

Doesn't Evolution Disprove God?

Intro: Tough Questions Series. Last week we looked at the question most Americans would like to ask God, "*How can a loving God allow suffering?*" Today we move to a question every bit as troubling to Americans, "***Did a personal God create the universe?***"

It is the question of origin, and it's an important question, because the question of origin sheds critical light on the value of life, the meaning of life, the purpose of life and the destiny of life. If you are an accident of a mindless random cosmic chemical process, this affects your sense of purpose and destiny and your behavior. If, on the other hand you were created by a personal God, who loves you and who has put you on this earth to fulfill a tremendously important task for your life, that will also affect your sense of purpose and destiny and your behavior. So let's think about the question of origin.

Two Contending Answers: (famous bumper stickers...)

- **Darwinism**: "*The cosmos is all that there is or ever was or ever will be.*"

Those are the opening words of Carl Sagan's famous book and PBS series, "Cosmos". It has become something of a creed for the philosophy of **Naturalism**, the belief that there is no creator God in the universe, but only the impersonal atoms and chemicals and forces of nature. **Where did we come from?** The answer of naturalism is you were created by nature. Well then, **where did nature come from?** Naturalism answers that the cosmos is the outcome of blind, impersonal and random forces that brought life into existence by chance chemical reactions. Over billions of years, the process of natural selection produced the universe we have today.

- **Design**: "*I believe in God the Father, creator...*"

This is the conviction that a personal and supreme God made everything that exists out of his free will and great love. As the opening words of the Bible put it,

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

For about 50 years now, the theory of Darwinism has dominated the public places of our lives, our classrooms, our government and our culture. Many people today think that Darwinism is no longer theory, but is fact. But a growing number of people are giving it some serious and fresh thought.

Cracks In Darwinian Theory Appear:

Chicago Tribune reporter turned pastor Lee Strobel is one of them. He began to get uncomfortable when he realized that the partnership of Darwinism and naturalism required him to believe that:

- Nothing produced everything
- Non-life produced life
- Randomness and chance produced fine tuning and highly detailed information
- Chaos produced reason
- Unconsciousness produced consciousness

This seemed to require a **leap of faith** he was more and more unwilling to make. Other cracks are emerging in Darwinian theory as well, like the **lack of fossil records** documenting the transition stages in the evolutionary development of the species... like some famous pieces of **fabricated evidence** that formed part of the text of almost every biology book used to introduce students to Darwinian theory, and like the emergence of **new discoveries** that cast long shadows across the fundamental assumptions of naturalism. He began to become convinced that this whole thing was worth looking at again.

He is not alone. Many of us share a **silent fear** that **something is wrong**, that something **doesn't fit**. Most of us get uncomfortable when we see where the Darwinian-naturalist theorists are taking us. For example, most people have an intuitive sense of the **reality of God**, gained in part from the highly ordered nature of the world around us. But again and again we are **told we are wrong** – but that it is OK to hold some beliefs like that as long as it is a matter of our **private and personal values**. Sort of like – “If you want to hold to those harmless delusions, that’s OK. Just keep it out of the classrooms, out of the culture and out of the government.”

Meanwhile the classrooms are more and more dominated by books on Darwinian philosophy. There has been an **explosion of books** probing Darwinian psychology, politics, economy, medicine, legal theory... It is a long list. What quickly raises our anxieties are some of the works on Darwinian ethics,

explaining **morality as a by-product of natural selection**. Some of their arguments move towards accepting and explaining some of our worst behavior – from rape to murder to self-centeredness. The argument in a nutshell is that **because these behaviors have survived, they must have somehow helped us survive**. Therefore they are acceptable because they have bestowed on us some evolutionary advantage. That is like saying, “whatever wins is good”. One evolutionary ethicist had written a book applying Darwinian ethics to rape and was arguing that **rape confers evolutionary advantage**. He was being interviewed on NPR about this and found himself deluged with angry calls. He finally insisted that the logic is inescapable: *“If evolution is true, then every feature of every living thing has an underlying evolutionary background [that affirms its value]. That is not a debatable matter”*.

Most people take pause at a moment like that and want to think it through again. I do. Maybe you do, too. So let’s ask the question: **“Doesn’t evolution disprove God?”**

I want to suggest **three steps for finding an answer**.

1) Take a New Look at All the Evidence

Some of the research in recent years has raised pressing questions that demand more learning. Scripture says that...

Wise men and women are always learning, always listening for fresh insights. Pr 18:15 (The Message)

Let me mention some of the questions:

- **“Who gave the universe its start?”**

The science of modern cosmology has discovered that matter is not eternal, as naturalists once confidently affirmed. They now believe that the universe began at a definite moment of time, in an extraordinary flash of light and energy commonly called the **“big bang”**, which implies that something outside creation gave it its start. Almost all philosophers and scientists agree: **whatever begins to exist has a cause**. Well then, “Who or what is the cause of the universe?” Naturalism has no answer. The assertion of Boston College philosopher & atheist Quentin Smith that *“we came from nothing, by nothing and for nothing”* seems absurd to everyone.

- **“What accounts for the unique and highly improbable hospitality to life upon the earth?”**

There is a long and growing list of extraordinary “coincidences” that make the **universe uniquely fit for life**. For example, one expert summed up that there are more than 30 physical or cosmological parameters that require **precise calibration** to produce a universe that can support life. Physicist philosopher Robin Collins says that **gravity** is fine tuned to one part in a hundred million billion billion billion billion. A small variation would mean life could not develop. Other parameters in this growing list include the mass, age, light and distance of the **sun**, the **orbit of the earth**, the **molecular properties of water**, the electrical charges of the **proton and electron** in the atom...

There is mounting evidence that the universe and this planet were **carefully designed** to support life. Can this happen **by chance**? Almost all scientists agree that the chance arguments for the design of the universe are fatally flawed, because **massively complex systems do not arise from random chance**.

- **“How do we account for the irreducible complexity of living systems at the molecular level?”**

Darwin said that *“If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down.”*

Recent advances in cellular biochemistry have shown us that living systems are filled with complicated microscopic chemical machines. They work like little factories in cells; they provide motion and transportation and many other functions. Biochemist Michael **Behe** has demonstrated that many of them have sophisticated component parts which **all had to be present for them to work at all**. How could these sophisticated parts – he asks – have been built and then assembled step by step in an extended evolutionary process? The Darwinians have no adequate answer.

He sets out a long list of these molecular machines and compares them to **mousetraps**. If natural selection was to produce a mousetrap, it would have to have produced the spring, the base, and the trigger mechanism in successive evolutionary steps - and then combined them in a final evolutionary step. But the mousetrap would never function until it was assembled. How could a mindless, random process do this? He goes on to

argue that the only rational explanation for how the cells within us came to exist is **intelligent design**.

It is high time to take a new look at all the evidence

2) Build a New Partnership between Science and Faith

A lot of people are arguing for this today, and saying that the evidence demands it. One of the most exciting questions to emerge in recent years is...

- **“Who wrote the genetic code?”**

Inside each and every one of the one hundred trillion cells in your body is **six feet of coiled DNA** that contains a four letter chemical alphabet that spells out a detailed message with **more information** in it than a full set of encyclopedias. In each cell! This encoded message is the instructions that guide every detail of the cell's life and activity. Some years ago when scientists announced they had decoded the human genome, President Clinton said, *“Today we are learning the language in which God created life.”*

Here's the question: How did our cells get complex, highly specified biological information? Genetic theorists have classically had two possible answers, **chance or natural law**. Could it be **by chance**? It would be like taking a trash can full of scrabble chips and throwing them on the table and getting the set of encyclopedias. But this doesn't happen – ever. You might get a word or two, even a short phrase. But **massively complex strings of information do not arise from random chance**. Information science has demonstrated that monkeys pecking at typewriters will never write a Shakespearean play, no matter how many million years they keep at it. How about **“Law-like processes”**? This is when certain chemical processes repeat themselves over and over again. They have the same weakness; the ability of some chemicals to faithfully attract and bond with certain other chemicals because of the molecular properties may produce repeated cycles of information – sort of like spelling out a single word with the scrabble chips over and over again. But **law-like processes do not produce highly complex volumes of specialized information**.

There must be a **better answer** than chance or law-like processes. The better answer is **intelligent design**.

You instinctively know that. (Waves on a beach). If you hold a book or look at some computer code – you may not know who the author was, but you know that **intelligent information is the marker of an intelligent mind**. Wave after wave of information in biology, genetics, cosmology, astronomy and physics point in the same direction – to intelligent mind far greater than our own.

Theoretical physicist John Wheeler, professor emeritus at Princeton, said, *“When I first started studying, I saw the world as composed of particles. Looking more deeply I discovered waves. Now after a lifetime of study, it appears that all existence is the expression of information.”*

Here’s what we are saying. **Information comes from Mind**.

Look more deeply again and you will see the fingerprints of a personal creator God. Just listen, in this context, to these familiar sentences of scripture with new ears...

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
And God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.*

Ge 1:1,3 (NIV)

Circle the word, “said”. Scripture tells us that God spoke the world into existence. It was a creative act of information transmission. Listen to these phrases from the start of John’s gospel in the NT...

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning... Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

Jn 1:1-3 (NIV)

Circle the phrase, “the Word”. That is John’s phrase for Jesus before he was born on earth. God created everything through him, through his word. Can you see how Genesis and The Gospel of John and modern science are converging?

Francis Bacon, long ago said that *“A little science estranges a man from God. A lot of science brings him back.”*

3) Get Into a New Relationship the Maker of the World

*My help comes from the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth.
He will not let your foot slip—
he who watches over you will not slumber;*
Psa 121:2-3 (NIV)

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