

## Where Did I Come From? What Difference Does It Make?

by Ross S. Olson MD

There are basically two possible explanations for our origin. Either we are a product of natural processes, an accidental result of mindless and purposeless laws of nature and random events, or we are the product of a designer. Either our existence can be totally explained by nature – what we might call natural law – or by something beyond nature – what we might call supernatural. There are really only these two possibilities.

I finished my medical education with the impression that evolution was a logical conclusion stemming from fair evaluation of all the relevant scientific data. Further, I was told that no intelligent people doubted its truth, although there were a few intellectually primitive Neanderthals who also continued to believe that the earth was flat, and that dragons caused eclipses.

It was not until I was given a book on creation by one of my brothers, who is a science teacher, that I even considered looking at the basis for these impressions. I left the book alone for over a year before I even opened it, finding myself revolted by the thought of reading material by someone who was so far from the scientific mainstream.

When I began to read *The Creation of Life* by the late A. E. Wilder-Smith, I was amazed and astounded by what I discovered. The author had three PhD's and was a brilliant biochemist. In his book, he pointed out that there is design in life which cannot be accounted for by chance. In fact, design always requires a designer and does not occur naturally.

Natural processes produce order, but it is of a different sort from the effects of intelligence. The sorting of pebbles and sand on the beach is easily explained by the action of wind and waves. The piling up of cut stones, cementing them together and forming them into a house with windows and doors, roofs and floors, is the result of planning and work and is not innate in the nature of the materials or the natural forces acting on them.

We can tell the difference and would not normally confuse a rock pile with a house on the beach. Nor would we attribute the presence of a house to the action of the wind and waves, but would assume that someone built it, even if we did not see the builder or know who it was. I think this would be true even if we had never seen a house before.

Attempts to explain away this distinction generally appeal to long ages of time and say that eventually, the unlikely becomes inevitable and the impossible becomes likely. In real life, however, we all know that time will not help to produce this kind of order. Given many years of exposure to the forces of nature, a beach house will not transform itself into a 400-room castle, nor will a rock pile become a beach house. No, in time, both the castle and the house will be reduced to a rock pile and will blend in with all the other rocks along the beach.

In the case of living things, the degree of order is so incredibly complex that the chance of it coming about by natural means is essentially zero.

For those familiar with molecular biology, the next few thoughts will be understandable. For those who are not, I only ask that you just try to appreciate how intricate and interrelated the factors have to be for it all to work properly. Scientist Fred Hoyle put it this way, "For life to occur by natural processes would be like a Boeing 747 assembling itself by means of an explosion in the junk yard."

The simplest living cell must have many functioning parts to be alive - that is to respond to its environment, to extract energy, to protect itself, and to reproduce. There must be coded information, usually stored in long molecules called DNA. This information must be retrieved and transferred when necessary to perform a function. This is generally done within cells by the manufacture of protein molecules, which catalyze chemical reactions and guide construction of structural parts of the cell.

All this must be organized in space for it to work. An auto parts store may have all the pieces needed to build a car, but until they are put together, you cannot drive it. Even one minor problem with the construction, such as a

disconnected wire, may make the whole thing inoperable, and random changes in the parts or connections are not going to make it better.

For those who think that "maybe we just got lucky," let me put a few numbers behind those ideas. Proteins are the basic building blocks for the function of living cells, and are essentially long chains of individual amino-acid molecules. They fold and assume various globular shapes, depending on which amino acids occupy which positions, and their function is determined by the shape, atomic affinity and electrical charge at various points on their surfaces.

There are 20 different amino acids which are used by living systems to make proteins. A few of these amino acids may occur naturally, but they exist in a mixture of "d" and "l" forms, which are like mirror images of each other. Only the "l" forms are used in living systems.

A protein molecule of 100 component parts would be a small part of a living cell. There would have to be, it is estimated, at least 230 very specific proteins, some as large as 10,000 amino-acids long, each coded by a gene, to complete the most simple, basic living cell. There would also have to be the coded information in the DNA for manufacturing that protein and the mechanisms for retrieving and transferring the information when the cell needed the function which that protein performed.

For the sake of illustration, let us look at the probability of putting that small protein molecule together from a "primordial soup" of individual amino acids, setting aside other difficulties such as the fact that long chains tend to fall apart. Let us forget about the need to select only "l" form, and the problem that amino acids, even if they do occur in nature, tend to deteriorate over time.

Since the chance of selecting the correct amino acid for the first position from an equal mixture of 20 possibilities is about one in 20 ( $1/20$ ), and the chance of selecting the second position correctly is also  $1/20$ , the chance of getting both correctly is  $(1/20)^2$  or  $1/400$ . Therefore, the chance of getting all 100 positions correct is  $(1/20)^{100}$  which is  $(1/10)^{130}$  or  $10^{-130}$ . On the average, therefore,  $10^{130}$  different chains of 100 amino acids would have to be tried before it is likely that one of them would be the correct configuration to do that particular job for the cell.

This is an incredible number which we can only begin to understand. The probability of this protein coming together is far beyond the bounds of possibility. There are only  $10^{47}$  molecules of water in the oceans, about  $10^{80}$  atoms in the entire universe and about  $10^{18}$  seconds in 30 billion years. Therefore, the evolutionist will run out of time and matter before even getting close to the order of magnitude needed to make it probable.

But suppose, what if someplace in the universe, some chain of molecules got lucky on this one protein? Still, the DNA for controlling that protein would need to "just happen" as well. Then, in order to have life, the other 229 different proteins and their DNA would also have to be put together by chance, some of them 10,000-amino-acids long.

And this is just to produce the simplest living cell. What about improving it by random changes into all the life forms that exist, each with its own incredible complexity? For instance, we human beings have more than one billion bytes of information in each cell, forming thousands of genes, each coding the information for making a specific protein. The human brain contains a hundred-billion neurons and a hundred-trillion connections, more complex than the internet.

A 2006 book by geneticist J.C. Sanford *Genetic Entropy & the Mystery of the Genome* shows that with each human generation there are 100 to 1000 deleterious mutations per individual and that the human race is headed for extinction. This translates into decreased fitness of 1 – 2% per generation and explains the increasing rates of both congenital diseases and deterioration that comes with age. We are living longer only because of modern medicine that controls diabetes and allows cancer patients to survive. But this all means that we had to have been created -- perfect or near perfect -- less than 1000 generations ago or we would already be extinct as a race.

"Well," you might say, "If it is so obvious, why do so many fail to see it?" That is a reasonable question and moves us from the physics to the psychology of evolution. After I had studied these matters, I returned to some of my

professors to discuss what I had found. One responded, "That does not impress me." "Yes," I replied, "But what do you do with the argument?" "It just does not impress me," he persisted.

Now, of course, anyone may take leave of reason whenever he wants to and escape into irrationality, but that does not make reason go away. When a person is not impressed by something that ought to impress him, we wonder about his mental condition. For example, if a person, walking down the middle of a busy road, sees a large truck coming his way but responds by saying, "It doesn't impress me," he may still be run over.

I have since discovered that those who do not accept evolution are often given failing grades in science classes. Their degrees may be denied. Their papers may be withheld from publication. Tenure may be refused. They will be rejected and ostracized by their peers. Therefore, it becomes a matter of professional survival to accept evolution. If it is accepted irrationally, it will be defended irrationally. Nevertheless, it may be defended passionately since otherwise, a person would have to acknowledge his dishonesty or lack of courage.

Another professor, when I asked him if he had any interest in the evidence against evolution, responded by saying, "No." When I offered him books and articles, he became angry. "I know where you are headed," he shouted. "You are going to talk about God and Jesus and I have no place for them in my life! And... I don't think you can talk about this on a public university campus!"

I was astonished! But he was indeed correct that if evolution is not true, the only other possibility is creation, which means there is a God. And if there is a God Who created us, then we are answerable to Him and ought to find out all we can about what He expects of us.

Theologian John Warwick Montgomery once said, "When you get on a train of thought, check your ticket." The idea is to see where a certain way of thinking is taking us. This professor did, and refused to get on board. Naturally, it did not change the truth, only his chance of learning it.

There are some basic philosophical problems with the evolutionary position, but they enter in a circuitous manner. First, the scope of science is limited to natural explanations. That is a reasonable limitation to set, so that we do not postulate miracles or magic as the explanation for everything. For example, did the eclipse of the sun end because we beat our drums or was there another factor operating?

By being persistent, natural explanations can be found to many, if not most, phenomena. But can we say, then, that there must be a natural explanation for everything? Science cannot prove that miracles do not exist. It can only admit its inability to deal with them. Yet many scientists confuse the scope of science with the totality of reality.

Actually, there are many assumptions made by the scientist before he even starts to look at data. Firstly, he assumes that he, himself, exists. Now, of course, that is a good place to start. Conversely, if you start with the assumption that you do not exist, why bother with anything?

Also, however, a scientist must assume: that the world exists and that his senses give accurate data about it; that he can manipulate that data with his mind and come up with true conclusions; that he can communicate true information with other people who are seeing the same world; and that the whole universe will not suddenly change tomorrow so that apples fall up instead of down.

It is interesting in this regard to note that science has flourished under a Biblical/Christian world view, which sees the Universe, including natural laws, as a rational creation of a rational God. It is also assumed from this view that God made us rational beings capable, to a certain extent, of learning about His creation. It is further assumed that because it is His nature to be unchanging, He will not capriciously change everything; yet that He also occasionally intervenes miraculously.

From the naturalistic point of view, the human brain is just an accidental organ, whose evolutionary purpose is supposedly for improved survival. It was designed and programmed by chance and there is no guarantee that it can come up with truth any more than randomly generated letters will come up with meaningful ideas. If lies have survival value, natural selection will favor them.

There is also no real mechanism for free will in a naturalistic world. The way the brain works, sensory input activates electrical-chemical pathways -- predetermined by the present random state of the brain and the pathways taken by previous impulses -- and produces a response. In other words, past experience and present happenstance determine what comes out. The person cannot help what he thinks or says. It was just the molecules bouncing around.

When the evolutionist says he knows his brain evolved, he really has to admit that he could not help but say that. His brain is giving him essentially randomly processed data, naturally selected. Thus, he cannot trust the mind that led him to the conclusion. Anybody confused?

On the other hand, when the evidence for creation is acknowledged, and the psychological and philosophical reasons for its rejection are unmasked, one is free to look objectively at all the data. It is then possible to even see that a great deal of "forbidden science" is actually credible and to discover that the scientific information contained in the Bible is both accurate and reliable.

More important, the case against evolution removes the illusion that atheism is intellectually respectable and throws one back to the most important decision any person ever makes: specifically, realizing that there is indeed an incredibly intelligent and powerful Creator who made us and all that exists, how will we respond to Him?

Reason only brings us so far, for we see a creation that is not only intricately designed and beautiful, we also see evil and suffering. Only the revelation God Himself provided and accredited with miracles and prophecies, the Bible, can fill in those gaps in our understanding.

The Biblical Creationist believes that the existence of God is not only true but terribly important and that the only loving thing to do is to spread the news. This includes the good news as well as the bad news, because it is the bad news that makes the good news so good. We were given free will by our Creator so that we might choose to love and serve Him. But we have tragically chosen to go our own way, what the Bible calls sin. In the process, we have caused the whole of creation to fall into disarray and evil to fall even on the relatively innocent. Yet the Creator took the initiative to restore all things by becoming human, in Jesus Christ, and taking on Himself the penalty of our sin.

Individually, we can return to the state He intended by humbling ourselves before Him and accepting the forgiveness He offers. Eventually, the great Creator who spoke the whole universe into existence, will bring it to an end, and judge all things. He will re-create what was originally intended to be, but hold each person responsible for the choices made, in response to the knowledge given.

This is what it means when the Scripture says: "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities -- his eternal power and divine nature -- have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened." (Romans 1:18-21)

Those are words that do not pass the tests of political correctness, sensitivity or tolerance. Yet they claim to be inspired by God Himself. And if that is true, they need to be taken very seriously indeed. The argument about origins is not a game. It is not even an academic exercise. It is a sober test of intellectual honesty and humility with eternal consequences. God has arranged it so that finding Him does not depend on intelligence or education, but on open spiritual eyes. Those who accept the evidence and acknowledge God as their rightful ruler include people from both ends of the intellectual spectrum. Likewise for those who reject. And it is also not a question that we should leave to "the experts" because we each will be held responsible for the decision that we make.

(January 26, 2008 Revision)