

# What about evolution?

**Series:** The Case for Faith

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This morning we continue our series called The Case for Faith. And the question before us today is simply, "What about evolution?" Doesn't evolution explain how life began on this planet? And if it does, then who needs God?

That's what Charles Templeton thinks. And in his book, Farewell to God, he says that "all of life is the result of timeless evolutionary forces." Templeton was once a pastor and an associate of Billy Graham, but now he's an agnostic and has stopped believing in God. And in his interview with Lee Strobel he said he can't imagine how anybody with a reasonably good mind could believe in God.

Listen to his own words, "It seems to me that anyone with a reasonably good mind cannot look with open eyes at the evidence of the world which is filled with horrors, animals eating animals, humans killing humans, and there is supposed to be someone who is all powerful who could change it? It is impossible for me to believe that there is any one, thing, person, being, whatever that could be described as a loving God who could allow what happens in our world daily and I am doomed. The question then is are you doomed by God? Well, if there is a God, one I suppose could say so, but there isn't a God, so no. A person has faith and they feel good about it and it makes them a better person, then I'm for that person even though in my view they're dead wrong."

Dead wrong. According to Charles Templeton we're dead wrong to believe in God. But Templeton's not the only one who thinks that. He's not the only who thinks that "all of life is the result of timeless evolutionary forces." Other great minds have thought that too.

The late Carl Sagan was an astronomer, astrophysicist, and professor at Harvard University. He was also an author. And in his book Cosmos, written in 1980, he made this statement, "The Cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be. If we must worship a power greater than ourselves, does it not make sense to revere the Sun and the stars." That quote by the way also hangs in the Air and Space museum of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC.

Carl Sagan didn't believe in God either. When he looked up at the stars at night, he didn't say, "Wow! God you're awesome!" No. He said, "Wow! Cosmos you're awesome and worthy of my worship."

Today the theory of evolution, or what some call Darwinism, is widely accepted as the explanation for the origin of life. It's rampant throughout our educational system. Starting in elementary school and going through graduate school, evolution is taught across the board with varying degrees of conviction.

In chapter three of *The Case for Faith*, Lee Strobel says, "I lost the remnants of my faith in God during biology class in high school. So profound was the experience that I could take you back to the very seat where I was sitting when I first was taught that evolution explained the origin and development of life. The implications were clear. Charles Darwin's theory eliminated the need for a supernatural Creator by showing how natural forces could account for the increasing complexity and diversity of living things."

Others have had a similar experience like Harvard scholar Patrick Glynn who said, "I embraced skepticism at an early age, when I first learned of Darwin's theory of evolution in, of all places, Catholic grade school. It immediately occurred to me that either Darwin's theory was true or the creation story of Genesis was true. They couldn't both be true. And I stood up in class and told the poor nun just that. Thus began a long odyssey away from the devout religious belief and practice that had marked my childhood toward an increasingly secular and rationalistic outlook."

In our popular culture today, the case for evolution is all but considered closed. In its December 31, 1999 issue, *Time* magazine reflected on the achievements of the last millennium. And when it came to science it said, "Charles Darwin didn't want to murder God, as he once put it. But he did .... Darwinism remains one of the most successful scientific theories ever promulgated." - *Time Magazine*, December 31, 1999

British biologist Richard Dawkins was speaking for many when he said that, "Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist." - Richard Dawkins, professor at Oxford University

Evolution is a popular scientific theory today. Embraced by many without question. But it's still only a theory. And the question remains, is the evolutionary theory true? Recently, more and more biologists, biochemists, and other researchers, Christians and non-Christians alike, have raised serious objections to the evolutionary theory, claiming that its broad inferences are sometimes based on flimsy, incomplete, flawed data. What once looked like an airtight case has begun to leak. New discoveries in the last thirty years have led an increasing number of scientists to contradict Darwin by concluding that there was an Intelligent Designer behind the creation and development of life. No longer is this a case of religion

versus science, of pastors versus professors. This is a case of science versus science, professors versus professors.

Now before we go any further. Let's define a few terms. First of all, "evolution." The word evolution is not a bad word. Evolution simply means "change in any direction." The word can be applied to anything. Technology is evolving, it's changing all the time. Valley View Community Church is evolving, we're growing and changing all the time. Evolution isn't a bad word.

And when the word is used in a scientific context it takes two forms, micro-evolution and macro-evolution. Micro-evolution is the term used to describe the small changes that occur within a species. Everyone agrees that this kind of evolution is true to some extent. It explains why there are over 40 kinds of domestic cats and 200 varieties of dogs.

Macro-evolution, on the other hand, is the term used to describe the big changes that occur between species. Macro-evolution is Darwin's theory. It's the theory that life as we now know it began millions of years ago with simple single-celled organisms. And over lots and lots of time, through natural processes, developed into the vast array of plant and animal life that we see today. It's the changes that caused an amoeba to gradually evolve into a monkey, that eventually became an ape, that ended up becoming a human being.

There are over 20 variations of the theory of evolution, all stemming from Darwin's original work published in 1859. But they all have the same fundamental equation and the Evolution Equation looks like this ...

Mutations + Natural Selection + Lots of Time = Evolution

Mutations are variations in an existing life form. Natural selection is the process that weeds out weak or ill-adapted creatures. It's sometimes called the survival of the fittest. And time is what evolution needs a ton of. Because these changes didn't happen overnight. They happened over millions, even billions of years. Common evolutionary thinking dates the world at about 5 billion years old. And all that time is needed to slowly move up the evolutionary ladder from single-cell life to human life.

Now, let's take a critical look at this theory, piece by piece. First of all let's talk about mutations. Mutations aren't usually good things. They're bad things. Even geneticists who buy into the theory admit that at least 99.9% of all mutations are harmful. They don't strengthen an organism, they weaken it and sometimes kill it. Parents who are expecting a baby, don't pray that their child will be born mutated. Every parent I know prays that their child will be born normal and healthy. They don't want

an abnormal child that has a mutation, because children born with birth defects aren't stronger, they're weaker. We don't pray that our kids have three ears or six fingers or twelve toes. Two ears, five fingers, ten toes is just fine.

Even so, mutations do occur. But when they occur, they happen within life forms, not between life forms. A mutated child is still a human being, not another species or something more advanced.

Let's look at natural selection. Natural selection is the process that weeds out weak creatures and allows the strong to survive. But if natural selection weeds out weaker life forms, then it would weed out mutations, the very thing evolution needs to progress. And if natural selection is supposed to weed out lower life forms, then why do lower life forms still exist at all? There are still plenty of single celled creatures around. They haven't all been weeded out.

And look at the fossil evidence for evolution. A fossil is the impression of an animal or a plant that's been preserved in the earth's crust. It's the imprint of a once living thing left on a rock. If evolution is true we should have fossils of all kinds of transitional life forms. Fossils that would show us every rung of the evolutionary ladder. But the truth is, we don't. Even Darwin admitted that "fossil evidence is perhaps the most obvious and serious objection to this theory." In one of his letters he wrote, "Not one change of species into another is on record ... we cannot prove that a single species has been changed."

And over a hundred plus years hasn't changed that. David M. Raup, the curator of the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, said in 1979, "We are now about one hundred and twenty years after Darwin and the knowledge of the fossil record has been greatly expanded. We now have a quarter million fossil species, but the situation hasn't changed much .... We have fewer examples of evolutionary transition than we had in Darwin's time."

Instead, what the fossil record does show is that in rocks dated back some five hundred and seventy million years, there is the sudden appearance of nearly all animal life, fully formed without a trace of the evolutionary ancestors that Darwin required.

Now what about time? Evolution needs lots and lots of time. It needs time for life to develop and it needs time for life to begin. Darwin lived before the discovery of DNA. And it was his view that life emerged from chemicals reacting in some warm little pond. Darwin didn't think it was all that difficult for life to come from non-life. But since then we've discovered how difficult that is.

Biologists now tell us that there are  $10^{87}$  ways to put together a human DNA molecule. According to evolution this complicated molecule came to be by trial and error. Many evolutionists believe that the

earth is 4.5 billion years old. There are only  $10 \times 18$  seconds in 4.5 billion years. If a combination were tried once every second there wouldn't be nearly enough time to put together DNA by trial and error.

Dr. Walter Bradley taught mechanical engineering at Texas A & M for twenty-four years. He's been the director of the Polymer Technology Center at Texas A & M for four years. He lectures widely on the origin of life and wrote a seminal book called *The Mystery of Life's Origin*. He's the man that Lee Strobel interviewed for this chapter. And in this slice of that interview he dismantles the theory that evolution has unlimited time for life to evolve.

Listen to what he said, "Before 1965 people believed in a steady state theory of the universe. Which is to say that the universe was infinitely old. And if the universe is infinitely old then the improbable becomes probable. With the discovery of the background radiation in 1965, the Big Bang theory became dominant in people's thinking of cosmology. The bad news was that it meant the universe was no more than 12 billion years old. And more recent work has verified that the earth is probably less than 5 billion years old. And it would only have had a proper temperature to allow chemical reactions to begin between 4.2 billion and when life appears to have first come on the scene in 3.8 billion. That gives you about 400 million years. So now we don't have an infinite number of time. If you take all the carbon in the universe and put it on the face of the earth. You allow it to chemically react at 10 to the 13th times per second and allow that to happen for a billion years which is twice the time we know we have. You come up with the probability of one times 10 to the 60th power of making one functional protein in accidental chemical reactions. The probability of doing it in one reaction is one in 10 to the 130th power. That's 10 with 130 zeroes after it. If you say, 'Well, we have lots of chances and we have lots of time.' Okay. With all the carbon in the universe reacting at the highest possible rate so you can get the maximum number of tries. The probability gets better. It's one in 10 to the 60th power. That's still pretty horrendous. That would be like covering the state of Texas in quarters ten feet deep and having one that's orange and trying to randomly reach down and pull out and come up with that. I mean, people make up metaphors like that. But it's so miniscule that it isn't scientific to believe that's how it happened. And I don't think people who work in the field, for a moment, believe that. They believe that chance is not an adequate explanation for how life began."

Chance is not an adequate explanation for how life began, no matter how much time you have. There are problems with the evolution equation. There always has been and there always will be. And the more we learn, the more difficult it becomes to buy into the theory. In fact, Bradley says, "I think people who believe that life emerged naturalistically need to have a great deal more faith than people who reasonably infer that there's an intelligent Designer." It takes more faith to believe in evolution than it does to believe in a Creator God.

The biggest question left unanswered by Darwinism is where did life come from in the first place? Who made that "little warm pond" where Darwin thought life began? There still has to be a beginning and evolution has no answer for that.

Nobel prize winner, Sir Francis Crick, the co-discoverer of DNA 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 .... Every time I write a paper on the origin of life, I swear I will never write another one, because there is too much speculation running after too few facts."

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 at the 1999 international conference on the origin of life was described as grim-full of frustration, pessimism, and desperation."

One professor said, "If you're looking for an atheist to debate, you have to go to the philosophy department, because you won't find one in the physics department."

Evolution fails to answer the most fundamental question which is, where did life come from in the first place?

At the end of his interview Strobel asked Bradley, "So you think the facts point convincingly toward a Creator?" "No," he said, "convincingly is too mild a term. The evidence is compelling. 'Convincing' suggests it's a little more likely than not. 'Compelling' says you have to really work hard not to get to that conclusion."

Which is why when a man named David looked up at the stars he concluded in his book, Psalms, chapter 19, The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

Look up and you will see the evidence for God! Those who travel into space inevitably have their faith strengthened in a Creator God. Astronaut John Glenn said this after his return from outer space in 1998, "Looking at the earth from this vantage point, looking at this kind of creation and to not believe in God, to me, is impossible. To see earth laid out like that only strengthens my beliefs." The heavens declare the glory of God.

I remember watching on TV the first astronauts to ever land on the moon, July 18, 1969. And those who watched all know what Neil Armstrong said when he put his foot down on the moon, "That's one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind." But what we didn't know at that time was what he and Buzz Aldrin did in the lunar module just moments before that and that was to celebrate communion. They pulled out a Bible, a silver chalice, bread and wine and observed the Lord's Table. We didn't see that on TV, we didn't hear about that in the news, but that's what they did. The very first act of the very first astronauts to ever land on the moon was to celebrate communion. The heavens declare the glory of God.

James Tour is a nanoscientist and professor at Rice University in Houston. He builds molecules for a living and I love what he says about God and science. "I stand in awe of God because of what he has done through his creation. Only a rookie who knows nothing about science would say science takes away from faith. If you really study science, it will bring you closer to God." The heavens declare the glory of God.

Time magazine was wrong. Darwin didn't murder God. God is alive and well, still enthroned over the cosmos he created, and every single day he's revealing himself to those who are looking for him. Do you believe that? Are you looking for him? The choice is yours.