The Origin of Life

**Introduction:** Where did we come from? We exist, we are alive, what is our origin? The question of life’s origin is an important one, our own existence a tangent of that question. In this lesson we will seek to answer the question.

* Theist: (Genesis 1:1,11-12,20-21,24-25,26-27)
* a-Theist: (Evolutionary theory)

**When did Life Originate?** - Evidence suggests that life first evolved around 3.5 billion years ago. (University of California, Berkeley – Evolution 101)

**Where did Life Originate?** - Scientists are exploring several possible locations for the origin of life, including tide pools and hot springs. However, recently some scientists have narrowed in on the hypothesis that life originated near a deep sea hydrothermal vent. The chemicals found in these vents and the energy they provide could have fueled many of the chemical reactions necessary for the evolution of life. (ibid.)

**How did Life Originate?** – *1) Simple organic molecules formed.* RNA and DNA molecules — the genetic material for all life — are just long chains of simple nucleotides. *2) Replicating molecules evolved and began to undergo natural selection.* All living things reproduce, copying their genetic material and passing it on to their offspring. Thus, the ability to copy the molecules that encode genetic information is a key step in the origin of life — without it, life could not exist. This ability probably first evolved in the form of an RNA self-replicator — an RNA molecule that could copy itself.

*3) Replicating molecules became enclosed within a cell membrane.* *4) Some cells began to evolve modern metabolic processes and out-competed those with older forms of metabolism.* [Note: This is the point where DNA comes into the picture]. *5) Multicellularity evolved*. As early as two billion years ago, some cells stopped going their separate ways after replicating and evolved specialized functions. They gave rise to Earth's first lineage of multicellular organisms. (ibid).

**I. Problems with the Evolutionary Model** (https://www.icr.org/article/3140, Duane Gish, PhD.)

A. **Oxygen dilemma.** Scientists note that an atmosphere with oxygen would oxidize and destroy the organic molecules necessary for the origin of life. Thus, some argue for no oxygen in the atmosphere at the time life is formed. However, no oxygen means no ozone (a protective layer that impedes ultraviolet light). Thus, ultraviolet light would also destroy organic molecules*. “Thus, evolutionists face an irresolvable dilemma: in the presence of oxygen, life could not evolve; without oxygen, thus no ozone, life could not evolve or exist.”*

B. **All forms of raw energy are destructive.** Sun, lightning, radioactive decay, heat – all of these tend to degrade rather than form amino acids and other compounds necessary for life.

C. **There is no such thing as a spontaneously self-replicating molecule** (see point 2, above). “To form a protein in a laboratory the chemist, after dissolving the required amino acids in a solvent, adds a chemical that contains high energy bonds (referred to as a peptide reagent). The energy from this chemical is transferred to the amino acids. This provides the necessary energy to form the chemical bonds between the amino acids and releases H and OH to form H2O (water). This only happens in a chemistry laboratory or in the cells of living organisms. It could never have taken place in a primitive ocean or anywhere on a primitive Earth.”

D. **DNA could not survive without repair mechanisms**. Over 130 DNA human repair genes have been discovered. According to scientists, “Genome |DNA| instability caused by the great variety of DNA-damaging agents would be an overwhelming problem for cells and organisms if it were not for DNA repair.” In simple terms, in order for DNA to exist, it is dependent upon DNA. “It would have been impossible for ordinary DNA to evolve before DNA repair genes had evolved. Here we see another impossible barrier for evolution.”

**II. More problems with the Evolutionary Model** (https://www.icr.org/article/6374/, Brian Thomas, M.S.)

A. “The 2008 documentary movie *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed* presented 250 proteins as an estimated minimum required for cell function. The odds of that many forming by chance was equated to a man winning at a slot machine 250 consecutive times.

“But the real odds are much more staggering. Molecular biologist Doug Axe said, "We're talking about something that's staggeringly improbable: roughly one in a trillion trillion trillion trillion trillion trillion." Based on new research, Axe may have to quadruple those already impossible odds.” (**Note:** New research suggests that 480 proteins necessary, in addition to 532 other “essential regions” “Thus, this experiment found that the number of DNA regions required for the basic life of this bacterium was 1,000, which is four times larger than the 250 proteins estimated in *Expelled*).

B. This argument, that the great complexity of life makes its chance development to be statistically impossible, is one that evolutionists seek to overcome through large amounts of time. (see 3.5 billion years in introduction). However, such time is not nearly enough, and unlimited time in and of itself does not overcome fundamental problems with the evolutionary model.

**III. Law of Biogenesis**

*“Biogenesis* is the production of new living organisms or organelles. The law of biogenesis, attributed to Louis Pasteur, is **the observation** that living things come only from other living things, by reproduction (e.g. a spider lays eggs, which develop into spiders). That is, life does not arise from non-living material, which was the position held by *spontaneous generation*. This is summarized in the phrase *Omne vivum ex vivo*, Latin for "all life [is] from life." A related statement is *Omnis cellula e cellula*, "all cells [are] from cells;" this observation is one of the central statements of cell theory.

“The term biogenesis was coined by Henry Charlton Bastian to mean the generation of a life form from nonliving materials, however, Thomas Henry Huxley chose the term abiogenesis and redefined biogenesis for life arising from preexisting life. **The generation of life from non-living material is called abiogenesis, and has occurred at least once in the history of the Earth, or in the history of the Universe (see panspermia), when life first arose.**”

(**Note:** Spontaneous generation disproved by Louis Pasteur by means of experimentation. “After obtaining his results, Pasteur stated: "*La génération spontanée est une chimère*" ("Spontaneous generation is a dream"). (Wikipedia, emphasis mine).

**IV. The Teleological Argument** (the Divine Watchmaker).

A. Not accepted by evolutionists, despite its logical appearance. The presence of order and complexity in the universe, (and in living beings), argues for a evident designer. Because of the scale and intricacy, theists attribute this design to an omnipotent, divine being. Christians claim it to be the God of the Bible.

B. (Psalm 19:1; 139:13-14; Romans 1:20; Acts 17:22-28)

**Conclusion:** Life exists, and the more we discover about it, the more we know of its complexity and structure. Evolutionists postulate its existence by time, chance and natural selection. The more simple and obvious (cf. Romans 1:20) reason is *supernatural*. A self-existent first cause (God), created the universe, and life. Evolutionists reject this, not because of a lack of plausibility, but because it is not a *natural* explanation. They choose evolution, despite the many problems with the model.