

The Word@ZPC

# The Case for God in an Anti-God World

## **In Search of Missing Links**

*Fossils, Transitionals, and the Origin of Life*

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*Has Darwinism made belief in God irrelevant, or is it just a new philosophical option masquerading as scientific fact?*

### **A Half Dozen Scientific Realms in Which We Must Test the Validity of Theism**

<i>Cosmology</i>	How did the universe begin?
<i>Physics</i>	Is the cosmos uniquely fine-tuned for human life?
<i>Biology</i>	What accounts for the complexity of molecular systems?
<i>Paleontology</i>	Does the fossil record affirm Darwinism?
<i>Origins</i>	Under what circumstances did life appear?
<i>Anthropology</i>	What is the origin of human consciousness?

### **Darwin's Public Gamble**

In *The Origin of Species* Charles Darwin offered two bold tests for evolution:

- (1) Selective breeding will ultimately produce new \_\_\_\_\_.
- (2) Fossil hunters will discover multitudes of \_\_\_\_\_.

Disappointments on these two fronts have received little publicity.

*The extreme rarity of transitional forms in the fossil record is the trade secret of paleontology. (Darwinist Stephen Jay Gould)*

The neo-Darwinist assumption today is that key missing links will be found.

Until then, evolution as an unguided, purposeless, 100% natural process is assumed to be true for two reasons:

- (1) It is \_\_\_\_\_ (if naturalism is first assumed).

(2) There are no real \_\_\_\_\_.

*We should reject, as a matter of principle, the substitution of intelligent design for the dialogue of chance and necessity; but we must concede that there are presently no detailed Darwinian accounts of the evolution of any biochemical system, only a variety of wishful speculations. (Biochemist Franklin M. Harold)*

We cannot fill in the gaps just because evolution must have taken place a certain way.

Scientific inquiry should instead lead us to ask:  
***What do we learn from the evidence?***

## **A Few Words About the Fossil Record**

Fossils are remains or traces of long-deceased plants and animals.

- Biological preservation (bugs in sap and mammoths in ice)
- Mineralized replacements (dinosaur eggs and petrified wood)
- Marks and imprints (outlines of feathers and T. Rex footprints)

Fossils are generally found embedded in the Earth's geological strata – layers of sedimentary rock (sandstone, shale, and limestone) which have been laid down over millions of years.

Bacterial life is known to have existed on Earth about 3.8 billion years ago.

Virtually all animal phyla suddenly appeared \_\_\_\_\_ years ago in the so-called Cambrian Explosion.

*It is as though they were just planted there,  
without any evolutionary history. (Richard Dawkins)*

The development of life appears to have been anything but seamlessly smooth:

- Approximately \_\_\_\_% of Earth's species are now extinct.
- Intermittent "life-exterminating events" are now widely assumed.
- A global disaster (meteor strike?) at the \_\_\_\_\_ Boundary is assumed to have eliminated the dinosaurs and countless other species.

"Creation Science" advocates, however, dispute the validity of the fossil record.

Their argument is not geological but theological – an absolute commitment to a creation date only a few thousand years ago.

## The Darwinist Wish List

If materialistic naturalism is true, and an unguided evolutionary process is indeed responsible for all of life on Earth, what should fossil hunters find?

- An exceedingly large number of transitional life forms
- No “saltations” (sudden leaps by which new organisms suddenly appear)
- Evidence that mutations and natural selection alone can produce extraordinary new features (eyes, brains, and wings) and whole new orders of organisms (not just variations on a theme, like the horse)

Darwin openly acknowledged that in his own time (the mid-1800’s) the lack of such fossil finds was “the most obvious and gravest objection which can be urged against my theory.”

## The Rocky Results To Date (the results of 150 years of digging)

Two observations stand out:

*Stasis*            Most species on Earth remain \_\_\_\_\_.

*Suddenness*    Species arrive “all at once,” without steady development.

*The fossil record does not convincingly document a single transition from one species to another. (Darwinist Stephen Stanley)*

The “fossil problem” for Darwinists is worsening with time, especially because publicity is beginning to reveal the skimpiness of the emperor’s clothes.

Archaeopteryx is the most celebrated “missing link.”

Is it typical, however, of what the fossil record shows, or is it a curious mosaic (like the modern-day platypus)?

Nowhere are subjectivity and the power of P.R. campaigns more evident than in the public discussion of human origins.

Virtually all proposed timelines and “ascents of man” have been set aside.

Today the hopes of Darwinism are set not on paleontology, but on \_\_\_\_\_.

## Which Came First: The Chicken or the Egg?

Theists actually have no struggle with this conundrum.

Darwinists, however, have to explain how \_\_\_\_\_ came about at once.

It's one thing to postulate how species might have morphed from one kind to another; the real challenge is to show how the very first gene appeared.

Life as we know it requires:

- DNA                      Self-reproducing information stored as genes
- RNA                      A cell's "factory" for producing proteins
- Nucleotides            Component parts of DNA & RNA (4 kinds for each)
- Proteins                The building blocks of living systems
- Amino Acids            The building blocks of proteins (only 20 of them)
- A stable cell environment with a semi-permeable membrane

DNA is best described as a \_\_\_\_\_ of blueprints for everything needed  
In our cells; every one of our 100 trillions cells has \_\_\_\_\_ of coiled DNA.

A single bacterial cell has more information (if written out in standard code) than the entire Encyclopedia Britannica.

The big question: If evolution is an unguided, 100% natural process, how and when did \_\_\_\_\_ emerge from \_\_\_\_\_?

Natural selection certainly "works" with existing DNA-based systems; but how did DNA come about in the first place?

## Irreducible Complexity

Everyone agrees that life is based on extraordinary molecular machines.

In his book *Darwin's Black Box*, biochemist Michael Behe suggested that the notion of such machines self-assembling is utterly counter-intuitive.

Even the simplest machines, like a \_\_\_\_\_, only work if all the component parts are present simultaneously (in this case, 5 parts).

Can the human brain – a 3-pound mass of 10,000 million nerve cells – be just a "computer made of meat" (Marvin Minsky), formed entirely by chance?

Christians recognize God's creation of both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_:

Genesis 1:1            "In the beginning, God created the heavens..."  
John 1:1              "In the beginning was the Word (*logos*)..."

*An honest man, armed with all the knowledge available to us now, could state that in some sense, the origin of life appears at the moment to be almost a miracle, so many are the conditions which would have had to have been satisfied to get it going.*  
(Darwinist Francis Crick, co-discoverer of DNA's double helix structure)

## The Search For a Non-Supernatural Origin of Life

*It is often said that all the conditions for the first production of a living organism are now present, which could ever have been present. But if (and oh! What a big if!) we could conceive in some warm little pond, with all sorts of ammonia and phosphoric salts, lights, heat, electricity, etc. present, that a protein compound was chemically formed ready to undergo still more complex changes, at the present day such matter would be instantly devoured or absorbed, which would not have been the case before living creatures before living creatures were formed.*

(Charles Darwin, speculating in an 1871 letter)

By 1959, on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *The Origin of Species*, Darwinism seemed on the brink of a major breakthrough in verification.

But discoveries that were expected to support non-supernatural "pre-biotic evolution" have instead bolstered the case for theism.

3.9 billion years ago, the Earth's surface was 100% molten.  
Limestone (formed of living remains) dates to 3.86 billion years ago.  
That leaves \_\_\_\_\_ years for life to self-organize.

There has never been any experimental evidence that a "chemical soup" could produce living systems...and geophysicists now agree that Earth's atmosphere was never a chemical soup anyways.

If we could break every chemical bond in the simplest living cell, the odds that it would perfectly reassemble by itself are equal to producing, by chance, perfect copies of \_\_\_\_\_ encyclopedias.

If this kind of data arrived in computer form from outer space, we would say it is evidence of intelligent extra-terrestrial life. When found here, however, it is now deemed to be the product of random processes.

No wonder Crick, Dawkins and others are open to an "E.T." solution.

**Final Thoughts: *Is There Compelling Evidence to Believe in God?***

Christians affirm that faith is courageous \_\_\_\_\_ in an object that one has good \_\_\_\_\_ to see as credible (Hebrews 11:1).

Faith, however, is a choice that we must make without all the data we desire.

Does reality as we find it conform to the Judeo-Christian story?

What we know about the cosmos  
What we know about ourselves  
What we know about the ways we think

Three realities stand out:

The teaching, character, and \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus  
The overwhelming evidence of \_\_\_\_\_  
The absence of logical or livable \_\_\_\_\_

To whom shall we go?

“Henceforth the soul’s habitation may be safely built only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair.” (Philosopher Bertrand Russell)

“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except by me.” (Jesus of Nazareth)

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