

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What about evolution?

Many people have the impression that in order to believe the Bible one must abandon science, reason and logic, and replace it with blind faith. But nothing could be further from the truth. There is no reason why science and the Scriptures should be viewed as being in opposition to each other. There has been a silent divorce, which should never have occurred between the two, for science and the Bible are allies not enemies!

The question of evolution seems to be at the hub of the whole debate, and it is of course a matter of immense importance, for this question deals with who we are, where we came from and where are we going.

For many years people have viewed the evolution debate as a duel, with the Bible in the blue corner and science in the red, fighting each other to the death like gladiators in an arena where there is only one winner.

However, science and the bible are friends not foes. Read on and discover why.

### What do you mean by evolution?

Have you ever attempted to come up with a definition of what you believe evolution is? Why not take a moment to try and think of an answer? Whatever answer you have come up with, see how it compares with the definition offered by the American National Association of Biology Teachers (ANABT). In 1995 the ANABT stated:

*'The diversity of life on earth is the outcome of evolution: **an unsupervised, impersonal, unpredictable and natural process of temporal descent with genetic modification that is affected by natural selection, chance, historical contingencies and changing environments.**'* (Phillip E. Johnson, *Testing Darwinism* (IVP 1997), p. 15).

Or, in the words of the famous evolutionist George Gaylord Simpson, 'Man is the result of a purposeless and natural process that did not have him in mind.' (Phillip E. Johnson, *Testing Darwinism* (IVP 1997), p. 15).

That's exactly what materialist scientists from David

Attenborough to Richard Dawkin mean by the theory of evolution. Everything we see around us evolved by unpredictable, unsupervised chance. You are nothing but a sack of chemicals which, somehow over a vast period of time, became a complex and finely-tuned living machine, but nothing more - or so you are led to believe. Indeed you have no option but to believe this, for **any** other option has been removed by the *materialist* scientists. You are, therefore, a complex accident!

### Is it a question of science or philosophy?

Much of the debate about evolution when closely examined has little to do with science and more to do with philosophy. If a person is convinced that God does not exist, then whatever evidence is put forward to suggest otherwise will be dismissed as irrelevant. The material evolutionists' philosophy will *always* prevent them from conceding that there is a Creator. But this in turn means that they are no longer being governed by science, but by philosophy.

Only the scientist who is willing to consider the evidence whilst laying aside their preconceived philosophy, stands any chance of arriving at a *truly* scientific conclusion based on the *evidence* alone.

Here is an example of where philosophy overrode the scientific evidence. Richard Lewontin is one of the most influential biologists in the world. He is a material evolutionist. He has no belief in God and yet even he confesses:

*'It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but, on the contrary, that **we are forced by our a priori adherence to material causes** to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, **no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated.** Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for **we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.** The eminent Kant scholar Lewis Beck used to say that anyone who could believe in God could believe in anything. To appeal to an omnipotent deity is to allow that at any moment the regularities of nature may be ruptured, that miracles may happen.'* (Phillip E.

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Johnson, *Testing Darwinism* (IVP 1997) p. 81, my emphasis).

What he is saying in other words is that no matter what the weight of scientific evidence is, we must never admit that there is a creator God, for to do that would be to betray the philosophy of materialism. The philosophy **must** come first (*a priori*) even when the weight of scientific evidence goes against that philosophy. We must do everything to prevent that 'Divine Foot' from entering the door even if it means using bad scientific practice!

### The selective use of evidence

It has been said that you can make the Bible say anything that you want it to. This is possible, but only if you abuse the Bible by choosing to select parts of it out of its literary context whilst ignoring other sections. In other words, if one is selective in the use of the information found in the Bible then it is open to being abused. This is exactly what cults like the Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons and Christian Scientists have done.

This problem of the selective use of information is not uncommon in science either. Why some scientists do it may be because they are protecting their philosophical presuppositions, as Professor Richard Lewontin explains: contradictory evidence is disregarded.

Another reason for the selective use of evidence may be to retain interested parties who are funding a particular research project. This is not to suggest that the majority of scientists employ such practices, but some clearly do when their argument is weak.

### Absolute statements without evidence

Carl Sagan in his famous TV series *Cosmos* said, 'The Cosmos is all there is, or ever was, or ever will be.' But what experiment can we perform to test that statement? None! This is a statement from his own philosophy.

### It's life Jim, but not as we know it!

The current view of evolution believes that life evolved from non-living molecules. But, what evidence is there that *proves* that life evolved from non-living molecules? The text books tell us that under the right conditions and over a long enough period of time such life did form *somehow!* But the length of time required is only necessary in order to create the 'right

conditions'. Therefore it stands to reason that the length of time can be drastically reduced if someone *purposefully* chooses to create those 'right conditions' within a science lab. Such attempts have been made, but without success, why?

Why hasn't a scientist created all the right conditions in the test tube to create even the simplest of living forms from non-living molecules? If man cannot do it purposefully then how on earth could it possibly have happened accidentally? Once again we see that the evidence simply doesn't back up the claims!

### Going to the dogs

Material evolutionists such as Charles Darwin and Richard Dawkin have both used dog breeding as an example of evolution. On the surface this seems plausible but when one digs deeper their theory falls down.

For a start, this is a poor example to use for the simple reason that the selective breeding of animals is a process guided by the intelligence of the dog breeders who know exactly what they are trying to achieve and how far they can go. One can hardly equate this as an example of an 'unsupervised, impersonal, unpredictable and natural process'. Furthermore, dog breeders only produce variations within a species and not a new species in itself. So, selective breeding is **not** the same thing as natural selection, but it is an example of intelligent design, which again points to a Creator.

### 'It's all there in the rocks', or is it?

In his excellent book *'Testing Darwinism'*, Phillip E. Johnson points out that, *'textbooks and museum exhibits highlight fossils that can be interpreted as possible transitional forms between major groups - fossils that are quite few in number. They rarely inform the public about the far greater mass of contrary evidence, such as the absence of ancestors for the major animal groups that appear in the Cambrian explosion.... Darwin's theory of evolution originally... predicted that fossil hunters would eventually find a great many transitional intermediates between the major groups (they didn't) and that animal breeders would succeed in creating distinct species (they didn't).'* (Philip E. Johnson, *Testing Darwinism* (IVP 1997) p. 38, 43).

Johnson goes on to say, *'I've long been fascinated by the conflicting messages Darwinists provide concerning the fossil evidence. On the one hand, they proudly point to a small number of fossil finds that*

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supposedly confirm the theory. These include the venerable bird/reptile Archaeopteryx, the 'whale with feet' called Ambulocetus, the therapsids that supposedly link reptiles to mammals, and especially the hominids or ape-men, like the famous Lucy.

*These examples, all from vertebrate animals, are pressed very insistently on me in debates as proof of the 'fact' of evolution and even of the Darwinian mechanism. I am not as impressed by such examples as Darwinists think I should be, because I know that the fossil record overall is extremely disappointing to Darwinian expectations. One prime example is the 'Cambrian explosion,' the basic animal groups all appear suddenly and without evidence of evolutionary ancestors. What is even more interesting is that the evidence for Darwinian macroevolutionary transformations is most conspicuously absent just where the fossil evidence is most plentiful - among marine invertebrates (These animals are plentiful as fossils because they are so frequently covered in sediment upon death, whereas land animals are exposed to scavengers and to the elements.)' (Philip E. Johnson, *Testing Darwinism* p. 59, 60).*

Clearly there seems to be a distinct absence of evidence from the fossil records to support the commonly held view of evolution. Perhaps it is for this reason that many of the schools and colleges in America are now beginning to abandon the 'traditional' view of evolution as set out by the ANABT in support of a Creator. (According to a report in the Daily Mail, November 1998 over 21 states have now abandoned the traditional teaching of materialist evolution.)

### Looking down the microscope

If evolution were possible, one would expect evidence to leap out at us from every angle.

But, 'molecular biologists don't even attempt to fill in the Darwinian theory with specific examples because they don't know how to do it.' (Philip E. Johnson, *Testing Darwinism* p.78). It would seem that molecular biologists accept Darwinism not on the strength of the evidence but simply because their belief in materialist evolution forbids them to consider an alternative. If that is not living by blind faith then I don't know what is!

### Microevolution or Macroevolution?

It is true to say that many species have adapted, over time, to their environment. A classic example of this is found on the Galapagos Islands where a particular

variety of finch has been found to have a longer beak. But this is a sign of microevolution (small variations within a species), not macroevolution (giant changes in the body or function that lead to an entirely different species altogether). *Adaptation* is not the same as *evolution* and no Christian would have reason to doubt that God created species in such a way as to allow them to adapt to their various environments.

These are just some of the ways that science has used selective evidence. So have scientists gone beyond their field of study and authority? I think that many have. Perhaps we need to go back to basics and ask what the job of science is.

### What is science?

Science involves three basic elements:

1. observation
2. repetition
3. interpretation

Scientists observe the universe that we live in by means of experiments, observations and calculations to develop theories and then to test those theories. In fact a good scientist will pay a great deal of attention to ensuring the experiments are repeatable, so that the same results will be arrived at when performed by other scientists who don't necessarily hold the same view. A scientist cannot make an absolute statement if there is insufficient evidence to support their theory when put to the test by others. At best, their theory must remain 'a theory'.

### 'Theory'... the missing word

In the past 20 years the word 'theory' has been dropped from the vocabulary when people talk about evolution. This is true in the biology class, the programmes we see on TV and the articles we read in magazines. It seems that some people want us to believe that evolution is no longer a theory but an unquestionable fact. Yet, as we have seen from the information above there is insufficient evidence to allow the scientists to drop the word 'theory' from evolution. There simply isn't the evidence to substantiate the materialist view of evolution. In fact there is far more evidence that would lead one to conclude that there is a Designer, who created the universe.

### Is creation possible?

Consider this question: Is creation possible? If you say no, then on what genuinely scientific grounds can you base your answer? Secondly, is your answer to that question based on evidence or a philosophy?

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### What does a Christian believe?

God only provides two pages in the Bible telling us about the creation of everything in the entire universe. The details of creation are not entered into, for God was not attempting to answer the questions of 20<sup>th</sup> century science, but the false polytheistic myths from the surrounding nations of the day as to the origins of the universe.

However, God designates over one thousand pages to explaining *who* made the universe and more importantly *why*. It therefore seems obvious that the *who* and the *why* questions are far more important for us to know about than the *how* question.

The reason is that once you take your last breath on this earth you will not be remotely concerned about how God created the world, but you *will* be concerned about whether you know the God who created you and therefore to whom you are accountable. Indeed your eternal destination depends on the answer to that question.

Dr Billy Graham said, 'I do not feel competent to speak on the various theories held by scientists with reference to the origin of the universe. But the one thing I am very sure of - any theory which leaves the Sovereign God out of His own universe is a very poor one.' (Billy Graham, *My Answer*, p.263).

All true Christians believe that God designed, created and planned (at every point) the universe and everything in it. What is more, God is currently sustaining everything in the universe. He has never, at any point in time, wound it up like a clock and left it to tick on it's own. Without God life simply could not survive.

Exactly *how* God made the universe may be open to some debate, and if we are **all** totally honest no-one, not even the atheist, can ever be absolutely 100% sure of the 'how' question. But, the two things the Bible clearly tells us is that, it was not a series of accidents and more importantly there is a reason!

### The Big Question!

In a tantalising conclusion to his brilliant book, *A Brief History of Time* (Bantam Press), Stephen Hawking writes:

*"Even if there is only one possible unified theory, it is just a set of rules and equations. What is it that breathes fire into the equations and makes a universe*

*for them to describe?...Up to now most scientists have been too occupied with the development of new theories that describe what the universe is rather than to ask the question why?"*

### Further reading:

- Kirsten Birkett, *Unnatural enemies* (St Matthias Press 1997).
- Sir John Houghton, *The search for God* (Lion 1995).
- Phillip E. Johnson, *Testing Darwinism* (IVP 1997).
- Michael Poole, *A guide to science and belief* (Lion 1994).
- David Wilkinson, *God, the big bang and Stephen Hawking* (Monarch publications 1997).
- Stephen Gaukroger, *It makes sense* (Scripture Union publications 1988).

*The response to this question is based on work done wholly or in part by Colin Webster.*

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