

IRRATIONAL NATURALISM

by Henry M. Morris*

One of the most disturbing attitudes of most evolutionists is their insistence on naturalism as the premise for explaining everything from the origin of the cosmos to the origin of the human soul. The fact is that total naturalism is quite devoid of real explanatory power for almost anything.

Except for the origin of the universe itself, the most difficult development would have to be the origin of life. Just how could non-living chemicals on the primeval earth transmute themselves into some kind of living and replicating cell?

Evolutionists will usually admit that they don't know how this happened. For example, the cosmologist Paul Davies admits their utter ignorance on this vital subject:

It's a shame that there are precious few hard facts [he might just as well have said there are none] when it comes to the origin of life. . . . Nobody knows how a mixture of lifeless chemicals spontaneously organised themselves into the first living cell.¹

Evolutionists still place great faith in the famous Miller-Urey experiments of a generation ago, which showed that some amino acids could be synthesized from hydrogen-rich ammonia, methane, and water. But amino acids are not alive,

and no one has ever generated life in a test tube. Most evolutionists have stopped trying altogether. An article in the journal *Evolution* several years ago noted that:

. . . most hypotheses about the origin of life from nonliving matter lie outside the main body of evolution theory. For example, the contents of volume 54 (2000) of *Evolution* comprise 192 primary research articles, but not one that concerns the origins of life.²

That statement could probably apply just as well to the 2001–2004 volumes.

But if the naturalistic origin of life is not part of the worldview of evolution then why do they insist that it be taught dogmatically in our schools? If the possibility of special creation or intelligent design cannot even be mentioned as a possibility (a policy on which they insist), then why cannot the tremendous odds against the naturalistic origin of life at least be mentioned?

For a long time it was believed that life arose in the primeval soup. But that idea has been largely abandoned and most evolutionists now believe life originated in the rocks and minerals of the early earth. For example, Robert Hazen, of NASA's Astrobiology Institute, in the lead article in a recent issue of the journal *Elements* says:

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In this issue of *Elements*, four of the most creative minds in origins research present their original insights on the geochemical origins of life. Each author has studied the field in depth, and each has come to an inescapable conclusion: rocks and minerals must have played a pivotal role in the transition from the blasted, prebiotic Earth to the living world we now inhabit.³

Nevertheless, Hazen has to conclude that:

Scientists are still far from understanding the ancient, intricate processes that led to the origin of life.⁴

The journal in which these studies appeared is a relatively new journal, sponsored by several important geochemical and mineralogical societies. Like the writers in most other scientific journals, these scientists are all committed to a naturalistic evolutionary origin of life, even though they all—one by one—admit they don't have a real clue as to how it happened. But they seem sure that it could not have been in the primeval soup. So it must have been in the rocks and minerals.

For example, George Cody, of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, tries to discuss certain geochemical processes which conceivably might generate organic-type reactions which could lead to primitive metabolism. For example:

Natural transition metal sulfide minerals can promote a broad range of organic reactions, either catalytically or as reaction participants.⁵

But then he says:

Whether and how this chemistry may have aided the emergence of life remains a mystery.⁶

He had already noted, in beginning his article, that:

At present there is no completely satisfactory theory for the origin of life.⁷

A number of biochemists have been suggesting for several years that the first life forms must have been RNA. James Ferris speculates on how this might have happened. But then he says:

Biochemistry is too complicated to replicate from generation to generation without a reliable mechanism to pass on genetic information. In all known lifeforms, that mechanism depends on the double-stranded molecule DNA and its close relative, the single-stranded RNA, or ribonucleic acid. But there's a catch: You need DNA to make proteins, but you need proteins to make DNA. Which came first?⁸

Despite this enigma, Ferris still believes that prebiotic reactions somehow generated RNA and that mineral and metal-ion catalysis was absolutely essential in the process. Another writer in the symposium also admits that:

. . . understanding the chemical beginnings of life poses major challenges. How could the first self-replicating and energy-supplying molecules have been assembled from simpler materials that were undoubtedly (sic) available on the early protocontinents? Most scientists abhor spontaneous generation, much less the wave of a magic wand from God or the inheritance of living organisms from outer space.

. . . The chemical steps that led to life on Earth remain a matter of intense speculation.⁹

The final article in this symposium was written by Professor Cairns-Smith of the University of Glasgow. He is believed to have been the first scientist to suggest that life arose from clay minerals (an idea

which led some progressive creationists to suggest that this would somehow confirm the Genesis record that God formed Adam from dust!) and is considered to be the prime authority in this particular field. But he is not much help in this study, mainly pointing out how complex the problem is.

For an organic chemist, it is humbling to think about bacteria because these supposedly simplest of organisms are amazingly good at *doing* organic chemistry. They can put together molecules requiring many steps in their making. Difficult, often huge molecules such as proteins are churned out, thousands of different kinds of them, each a characteristic constellation of some thousands of atoms and with every atom connected up just so.¹⁰

And just how could such phenomena get started?

Surely there must have been a prolonged or intensive evolution *through natural selection* to have brought such machinery into existence.¹¹

And *that* explains it?

The real answer is creation.


The patriarch Job said long ago that God is the key to all mysteries, “*In whose hand is the soul [or ‘life’] of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind*” (Job 12:10). With particular respect to mankind and the human body—the most complex “*living thing*” of all, the psalmist has said, “*I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well*” (Psalm 139:14). To try to explain the origin of life without acknowledging God is entirely irrational, no matter how many degrees and scientific articles a scientist can claim.

The prophet Jeremiah preached that those people of Israel who had abandoned God to worship some pagan idol ought to be deeply ashamed, “*Saying to a stock, Thou art my Father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth: . . .*” (Jeremiah 2:27).

If it is shameful to think sticks and stones can generate life, is it not just as irrational to attribute it to rocks and minerals? It was the apostle Paul who said concerning the pagan scholars who try to substitute “Nature” or some image depicting natural processes for the real Creator: “*Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools*” (Romans 1:22).

Only the Living God can create life! “*In Him was life; and the life was the light of men*” (John 1:4).

Endnotes

1. Paul Davies, “Born Lucky,” *New Scientist* (vol. 179, July 12, 2003), p. 32.
2. Michael F. Antolin and Joan M. Herbers, “Evolution’s Struggle for Existence in America’s Public Schools,” *Evolution* (vol. 55, December 2001), p. 2381.
3. Robert M. Hazen, “Genesis: Rocks, Minerals, and the Geochemical Origin of Life,” *Elements* (vol. 1, June 2005), p. 135.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 137.
5. George D. Cody, “Geochemical Connections to Primitive Metabolism,” *Elements* (vol. 1, June 2005), p. 143.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, p. 139.
8. James P. Ferris, “Mineral Catalysis and Prebiotic Synthesis: Montmorillonite-Catalyzed Formation of RNA,” *Elements* (vol. 1, June 2005), p. 146.
9. Joseph V. Smith, “Geochemical Influences on Life’s Origins and Evolution,” *Elements* (vol. 1, June 2005), p. 151.
10. A. Graham Cairns-Smith, “Sketches for a Mineral Genetic Material,” *Elements* (vol. 1, June 2005), p. 157.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 161. 

HOW DID NOAH GATHER THE ANIMALS?

by John D. Morris, Ph.D.

Bible skeptics have long raised this objection to the Flood story. How could one man and his sons travel to all corners of the globe collecting all the pairs of animals to preserve them through the coming Flood? How did he even know about them? It's a serious question and deserves a careful answer.


First, it is necessary to note that Noah was not told to gather the animals. He was commanded only to build the Ark, large enough for all the animals, and simply receive the animals when they arrived. "*And of every living thing of all flesh, . . . two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive*" (Genesis 6:19–20).

Next, we recognize that the pre-Flood geography and environment was very different from that at present. Hints in Scripture intimate a worldwide habitable climate, confirmed by warm weather plants and animals fossilized in all parts of the globe, indicating that animals were not segregated into polar and desert zones, but were represented in all areas. Animals today are able to thrive in a variety of habitats. We suspect that the recently created, more robust specimens before the Flood were even more adaptable and had no reason to isolate. Very likely, all of these areas were possibly connected as a single continent, with no mountain or ocean barriers to hinder migration. Such varied zones resulted from the Flood and did not exist before.

Third, it has been noted that essentially all land animals possess a marvelous ability to sense imminent danger and migrate to avoid it. Many are the tales of unusual animal behavior and migration to safety

in the hours before the recent Asian tsunami of December 2004. Likewise, large segments of the elk herd on Mount St. Helens all migrated to the mountain's south flank in the few days before the May 18, 1980, eruption, thus avoiding the northward directed blast. Some animals migrate yearly, but sometimes generations lapse between utilization of these migratory instincts. Often the animals knowingly migrate to areas where neither they nor their parents have ever been. Scientists rightly wonder how these skills originated. They seem to operate by a variety of mechanisms, from sun and star locations, to the magnetic field, to ocean currents, to magnetic imprinting. Understanding the operation of these abilities is mysterious enough, but where did they come from in the first place? No purely naturalistic source is satisfying.

The Flood story, however, is not merely natural, it involves the supernatural. The Creator was moving to preserve His creation. Might it not be appropriate to propose that, as the Flood was nearing, He instilled in a chosen pair of each "kind" a sense of impending doom and a desire to migrate to Noah and his Ark for preservation? All other representatives of their kind perished in the Flood, and all living representatives descended from the chosen pairs, inheriting the premonition and migration instincts.

There is no better explanation for the origin of these marvelous abilities. We can't know if this explanation is true, for the Creator hasn't told us the details. But at least there is a plausible answer. The naturalist has none. 



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