

April 2016

Scientific Evidence That Points to a Creator

By Dan Reynolds

I was recently invited to give a talk on intelligent design to a college philosophy class on Darwin, Marx, and Freud. I have known the professor for a number of years and had presented to his classes before. He usually has had me come in and present the case for intelligent design (ID) at the start of the section on Darwinism. The professor is an atheist but interested in discussing various views. I can only imagine what he has to say about my presentations afterwards; no doubt he tries to counter my arguments. Since I only had one chance to speak to these students, I wanted to present them with what I considered to be the best evidences for theism. This article is based on that talk. The discussion here will be brief and in everyday language. References are provided for those who wish to learn more.

The title of my talk was "Science that Points to a Creator." First I set the ground rules for investigation in the historical sciences (geology, archeology, cosmology, history of life, etc.) by discussing Causality and Inference to the Best Explanation. Then I presented six topics that point to a creator: The Universe Had a Beginning, The Fine-Tuning of Physics, The Origin of Life, The Origin of Phyla, The Origin of Humans, and Worldviews and Morality. Any one of these evidences suggests a designer. Taken together, they form a strong reason to believe in a supernatural creator. Here are the topics.

Setting The Ground Rules: Causality and Inference to the Best Explanation

This topic sets the rules for gathering data and forming hypotheses, our method of inquiry. The historical sciences, where past events cannot be reproduced or directly observed, use *abductive* reasoning in forming hypotheses to explain data and in drawing conclusions. This form of reasoning is much like that used by forensic detectives or a trial jury. Evidence is gathered in the present. Then an inference to the best explanation is made. Using abductive reasoning, one comes to the most probable explanation based on current knowledge. In addition, explanations must present causally adequate mechanisms.

Evidence #1: The Universe Had a Beginning^{1,2,3}

This topic alone strongly points to a supernatural creator. All the observable evidence we have about the universe implies it had a beginning. The universe includes all of nature: matter in all its forms, space-time, and natural law (all physics and chemistry, including quantum mechanics, relativity, all fundamental forces, the vacuum, etc.). Two evidences for the finite age of the universe are the expansion of space-time and the law of entropy. We know from astronomy that the universe is expanding, that galaxies are moving away from each other. Run in reverse, the universe coalesces to a point of infinite density, temperature, and gravity with no volume and without the passage of time. This singularity is *the beginning* of the universe. The law of entropy (also known as the Second Law of Thermodynamics) states that the total amount of useful energy in the universe necessarily decreases with time. And since there is still useful energy in the universe, the universe must have a finite age or a beginning.

Logically, the universe did not and could not create itself. If the universe (nature) could / did not create itself and it had a beginning, then only something or someone outside of nature can account for the universe's existence. Genesis 1:1 offers a credible explanation: *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*

Evidence #2: The Fine-Tuning of Natural Law

Then there is the evidence for fine-tuning of physics. As it turns out, many of the laws of physics (e.g., gravity, electromagnetism, strong and weak nuclear forces) and fundamental constants (speed of light *c*, gravitational constant *G*, etc.) are precisely what they must be to allow life as we know it to exist. Change any of these laws or constants by a small amount, and you may get different stars, a different periodic table of the elements, different chemistry, etc. And we know of nothing in nature that requires these laws and constants to be what they are; they just are what they are. So, we have a universe with a beginning and natural laws that are just what are required for us to exist. That natural law just happens to be what it is by chance is unlikely and unreasonable. A supernatural intelligent creator who exists outside of nature is a logical explanation for the beginning of the universe and the fine-tuning of physics.

Some will object and say that string theory, inflation theory, and other related ideas imply a *multiverse* in which universes with different physical laws are constantly popping into exist-

¹ Reynolds DW (2011 May) A review and response to the book *The Grand Design* by Stephen Hawking, TASC Newsletter <http://tasc-creationscience.org/sites/default/files/newsletter_pdf/may11.pdf> Accessed 2016 Mar 25

² Reynolds DW (2012 May) A review of Lawrence Krauss's book, *A Universe From Nothing*, TASC Newsletter <http://tasc-creationscience.org/sites/default/files/newsletter_pdf/may2012.pdf> Accessed 2016 Mar 25

³ Reynolds DW (2014 May) The data of cosmology say the universe had a beginning and is finely tuned for life, TASC Newsletter <http://tasc-creationscience.org/sites/default/files/newsletter_pdf/may2014.pdf> Accessed 2016 Mar 25

ence. However, there is no evidence for other universes or natural laws that can create them (or for string and inflation theories for that matter), so fine-tuning remains an unexplained reality. Moreover, even those theories that predict a multiverse say the *multiverse had a beginning*. Again, we have one known universe of finite age with fine-tuned physics and no physical reason for it to be that way. The apostle Paul summed it up well when he said in Romans 1:20: "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse..."

Evidence #3: The Origin of Life^{4,5,6,7}

The origin of life is inexplicable by known natural processes, period. The main problem is how the information in the codes (languages) of biochemistry came to be. DNA and proteins consist of many monomer units that must be sequenced in specific ways in order to have biochemical function. Just as the words in a sentence must conform to rules of grammar and be ordered in the right way to convey meaning, the monomer "bases" in DNA or amino acids in proteins must be ordered in specific ways to make biochemical "sense." Just as there are few combinations of words that create meaningful sentences compared to the total number of possible arrangements, there are few arrangements of bases in DNA or amino acids in proteins that have biological meaning and function, very few. Experiments have shown that there is no preferred ordering of the bases in DNA or amino acids in proteins when abiotic chemical reactions are carried out. In other words, bases and amino acids combine in random fashion outside of biology. This is bad news for those who believe in abiogenesis (life emerging from chemistry alone without the advantage of the enzymes and DNA found in living things) because formation of the required molecules is so improbable. Information theory holds that the improbability of the random occurrence of meaningful or functional sequences correlates with the information content of the sequence; the more improbable the functional sequence, the more information it contains. To make matters worse, just producing the right bases and amino acids under plausible geochemical conditions is extremely challenging in its own right. And even if all the right bases and amino acids did form naturally (this is extremely unlikely), getting them to combine in biologically meaningful sequences by chemistry alone would be extremely improbable. And even if by a miracle one of the necessary proteins or DNA strands did form, hundreds more of equal or greater complexity would be needed at the same place at the same time and then arranged

correctly with the other molecules just to form the simplest known cell—impossible! *The truth is that no one knows how abiogenesis may have occurred*; it is just assumed there must be a natural explanation. However, just as we know an intelligent writer is able to combine words into meaningful text, meaningful biochemical "sentences" also imply, even necessitate, an intelligent designer.

Evidence #4: The Origin of Phyla⁸

The biological classification system contains various categories: species, genus, family, order, class, phylum, kingdom, and domain. Organisms of the same species are very similar and are able to interbreed. The higher the category (species being the lowest, domain the highest), the less similar are the organisms within the category. Organisms of *different* phyla are typically very different (have different body plans altogether). According to the evolutionary theory, all life evolved by descent with modification by a random variation/natural selection mechanism. Darwin's theory predicts evolution would work through small incremental changes. So, the first living thing would have slowly evolved into another species (diversity), similar to the parent species, but with some distinguishing characteristics. Over deep geological time, different phyla (disparity) would eventually emerge. But the fossil evidence is that most phyla appear *suddenly and at the beginning* of the history of life (this phenomenon in the fossil record is called the Cambrian Explosion). Only after the appearance of the phyla do the smaller variations emerge. This pattern has been called the "inverted cone of diversity" and is the *opposite* of what is predicted by Darwinism. During the Cambrian Explosion, 23 of 36 animal phyla appear abruptly and at about the same time. There are fewer phyla now than in the past.

The cause of the Cambrian Explosion must have been able to create much complex specified information quickly. Any explanation must demonstrate how much new functional DNA, new functional proteins, new cell types, new tissue types, new organs, and new body plans were formed quickly in coordinated fashion without leaving any evidence of transitional forms or precursors in the fossil record. The random mutation/natural selection mechanism can't even produce a few functional proteins in billions of years. It is also unable to account for all the new information formed during the Cambrian Explosion. However, a designer could generate that much information quickly. Concerning the sixth day of creation, Moses writes in Genesis 1:25: "And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good."

Evidence #5: The Origin of Humans⁹

Recent research in genetics and the human genome has not been friendly to evolutionary theory but is consistent with intelligent design and biblical creation. First, the DNA that does not code for proteins, once thought of as "junk" by evolutionary biologists, has been recently shown to have numerous

⁴ Reynolds DW (2006 May) Intelligent design, TASC Newsletter <http://tasc-creationscience.org/sites/default/files/newsletter_pdf/may06.pdf> Accessed 2016 Mar 25

⁵ Reynolds DW (2013 May) The origin of information in biology, TASC Newsletter <http://tasc-creationscience.org/sites/default/files/newsletter_pdf/may2013.pdf> Accessed 2016 Mar 25

⁶ Reynolds DW (2010 Jan) Review of the book *Signature in the Cell* by Stephen C. Meyer, TASC Newsletter <http://tasc-creationscience.org/sites/default/files/newsletter_pdf/jan10.pdf> Accessed 2016 Mar 25

⁷ Reynolds DW (2009 Jun) Has science found how life began and species Eevolved? An examination of the "RNA world" hypothesis and rapidly changing lizards, TASC Newsletter <http://tasc-creationscience.org/sites/default/files/newsletter_pdf/jun09.pdf> Accessed 2016 Mar 25

⁸ Reynolds DW (2013 Oct) Review of Stephen Meyer's new book *Darwin's Doubt*, TASC Newsletter <http://tasc-creationscience.org/sites/default/files/newsletter_pdf/oct2013.pdf> Accessed 2016 Mar 25

⁹ Reynolds DW (2015 Apr) On the origin of humans, TASC Newsletter <http://tasc-creationscience.org/sites/default/files/newsletter_pdf/apr2015.pdf> Accessed 2016 Mar 25

regulatory functions and is therefore not useless after all. This means that the genomes of organisms contain vastly more information than previously thought and are thus even more difficult for the Darwinian mechanism to explain. Instead of being the haphazard cobblings of a “blind watchmaker,” genomes appear more and more to have been intentionally designed. Second, recent genetic studies have shown that the real percent similarity between the genomes of humans and chimpanzees, thought to share a common ancestor a few million years ago, is only about 70% and not the widely stated 99%. This fact creates a problem for the evolutionary story, since now an enormous amount of new DNA and information must have been generated in a short period of time, and brings into question the whole notion of having a common ancestor with chimps. Third, alleged evidence for a past fusion event in human chromosome 2, once presented as proof that humans and chimps shared a common ancestor, has been shown to be mistaken by new genetic studies. The chromosomes that allegedly fused and human chromosome 2 are not very similar after all, and the alleged fusion site is part of an active gene. Lastly and perhaps most importantly, recent studies of the human genome have supported biblical history, specifically Adam, Eve, Noah, and the Flood. Most human traits are determined by only two possible alleles or variations in genes. This is as would be expected if the human race recently started from a single male/female pair and Eve was the clone of Adam. And as it turns out, there are three major variants of mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) in the world. Mitochondrial DNA is passed down through females. There were four women on the ark, but only three of them (Noah’s daughters-in-law) probably had children after the Flood; hence the three versions of mtDNA in the world. Lastly, there is only one major variant of the male Y-chromosome in the world. Y-chromosomes are inherited from and found only in males. Hence the fact that there is only one major human male chromosomal variant is consistent with Noah and his three sons that were on the ark! Also interesting is the fact that the variation in the human Y-chromosome is very small yet the differences in the chimpanzee and human Y-chromosomes are huge. If humans do indeed share a common ancestor with chimps, how does one explain the vast differences between the Y-chromosomes in humans and chimps on the one hand with the fact that there is very little variability of Y-chromosomes among human males? The scriptures teach that God created Adam and Eve on the sixth day of creation (Genesis 1:26-28) and that Eve was made from Adam (Genesis 2:22)—all consistent with the genetic data.

Evidence #6: Worldviews and Morality

Everyone has reality and value assumptions, the validity of which can’t be proved in a scientific sense.

Naturalism holds that everything can be explained by natural law. As its base, the universe and everything in it is controlled by impersonal physical and chemical forces. This includes your thoughts, feelings, and decision making. Humans are merely complex biochemical machines. “Free will” and hence moral responsibility are illusory. “Good” and “evil” are relative terms dictated by circumstances. This life is all there is. People are neither good nor bad; they just are. There is no soul. Mind/brain dualism collapses to brain monism. Presumably, society can be improved through education and technology.

The Christian worldview holds that a transcendent, all powerful, and benevolent God created the universe from nothing by

supernatural means for a purpose in the finite past. The universe is consistent with physical and chemical laws but cannot be completely explained by or reduced to them. At its base, the universe is marked by information and design derived from a mind. God defines what is good and evil. Real good and evil exist in an absolute, transcendent, and nonrelative sense. We were made with freedom of choice and thus are responsible for our actions. God’s moral laws and our freedom of choice make meaning in life, justice, love, and right and wrong possible. There is life after death. People have intrinsic worth because they were created in the image of God, but we have rejected God. The problems of the world spring from our rejection and separation from God. Only through reconciliation to God is there hope for the individual and society. And of course, to be reconciled to God, we must confess our sins and accept Christ as our savior and Lord (John 3:16, Romans 10:9-10); it’s our choice!

Ironically, atheist Richard Dawkins wants to have an absolute materialism yet with something like Christian values:

There have in the past been attempts to base a morality on evolution. I don’t want to have anything to do with that. The kind of world that a Darwinian, going back to survival of the fittest now, and nature red in tooth and claw, I think nature really is red in tooth and claw. I think if you look out at the way wild nature is, out there in the bush, in the prairie, it is extremely ruthless, extremely unpleasant, it’s exactly the kind of world that I would not wish to live in. And so any kind of politics that is based upon Darwinism for me would be bad politics, it would be immoral. Putting it another way, I’m a passionate Darwinian when it comes to science, when it comes to explaining the world, but I’m a passionate anti-Darwinian when it comes to morality and politics.¹⁰

What we need is a truly anti-Darwinian society... in the sense that we don’t wish to live in a society where the weakest go to the wall, where the strongest suppress the weak, and even kill the weak. We—I, at least—do not wish to live in that kind of society. I want to live in the sort of society where we take care of the sick, where we take care of the weak, take care of the oppressed, which is a very anti-Darwinian society.¹¹

To some degree, most people, even atheists, acknowledge many Christian virtues. But Christian virtues and values don’t logically follow from a materialistic philosophy. The fact is that most people have an inner sense of right and wrong regardless of their reality assumptions. Most people know they have the freedom to make moral choices. And I believe the common moral sense points to a transcendent morality given by our creator. Christianity provides a framework from which morality can be drawn, materialism does not.

Summary

We have seen several evidences for a creator. The universe had a beginning, and physics is fine-tuned for the existence of life as we know it. The origin of life is impossible by the known laws of chemistry and probability, even in billions of years.

¹⁰ Dawkins R (2000) *The Descent of Man (Episode 1: The Moral Animal)*. A series of radio shows, broadcast in January and February 2000 by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, produced by Tom Morton

¹¹ Richard Dawkins Lecture at Kennesaw State University, 2014 Nov 21

Most phyla appear in the fossil record early, abruptly, and without obvious precursors. Recent genetic studies have shown that most DNA is useful, that the genomes of humans and chimpanzees are only 70% similar, that there are three major mtDNA variants and one Y-chromosome variant consistent with Noah and the Flood, and that most human traits occur in two varieties, consistent with Adam and Eve, where Eve was a clone of Adam. Finally, Christian theism provides a philosophical framework and basis for morality that materialism is unable to do. All of these evidences are consistent with an intelligent designer and the Biblical narrative on creation. ❧

COMING EVENTS

Thursday, April 14, 7:00 pm, Providence Baptist Church, 6339 Glenwood Ave., Raleigh, Room 207

Science That Points To A Creator. Dr. Dan Reynolds will discuss six evidences that point to God: The Universe Had a Beginning, The Fine-Tuning of Physics, The Origin of Life, The Origin of Phyla, The Origin of Humans, and Worldviews and Morality. Any one of these evidences suggests a designer. Taken together, they form a strong reason to believe in a supernatural creator.