in a different area of the earth, and they survived until near the end of the flood, when they were buried in the highest rock layers.

The sequence of fossils does *not* record a sequence of evolution; it shows, instead, when different animal groups died and were buried in the catastrophic global flood.

Because we don’t have all the evidence, and consequently can’t demonstrate a correct explanation, both creationists and evolutionists find some evidence difficult to explain.

Problems for evolutionists. Most groups of animals or plants are not linked together in the fossil record by series of evolutionary intermediates, as would be expected with this paradigm.

Problems for creationists. A few groups of fossils do look like good evolutionary intermediates. Also, it is difficult to explain how the different animal groups came to be arranged in such a detailed sequence in the rocks. Why didn't the flood waters carry a few mice to the edge of the sea and bury them with the starfish?

2. *Radiometric dating.* Fact: In the stack of rock layers, certain radioactive materials are more abundant in lower, older rocks, and less abundant in upper layers. In the upper rock layers they have changed, or decayed, through time to a form that is not radioactive. This radioactive decay takes a long time—thousands of years for carbon 14, and millions of years for other elements.

Evolutionist interpretation of the data: The radioactive materials indicate that the older rocks are hundreds of millions of years old. Consequently the life forms fossilized in those rocks are also that old.

Creationist interpretation of the data: Life has been on earth for only thousands of years. This means the radioactive decay has occurred much faster than most scientists think.

Problems for evolutionists. Some evidence in the rocks seems to require a much shorter time period for the formation of our world. For example, in a number of cases radiometric dates for rocks, as such dating is understood, require the ground surface to have been exposed for millions of years with little or no erosion of the soil and rocks. This does not happen in nature today. What normally happens is that over time, rivers and streams erode the land into hills and valleys and canyons. This seems to indicate that the radiometric dating is wrong.

Problems for creationists. The physics of radioactivity has been extensively studied, and we do not know what would cause radiometric “clocks” to be so seriously wrong as the creationist paradigm requires. A creationist must propose that unknown factors yet to be discovered will explain the radiometric evidence.

Naturalism, natural laws, and design

Many scientists have accepted the paradigm of naturalism, which denies any supernatural action in history. Naturalism is a controlling paradigm in science today. Everything is understood to be working by natural law alone. Any kind of miracle should never be used to explain the data that is observed. However, if we accept this limitation, does it leave enough room for an adequate, fully plausible explanation?

Take an example: Our automobiles work by the operation of natural law. We don't believe there are supernatural spirits inside the engine pushing the pistons. Yet is that a good reason to deny the possibility that there may have been intelligent beings involved in the origin of the car?

Look at the human cell. Proteins are an important building block in every cell in our body. Proteins are long strings of small molecules called amino acids. An amino acid is a particular combination of carbon, oxygen, hydrogen, and nitrogen.

Thus, if we mix these elements together under the right conditions, the laws of chemistry will cause them to combine in such a way as to form amino acids. Does that mean life could easily begin by this process?

To answer, we must also consider the concept of “information.” Information is a way of expressing ideas. Words written by a poet are information. Or information could be precise, technical instructions on how to make an automobile.

Are there any natural laws that could produce the information in a book of poetry or in the automobile instruction manual? Is there any natural way for a machine to use the laws of nature to produce meaningful, original information in a book?

No. Information is the product of intelligence. No law indicates whether D should come before M, or S after K. The order of letters and words in a book result only from intelligent thought. A well-established metaphor

is highly relevant and worthy of repetition at this point: Imagine the probability of a dictionary coming together by random accident, or from throwing millions of letters into space.

The paper in a book is held together by a particular application of the laws of chemistry, but the words and sentences—the information—in the book did not result from natural law. Information results from intelligent thought and initiative. Why is that so important? Because life itself is based on particular information.

About 20 different amino acids join together, like links in a chain, to make a protein. If we make a protein from a series of amino acids, the letters that represent them could look like this: ADGOCITBLERACKBNSK—and that's just an easy one. The specific task of the amino acid in a protein is determined by the sequence of amino acids, just as the sequence of letters determines the meaning of a sentence.

Compare the information content in these two letter sequences: (1) RFOBROIBPODEMOP; (2) GOD LOVES YOU. The difference in meaning is dramatic.

Similarly, the function of a protein, if any, is also determined by its sequence of amino acids. However, *no law in nature contains the information concerning what the sequence of amino acids should be in any protein.* The sequence of amino acids is information and not governed by natural law.

How does the living cell know how to make the correct protein? The cell contains instructions in its DNA that tell exactly what sequence of amino acids will make the correct protein. Where did the DNA get that information? *No natural law* dictates the information in DNA or protein—it had to be invented.

The difference between law-governed processes and information is a key to understanding what life is.

Our bodies are made of innumerable “machines”; mechanisms like the heart and thousands of microscopic

molecular machines in each cell. The operation of each machine is governed by understandable natural laws. But the instructions that allow the body to make all those little “machines” is information, and information does not arise from natural laws.

Life can exist only because of *information* that controls the manufacture of the millions of parts of a living thing. When we study the construction and functioning of our automobiles, we understand that the instructions for making all of its parts are the result of the intelligent effort of an inventor. Doesn't the vastly more complex information that makes a living animal indicate that the origin of these animals was dependent on an intelligent Inventor? It would seem so.

The origin of major life forms

Even if we accept the possibility that life could have been created, how did the many different forms of life come about? After God created the first living microorganisms, with all the information to make more living things, did the evolutionary process of mutation and natural selection gradually change it into different types of life?

Living things do change. Consider all the different races of humans that have come from one original type of human. Even a creationist must recognize that changes have occurred within the groups that were created. Science also calls this type of change

evolution (microevolution).

But evolution also attempts to explain how completely new types of animals or plants can originate. What would it take to evolve from invertebrates to warm-blooded mammals that bear live young? That would require evolving new DNA information, instructions for making a skeleton, lungs, brain, and other new organs that did not exist before.

This would be adding many new chapters of precise information to the “instruction manual” for making life. If there were not intelligent action in designing living things, all of these volumes of new information would have to gradually arise through changes resulting from random changes in the DNA, called mutations, and through natural selection.

Can we prove that this cannot happen? No. No one can prove what happened long ago; we can only explore the possibilities. The evolution of new information begins with mutations that change nucleotides in DNA, which may change an amino acid in a protein (“changing the letters” in our simple protein).

In the evolutionary model, these changes are random—the mutation process does not know what the animal is going to need. Naturalism assumes that random mutations and natural selection will produce whatever is needed. But is this realistic? Will this process evolve new, previously nonexistent complex organs and tissues, or would random

changes ultimately be destructive?

If some caribou in Alaska are too slow to outrun a wolf, natural selection will eliminate them and their offspring. Some scientists believe that natural selection can eliminate *only* these weaker individuals but will not produce any new organs or new types of animal life. In fact, science has not demonstrated the existence of a genetic process that can evolve any basic new types of life.

Conclusion

Though plenty of evidence for creation is supported by credible scientific research, unanswered questions remain for creationists as well as for evolutionists. What should we do if, as certainly is the case, we don't have the answers to all of our questions?

The answer may depend on our *personal experience* with God. Though God wants the believer to think, analyze, discover, and research, the bottom line may be, Do we trust Him and His Word? Do we believe that He knows more about ancient history than we do, since He was there when the earth was formed (Job 38; Ps. 33:6)? Can we literally take Him at His Word?

Seven times in the creation account, God states, “and it was so.” In speaking of his literal return, Christ says, “If it were *not so*, I would have told you.” If earth and humanity's origins differed from the biblical account, would Christ not have told us so as well? ■

Recommended references

- ◆ Michael J. Behe, *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution* (New York: The Free Press, 1996).
- ◆ Leonard R. Brand, *Faith, Reason, and Earth History* (Berrien Springs, Mich.: Andrews University Press, 1997).
- ◆ *The Creation Hypothesis: Scientific Evidence for an Intelligent Designer*. J. P. Moreland, ed. (Downer's Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1994).
- ◆ *Origins*, and *Geoscience Reports* (journals published by the Geoscience Research Institute). For subscription requests or to order back copies, contact: Origins, Geoscience Research Institute, 11060 Campus St., Loma Linda, CA 92350.

Illustrations

The following Web sites have useful illustrations, or scan illustrations from the book listed above by Leonard Brand:

- ◆ http://www.blc.arizona.edu/Molecular_Graphics/DNA_Structure/DNA_Tutorial.HTML
- ◆ <http://www.genome.iastate.edu/edu/doe>
- ◆ <http://www.accessexcellence.com/AB/GG>