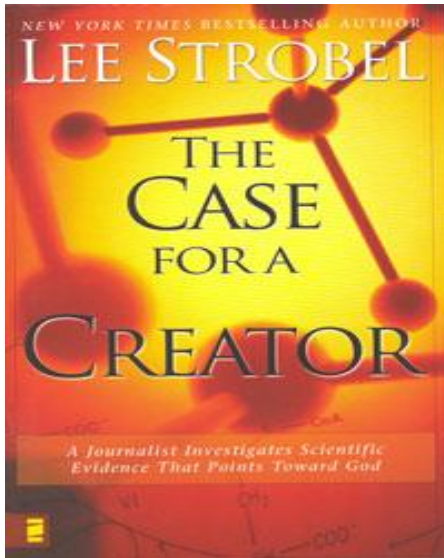


## Strong case, but Flawed by Compromise

A review of *The Case for a Creator* by Lee Strobel, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2004 by [Lita Cosner](#)



“You don’t need the Bible if you’ve got *The Origin of the Species*” (p 24). This is the challenge Lee Strobel brings in *The Case for a Creator*: does modern science support or refute the existence of an intelligent creator?

Using his expertise as a journalist, he retraces his search for the truth about evolution and intelligent design, interviewing experts in areas including biochemistry, philosophy, astronomy and physics. The interviews build up a scientifically and philosophically convincing case for design rather than Darwinism.

## Images of Evolution

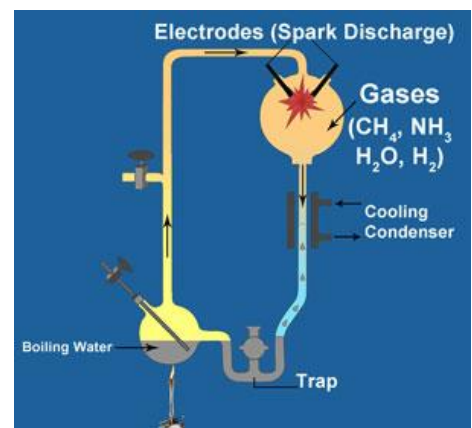
Strobel starts out by describing what he calls ‘images of evolution’ that were particularly persuasive to him and influenced him towards Darwinism. The four examples he gives are:

- The Miller–Urey experiments purporting to prove that life evolved from non-living chemicals
- Darwin’s tree of life
- Haeckel’s embryo drawings, and
- the *Archaeopteryx* fossil ‘missing link’ between reptiles and birds

The problem with all of these evidences for evolution is that they break down under scrutiny.

## The Miller–Urey experiment

The Miller–Urey experiment claimed to reproduce the atmosphere of the primordial earth and, using these conditions, create amino acids. The main problem with the experiment is that it used the wrong type of atmosphere, consisting of hydrogen, ammonia, methane and water vapour. Most evolutionary geochemists today believe that our earliest atmosphere probably consisted of carbon dioxide, nitrogen and water vapour, which gives much less favourable results. Even if the early atmosphere had been like the one in the Miller–Urey experiment, a few amino acids is far from a living cell; the amino acids would still need



to be isolated from the surrounding material and assembled by chance and against the chemical barriers.<sup>1</sup>

## Darwin's Tree of Life

Darwin's tree of life is a powerful image that sticks in the mind of every student from elementary school, with a one-celled ancestor as the 'trunk' of the tree, branching out into all the life forms that exist today. It is a good illustration of Darwin's theory, but lacks even one undisputed missing link between different kinds of animals—the tree has no branches, trunk or root.

## Haeckel's Embryo Drawings

Even if the early atmosphere had been like the one in the Miller–Urey experiment, a few amino acids is far from a living cell; the amino acids would still need to be isolated from the surrounding material and assembled by chance and against the chemical barriers.

Haeckel's embryo drawings, or similar sketches, are prominently featured in many biology textbooks. These drawings show alleged similarities between embryos as they develop; early in the sequence, the embryos of the different species look very similar, becoming more distinct as they progress in their development. These drawings are a fraud on several levels; he stacked the deck by choosing embryos of the species that would look most similar to each other, then made them look more similar than they really were. But, as Jonathan Wells explains to Strobel,

'... the most dramatic problem is that what Haeckel claimed as the early stage of development is nothing of the sort. It's actually the midpoint of development ... If you go back to the earlier stages, the embryos look far more different from each other. But he deliberately omits the earlier stages altogether' (p. 49).<sup>2</sup>



### *Archaeopteryx*

When *Archaeopteryx* was discovered, it was hailed as the missing link between birds and reptiles, but this claim fails on several levels. *Archaeopteryx* is not half-bird, half-reptile; it is a bird, with a bird's feathers<sup>3</sup> and structures that are very different from a reptiles'. There are no transitional structures; Archie had wings like modern birds, the unique avian lung system, a brain with large optic lobes, and semi-circular canals in the ear that would have given it the good balance required for coordinating flight.<sup>4</sup>

by [Steve Cardno](#)

Artist's impression of *Archaeopteryx*

## Science: the Only Begetter of Truth?

Harvard geneticist Richard Lewontin claimed that science is the ‘only begetter of truth’. It is ironic that this statement is self-refuting, because this statement cannot be tested scientifically, and as we gain knowledge through introspection and history that can’t be tested scientifically. Strobel explores the question of the proper boundaries of science and theology; can the two go together? Gould’s ‘non-overlapping magisteria’ claims that the Bible and science talk about two entirely different areas, making it impossible to have any connection between the two.

However, the Bible makes claims that are scientifically testable, and the validity of its moral and spiritual message relies on its accuracy in all testable areas. Jesus’ statement, ‘If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?’ ([John 3:12](#)) shows the futility of trying to separate the Bible’s moral claims from its historical claims, including those that are scientifically testable.

The Darwinist has a problem when trying to invoke naturalistic causes for the origin of the universe; there is no nature to invoke before nature exists! Stephen Meyer explains, ‘You can invoke neither time nor space nor matter nor energy nor the laws of nature to explain the origin of the universe’ (p. 77). In other words, something outside of time and space and the laws of nature had to cause all those things. Only theism provides an adequate answer for what caused the universe, although one does not need to believe that the God of the Bible is the Creator to use this argument.

Meyer also debunks the notion of the unbiased secular scientist: ‘Every scientist has a motive ... but motives are irrelevant to assessing the validity of scientific theories ... If every person in the Intelligent Design movement were a fundamentalist who attends Baptist Bible Church, it wouldn’t matter. Their arguments have to be weighed on their own merits’ (p. 85). Otherwise, critics would be guilty of the *genetic fallacy*.<sup>5</sup>

A genetic fallacy is an illogical argument for or against an idea based on the origin of the idea. An example is, “It will rain on Tuesday because my father said so.” The speaker’s father may be a good man and a good father, but it doesn’t necessarily translate that he knows for certain what the weather will be like some time in the future. Conversely, a negative example would be, “Easter is bad because it started as a pagan holiday.” While elements of Easter do, indeed, include pagan symbols such as rabbits and eggs, it’s certainly not a bad thing to set aside a day to corporately remember Jesus’ resurrection.

The genetic fallacy in regard to religion refers to the argument that a person’s faith is irrelevant because he most likely learned that faith from his parents. The argument claims that, because the primary determinant of a person’s religion is exposure to that religion as a child and not comprehensive, logical research, a person’s faith is immaterial and false.

The problem with the genetic fallacy is that the truth of a statement is in no way based on the origin of the concept. A philosophical or theological concept is true or it is not; it does not matter how a person came to believe the concept or who, in the past, held that concept to be true.

At the same time, arguments regarding origins in religion bear consideration because people should not blindly follow a religion merely because it is the religion of their parents. Each individual is responsible for his/her own beliefs and relationship with God. Although a faith learned in childhood is not necessarily false, it is also not necessarily true. Believers should always study the Scriptures ([Acts 17:11](#)) and be able to give an account as to why they believe ([1 Peter 3:15](#)), apart from family tradition

## Bad design?

Jesus' statement, 'If I told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?' ([John 3:12](#)) shows the futility of trying to separate the Bible's moral claims from its historical claims.

Some Darwinists claim that evolution must be true on the basis of 'bad design' in certain structures. However, this argument is a *theological* argument, not scientific. People who claim that a structure is badly designed often fail to weigh the benefit of a structure to an organism versus the resources it uses. Most structures that evolutionists claim are 'badly designed' are adequate for the creature's needs, and indeed the alleged 'bad design' turns out to be essential. A good example is the allegedly backwardly wired retina, an arrangement that turns out to be essential so that the light receptors can be regenerated and cooled.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, recent research shows that the eye even has a fibre-optic plate comprising the Müller cells that efficiently guides light through the nerve network.<sup>7</sup>

And in a case of true deficiency, it is easier for the creationist to explain how the Fall could corrupt an originally good structure than for an evolutionist to explain how that structure came to exist through mutation.

## Cosmic Design

Our universe is surprisingly suitable for life. This used to be taken for granted, but it has become clear relatively recently how remarkable the universe is. The fine-tuning of some of the constants is described as like throwing a dart from outer space towards the earth and hitting a precise atom.

So some opponents have used this as 'evidence' of multiple universes.<sup>8</sup> However, these extra universes could not be observed, even in principle, so this is not science but special pleading (*argument in which the speaker deliberately ignores aspects that are unfavourable to their point of view*).

The multi-universe theory is really the result of an *a priori* rejection of a designer, not science, and still fails to explain where they came from. If sceptics use Ockham's Razor to reject a Designer, then *a fortiori* this should shave off these extra unobserved and unobservable universes and recognize that a Designer is actually a more parsimonious explanation (*stingy OR very unwilling to spend money or use resources*).

## Water

It used to be assumed that anywhere there is liquid water, life could flourish. Every time a new story comes out about a slight possibility of liquid water on a celestial body, it is inevitable that the possibility of life on that planet will be mentioned. However, the requirements for life on a planet are much more complicated than 'just add water,' there are many criteria that must be met. Indeed, water is a huge obstacle for the origin of first life, because it tends to break down large molecules and inhibit their formation in the first place.<sup>9</sup>

## Sun

For a planet to support life, it has to be in a certain place in the galaxy. It cannot be close to the centre because of the powerful black holes, and it also has to be away from the spiral arms which have many dangerous supernovas. The safest place is in between two of the spiral arms in the outer regions of the galaxy, but this region has less of the heavy elements needed to make a planet (*but this presupposes an evolutionary origin of the planets which has major problems*<sup>10</sup>). The sun is located in the exact best place in the galaxy for life. And it is in the unique *co-rotation radius*, where the star's orbital speed matches that of the spiral arms, otherwise the sun would cross the arms too often and be exposed to supernova explosions.<sup>11,12</sup>

Earth's position in the solar system is also ideal for life. If a planet is too close to the sun, all the water will evaporate; if it is too far, the water will freeze. There is a small area around a star where a planet's orbit must be to have liquid water, this is the *circumstellar habitable zone* (CHZ). However, life can only occur in its inner edge; the outer parts of the CHZ require high levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to trap the sun's radiation and keep the water liquid, so there could not be enough oxygen in the air for animal life. A planet would also have to have a near-circular orbit; it would do no good for a planet to have liquid water for half the year and frozen oceans the other half.

It has long been assumed that our sun is an ordinary star; most high-school science classes learn how ordinary and run-of-the-mill our sun is. But the sun is far from ordinary—for one thing, it is [in the top 10% of stars \(by mass\) in our neighbourhood; for another, it has many features that make it ideal for life on earth](#). It emits the right combination of red and blue light, ideal for photosynthesis.

## Moon

Every scientist has a motive ... but motives are irrelevant to assessing the validity of scientific theories ... If every person in the Intelligent Design movement were a fundamentalist who attends Baptist Bible Church, it wouldn't matter. Their arguments have to be weighed on their own merits'—Steven Meyer

The moon is an important feature: it is so massive relative to the earth (1/81) it stabilizes the tilt of earth's axis, and generates tides that circulate ocean water and keep it fresh.<sup>13</sup>

Our moon can also cause total solar eclipses, which have greatly advanced astronomy. This can occur because of the fine match-up: the moon is both 1/400 the size of the sun, and 400 times closer, so they have the same angular size in the sky: 0.5'. Yet a blind spot of this book is that it fails to realize that this design makes sense only on a young earth view. Since the moon is receding, this matchup would not have worked for most of Earth history if it really were billions of years old.<sup>14</sup>

## **Earth**

The earth itself has just the right mass. If it were less massive, it would not be able to hold an oxygen-rich atmosphere, but if it were too massive, gravity would pull mountains and continents down, and the whole world would be covered by the oceans. There are also several negative feedback mechanisms that regulate surface temperature of Earth by reflecting light from the sun.

## **Beauty**

There is also unnecessary beauty in physical laws, and their discoverability points to intelligent designer with a sense of aesthetics. This journal has also pointed to examples of beauty in the living world and the intricate mathematics behind it, as well as to the vacuity [*empty-headedness*] of ‘sexual selection’ explanations.<sup>[15](#)</sup>

## **The Information Problem**

One of the most problematic areas of evolution is explaining how complex structures arose via random mutations. Especially difficult are irreducibly complex systems. Strobel defines irreducible complexity as a system that ‘has a number of different components that all work together to accomplish the task of the system, and if you were to remove one of the components, the system would no longer function’ (p. 197). There is no way to build up an irreducibly complex system part-by-part, because the absence of one of the vital parts does not result in a system that is simply less effective or efficient; the system does not work at all. Examples of irreducibly complex systems in nature include the bacterial flagellum and the blood clotting cascade.

Another problem evolutionists have is explaining how biological information in the form of DNA came to exist. Random chance could not create the complex code—it would be like throwing Scrabble letters at random to produce a work of literature. Self-ordering tendencies would create simple, repetitive sequences, while a code would require irregular sequences to convey information. Natural selection cannot be invoked either, for natural selection requires self-replicating entities to work; so it cannot be invoked to explain their origin. Leading 20<sup>th</sup> century evolutionist Theodosius Dobzhansky (1900–1975) said:

*‘Natural selection is differential reproduction, organism perpetuation. In order to have natural selection, you have to have self-reproduction or self-replication and at least two distinct self-replicating units or entities. ... I would like to plead with you, simply, please realize you cannot use the words “natural selection” loosely. Prebiological natural selection is a contradiction of terms’.* [emphasis added].<sup>[16](#)</sup>

## **Consciousness and the Soul**

Evolution has enough problems trying to figure out how life started at all, let alone a materialistic explanation of how consciousness came about. [How could dead matter evolve consciousness?](#) There is no inherent potential in matter to become conscious, and there is no real necessity for organisms to evolve consciousness. However, if materialism is correct, there can be no real consciousness, and no free will if we are governed simply by chemical processes in our brains.<sup>[17](#)</sup>



## 5. Problems in the Fossils Record

- a) Gaps in the record
- b) Circular reasoning
- c) Error of exploration
- d) More than 500 cases of inverted fossil records have been found

**Rock ----- more complex cases**

**Strata-----less complex cases**

## 6. There are problems with radioactive dating.

- C-dating only accurate up to 14,000 years
- We need to know how much strontium was there in the beginning so that we can calculate the half-life

## B. Creationism

- 1) Can explain the origin of life
- 2) Recent Developments
  - a. 24 hrs. Literal Creation
  - b. Pictorial Creationists
  - c. Research Creationists
  - d. Theistic Evolutionists
  - e. Day age Theory
  - f. Apparent Age Theory

# CREATION OR EVOLUTION: DOES IT MATTER?

## What Does the Fossil Record Show?

Can the theory of evolution be proven? After all, it is called the theory of evolution in acknowledgment that it is a hypothesis rather than a confirmed scientific fact.

Where can we find evidence supporting evolution as an explanation for the teeming variety of life on earth?

Since evolutionists claim that the transition from one species to a new one takes place in tiny, incremental changes over millions of years, they acknowledge that we cannot observe the process taking place today. Our lifespans simply are too short to directly observe such a change.

Instead, they say, we have to look at the past-the fossil record that shows the many life forms that have existed over earth's history-to find transitions from one species to another.



## Darwin's Greatest Challenge

When Charles Darwin proposed his theory in the mid-19th century, he was confident that fossil discoveries would provide clear and convincing evidence that his conjectures were correct. His theory predicted that countless transitional forms must have existed, all gradually blending almost imperceptibly from one tiny step to the next, as species progressively evolved to higher, better-adapted forms.

Indeed that would have to be the case. Well in excess of a million species are alive today. For all those to have evolved from common ancestors, we should be able to find millions if not hundreds of millions of intermediate forms gradually evolving into other species.

It was not only fossils of transitional species between apes and humans that would have to be discovered to prove Darwin's theory. The gaps were enormous. Science writer Richard Milton notes that the missing links "included every part of the animal kingdom: from whelks to whales and from bacteria to bactrian camels. Darwin and his successors envisaged a process that would begin with simple marine organisms living in ancient seas, progressing through fishes, to amphibians-living partly in the sea and partly on land-and hence on to reptiles, mammals, and eventually the primates, including humans" (*Shattering the Myths of Darwinism*, 1997, p. 253).

However, even Darwin himself struggled with the fact that the fossil record failed to support his conclusions. ". . . Why, if species have descended from other species by fine gradations, do we not everywhere see innumerable transitional forms? . . . Why do we not find them imbedded in countless numbers in the crust of the earth?" (*Origin of Species*, 1958 Masterpieces of Science edition, pp. 136-137).

". . . The number of intermediate varieties, which have formerly existed, [must] be truly enormous," he wrote. "Why then is not every geological formation and every stratum full of such intermediate links? Geology assuredly does not reveal any such finely graduated organic chain; and this, perhaps, is the most obvious and serious objection which can be urged against the theory [of evolution]" (Darwin, pp. 260-261).

Darwin acknowledged that the fossil record failed to support his conclusions. But, since he thought his theory obviously was the correct explanation for earth's many and varied forms of life, he and others thought it only a matter of time before fossilized missing links would be found to fill in the many gaps. His answer for the lack of fossil evidence to support his theory was that scientists hadn't looked long enough and hadn't looked in the right places. Eventually they would find the predicted fossil remains that would prove his view. "The explanation lies, I believe, in the extreme imperfection of the geological record," he wrote (p. 261).

He was convinced that later explorations and discoveries would fill in the abundant gaps where the transitional species on which his theory was based were missing. But now, a century and a half later, after literally hundreds of thousands of fossil plants and animals have been discovered and cataloged and with few corners of the globe unexplored, what does the fossil record show?

## What the Record Reveals

David Raup is a firm believer in evolution and a respected paleontologist (*scientist who studies fossils*) at the University of Chicago and the Field Museum. However, he admits that the fossil record has been misinterpreted if not outright mischaracterized. He writes: "A large number of well-trained scientists outside of evolutionary biology and paleontology have unfortunately gotten the idea that the fossil record is far more Darwinian than it is. This probably comes from the oversimplification inevitable in secondary sources: low-level textbooks, semi-popular articles, and so on. Also, there is probably some wishful thinking involved. In the years after Darwin, his advocates hoped to find predictable progressions. In general, *these have not been found*—yet the optimism has died hard, and *some pure fantasy has crept into textbooks*" (Science, Vol. 213, p. 289, emphasis added).

Niles Eldredge, curator in the department of invertebrates at the American Museum of Natural History and adjunct professor at the City University of New York, is another vigorous supporter of evolution. But he finds himself forced to admit that the fossil record fails to support the traditional evolutionary view.

"No wonder paleontologists shied away from evolution for so long," he writes. "*It seems never to happen*. Assiduous collecting up cliff faces yields zigzags, minor oscillations, and the very occasional slight accumulation of change-over millions of years, at a rate too slow to really account for all the prodigious change that has occurred in evolutionary history.

"When we do see the introduction of evolutionary novelty, *it usually shows up with a bang*, and often with no firm evidence that the organisms did not evolve elsewhere! *Evolution cannot forever be going on someplace else*. Yet that's how the fossil record has struck many a forlorn paleontologist looking to learn something about evolution" (*Reinventing Darwin: The Great Debate at the High Table of Evolutionary Theory*, 1995, p. 95, emphasis added).

After an immense worldwide search by geologists and paleontologists, the "missing links" Darwin predicted would be found to bolster his theory are still missing.

Harvard University paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould is perhaps today's best-known popular writer on evolution. An ardent evolutionist, he collaborated with Professor Eldredge in proposing alternatives to the traditional view of Darwinism. Like Eldredge, he recognizes that the fossil record fundamentally conflicts with Darwin's idea of gradualism.

"The history of most fossil species," he writes, "includes two features particularly inconsistent with gradualism [gradual evolution from one species to another]:

"[1] *Stasis*. Most species exhibit no directional [evolutionary] change during their tenure on earth. They appear in the fossil record looking pretty much the same as when they disappear; morphological [anatomical or structural] change is usually limited and directionless.

"[2] ***Sudden appearance***. In any local area, a species does not arise gradually by the steady transformation of its ancestors: it appears all at once and 'fully formed'" (Gould, "Evolution's Erratic Pace," *Natural History*, May 1977, pp. 13-14).

### **Fossils Missing in Crucial Places**

Francis Hitching, member of the Royal Archaeological Institute, the Prehistoric Society and the Society for Physical Research, also sees problems in using the fossil record to support Darwinism.

"There are about 250,000 different species of fossil plants and animals in the world's museums," he writes. "This compares with about 1.5 million species known to be alive on Earth today. Given the known rates of evolutionary turnover, it has been estimated that at least 100 times more fossil species have lived than have been discovered . . . But the curious thing is that there is a consistency about the fossil gaps: *the fossils go missing in all the important places*.

"When you look for links between major groups of animals, *they simply aren't there*; at least, not in enough numbers to put their status beyond doubt. Either *they don't exist at all*, or they are *so rare* that endless argument goes on about whether a particular fossil is, or isn't, or might be, transitional between this group and that.

". . . There ought to be cabinets full of intermediates-indeed, one would expect the fossils to blend so gently into one another that it would be difficult to tell where the invertebrates ended and the vertebrates began. *But this isn't the case*. Instead, groups of well-defined, easily classifiable fish jump into the fossil record *seemingly from nowhere*: mysteriously, suddenly, full-formed, and in a most un-Darwinian way. And before them are *maddening, illogical gaps where their ancestors should be*" (*The Neck of the Giraffe: Darwin, Evolution and the New Biology*, 1982, pp. 9-10, emphasis added).

Acknowledging that the fossil record contradicts rather than supports Darwinism, professors Eldredge and Gould have proposed a radically different theory they call "punctuated equilibrium": that bursts of evolution occurred in small, isolated populations that then became dominant and showed no change over millions and millions of years. This, they say, is the only way to explain the lack of evidence for evolution in the fossil record.

As *Newsweek* explains: "In 1972 Gould and Niles Eldredge collaborated on a paper intended at the time merely to resolve a professional embarrassment for paleontologists: their inability to find the fossils of transitional forms between species, the so-called 'missing links.' Darwin, and most of those who followed him, believed that the work of evolution was slow, gradual and continuous and that a complete lineage of ancestors, shading imperceptibly one into the next, could in theory be reconstructed for all living animals . . . *But a century of digging since then has only made their absence more glaring* . . . It was Eldredge and Gould's notion to call off the search and accept the evidence of the fossil record on its own terms" ("Enigmas of Evolution," March 29, 1982, p. 39, emphasis added).

As some observers point out, this is an inherently unprovable theory for which the primary evidence to support it is lack of evidence in the fossil record to support transitional forms between species.

### **Fossil Record No Longer Incomplete**

The fossil record has been thoroughly explored and documented. Darwin's excuse of "extreme imperfection of the geological record" is no longer credible.

How complete is the fossil record? Michael Denton is a medical doctor and biological researcher. He writes that "when estimates are made of the percentage of [now-] living forms found as fossils, the percentage turns out to be surprisingly high, suggesting that the fossil record may not be as bad as is often maintained" (*Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, 1985, p. 189).

He explains that "of the 329 living families of terrestrial vertebrates [mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians] 261 or 79.1 percent have been found as fossils and, when birds (which are poorly fossilized) are excluded, the percentage rises to 87.8 percent" (Denton, p. 189).

In other words, almost 88 percent of the varieties of mammals, reptiles and amphibians populating earth have been found in the fossil record. How many transitional forms, then, have been found? ". . . Although each of these classes [fishes, amphibians, reptiles, mammals and primates] is well represented in the fossil record, as of yet *no one has discovered a fossil creature that is indisputably transitional between one species and another species. Not a single undisputed 'missing link' has been found* in all the exposed rocks of the Earth's crust despite the most careful and extensive searches" (Milton, pp. 253-254, emphasis added).

If Darwin's theory were true, transitional creatures such as invertebrates with partially developed backbones, fish with rudimentary legs, reptiles with primitive wings and innumerable creatures with semi-evolved anatomical features should be the rule, scattered throughout the fossil strata. But they are nonexistent.

### **What about Fossil Proofs?**

At times various fossil species have been presented as firm proof of evolution at work. Perhaps the most famous is the supposed evolution of the horse as presented in many biology textbooks. But is it what it is claimed to be?

Notice what Professor Eldredge has to say about this classic "proof" of evolution: "George Gaylord Simpson spent a considerable segment of his career on horse evolution. His overall conclusion: Horse evolution was by no means the simple, linear and straightforward affair it was made out to be ... Horse evolution did not proceed in one single series, from step A to step B and so forth, culminating in modern, single-toed large horses. Horse evolution, to Simpson, seemed much more bushy, with lots of species alive at any one time-species that differed quite a bit from one another, and which had variable numbers of toes, size of teeth, and so forth.

"In other words, it is easy, and all too tempting, to survey the fossil history of a group and select examples that seem best to exemplify linear change through time ... But picking out just those species that exemplify intermediate stages along a trend, while ignoring all other species that don't seem to fit in as well, is something else again. The picture is distorted. The actual evolutionary pattern isn't fully represented" (Niles Eldredge, *The Great Debate*, p. 131).

Eldredge in effect admits that paleontologists picked and chose which species they thought fit best with their theory and ignored the rest. George Gaylord Simpson himself was more blunt: "The uniform continuous transformation of Hyracotherium [a fossil species thought to be the ancestor of the horse] into Equus [the modern horse], so dear to the hearts of generations of textbook writers, never happened in nature" (*Life of the Past*, 1953, p. 119).

Professor Raup elaborates on the problem paleontologists face in trying to demonstrate evolution from the fossil record: ". . . We are now about 120 years after Darwin, and knowledge of the fossil record has been greatly expanded. We now have a quarter of a million fossil species but the situation hasn't changed much. The record of evolution is still surprisingly jerky and, ironically, *we have even fewer examples of evolutionary transition than we had in Darwin's time.*

"By this I mean that some of the classic cases of Darwinian change in the fossil record, such as the evolution of the horse in North America, *have had to be discarded or modified* as a result of more detailed information—what appeared to be a nice simple progression when relatively few data were available *now appears to be much more complex and much less gradualistic* [evolutionary]" ("Conflicts Between Darwin and Paleontology," *Field Museum of Natural History Bulletin* 50, January 1979, pp. 22-25, emphasis added).

### **Paleontology's Well-Kept Secret**

What does all this mean? In plain language, if evolution means the gradual change of one kind of organism into another kind, the outstanding characteristic of the fossil record is the absence of evidence for evolution—and *abundant evidence to the contrary*. The only logical place to find proof for evolutionary theory is in the fossil record. But, rather than showing slow, gradual change over eons, with new species continually emerging, *the fossils show the opposite*.

Professor Eldredge touched on the magnitude of the problem when he admitted that Darwin "essentially invented a new field of scientific inquiry—what is now called 'taphonomy'—to explain why the fossil record is *so deficient, so full of gaps*, that the predicted patterns of gradual change simply do not emerge" (Eldredge, pp. 95-96, emphasis added).

Professor Gould similarly admits that the "extreme rarity" of evidence for evolution in the fossil record is "*the trade secret of paleontology.*" He goes on to acknowledge that "the evolutionary trees that adorn our textbooks have data only at the tips and nodes of

their branches; the rest is inference, however reasonable, *not the evidence of fossils*" ("Evolution's Erratic Pace," *Natural History*, May 1977, p. 14, emphasis added).

But do paleontologists share this trade secret with others? Hardly. "Reading popular or even textbook introductions to evolution, . . . you might hardly guess that they [fossil gaps] exist, so glibly and confidently do most authors slide through them. In the absence of fossil evidence, they write what have been termed 'just so' stories. A suitable mutation just happened to take place at the crucial moment, and hey presto, a new stage of evolution was reached" (Hitching, pp. 12-13).

Regarding this misrepresentation of the evidence, Phillip Johnson writes: "Just about everyone who took a college biology course during the last sixty years or so has been led to believe that the fossil record was a bulwark of support for the classic Darwinian thesis, not a liability that had to be explained away . . .

"The fossil record shows a consistent pattern of sudden appearance followed by a stasis, that life's history is more a story of variation around a set of basic designs than one of accumulating improvement, that extinction has been predominantly by catastrophe rather than gradual obsolescence, and that orthodox interpretations of the fossil record often owe more to Darwinist preconception than to the evidence itself.

Paleontologists seem to have thought it their duty to protect the rest of us from the erroneous conclusions we might have drawn if we had known the actual state of the evidence" (*Darwin on Trial*, 1993, pp. 58-59).

The secret evolutionists don't want revealed is that, even by their own interpretations, the fossil record shows fully formed species appearing for a time and then disappearing with no change. Other species appeared at other times before they, too, disappeared with little or no change. The fossil record simply does not support the central thesis of Darwinism, that species slowly and gradually evolved from one form to another.

### **Fact or Interesting Speculation?**

Professor Johnson notes that "Darwinists consider evolution to be a fact, not just a theory, because it provides a satisfying explanation for the pattern of relationship linking all living creatures—a pattern so identified in their minds with what they consider to be the necessary *cause* of the pattern-descent with modification—that, to them, biological relationship *means* evolutionary relationship" (Johnson, p. 63, emphasis in original).

The deceptive, smoke-and-mirror language of evolution revolves largely around the classification of living species. Darwinists attempt to explain natural relationships they observe in the animal and plant world by categorizing animal and plant life according to physical similarities. It could be said that Darwin's theory is nothing more than educated observance of the obvious; that is, the conclusion that most animals appear to be related to one another because most animals have one or more characteristics in common.

For instance, you might have a superficial classification of whales, penguins and sharks in a group classified as aquatic animals. You might also have birds, bats and bees grouped as flying creatures. These are not the final classifications because there are many other obvious differences. The Darwinist approach, however, is to use the obvious general similarities to show, not that animals were alike in many ways, but that they were related to each other by descent from common ancestors.

Professor Johnson expresses it this way: "Darwin proposed a naturalistic explanation for the essentialist features of the living world that was so stunning in its logical appeal that it conquered the scientific world even while doubts remained about some important parts of his theory. He theorized that the discontinuous groups of the living world were the descendants of long-extinct common ancestors. Relatively closely related groups (like reptiles, birds, and mammals) shared a relatively recent common ancestor; all vertebrates shared a more ancient common ancestor; and all animals shared a still more ancient common ancestor. He then proposed that the ancestors must have been linked to their descendants by long chains of transitional intermediates, also extinct" (Johnson, p. 64).

Evolutionists exercise selective perception when looking at the evidence—rather like deciding whether to view half a glass of water as half empty or half full. They choose to dwell on similarities rather than differences. By doing so they lead you away from the truth of the matter: that similarities are evidence of a common Designer behind the structure and function of the life forms. Each species of animal was created and designed to exist and thrive in a particular way. Darwin and the subsequent proponents of the evolutionary view of life focused on similarities within the major classifications of animals and drew the assumption that those similarities prove that all animals are related to one another through common ancestors.

However, there are major differences in the life forms on earth. If, as evolution supposes, all life forms had common ancestors and chains of intermediates linking those ancestors, the fossil record should overflow with many such intermediate forms between species. But, as we have seen earlier, paleontologists themselves admit it shows no such thing.

### **Simple Life Forms?**

Since the fossil record does not support the traditional evolutionary view, what does it show?

We have already seen how several well-known paleontologists admit that the fossil record shows the sudden appearance of life forms. As Stephen Jay Gould puts it: "In any local area, a species does not arise gradually by the steady transformation of its ancestors: it appears all at once and 'fully formed'" (Gould, "Evolution's Erratic Pace," *Natural History*, May 1977, pp. 13-14).

When we sweep away the evolutionary bias inherent in most views, the fossil record does not show a gradual ascent from simple to complex. Some of the earliest fossils

found are bacteria. What is interesting about bacteria is that they are not simple organisms at all.

In reality there are no simple life forms. Modern technology has shown that even a single cell is extraordinarily complex.

Michael Behe is associate professor of biochemistry at Pennsylvania's Lehigh University. Noting scientists' changing perceptions of the most elementary forms of life, he writes: "We humans tend to have a rather exalted opinion of ourselves, and that attitude can color our perception of the biological world. In particular, our attitude about what is higher and lower in biology, what is an advanced organism and what is a primitive organism, starts with the presumption that the pinnacle of nature is ourselves . . . Nonetheless, other organisms, if they could talk, could argue strongly for their own superiority. This includes bacteria, which we often think of as the rudest forms of life" (*Darwin's Black Box*, 1996, pp. 69-70).

When Darwin wrote *Origin of Species* almost a century and a half ago, scientists did not know nearly as much about the cell (and single-celled organisms) as we do today. Darwin thought that single-celled organisms were quite primitive. In fact, at that time many still thought that life could arise naturally from nonliving matter—for example, that decaying meat spontaneously produced flies.

Years passed before French scientist Louis Pasteur convincingly demonstrated, through a series of meticulous experiments, the impossibility of the notion. Yet even Pasteur had quite a battle with scientists of his day convincing them that life came only from preexisting life forms. So Darwin's idea—that single-celled meant simple—was not questioned at the time. Later discoveries have shown that even the single-celled organisms found early in the fossil record are far more complex than Darwin and others could have imagined.

### **An Explosion of Life Forms**

Paleontologists widely consider the Cambrian period, one of the oldest in their view, to be the earliest in which extensive life forms are preserved. Since only the remains of marine life are found in Cambrian strata, paleontologists interpret these deposits as dating to a time before land animals had evolved.

The *Encarta Encyclopedia* says of this time: "By the beginning of the Paleozoic Era, the steadily increasing oxygen content of the atmosphere and oceans . . . had made it possible for the marine environment to support new forms of life that could derive energy from respiration. Although life had not yet invaded dry land or the air, the seas of the Cambrian Period teemed with a great variety of marine invertebrates, including sponges, worms, bryozoans ('moss animals'), hydrozoans, brachiopods, mollusks (among them the gastropods and species ancestral to the nautilus), primitive arthropods such as the trilobite, and a few species of stalked echinoderms.

"The only plant life of the time consisted of marine algae. Because many of these new organisms were relatively large, *complex marine invertebrates* with hard shells and



skeletons of chitin or lime, they had a far better chance of fossil preservation than the soft-bodied creatures of the previous Precambrian Era" (1997, "Cambrian Period," emphasis added).

Notice that complex marine invertebrates are found in fossil deposits from the Cambrian period. Many don't realize it, but even paleontologists acknowledge that life does not start with only a few simple creatures. At the lowest levels of the geologic strata, the fossil record consists of complex creatures such as trilobites.

*Time* magazine said in a long cover story describing fossilized creatures found in Cambrian strata: "In a burst of creativity like nothing before or since, nature appears to have sketched out the blueprints for virtually the whole of the animal kingdom. This explosion of biological diversity is described by scientists as biology's Big Bang" (Madeleine Nash, "When Life Exploded," Dec. 4, 1995, p. 68).

Contrary to the assumptions of early evolutionists, life does not start with only a few rudimentary species. Even those who hold to the traditional interpretation of the fossil record admit that it begins with many life forms similar to those we find today. At the same time, they cannot explain such a vast "explosion" of life forms in such a short amount of geologic time, which evolutionary theory predicts would take far longer.

### **Unanswered Questions**

Supporters of evolution have had to back down from the claims of Darwin and others. "Over the decades, evolutionary theorists beginning with Charles Darwin have tried to argue that the appearance of multi-celled animals during the Cambrian merely seemed sudden, and in fact had been preceded by a lengthy period of evolution for which the geological record was missing. But this explanation, while it patched over a hole in an otherwise masterly theory, now seems increasingly unsatisfactory" (*Time*, p. 68).

Again, the facts etched in stone do not match the assumptions and predictions of evolutionary thought. Even if we accept the evolutionists' interpretation of the fossil record, we see life beginning at the lowest levels with complex creatures, with elaborate organs and other features-but with no known ancestors. Life does not start as predicted by evolution, with simple forms gradually changing into more-complex species.

Although toeing the evolutionary line, the *Time* magazine article admits: "Of course, understanding what made the Cambrian explosion possible doesn't address the larger question of what made it happen so fast. Here scientists delicately slide across data-thin ice, suggesting scenarios that are based on intuition rather than solid evidence" (*Time*, p. 73).

Evolutionists have been known to pointedly criticize Christians because they don't have scientific proof of miracles recorded in the Bible. Yet here is a supremely important geological event with far-reaching implications for the theory of evolution-but one for which scientists have no explanation. Of course, they must assume that life came from

nonlife-in violation of the laws of biogenesis. But don't their fundamental assumptions also amount to faith?

A reasonable explanation is that the life forms found in the Cambrian strata were created by God, who did not work by chance but by design. The fossil record is the only objective evidence we can examine to see whether evolution is true. But, rather than supporting Darwinism, it shows exceedingly complex organisms in what evolutionists interpret as the oldest fossil strata, no intermediate forms between species, little if any change in species over their entire span in the fossil record, and the sudden appearance of new life forms rather than the gradual change expected by Darwin and his followers.

If we look at the evidence objectively, we realize that the creation story in Genesis 1- describing the sudden appearance of life forms-is a credible explanation.