



CREATIONⁱⁿ THE CROSSFIRE

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And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts....And the water prevailed more and more upon the earth, so that all the high mountains everywhere under the heavens were covered. Gen 1:31-2:1; 7:19

The Next Meeting: January 24, 2009 at 7 PM.

Mark Armitage: "Jesus is like my Scanning Electron Microscope." In this talk, a scientist looks at his relationship with the Creator. Just as Mark must prepare specimens so they can withstand the high vacuum of the electron microscope, so Christ must change us to enter into an eternal relationship with Him. He will show examples of current microscopy research projects at the CRS Van Andel Experiment Station in northern Arizona. Mark will have autographed copies of his book and copies of his new CD-ROM with 175+ microscope images on it for sale.

Coming February 28: Dr. Ariel Roth, an excellent speaker and author, from Geoscience Research Institute, will review his book *Science Discovers God*.

Intelligent Design: Probability or Design?

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In *Darwin Strikes Back*, Thomas Woodward says William Dembski provided three successive filters to determine whether some object or event, he calls Phenomenon X, is the result of probability or intelligent design.

1. The first filter asks if X has a high probability, meaning it is very likely to happen, such as throwing a ball into the air. Chances are almost 100% that it will fall back to earth. Natural laws and chance adequately explain it. However, if the probability of X is low, it passes on to the second filter.
2. **The chance filter** will catch X if it has a medium to moderately low probability. The probability of getting dealt a royal flush in spades is about 1 in 2,600,000. If you were to get such a hand, this could happen by chance. Dembski has chosen 1 in 10^{150} , his cutoff level for an impossible event.

Emil Borel considered anything over 10^{50} so improbable that it was practically impossible, but

evolutionists seem to delight in believing the impossible. In *Science News* (12/6/08) "No Gene Is an Island," Patrick Barry reveals the amazing interconnectedness of genes and proteins in a vast network, consisting of subnetworks, all of which are working in concert to produce cellular behavior. These cellular features go far beyond mere probability, which segues into Dembski's third filter.

3. The **Explanatory Filter** or Specification Filter

The probability of a random sequence of heads and tails from flipping a coin a thousand times is 10^{300} , but this would not qualify as designed even though the probability is exceptionally low. The sequence of heads and tails is unspecified, and flipping the coin is always going to result in a meaningless sequence. Someone might say that if we specify a certain sequence for the thousand flips and we got that sequence it would indicate intelligent design. Although it is highly improbable, it could still happen by chance. There is no required sequence.

Debating an evolutionist, Dr Duane Gish had to correct his opponent for stating that the probability for the specific individuals attending and sitting in their specific seats was astronomical, yet there they were. Gish remarked that there was no prior specification for who was to attend or in which seats they were to sit. Whoever wanted could come and sit wherever they liked.

In a city the size of Los Angeles, possible attendees might be well over one million, but actual attendees would be much lower. If someone queried everyone in Los Angeles to find out who might attend the debate, then beforehand guessed the 600 who would attend, and picked the exact seat in which each of them would sit, the probability of guessing the actual attendees and right seat order would be impossibly low. While the probability would be extremely low, it is still probable.

A tyrannical dictator could choose the 600 attendees, dead or alive, who must go to the debate and force

them to sit in the exact order he dictated. Human intervention and design would then have produced the outcome.

The Specification Filter catches probable events so that only intelligent designs pass through the filter.

Design products are not the result of chance—they are improbable and cannot be produced by chance. Designers consider what they want and try to produce it using their knowledge, skill, and available materials.

I asked an evolutionist if a glass Coca-Cola bottle like the one I was holding, with the same lettering on it, could be reproduced in nature by chance. He believed it could happen. Although I was not a Christian then, I thought he was irrational. This typifies the stubborn wrong-headedness of doctrinaire evolutionists such as Richard Dawkins.



While a Coca-Cola bottle has a design of fairly low specified complexity, the precisely formatted English text on the bottle and the embossed script adds higher levels of specified complexity. Adding Chinese characters on the opposite side of the bottle, as in the image, increases the specificity. Such a bottle cannot be produced by random events because the

lettering is not the result of any known unguided natural processes. Evolutionists may try to deny this, but if they do, they must be ready to provide unequivocal observed evidence and not just an assumed conceivable scenario.

A Bizarre Evolutionary Belief System

Some evolutionists, such as William Provine, would say that because we are the products of chance events, anything we do would simply be a continuation of the long sequence of random events that produced us. If this is true, intelligent design doesn't exist. Human intelligence is an illusion because it too is the product of chance events. Regardless of the order and specified complexity, the products of human endeavors are simply the result of a long chain of random events that culminate in something that seems meaningful. It is our misperception that an architect creates an intelligent design. The building plans are the result of many sequential random events that led to them, regardless of how improbable it may seem.

Evolutionists champion wholly natural chemical evolution forming the first living cell (abiogenesis) in a prebiotic soup, in the hydrothermal vents of the oceans, or some other environment that might be conducive to the development of life. Origin of life experimenters seek purely naturalistic mechanisms producing the first living cell.

Stanley Miller's experiment in 1952 showed that amino acids form in an oxygen-free environment of ammonia, methane, hydrogen, water vapor, and electric sparks. From Miller's primitive results, evolutionists believed that life could develop by random processes. Miller's success also sparked the imagination of the public, convincing many that man would eventually be able to create life.

After Miller's successful experiments, geologists decided that oxides present in the deep rocks of the Earth's crust suggest the presence of oxygen on the early earth. The possibility that natural mechanisms created oxygen from atmospheric water invalidates Miller's assumption of an oxygen-free atmosphere. Nevertheless, Miller's experiment became an icon of evolution that bolstered evolutionists' hope of discovering natural mechanisms that would produce life.

Woodward covers the experiments of chemical evolution from Miller to the present. He and I highly recommend *The Mystery of Life's Origin*, a very informative book that caused a modest ripple among scientists, especially among chemical evolutionists.

Woodward provided a concise bullet summary of *The Mystery of Life's Origin*:

- *The plausibility of DNA and RNA scenarios of random assembly was heavily critiqued.* Since DNA depends on proteins for its functioning, and yet proteins depend upon DNA (and RNA) for their own assembly, this is the ultimate chicken-egg question as to which came first. Proteins depend on left-handed-only amino acids for their construction, but DNA and RNA require right-handed deoxyribose or ribose sugars. Researchers did experiments trying to link the building blocks of DNA (sugars, phosphates, and the four chemical letters). The result was short, poorly shaped chains. This reflected a DNA nightmare. If it is to form its lovely double helix shape, building blocks must be linked in a delicately precise way. Predictably, this result could never be achieved in the rough and tumble of a raw, unstructured pond environment.

Nature proves itself incapable of knitting together even short DNA ladder segments.

- “*The Myth of the Prebiotic Soup*”—a chapter praised by leading researchers—details the constant threat of chemical ruination or termination of any growing chain. These unavoidable chemical glitches are called “interfering cross-reactions.” Such nasty reactions are virtually inevitable in a pond, lake, or ocean where biological building blocks would be trying to link together. For example, if a protein chain or DNA ladder started to form, it would inevitably link with chemical units like aldehydes that act to terminate the chain, sealing the chain’s end and shutting down growth. Growing molecular chains would have to fight terrible odds to avoid such terminator reactions with chemicals swimming in any prebiotic soup.
- An incredible number of oddball, nonprotein amino acids would interfere with further development of a proper protein.

Woodward listed additional highlights, but reading *The Mystery of Life’s Origin* would be better.

An important point that Duane Gish made is that if we conceded that the abiotic formation of the first protein beat all odds, which he calculated at roughly 10^{130} for a protein 100 amino acids long, what would we have? We would have just one protein. His point is well taken. What could that single protein do? It could not reproduce itself nor code for itself. It could not take part in any biochemical pathway because there would be no pathway.

The simplest possible independent, free-living proto-cell would require around 1200 genes along with their interconnected functional proteins all working in concert with one another in a finely tuned network. Positing a single protein as a first step in the origin of life is a futile smokescreen attempting to hide the complexity of the problem. Even for the least complex cell, none of it works until all of it works.

Even if that protein had been a functional enzyme that could split a simple sugar to obtain energy, what would have been the point? It might have split many molecules of sugar, but it wouldn’t have contributed to any cellular process. Eventually, it would have worn out and become inoperative. Natural selection doesn’t operate on a single protein. Natural selection requires DNA or operational substitute to replicate for selection of mutations coding for that protein to preserve any changes leading to further prebiotic development. This is a major conundrum.

A protein is not adequate substitute for genetic material. It would have to be able to act as a genetic template for its duplication and at the same time be able to build another protein like itself from suitable amino acids in its environment.

Dean Kenyon, who taught biology from 1966-2001 at San Francisco State University, was involved in origin of life research. In 1969, he published *Biochemical Predestination*, in which he wrote, “Life might have been biochemically predestined by the properties of attraction that exist between its chemical parts—particularly between amino acids in proteins.” One of his students gave him a published a critique of his position and he began to rethink his belief. He decided that:

It’s an enormous problem how you could get together in one tiny submicroscopic volume of the primitive ocean, all of the hundreds of different molecular components you would need in order for a self-replicating cycle to be established. And so my doubts about whether amino acids could order themselves into meaningful biological sequences on their own, without preexisting genetic material being present, just reached for me the intellectual breaking point near the end of the decade of the 70s.

That was part of my problem with the theory. Such a thing would have to be accepted as probable and possible by people who reject the supernatural origin of life. They would have to believe the fantastic and unrealistic development of life suggested by evolutionary theory. Kenyon’s remark succinctly outlines the barriers to abiogenesis.

Evolutionists are looking for a magic bullet that would break through these seemingly insurmountable barriers to abiotic development of life. In the 1980s Nobel Prize winners Sidney Altman and Thomas Cech reported that RNA seemed to provide the answer to which came first, “proteins or DNA?” They developed the concept of the RNA world. RNA can act as an information template and catalyze chemical reactions. Therefore they aver RNA came first.

My wife, Dr. Anita Millen gave an excellent talk on the foibles of the RNA world at one of our meetings. The DVD is available.