

Sermon 26: Evolution or Creation

OUTLINE

Creation
Evolution

INTRODUCTION

Where does life come from? Where does humanity come from? These are the questions that we want to consider today. The most common answer that we find in our Western context is—evolution. Life evolved from a primordial soup. Time plus chance equals everything we see today. Through a series of mutational jumps certain mutations proved advantageous, then by the process of natural selection, those with these advantageous mutations survived to produce offspring who perpetuated these characteristics. Thumbs, eyes, walking upright, no tails, etc. are the results of the process of evolution. All that we are as human beings is a collection of previously advantageous mutations. This is the basic theory of evolution. However, in opposition to this is the Biblical story of creation. God made Adam and Eve as mature, historical figures. They were set in a literal garden and literally sinned bringing about consequences which we are sitting with today, e.g. sin, death, difficulty, etc.

Today I would like to quickly show how the Bible cannot be read but in a simple straight forward way with regard to the origins of human life. And secondly, to show the major problems that the theory of evolution faces from science itself.

Creation

John Stott in his comments on Adam in Romans 5 tries to make a case for God taking the fruit of evolution and making Adam from it. 'Adam then was a special creation of God, whether God formed him literally 'from the dust of the ground' and then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life,' or whether this is the biblical way of saying that he was created out of an already existing hominid. The vital truth we cannot surrender is that, though our bodies are related to the primates, we ourselves in our fundamental identity are related to God.¹ Present homo sapiens are traced back to homo habilis and homo erectus. These all springing from a common ancestry (Not Adam). Then when this individual we know as Adam was set apart by God sinned, Adam was not the only hominid on the earth, Adam's federal headship caused those older than him and younger than him, all other hominids wherever they were scattered to on earth to be plunged into the consequences of his actions. This attempt to marry the Bible with evolution is not the teaching of the Bible when it comes to the origins of human life.

Matt. 19:4-5, 'He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵ and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? Here we have the words of Jesus Christ, He is the God man, I hold that His understanding of history and God's workings are informed and He claims that the beginning began not with 2 million years of hominid development but with the creation of Adam and Eve as the original marriage pair casting the shape of all human relationships. They were the prototypes of humanity, not the cream of a few million years of primate development.

¹ John Stott, The Message of Romans, p164.

Gen. 1:26-28 gives us an account of this, 'Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'" Here we see the distinct place that humanity holds over all the other creatures. We are not merely evolved apes, but made in God's image. Gen. 2:4-24 gives us detailed historical narrative about how Adam was alone as a human being on the earth, how Eve was made from him and for him, and how they were married and became one flesh. These events are miracles and we are not seeking to give natural explanations for things that are clearly supernatural in origin.

The pressure to hold to evolution or some more scientifically viable option is felt by many, and is a big reason why many unbelievers claim they cannot accept what the Bible says. Firstly, we must make very clear that even if someone saw a real miracle as happened during the ministry of Christ this would not guarantee faith. Faith in God is not the result of your intellectual mind rationally and objectively interpreting data and coming to the clear and obvious truthful conclusion. The sinner's heart deceives at every point and the Spirit is needed to open the unbeliever's eyes. Secondly, this does not mean that we are without arguments, there are many arguments that we can bring to show that evolution as the way to explain the origins of life is an inadequate basis to reject the miraculous account of the Bible.

Evolution

In article called What are the top ten problems with Darwinian Evolution, Casey Luskin lists the problems evolution encounters from a scientific perspective. Here are a few of them. The lack of a viable mechanism for producing high levels of complex and specified information. (likely atmospheric conditions of an early earth cannot produce a primordial soup)

The failure of the fossil record to provide support for Darwinian evolution. (no missing links)
The failure of molecular biology to provide evidence for a grand "tree of life." (the inability to prove universal common ancestry)

Natural selection is an extremely inefficient method of spreading traits in populations, unless a trait has an extremely high selection coefficient.

Abrupt Appearance of Species in the Fossil Record Does Not Support Darwinian Evolution. (The Cambrian period marks the arrival of very advanced life forms very similar to life forms today all of a sudden)

The failure of chemistry to explain the origin of the genetic code.

The failure of developmental biology to explain why vertebrate embryos diverge from the beginning of development.

The failure of neo-Darwinian evolution to explain the biogeographical distribution of many species.

A long history of inaccurate predictions inspired by neo-Darwinism regarding vestigial organs or so-called "junk" DNA.

Humans show many behavioral and cognitive traits and abilities that offer no apparent survival advantage. We will give our lives to save another's. (e.g. music, art, religion, ability to ponder the nature of the universe).²

² Adapted from <http://bylogos.blogspot.com/2015/08/is-evolution-unfalsified.html>

Michael Behe, who is not a Christian termed the phrase 'Irreducible complexity' to show how systems like blood clotting cannot evolve gradually but have to arrive all at once with all of its parts working or survival will be impossible. 'Dr. Michael J. Behe, biochemistry professor and author of the 1996 blockbuster book Darwin's Black Box, has challenged the classical neo-Darwinian explanation that intricate cell structures arose by chance. In the book, he uses the flagellum to introduce the concept of "irreducible complexity." If a structure is so complex that all its parts must initially be present in a suitably functioning manner, it is said to be irreducibly complex. All the parts of a bacterial flagellum must be present from the start in order to function at all. According to Darwinian theory, any component that doesn't offer an advantage to an organism (i.e., doesn't function) will be lost or discarded. How such a structure could have evolved in a gradual, step-by-step process as required by classical Darwinian evolution is an insurmountable obstacle to evolutionists. How a flagellum is used, however, adds an additional level of complexity to the picture.

Some bacteria have a single flagellum located at the end of a rod-shaped cell. To move in an opposite direction, a bacterium simply changes the direction the flagellum rotates. Other bacteria have a flagellum at both ends of the cell, using one for going in one direction and the other for going in the opposite direction. A third group of bacteria has many flagella surrounding the cell. They wrap themselves together in a helical bundle at one end of the cell and rotate in unison to move the cell in one direction. To change direction, the flagella unwrap, move to the opposite end of the cell, reform the bundle, and again rotate in a coordinated fashion. The structural complexity and finely tuned coordination of flagella attests to the work of a Master Engineer who designed and created flagella to function in a wonderfully intricate manner.

You might call it the Maker's molecular outboard motor. Its most interesting aspect is that it is attached to and rotated by a tiny, electrical "motor" made of different kinds of protein. Like an electrical motor, the flagellum contains a rod (drive shaft), a hook (universal joint), L- and P-rings (bushings/bearings), S- and M-rings (rotor), and a C-ring and stud (stator). The flagellar filament (propeller) is attached to the flagellar motor via the hook. To function completely, the flagellum requires over 40 different proteins. The electrical power driving the motor is supplied by the voltage difference developed across the cell membrane. This motor is one of the nature's best molecular machines!

Some scientists have called bacterial flagella the "most efficient machine in the universe" with its self assembly and repair, water-cooled rotary engine, proton motive-force drive system, forward and reverse gears, operating speeds of 6,000 to 17,000 rpm, direction-reversing capability, and hard-wired signal-transduction system with short-term memory.³

Of course there is a rejection of these sorts of scientific findings, they have been called pseudoscience. But when we take the cosmological argument, the biased views of scientists, the many problems evolution cannot overcome, and the clear teaching of the Bible, we can have confidence in the Bible's teaching.

This is the third message looking at sciences attack on Christian faith, so I want to end with a long list of the limitations of science recorded by John Blanchard as a way to end this discussion:

'Science can produce credible theories as to what happened in the first moments of the universe's existence, some claiming to take us back to within a tiny fraction of a second of the Big Bang. *Science cannot go back beyond the 'zero time point'.* As Edgar Andrews

³ <https://answersingenesis.org/intelligent-design/bacterial-flagella-icon-of-the-intelligent-design-movement/>

indicates, 'Thus it follows that science, even at its most speculative, must of necessity stop short of offering any explanation or even description of the actual event of origin.' Science can speculate as to how the world came into being. *Science cannot explain why it should have done so.* Some fifty years ago Julian Huxley wrote, 'Science has removed the obscuring veil from many phenomena, much to the benefit of the human race; but it confronts us with the basic and fundamental mystery—the mystery of existence in general...Why does the world exist? More recently, Stephen Hawking has said much the same thing: 'Even if there is only one unique set of possible laws, it is only a set of equations. What is it that breathes fire into the equations that makes a universe for them to govern?...Although science may solve the problem of how the universe began, it cannot answer the question: why does the universe bother to exist? I don't know the answer to that.'

Science can demonstrate the consistency of scientific or natural laws in both space and time. *Science cannot tell us how they came to be there, or why they should be exactly as they are.* It can tell us that light travels at 186,282,397 miles per second, but cannot explain why it does not travel faster or slower. Edgar Andrews gives another example: 'If we ask science...why the law of gravity is an inverse square law with respect to distance, science can do nothing but shrug its mathematical shoulders and reply, 'The question lies outside my terms of reference.'

Science can provide helpful statistics on demographics. *Science cannot explain why human beings exist.* Nor can it tell us why we are self-conscious individuals, or why we should have the slightest interest in asking questions about the meaning and purpose of life. Sir John Eccles, a Nobel Prize-winning pioneer in brain research, confirms that these are questions beyond the competence of science: 'science cannot explain the existence of each of us as a unique self, nor can it answer such fundamental questions such as 'Who am I?' How did I come to be at a certain place and time? What happens after death?' These are all mysteries beyond science.'

Science can tell us a great deal about physical and material reality. *Science cannot tell us whether we should expect or hope for more.* Albert Einstein made this clear in *Ideas and Opinions*. 'The scientific method can teach us nothing beyond how facts are related to and conditioned by each other...knowledge of what is does not open the door directly to what should be. One can have the clearest and most complete knowledge of what *is*, and yet not be able to deduce from that what should be the *goal* of our human aspirations.'

Science can tell us a great deal about our physical make-up. *Science cannot explain why the mind exists and functions as it does.* In a *Sunday Telegraph* article Oxford biochemist Arthur Peacocke wrote, 'Science can investigate all the physical aspects of the brain, but there is still something about the mind—and therefore about who you really are—that it cannot get at.'

Science can enable man to produce nuclear, chemical and biological weapons capable of wiping out the entire human race. *Science cannot remove the causes of war by changing people's attitudes and behaviour.*

Science can identify Third World needs, provide immediate relief and supply long-term technology to help the countries concerned. *Science cannot eliminate the corruption which often exacerbates the problem.*

Science can study certain aspects of human behaviour. *Science cannot make any assessment of our deepest convictions.* We know instinctively that peace is better than war, that truth is better than falsehood, and that kindness is better than cruelty. These beliefs are part of the foundation on which viable human society exists, but none of them can be assessed or proved scientifically. Albert Jay Nock puts his finger precisely on the problem: 'When the men of science have said all their say about the human mind and heart, how far they are from accounting for all their phenomena, or from answering the simple, vital questions that one asks them! What *is* the power by which a certain number and order of

air vibrations is translated into the processes of great emotional significance? If anyone can answer that question, believe me, he is just the man I want to see.'

Science can make many aspects of life easier. *Science cannot add to its quality.* In 1991 some 200 scientists, including many social scientists, attended a conference organised by the International Council of Scientific Studies to discuss the likely needs for science and technology in the twenty-first century. John Houghton later assessed the results of their discussion on the theme 'Quality of Life': 'Although we could largely agree on those factors which ideally make up quality of life, as scientists we could say virtually nothing (and there was considerable debate on the issue) about how to achieve it in practice. In particular, how could we overcome the inherent selfishness, greed and other undesirable characteristics shown by human beings? The problems can be described by science, as can the factors which may exacerbate them, *but science cannot solve them.*'

Science can produce an array of contraceptive devices to reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies (the medical director of London's Margaret Pike Centre proposed in 1999 that ten-year old girls could be given a long-term contraceptive implant). *Science cannot persuade those concerned to behave responsibly and avoid the need for such devices.* If contraception fails, science can enable us to abort foetuses as routinely as we pull teeth, but it cannot identify or address the moral issues involved.

Science can study the results of human behaviour. *Science cannot explain the principles involved.* It can say nothing about love, justice, freedom, beauty, goodness, joy or peace. It cannot assess ethical values or moral principles, nor can it distinguish between good and bad, right and wrong. To say that science can offer explanations for everything within human experience is to ignore every moral question that has ever been raised.

Science can specifically study and analyse trends in religious belief and behaviour. *Science cannot supply any reason why either should exist.* The subject is simply outside its terms of reference.⁴

⁴ John Blanchard, Does God Believe in Atheists, p433-435.