

Is There Any Evidence For Belief In God?

Lee Strobel is a former atheist. At one time, he was convinced that Darwinism and the Theory of Evolution justified his beliefs. He studied biology, chemistry, geology, and anthropology, and believed that it was obvious that natural selection acting on random variation had made the world what it is today. To put it bluntly, it put “God” out of a job. But now Strobel is a Christian, and believes in God. He has written a book, The Case for a Creator. What evidence persuaded him to change his mind? *Scientifically*, what pointed him toward God?

The two main competing ideologies today both explain how our universe came to be—and how we humans came to be as well. Most people know these hypotheses as Evolution vs. Creation. For this article, we will call them “Darwin vs. Design. Which hypothesis best accounts for the most current data of the physical world we live in?

Possibility #1: Darwin

Charles Darwin developed a sketch in which he depicted all life as a tree. There was an ancient ancestor at the bottom, that through random chance, natural selection and time, blossomed upward into various twigs, branches and limbs as life evolved with increasing diversity and complexity. Ultimately, human beings also evolved from this “tree of life” model.

In his research, Darwinism discovered that evolution was occurring within different species of animal life: finches, for example, developed longer or shorter beaks based on the type of food they needed to eat. Change within a species was happening.

Case Studies: Dogs And Horses

Consider the incredible variation in dogs, horses, and roses, touted as “evolution in action.” Notice, however, that even if you have Chihuahuas and Great Danes, and Shetland Ponies and Clydesdales, neither breed or variety shows any tendency to leave the canine or equestrian family. None of the changes has created a novel kind of organism. None of the examples are evolving into a new level of complexity; they all illustrate variation around a mean. All observed change is limited. This fact only supports what Genesis records as the limits of creation: “And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps along the earth according to its kind (Genesis 1:25).”

Breeding doesn’t create new genes, any more than shuffling cards in a deck creates new cards! In other words, a pig cannot be bred to grow wings!

It was a gigantic leap for Darwin and other evolutionists to conclude therefore, because a horse developed and evolved from smaller to larger, for example, then the whole universe began as simple cells in the ocean, and over time randomly became more complex and evolved into all the animal and plant life we see today.

Peppered Moths of England

Consider another famous Darwinian example of evolution: moths of England. Scientists observed both black and white peppered moths in England during the

Industrial Revolution. A photograph was taken of a dark moth against a tree darkened by the smoke of the industrial factories. It was a hoax! The photographs showing the light moths against the dark trunks were faked. Peppered moths fly about in the upper branches of the trees and don't perch on the trunks at all.

Finches on Gallapagos

Charles Darwin observed various finches on the Gallapagos Islands in the Pacific. In the dry seasons, finches' beaks grow larger when the seeds they eat are tough and hard. In the rainy seasons, these same finches' beaks grew smaller when tiny seeds became available. Rather than pointing to evolution, the change points to a cyclical fluctuation that allows finches to adapt and survive—in other words, it's a minor adjustment that allows finches to stay finches! And it certainly doesn't demonstrate that finches are evolving into a new kind of organism, or that the finch species evolved from another organism.

Archaeopteryx, the "Bird-Reptile"

In Darwin's hypothesis, birds evolved from reptiles, gradually over time. When archaeologists discovered the magnificent image of this creature impressed into limestone in Germany in 1861, it looked as if a "transitional creature" had been found. Rather than being half-bird, half-reptile, archaeopteryx was clearly a bird, with modern feathers for flying. A bird's breeding system, bone structure, weight and muscle distribution, and lungs all differ from a reptile. Moreover, archaeopteryx is not an ancestor to modern birds at all, but is part of a distinct class of birds that are now extinct (The Case for a Creator, p. 57)

A continual study in paleontology (rock formations and what they contain about prehistoric life) has yielded new forms of life, but they have never yielded any of Darwin's "transitional forms" that would be necessary for his hypothesis to be true. The "intermediate forms" of life have remained as elusive as ever. In fact, the discontinuity of the fossil record is just as pronounced as when Darwin's Origin of Species was first published in 1859.

For the theory of Darwinism to be true, one has to believe that:

- Nothing produces everything (contradicts the law of cause and effect)
- Non-life produces life
- Randomness produces fine-tuning
- Chaos produces information
- Unconsciousness produces consciousness
- Non-reason produces reason

The audacious claim of Darwinian evolution, in a nutshell, is that organisms can put together complex systems with *no intelligence at all*. Naturalistic processes cannot explain how non-living chemicals could somehow *self-assemble* into the first living cell. For Lee Strobel, it didn't take him long to reason that the doctrine of Darwinism was simply too far-fetched to be credible.

The main antagonist is Darwin's hypothesis turns out to be the *fossil record*. A "Cambrian explosion" as scientists call it, happened about 500 million years ago, in

which full blown developed animals abruptly and extensively appeared on earth. It gave rise to the sudden appearance of most of the animal phyla—or divisions—that we see today. It flies in the face of Darwin’s idea of gradual plant and animal life development over a long period of time. Among other scientific discoveries, the “Cambrian explosion” uproots Darwin’s tree (The Case for a Creator, p. 45).

Possibility #2: Design

If there is a Creator of this universe, what scientific evidence supports this theory? Lee Strobel explored a number of issues to gather his information:

The Evidence of Cosmology. The argument is simple: 1) Whatever begins to exist has a cause; 2) the universe has a beginning; 3) therefore, the universe has a cause. Charles Colson and Nancy Piercey add in their book, How Now Shall We Live?, “If the universe had a beginning, then something *external* to the universe must have caused it to come into existence—something, or Someone, transcendent to the natural world” (p. 58). Even Stephen Hawking has said, “Almost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the Big Bang” (The Case for a Creator, p. 107). Of course, Christians quip, “God spoke, and BANG! The universe happened.” God would be the Transcendent Cause, the uncaused Cause, since He is eternal. Remember, the argument is not, “everything has a cause”, but rather “whatever begins to exist has a cause.”

The Evidence of Physics. Modern science has discovered that the laws and constants of physics unexpectedly conspire in an extraordinary way to make the universe habitable for life. One example would be just how fine-tuned gravity is on earth. Of the force strengths in nature, gravity is the weakest, and the nuclear force that binds protons and neutrons in the nuclei is the strongest force. If you stretched a ruler across the universe, and made one inch increments, and you moved the force of gravity *only one* inch, the change in force would increase gravity by a *billion fold!* For life to exist, gravity has to have an incomprehensibly narrow range! Cosmologist Edward Harrison concludes: “The fine tuning of the universe provides *prima facie* [plain; clear] evidence of deistic design” (The Case for a Creator, p. 127)

The Evidence of Astronomy. Earth’s position in the solar system and the universe, along with its unique geological and chemical processes work together to host a safe place for humans to live. Our sun, for example, emits the right colors, a balance of red and blue. This helps maintain the oxygen level and ozone layer at the right levels. It also aids in photosynthesis, key to life on our planet. The moon also helps support life, by stabilizing the tilt of our earth’s axis. With the earth’s tilt at 23.5 degrees, it helps make our seasonal changes mild. Without the moon, our earth’s tilts could swing wildly, and result in major temperature changes. 60% of our tides are caused by our moon, which help flush our oceans and keep ocean circulation in motion. Since the oceans carry a lot of heat, this helps keep our northern latitudes relatively mild (The Case for a Creator, p. 178-179). Our earth’s plate tectonics help develop continents and mountains, which prevent a water world. Tectonics also drive the earth’s carbon dioxide-rock cycle, which helps regulate our environment by balancing greenhouse gases. Greenhouse gases absorb infrared energy and help warm the planet. Through

tectonics and volcanoes, the earth releases internal heat in the form of carbon dioxide. It acts as a thermostat to keep our surface temperature under control (p. 183).

The Evidence of Biochemistry. This science reveals an amazing complexity of molecular machines. In an interview with Michael Behe of Lehigh University in Pennsylvania, a doctor of biochemistry, Behe pointed out that, at the cellular level, “every part of the cell’s function is controlled by complex, highly calibrated machines” (The Case for a Creator, p. 199). The existence of even a simple molecule requires intelligent design. When we probe into the bottom of life—at the level of molecules—we discover that the cell, rather than being simple, is extremely complicated, highly sophisticated, and is run by synchronous micromachines. In cilia, in proteins, in flagella, all basic components of cells, they are *irreducibly complex—at the micro level*. As scientist Allan Sandage has said, “The world is too complicated in all its parts and interconnections to be due to chance alone...The existence of life with all its order in each of its organisms is simply too well put together...” (The Case for a Creator, p. 217).

The Evidence of Biological Information. In each one of our bodies’ 100 trillion cells, there is six feet of DNA coiled. That DNA contains a four letter alphabet that precisely spells out assembly instructions for proteins. DNA research reveals complex sequential formations and arrangements of proteins, that correspond to independent functions. This huge amount and kind of information stored and used emphatically implies an intelligent source.

The Evidence of Consciousness. Consciousness is our thoughts, emotions, sensations. It is what makes us alive and aware. J.P. Moreland says, “Consciousness is when you’re aware of when you introspect—when you pay attention to what’s going on inside you” (The Case For A Creator, p. 254). Moreland concludes, “If the universe began with dead matter having no conscience, how then do you get something totally different—conscious, living, thinking, feeling creatures—from materials that don’t have that?”

Together, these scientific discoveries overwhelming support the theory of “intelligent design.”

If There Is Intelligent Design, What may be concluded about the Designer?

- From Physics: the Designer is intelligent and involved, ongoing
- From Astronomy: the Designer is incredibly precise, implying sustained care
- From Biochemistry: the Designer is creative and complex
- From Consciousness: the Designer is rational; has awareness & feelings

The basic picture of the Designer gathered from scientific data uncannily supports the description of the God whose identity is spelled out in the Bible: “*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth*” (Genesis 1:1). Two thousand years ago, the Apostle Paul wrote in a letter to Christians in Rome:

“*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*

[that is, the world], so that men are without excuse” (Romans 1:20). From the evidence gathered in the world we live in, it is clear there exists a Designer. That Designer, the Bible calls God. If God the Creator wanted to reveal Himself to mankind, what religion best describes His qualities?

If you are still seeking answers, consider this outline to pursue:

1. Is there a God who created the universe?
2. If so, did God reveal himself to humankind through the Bible, or other sacred scriptures?
3. Who is Jesus? Is he the Son of God, as the Bible states—both Deity and humanity in one person?
4. Can Jesus help you, as he claimed?

For Lee Strobel, he saw “faith” in God as a reasonable step in the same direction the evidence is pointing. First, there is a God, who created the universe. Second, this God chose to reveal Himself in human history. Third, the story of Israel in the Old Testament, and the church in the New Testament, unfolds God’s dealing with mankind in human history. And third, a man named Jesus claimed to be God who became a human being, so that mankind could be put in a right relationship with God. Lee Strobel followed the facts, and believed the message about Jesus Christ. He put his trust in the God of creation, the God of the Bible, and he became a follower of Christ.

What about you? What are you going to do with the evidence?

Your comments and/or questions are welcome! Please respond to:
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Goo, to Zoo, to You
Doubts about Darwinism...