

Was Creation a Miracle?

by John D. Morris*

The Institute for Creation Research's work lies primarily in the area of scientific research and teaching, but at its core it is a Christian organization. Each staff member holds unapologetically to the Christian faith and Biblical doctrine. But many today would insist that science and faith are mutually exclusive. One involves only hard facts of nature and the other includes belief in miracles of past history. Doesn't natural science exclude supernatural events?

ICR holds to natural law, that the universe and all in it operate according to the laws of nature. We do all our study and experiments within this natural sphere, and never rely on supernatural processes to explain current events. Yet we all insist that a supernatural Creator exists, and has acted in the past.

The real issue facing the creation/evolution controversy is not do true miracles occur today but did they happen in the past, resulting in the natural world in which we live? To deny the possibility of miracles is to deny the existence of God, a claim beyond the certain knowledge of any finite being.

All natural processes today operate within the boundaries of two overarching laws, which have been verified through countless observations, and never have been violated. They have been applied in every field, and are now recognized as universal laws.

The first such law is the law of conservation, that in all processes, the components going in will be equivalent to the components coming out. They may change form, but the total mass, energy, etc. will remain the same. Nothing can be either created or destroyed.

The second law is the law of decay. The total will be the same, but the energy or usefulness of the components will be less. In any process there will be a heat loss or information loss. The *quantity* will be the same but the *quality* will decrease. Statistically it is possible for a far-from-equilibrium process to spontaneously increase in output, but a theoretical exception does not become the rule.

Consider how these laws apply in creation/evolution. The first law says that creation of something from nothing is impossible. Yet here we are! Could our origin be due to processes not observable today? The second law says all things are running down, becoming less ordered with less information present. Yet much available energy remains, and things, especially life, are information intensive. Surely present processes would never produce what we see. And, since things are only going downhill, and aren't yet at the bottom, surely they couldn't be excessively old.

All that we observe supports the Biblical doctrine that the past act of creation was a miracle, indeed. 

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DNA: A Stew-ependous Creation

by Frank Sherwin, M.A.*

Often those who prefer non-Darwinian explanations for the origin of the species are accused of being unscientific. One may *believe* in creation (or intelligent design), evolutionists maintain, but there certainly isn't any evidence for it. Ironically, it is research by the scientific community that begs to differ, revealing stunning and sophisticated features of the living world:

DNA's simple and elegant structure—the “twisted ladder,” with sugar-phosphate chains making up the “rails” and oxygen- and nitrogen-containing chemical “rungs” tenuously uniting the two halves—seems to be the work of an accomplished sculptor.

Yet the graceful, sinuous profile of the DNA double helix is the result of random chemical reactions in a simmering, primordial stew. Just how nature arrived at this molecule and its sister molecule, RNA, remains one of the greatest—and potentially unsolvable—scientific mysteries.¹

There are a number of points of note in this remarkable quote. The most obvious is that judging simply by what the secular scientist can see (Romans 1:20), DNA has all the earmarks of a Sculptor who is gifted, skilled, and clever. But then notice they deny what is “clearly seen” choosing to attribute the “graceful, sinuous profile” of DNA to “a simmering, primordial stew.” In 1952 a graduate student in Chicago attempted to emulate prebiotic conditions on a young Earth “billions of years ago.” But organic life and DNA were never “created.”² What biochemists cannot do given almost unlimited funding, time, and con-

tact with the brightest and best scientific minds in the world—a “simmering, primordial stew” can do! There have been other simulation experiments, but no one has been able to make “the sugar molecules dioxo-ribose [*sic*] and ribose necessary to build DNA and RNA molecules.”³

“Random chemical reactions” are not what any biochemist would bet on when making something as detailed as DNA, even in the fullness of time. Recent discoveries have added even more woes to the primordial stew hypothesis.⁴

If the origin of DNA/RNA continues to remain “one of the greatest—and potentially unsolvable—scientific mysteries” then the door is wide open to a supernatural explanation. Questing, unbiased scientists should be free to go down that path. Darwinists are hoping that some day a purely chemical explanation for the origin of the complex DNA molecule will miraculously appear, but that day will never come.

1. *Physorg.com*. 2006. Uncovering DNA's “sweet” secret. October 3, 2006. <http://www.physorg.com/news79110174.html>.
2. Meyer, S. Spring 1996. The origin of life, *The Intercollegiate Review* 31:26.
3. *Ibid*.
4. Kerr, R. A. October 6, 2006. Has lazy mixing spoiled the primordial stew? *Science* 6 314:36–37. 



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Fossil Political Correctness in the Sixteenth Century

by William A. Hoesch, M.S.*

The history of thinking about fossils is a study in worldviews. Conrad Gesner of Zurich (1516–1565) is considered by some the greatest naturalist of his century. His book, *On Fossil Objects*, in many ways reflects his Protestant upbringing. The fact that he lost his father in armed combat between Catholics and Protestants in 1531 reminds us that this was a time when it was *costly* to believe. Gesner's close friend growing up was none other than Heinrich Bullinger, one of the most influential Christian figures of his century. Gesner's interest in science led him to universities at a time when Renaissance humanism was the dominant worldview. In his work on fossils, his Protestant upbringing shines through in some interesting ways.

First, Gesner placed great emphasis on first-hand observation which can be seen in his detailed woodcut illustrations of fossils. In this, he broke with the Renaissance tradition of science, placing the opinions of the "Ancients" (Aristotle, etc.) above that of observation. Gesner reversed this. At the time, it was not at all obvious that marine-looking fossils found in stone far from the sea were the remains of once living organisms. Neoplatonism held that the funny fossil shapes were controlled by mysterious astral influences, and Aristotelianism attributed marine-looking fossils to the transport of "seeds" of ocean-dwelling organisms that got carried inland and grew in place after lodging in the cracks. Gesner made no effort to challenge these teachings, but in comparing side-by-side quality woodcut illustrations of living marine organisms with marine-looking fossils,

he helped to move thinking toward an organic interpretation of fossils. First-hand observation is an essential step in "taking dominion over nature" that is mandated in Scripture, and Gesner seemed to manifest this.

Second, Gesner took a peculiar delight in the study of nature. When he considered the minerals and gems which were at that time considered in the category of "fossils," he was transfixed by the thought that these were earthly reminders of the jeweled City of Jerusalem. An accomplished physician, he delighted in hiking the Swiss Alps where he sought to catalog botanicals for their potential medicinal use. It was considered odd at this time to "enjoy" nature, but Gesner is hailed by some today as the father of recreational hiking! Despite nature's fallen condition, he was able to "see" the invisible things of God and His attributes (Romans 1:20). The level of delight Gesner took in nature cannot be credited to his Neoplatonic or Aristotelian training. It is as if he saw all of nature as a divine revelation.

The considered wisdom of "the Ancients," that fossils grew in place, was ultimately an article of pagan philosophy. Gesner, and others who followed, helped to change the thinking process. Early church fathers like Tertullian actually had it right; they understood an organic origin for fossils. For them, to get the remains of marine creatures high on the hills required an unusual agency—it obviously took a global Flood! Although long forgotten, and requiring thinking big about earth history, this teaching of a global Flood would return in the seventeenth century and play a key role in returning science to a solid foundation. 

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Crisis in Crater Count Dating

by David F. Coppedge*

Dating methods are like human pyramids; they depend ultimately on the support of the bottom layer. Picture an inverted pyramid. If the bottom guy buckles under pressure, the circus act quickly turns into a dogpile. One widely used technique for estimating ages of planetary surfaces is in similar jeopardy. Its underlying assumption, unquestioned for decades, has recently been found to be seriously flawed.

Crater-count dating seems perfectly logical: the more craters, the older the landscape. It assumes, however, that impactors arrive at a roughly steady rate and produce one crater per hit. After compensating for various complicating factors, like atmospheric density, gravity, and geological activity, scientists had been confident of their time charts—until recently. New thinking about “secondary craters” has thrown this whole foundation of comparative planetary dating into disarray.

Secondary craters are those formed from the debris of an initial impact. If a sufficiently massive body hits a planet or moon, the debris cloud tossed upward will contain many pieces big enough to fall back and form more craters. Planetologists were not unaware of secondary cratering, but until recently, underestimated its significance. Now they are finding that the vast majority of craters could be secondaries. One writer in *Nature* estimated that a single large impact on Mars could generate ten million secondaries, and that 95% of the small craters on Europa could be from fallback debris.

Without a way to reliably identify secondary craters, only subjective inferences can be made about the history of a sur-

face. One might suppose secondaries could be identified by proximity to a large crater, or by similar amounts of erosion or space weathering. It’s not so simple. Some debris could go into orbit only to fall back centuries later, while other pieces could escape into space to eventually impact other bodies. Fallback debris could also cast dust over the primary craters, obscuring the relationship, or could even toss up more debris to generate additional impacts.

Believing they knew how old the earth-moon system was, and something about its geological history, scientists had plotted crater density on the moon against surface age. They applied this to Mars and other planets and moons, such that any surface could be dated by reference to the lunar standard. A pyramid was thus built on a shaky assumption. Now, awareness of the potential for single impacts to generate vast numbers of secondary craters has yanked the guy on the bottom, bringing the scheme crashing down. *Science* (May 26, 2006) reported that at a conference last March, “125 planetary scientists deadlocked” over how to apply the method, with many doubting that crater counts have anything to do with telling time. Geological dates inferred from the method could be “off by orders of magnitude.”

A brief discussion like this cannot begin to place crater formation within a Biblical timescale. A full creationist model of cratering in the solar system will require much work. There is an important lesson here, though, for all science lovers: question assumptions. 

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