

Does God Exist? The Origin of Life

"The complexity of the simplest known type of cell is so great that it is impossible to accept that such an object could have been thrown together suddenly by some kind of freakish, vastly improbable event. Such an occurrence would be indistinguishable from a miracle."

— MICHAEL DENTON

MEMORY VERSE

... "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' (Matthew 22:37-39).

REVIEW OF THE CONCLUSIONS FROM THE EVIDENCE SO FAR:

1. Does Truth Exist? Yes. It is self-defeating to deny it.
2. Does God Exist? So far, we have seen evidence that He does from:
 - a. The beginning of the universe (Cosmological Argument)
 - b. The design of the universe (Teleological Argument/Anthropic Principle)

Since we are going to talk about science, it will be helpful to define our terms. While there is no consensus on how one defines science or its limits, at the very least science is a search for causes. Scientists are normally trying to discover what caused a particular effect.

1. What are the two types of causes?

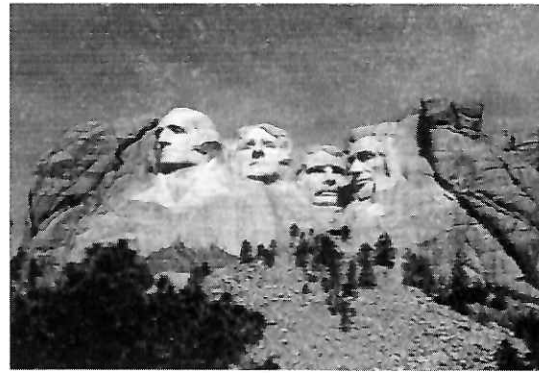
2. What philosophical presupposition do naturalistic scientists hold that causes them to rule out intelligent causes?

Principle of Uniformity

What caused an unseen past event:



PAST



PRESENT

YOU CAN'T HAVE LIFE WITHOUT A UNIVERSE!

A thousand years from now when scientists have solved all the questions that plague humanity, they are finally ready for the ultimate challenge. They elect a representative to address God.

"God," says the scientist in charge. "You are no longer needed. You served a function in Your day, but that day is gone. We can do everything that You can do, so goodbye."

There is a moment of silence. Then a voice booms out of the sky: "Everything?"

"Yes," answers the scientist, "everything"

"Can you make a human being from dust?"

"Absolutely."

"OK" says God, "let me see you make a human being".

The scientist reaches down and digs his hands into the earth.

"Oh, no," says God. "Get your own dust."

David Wolpe, "Does Science Disprove Religion?" *Why Faith Matters*, pgs. 81, 88-89.

This is the third time we are asking a question similar to this, but it's such an important point that we need to emphasize it. Atheists sometimes suggest that there is no need for God if macroevolution is true. This is nonsense.

3. Name two things that must exist before new life forms can come into existence (both of these things display evidence of design and thus require a designer).

THE CREATION VS. EVOLUTION DEBATE

When we look into a telescope at our massive universe, we are amazed at the highly fine-tuned design we see. In this lesson, we will see that when we look into a microscope at even the tiniest life form, amazing evidence of design is also readily apparent.

How did life begin? Why is this question important? Your belief about the origin of life affects your outlook on life, your world view. If everything that exists is a result of a cosmic accident and human life forms arose from primordial goo, then life has no ultimate meaning. You are nothing but a highly evolved amalgamation of cells whose ultimate fate is to return to dust. On the other hand, if we were created, then we are endowed with rights, meaning, and purpose. What we believe matters.

So which view is true?

When it comes to the origin of life, there are really only two possibilities: Either life is the product of intelligence or it is not. Either some kind of intelligence created life or it came together by natural forces.

Unfortunately, many scientists philosophically rule out intelligent causes before they look at the evidence. That's why the "creation vs. evolution" debate is not as much a debate over evidence as it is over philosophy. Everyone is looking at the same evidence. **The debate is really over two major philosophical issues: 1) What causes will we consider possible before we look at the evidence? 2) How should we interpret the evidence?**

Since all data needs to be interpreted, "science" doesn't say anything—scientists do. When scientists study a biological creature, it doesn't say "Made by God" or "Product of natural forces" on it. The scientist must look at the data and make an interpretation, and that involves philosophical realities including reasoning skills.

When scientists let their personal preferences dictate their assumptions or interpretation of the evidence, then their ideology is dictating their conclusions, not the other way around. Ironically, that's exactly what many secular scientists accuse religious people of doing!

This chart summarizes the positions of the two possible views for the origin of life:

Naturalism	Intelligent Design
Only natural causes are possible (a philosophical assumption).	Natural and intelligent causes are possible.
The first life arose spontaneously by chance from non-living chemicals.	Even the simplest life has characteristics that are the products of intelligence and cannot be explained by natural causes.
Adding long periods of time increases the chances for spontaneous generation.	No amount of time is enough to allow spontaneous generation to occur.
Creation-versus-evolution is about religion versus science.	Creation-versus-evolution is about good science versus bad science.
Although spontaneous generation isn't supported by empirical observation, it is still the best explanation for life's origin.	Based on the principle of uniformity (the present is the key to the past), intelligent design is the best explanation for life's origin.

SIMPLE LIFE? THERE'S NO SUCH THING!

The origin of the genetic code is a supreme problem for atheists. The order of letters in the genetic code, while expressed in chemicals known as DNA, is not determined by physical forces any more than the order of the words in this sentence is determined by physical forces. In other words, just like the laws of ink and paper cannot explain the order of the letters in this sentence, the laws of physics, chemistry, and biology cannot explain the order of the letters in your DNA.

So what caused the genetic code? Whenever we see a code, we always discover that the code is the product of an intelligent mind. Yet because of their naturalistic bias, atheists rule out that possibility, before even looking for the cause of the genetic code. This goes against everything we know from experience. To say that materials can create a code is like saying that an iPod can create its own music. Codes come from minds like music comes from minds.

4. How does DNA demonstrate that life is not "simple"?

5. What is the significance of the examples used in the video such as, "Take out the garbage, Mom," "John loves Mary," and "Drink Coke" to the study of biological life?

INVESTIGATING THE ORIGIN OF FIRST LIFE

Since no human observed the origin of the first life, how can we discover how the first life came into being? We can use the same scientific principles that are used every day in our criminal justice system: Forensic principles. The origin of life is a forensic question.

6. Describe the Principle of Uniformity and how it is used to discover the cause of first life.

7. How might a person's view of the origin of life affect their view of moral questions in life?

WHICH CAME FIRST, THE CHICKEN OR THE EGG?

A difficult chicken-egg dilemma exists for naturalistic spontaneous generation because DNA relies on proteins for its production but proteins rely on DNA for their production. So which came first, proteins or DNA? One must already be in existence for the other to be made.

The spontaneous generation of life has never been observed. Scientists have attempted to combine chemicals to emulate the environment that they theorize would have been necessary for spontaneous generation. But their attempts to create life have failed. And if scientists ever do manipulate conditions to create life in the laboratory, it will only show that intelligence was necessary to do so!

The inability of the brightest scientists to create even the simplest life form is evidence that "simple life" is not simple at all. Moreover, if we've failed to create life using all of our intelligence, why should we expect non-intelligent natural processes to do so?

8. State two reasons why naturalistic spontaneous generation is implausible.

9. Why is suggesting the intelligent design of the first life NOT 'God of the Gaps' reasoning?

INTELLIGENT CAUSES VS. SUPERNATURAL CAUSES

ID theorists have made the case that the proper distinction regarding causes is between natural and intelligent causes, not natural and supernatural causes. That certainly makes sense in scientific endeavors such as archaeology, forensic criminal investigations, cryptology, and SETI (the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence, as depicted in the movie "Contact").

There does, however, come a point when one should make a distinction between natural and supernatural causes. Certainly that seems to be the case with the creation and fine-tuning of the universe. There can be no natural cause for the universe because nature itself was created at the beginning of the universe—it was the effect, so it can't be the cause. Since all space, time, and matter were created with extreme precision, the cause must be spaceless, timeless, immaterial, and intelligent (i.e. beyond nature, or supernatural). And since the initial conditions of the universe were fine-tuned, an evolving naturalistic process cannot explain them. Those conditions appear to be put in at the creation event by a Cause that transcends nature. Therefore, the universe necessitates not just an intelligent cause but also a supernatural one.

Cosmology is one thing, but what about biology? It seems the evidence also leads to the supernatural for the ultimate cause of living things, especially the genetic code. The genetic data doesn't necessarily tell us whether the cause of the genetic code is inside or outside the natural world—it could be an intelligent alien that is in the natural world. In fact, atheist Richard Dawkins, in an interview for the movie "Expelled", even posited that aliens might have deposited life here on earth.

However, if no known natural forces can create the genetic code, then no known natural forces could have created the intelligent alien (or whatever the intelligence was) who is claimed to have created the genetic code. Therefore, we ultimately arrive at a supernatural cause for the genetic code, not just an intelligent one. Again, it's not just that we **lack** a naturalistic cause for the genetic code, but we have positive evidence **for** an intelligent supernatural cause of the code. When you consider the background information brought to us by cosmology, the best candidate for the genetic code, is the same spaceless, immaterial, timeless, and intelligent being who created and fine-tuned the universe. So while natural vs. intelligent causes is the proper distinction for some questions, when it comes to ultimate questions the proper distinction is natural vs. supernatural.

“God never did a miracle to convince an atheist because His own ordinary works provide sufficient evidence.”

— Ariel Roth

MORE TIME, MORE DISORDER

The Second Law of Thermodynamics states that the universe is running out of usable energy. With each passing moment, the amount of usable energy in the universe grows smaller, leading scientists to the obvious conclusion that one day all the energy will be gone and the universe will die. Like a running car, the universe will ultimately run out of gas. Another aspect of the Second Law of Thermodynamics is that nature disorders, it doesn't organize things.

10. Given the fact that nature tends to disorder things over time, why does more time not help the prospects for the spontaneous generation of life?

SCIENCE IS BUILT ON PHILOSOPHY

Darwinists want to explain everything using science. But everything can't be explained by science. In fact, the statement, "all truth comes from science" is not a scientific truth and is therefore self-defeating. It's a philosophical claim, not a scientific conclusion. Using science to search for causes by observation and repetition is just one of the ways we can find truth—it is not the only means. Science cannot be done without philosophy.

11. What are some aspects of reality that science cannot explain?

12. What are some of the philosophical assumptions scientists must make in order to conduct empirical experiments or to embark on a forensic science investigation?

MATERIALISM MAKES REASON IMPOSSIBLE

Materialism asserts that the mind is the brain; that we are nothing but meat machines—molecules in motion. If that is the case, then we have no grounds to believe it. The very tool you are using to come to that conclusion (your brain) can't be trusted because it is just a meat machine. This is why science in principle can never discover that the mind and the brain are the same—do all the empirical studies you want to observe the correlation between the brain and the mind. In order to run the experiment, gather the data, interpret the data, and draw a conclusion, you have to use your mind! That's the very thing materialists claim does not exist!

13. Why is materialism not reasonable?

14. Due to the evidence from the beginning and design of the universe, we can see that this is a theistic universe. Why is a theistic context important when interpreting the biological evidence, such as the incredible design and information content found in even the "simplest" life?

IMPORTANT POINT!

The debate of how life originated has raged on for centuries. Both sides have accused the other of narrow-mindedness. Too frequently people who believe in intelligent design have been accused of being controlled by their "religion." But we have been giving evidence for theism while the atheists simply have faith there is no God and interpret the evidence with that assumption. So ironically, in this case the atheists appear to be guided by religious dogmatism, not the Christians!

TOOLBOX

- Go to the CrossExamined.org website and read an article by Frank Turek titled "Science Doesn't Say Anything, Scientists Do".
- Get *Signature in the Cell, DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design*, by Stephen C. Meyer
- Take an online course at SES.edu taught by Southern Evangelical Seminary professor and co-founder of the Intelligent Design movement, Dr. Bill Dembski. You might be interested in his course recorded in 2013 called "Evolutionary Biology and Intelligent Design".
- Tune in to CrossExamined with Frank Turek for an hour each week on radio or in podcast. (Also available on the CrossExamined App.) Go to CrossExamined.org for details.