

Series: Questions People Ask
Title: What about Creation and Evolution?
Text: Selected Passages from Genesis 1, 2 & Colossians 1:15-17

Science is becoming good entertainment in the past year or so. We now have a few networks completely devoted to science and technology. The Discovery Channel, Animal Planet, TLC Network, National Geographic, Discovery Health, and Nova, all educate and marvel audiences around the world. With the popular television series: CSI, CSI Miami, and CSI New York we see abbreviated science at work in solving crimes. In some cases an investigator will find a human hair either on the victim's body or at the crime scene. They take that hair, look at it under a microscope and compare it with a list of suspects. But today it is insufficient to implicate a particular suspect on the basis of just the color, shape, and texture of a hair sample because that hair may be consistent with the hair of any number of people. Today, criminologist must include a DNA comparison. A simple hair analysis may be impressive testimony and evidence, appearing to be scientifically valid, but it is inadequate in establishing a defendant's guilt. Without DNA analysis some defendants would be unjustly convicted and some innocent death row inmates would be sent to their unfortunate death.

It is also easy to draw sweeping conclusions about the nonexistence of God when a person accepts Darwin's theory of evolution without considering the theory of creationism. Some well-meaning scientists and philosophers take the theory of evolution so far that they deny the existence of God. As United Methodist we affirm that science has a key role in our understanding of our natural world. Our Social Principles state, "We recognize science as a legitimate interpretation of God's natural world. We affirm the validity of the claims of science in describing the natural world, although we preclude science from making authoritative claims about theological issues." In other words, we prevent science from being the primary source of our understanding of God and His relationship with all of creation. The Bible and Jesus Christ serve as the fundamental source of our understanding of God.

We live in a world where faith and science exist together. Science is a way of explaining the natural world. Anything that can be observed or measured is open to scientific exploration. Science believes that the universe functions according to consistent patterns that can be discovered and understood. Science observes repeated patterns within the natural world; develops theories that identify consistent causes and effects dependent upon well-established principles. Science then tests these theories to verify their accuracy and potential for new knowledge. Once confirmed it is considered to be true or scientific law. If it is repeatedly disproved then the theory is either trashed or modified. As a result, explanations of the natural world that are not based on evidence but on myths, personal beliefs, religious values, and superstitions are not scientific. Furthermore, since science is limited to explaining the natural world through the use of observable evidence, it cannot provide religious or ultimate explanations. We must also understand that science changes as new observations and discoveries are made. Theories change. New theories emerge, and other theories are modified or discarded.

The Christian faith focuses not so much on the “how” and “when” of our natural world, as science does, but on the “who” and “why” of the natural world. Faith in the One and Only God as Creator explains the dependability of those revealed natural laws. For example, we know that Newton discovered the law of gravity, which states, in very simple terms, “Things tend to fall downward.” One day Newton saw an apple fall from a tree. Then for some reason, he thought about what held the moon in its orbit around the earth, then what held the earth in its orbit around the sun. He concluded that the same force that caused the apple to fall from the tree to the ground was the same force that keeps the moon and planets in orbit. Masses attract each other. We can not see gravity. But we feel its pull when our feet leave the ground. We can also depend upon this law always working. We also know that this force was not created, manufactured, designed, engineered or developed by any human being. It had to come from somewhere, from Someone, from some Master, intelligent designer, whom many call God. Creationism is the theory that that an Intelligent Designer must be involved in the creation, formation,

and maintenance of life. So if God can be depended upon for such reliable laws then we can be released us from fear in exploring the world in which we live.

With this review of our understanding of science and faith let's consider the issue of evolution and creation science. Let's begin with these **views on the origin of Life**.

Evolution in the broadest sense can be defined as the idea that the universe has a history: that change through time has taken place. If we look today at the galaxies, stars, the planet Earth, and life on planet Earth, we see that things today are different from what they were in the past: galaxies, stars, planets, and life forms have developed over the course of time. Biological evolution refers to the scientific theory that living things share ancestors from which they have departed; it is called "descent with modification." Abundant and consistent evidence from astronomy, anthropology, physics, biochemistry, geochronology, geology, biology, and other sciences proves that evolution has taken place. Some call this process of change or adaptation, microevolution. For example, I had a conversation with a college professor who stated that during the civil war the average height of a Union or confederate soldier was 5'7". Today, many scientist claims that the average height of the American male is 5'10". Human beings are getting taller. We know that dog breeders can breed different varieties within this species. Science also has proved that some bacteria are now resistant to a variety of antibiotics. Most Christians affirm this understanding of evolution.

Charles Darwin, the author of evolution theory took microevolution a step farther. He expanded it to include the origin of all life. He was convinced that the process of evolution is the creator. All life originated from a single, original species and one species developed into another and so on. Darwinist then keep the belief in a Creator God, or as some would call this God, an intelligent Designer out of the picture. They have to provide a naturalistic cause for the origin of life. Yet, many renowned scientists have concluded that they have not been adequately able to overcome this burden of proof.

It is important to note that scientists often disagree about their explanations. In any science, disagreements are subject to rules of evaluation. Scientific conclusions are tested by experiment and observation, and evolution, as with any aspect of theoretical science, is continually open to and subject to experimental and observational testing. With new discoveries Darwin's theory is being tested just like any other scientific theory. They are challenging the National Science Education Standards which state, "Explanations of how the natural world changes based on myths, personal beliefs, religious values, mystical inspiration, superstition, or authority may be personally useful and socially relevant, but they are not scientific." These scientists are proving that **creation science is scientifically relevant**. Yes, faith can faithfully respond to the why's of science.

For example: During my high school education I was taught Alexander Oparin & J.B. Haldane's theory that primitive earth was covered with pools of chemicals and had an atmosphere that was conducive to the formation of life. With energy supplied by lightning, chemicals over a long period of time linked together and simple life was formed. From there evolution took over. Stanley Miller later tested this theory with experiments using ammonia, methane, and hydrogen which he believed were present in our earth's first atmosphere. With the help of electricity simulating the effects of lightning, he successfully discovered that over the course of time amino acids, the building blocks of life were created. However, in the 1980's NASA scientists discovered that the primitive earth and its atmosphere did not have these gases, but rather they were composed of water, carbon dioxide and nitrogen, which cannot create amino acids. Miller mistakenly based his experiment on physical chemistry and not what was actually present. This sounds a bit like our hair sample analogy; impressive testimony and evidence, but lacking in scientific credibility.

All living systems do these three basic things: process energy, store information, and reproduce. Humans do these things as well as bacteria, but in a much faster and more efficient manner. Nonliving things don't do these things. Darwin did not think

that it would be very difficult to create life out of nonlife because the gap was narrow. But over the course of time science has proven that one-cell organisms are very complicated, even more complicated than any supercomputer that has ever been engineered. Constructing a single-cell living organism beginning with amino acids, with all the right chemical bonds, appropriately connected in the right sequence with about 200 other protein molecules would be required to create life. This whole process is rather mind-boggling. Noble Prize winner, Sir Francis Crick said, “The origin of life appears almost a miracle, so many are the conditions which would have had to be satisfied to get it going.” **The bottom line is the origin of life has confounded scientists in their attempt to theorize how chemicals could evolve into living matter.** Biochemist, Walter Bradley said, “There isn’t any doubt that science, for the moment at least, is at a dead end. The optimism of the 1950’s is gone. The mood of the 1999 international conference on origin of life was described as grim-full of frustration, pessimism, and desperation. Nobody pretends that any alternative provides a reasonable path of how life went unguided from simple chemicals to proteins to basic life forms.”

So that leaves us with **a key question** if the world’s best scientists have no clue on the origin of life, if there is no clear naturalistic explanation, if there appears to be no potential explanation in sight, then is a supernatural explanation possible? Would it not be possible for an intelligent designer to create life? Genesis reveals that God has revealed an answer to our question.

In the movie, *Contact*, scientist are scanning the skies for signs of intelligent life in outer space. Their radio telescopes just receive static—random sounds from space. It’s reasonable to assume there’s no intelligence behind random sounds. Then one day they begin receiving a transmission of prime numbers, which are numbers divisible only by themselves and one.

The scientist reason that it’s too improbable that there would be a natural cause behind a string of organized, prime numbers. This had to be information, a message with content. So they determined that an intelligent being caused it. Carl Sagan wrote,

“The receipt of a single message from space would be enough to know there’s intelligence out there.” Where there is intelligent communication, there is an intelligent cause.

There are vast amounts of information and intelligent communication in the DNA of every living thing. Each cell in the human body contains more information than all thirty volumes of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. It is reasonable to come to the conclusion that Genesis must be true.

In the book Searching Issues, Dr. John Lennox helps us with the partnership of science and faith. He tells us to imagine a cake and some scientist come and analyze it. The nutritionist determines the precise ingredients. A biochemist explains the working of the electrons, protons and the quarks. The mathematician describes the equations governing the motions of the electrons, protons, and quarks. But not one could reveal who made the cake or even why it was made. Until Aunt Matilda speaks up and says, “I made the cake for my nephew’s birthday.” That is what Genesis is all about. God reveals He created life. He created order out of chaos.

So what does that mean for you and me? Since God is a God of Order, we can trust Him put our life in order. Since God is a God of purpose, we can trust Him to give us purpose in life. Since God makes something out of nothing, we can trust Him to help us make something out of our life. Since, nothing is beyond the scope of God’s imagination; God can be trusted to do that which is beyond my imagination. Since, God lovingly cares about the details; I can show God’s love in attending to the details. Since God entrusts the care of His creation to men and women, we shall be a good caretaker of God’s environment. Since God created our vast universe, the Milky Way Galaxy, one of one trillion in our universe, our Sun, one of hundreds of billions of stars in our Galaxy, and our planet, the only one of nine with life, at just the right distance from the Sun, right shape, and weight, to sustain life, we can only bow in awe of the Majesty of our God. Since God reveals as much as we need to know about the mystery of life, we’re without excuse in discovering the mystery of life in His Son Jesus Christ, “*for by*

*Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible,
whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities: all things were created by him and
FOR HIM.* (Colossians 1:16, 17)