

The genre of the Genesis creation stories is very different from that of the New Testament records that describe the life of Jesus. The New Testament authors emphasized that what they wrote about Jesus—his life, death, and resurrection—was based on direct observation. Paul did not allow that his message could be taken figuratively (1Cor. 15:1-8); Luke stressed that he wrote as an investigative historian (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1-2) and John, although considered the most “spiritual” of the Gospel writers, emphasized his reliability as an eyewitness (John 19:35; 1 John 1:1-3). The “second generation” believers made it clear that they understood the Good News as describing history (John 21:24; Heb. 2:3). That the earliest Christian preaching about Jesus was to be taken in concrete historical terms was made plain by reports of Roman (Tacitus), Jewish (Josephus, Talmudic writings) and early Church (Ignatius, Clement) writers. See P. Barnett, *Is the New Testament History?* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1986); E. M. Blaiklock, *Who Was Jesus?* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974); F. F. Bruce, *Jesus and Christian Origins Outside the New Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1974); M. Staniforth, trans., *Early Christian Writings* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968).

¹⁵C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms* (Glasgow: Collins, 1961), chap. 8.

¹⁶H. Turner, *The Roots of Science* (Auckland: DeepSight Trust, 1998).

¹⁷M. Poole, *Science and Belief* (Oxford: Lion, 1990), 110.

¹⁸A debate between Dawkins and a science educationalist is hugely instructive for understanding the issues. See M. Poole, “A Critique of Aspects of the Philosophy and Theology of Richard Dawkins,” *Science and Christian Belief* 6 (1994): 41; with the replies in the same journal, vol. 7, pp. 45, 51. Dawkins insists that “I pay religions the compliment of regarding them as scientific theories ... I see God as a competing explanation for facts about the universe and life.” Dawkins and Creationists see “God” and “evolution” as competing explanations. This is as illogical as seeing “God” an alternative to “star formation,” “plate tectonic movement,” “pollination,” “fruit set,” or “cell division.”

¹⁹J. I. Packer, “Reflected Glory,” *Christianity Today* 47 (2003): 56. “Image” means “representative likeness.” This requires that, like God, “we should always act with resourceful rationality and wise love, making and executing praiseworthy plans ...” We should generate value by producing what is truly good. “We should be showing love and goodwill towards all other persons ... And in fellowship with God, we should directly honor and obey him by the way we manage and care for that bit of the created order that he has given us to look after.”

²⁰A. Varki, “How to Make an Ape Brain,” *Nature Genetics* 36 (2004): 1034.

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Mounting Evidence for Theistic Evolution against Intelligent Design

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Two reports in a single journal challenge the notions presented in opposition to theistic evolution (TE). Daniel M. Weinreich et al., “Darwinian Evolution Can Follow Only Very Few Mutational Paths to Fitter Proteins,” [*Science* (7 April 2006): 312: 111-4] challenges the notion that evolution functions by totally random mutations. The report describes five mutations in a standard bacterial β -lactamase that confer high resistance to cefotaxime, a recently introduced cephalosporin antibiotic. Five mutations theoretically allow 5! or 120 paths. However, 102 of the 120 trajectories are “inaccessible to Darwinian selection,” with several of the remaining ones unlikely. They indicate that no more than four, and possibly only two, are viable. This means that the actual evolutionary sequence will be more nearly linear than random. Reality markedly restricts logical possibility.

I must add two further points. First, not all the bacteria will change to the new enzyme because many other β -lactam antibiotics (the penicillins, cephalosporins, and carbapenems) are still in use, with the original forms still found in nature. So, while some strains will develop resistance to the one cephalosporin, others will develop different resistance. Some will retain the original gene. Second, what looks very much like guidance is built into living things at a very basic level.

The second report, Jamie T. Bridgham, et al., “Evolution of Hormone-Receptor Complexity by Molecular Exploitation” [*ibid.*, pp. 97-101] is accompanied by an analysis,

Christoph Adami, "Reducible Complexity" [ibid., pp. 61-3]. The report notes that, in tetrapods, one irreducibly complex (IC) signaling sequence involves aldosterone and the mineralocorticoid receptor. Another involves cortisol and the glucocorticoid receptor. This latter is more ancient, found in some of the most primitive vertebrates, agnathans, which have a single pathway utilizing cortisol as the signaling molecule. However, their receptor also responds to aldosterone. The gene in this ancient pathway was duplicated before elasmobranchs split from agnathans, apparently between 470 and 440 million years ago. One of the duplicated genes mutated twice sometime during the next 20 million years, removing sensitivity to aldosterone in one receptor. Thus teleosts have a single functional pathway. They already have the pair of receptors, but with no aldosterone synthesis the unmutated receptor cannot be triggered. The tetrapod line adds aldosterone synthesis, thereby producing two control systems. Thus the single IC control sequence of the ancestor about 470 million years ago became two separate IC control sequences in tetrapods by normal Darwinian evolution. So the report concludes:

We propose that molecular exploitation will be a predominant theme in evolution, one that may provide a general explanation for how the molecular interactions critical for life's complexity emerged in Darwinian fashion.

Adami refers to this study and to an earlier paper, Richard E. Lenski, et al., "The Evolutionary Origin of Complex Features" [*Nature* 423 (8 May 2003): 139-41], and concludes:

Although these authors have not directly addressed this controversy [ID] in the discussion of their work — because the work itself is intrinsically interesting to biologists — such studies solidly refute all parts of the intelligent design argument. These "alternative" ideas, unlike the hypotheses in these papers, remain thoroughly untested. Consequently, whatever debate remains must be characterized as purely political.

This is markedly different from Michael Behe's admission as a witness in the Kitzmiller v Dover trial:

There are no peer-reviewed articles by anyone advocating for intelligent design supported by pertinent experiments or calculations which provide detailed rigorous accounts of how intelligent design of any biological system occurred.

As a Senior Fellow, Discovery Institute, he would certainly have given Intelligent Design (ID) the most positive spin possible.

Looking at the material scientifically, the claims against TE are rejected, and support for ID is denied. Looking at this from a theological/philosophical viewpoint, the mate-

rial runs counter to all versions of old earth creationism, including ID. The Creator evidently established the basis for IC processes within natural patterns of development. Providential control anticipated evolutionary requirements without any need for later tinkering. So the Robust Formational Economy Principle is buttressed by the new research. This "fully-gifted creation" must be expected from the omniscient and omnipotent Author and Conservator of all. Is it too strong to suggest that the deity of old earth creationism has limited competence and ability? ❁

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