

Evidence for God from the Design

The Teleological Argument



Sure Foundations

There are many ways that scholars and theologians have argued for the existence of God, but when we examine the world around us, perhaps the most conclusive argument grows from the reality of the intricacy of our universe. The argument we are about to study should give you sure footing in your faith. It should remind you that your faith is not built on emotion or blind commitment, but on the sure footing of reason and evidence. When we love God with all our minds, we honor and worship Him. Our faith is not an empty hope. It is a certain and sure reality from which hope abounds. In our last argument (the Cosmological Argument), we talked about the ridiculous and weak defenses that many of us have given when challenged to defend our faith in the existence of God. We often resort to trite sayings and clichés. One of them we discussed was this simple argument from the natural evidence:

The "Nature is Pretty" Argument

- (1) *Check out that tree. Isn't it pretty?*
- (2) *Therefore, God exists.*

Now that may sound like a silly argument on its face, but when we examine it closely, it really isn't all that crazy. When we look at the universe in its incredible glory and think about the order and structure that exists across the galaxies, we can't help but be astonished and amazed. The laws of physics, the incredible complexity and the enormity of distance, should leave us in awe and urge us to consider the possibility that a vast and powerful God must be responsible for something so marvelous. And as we look inwardly and examine the detailed complexity of the human specimen, we've got to be honest and recognize that there is more than a small possibility that an incredibly creative and powerful God is once again at work.



The Teleological Argument

As we look at the shape and nature of the universe and of all the biological life that exists here on earth, we have to come to grips with the powerful argument from the apparent design of all that we see. This argument for the presence of God is called the "teleological argument". The Greek word, "telos" means "design" and the argument was first developed by William Paley (1743 – 1805), who observed that the intricacy and detailed nature of a watch, certainly beg for the existence of a 'watch maker'. And if this reality (that the presence of intelligent design, calls for the presence of an intelligent designer), then we've got to examine the reality of an almighty designer as we try to explain the nature of the universe and all creation. The long, formal version of the argument goes something like this:

- (1) *Human Artifacts (like watches) Are Products of Intelligent Design*
- (2) *Our Universe and World Resemble Human Artifacts*
- (3) *Therefore, the Universe Is the Product of Intelligent Design*
- (4) *But the Universe is Complex and Giant in Comparison to Human Artifacts*
- (5) *Therefore, There is a Powerful and Vastly Intelligent Designer Who Created the Universe*

That's a lot to think about, so the argument is often restated in a number of ways to help make it more understandable. Another way to phrase the argument may go something like this:

- (1) Our Intelligent and Ordered Universe Demonstrates Qualities of Intelligent Design*
- (2) Therefore, There Must Be An Intelligent Designer Who Designed the Universe*
- (3) The Designer Who Exists is God*

It all comes down to this: if statement (1) is correct, then statement (3) must necessarily follow. If the universe demonstrates qualities of intelligent design, then there must be an intelligent designer. And this all-powerful being would simply have to be God. So if the first proposition turns out to be true, the case is closed and we can have confidence related to the existence of God. So let's take a look and see if the universe and our world demonstrate the characteristics of Intelligent Design. Now it seems to me that there are only two possibilities here. Either everything that we see and know has evolved on its own, or there is a designer God who has designed it all. On the one hand, everything has to either come from simple, random and accidental processes of evolution, or from the intricately complex, specific and intelligent processes of an all powerful, intelligent cosmic designer. So which is it?



Simple or Complex?

Well, let's begin by examining the evidence to see which universe really exists. Is it the simply random, accidental universe of evolution, or the complex, specific, intelligent universe of design? Charles Darwin (1809 – 1882) really changed our world in 1859 when he wrote the famous book, "On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life". He proposed that variations occur randomly within a species, and the ability to survive will depend on the species ability to adapt to its surroundings. In essence, Darwin believed that this process of natural selection (small changes to the pressures of the environment over long periods of time) accounted for the slow evolution of everything in our world, as all life progressed from simple cells to the life forms we see today.

This idea is founded on an assumption. Darwin assumed that there WAS such a thing as a simple cell. He looked through the primitive microscope of his day and observed what appeared to be a little blob of protoplasm. Looking at this, it wasn't hard to imagine that this little blob could evolve from a small assemblage of amino acids!



The Huge Assumption

See Darwin made a huge assumption, and everything that he proposed after this assumption was dependent on the hope and presence that such a simple, uncomplicated and basic entity could really exist. And Darwin was comfortable with the idea that as things get smaller, they actually get LESS complicated. He assumed this simplicity as he developed his theories of natural selection which later formed the foundation for the modern world view of evolution. Darwin believed that there existed a primordial lake with all the basic ingredients for life. This lake full of matter was energized in such a way that small changes occurred in the relationships between the elements of matter and the changes became more and more complex over time, resulting eventually in the formation of simple single cell organisms that eventually became the life we see today.

But in the many years since Darwin, our ability to look closely at the cell has grown to the point that we now know that there is NO such thing as a simple cell. In fact, as we examine cells, we realized that their complexity is incredible, and their world is incredibly small. Our modern microscopes reveal that a single thimble filled with cultured liquid can contain over 4 BILLION single cell bacteria. Each of these are like tiny machines, packed with information and complexity that Darwin could never have imagined. We now know that the simplest of cells is actually made of amino acids (the basic building blocks of life) that in turn are assembled into proteins which form the basis of all matter in the cell. It all begins with the formation of these acids and proteins. If this is a simple process of transformation and construction, then Darwin may, in fact, be right. But if it is not simple, Darwin's theory stumbles before it can ever start walking.



Amino Acids and Proteins

Darwin has to be able to explain how these truly simple amino acid chemicals, floating around in that primordial soup, can come together to form the proteins needed for building the cell. Because Proteins are actually a complex assembly of amino acids, put together in a very specific order and manner, just like a jigsaw puzzle. Each protein is shaped in a different way. While there are hundreds of thousands of proteins found in nature, they are all made up of only 20 amino acids. Each protein is a unique assemblage of some or all of these amino acids, carefully united in such a way as to form the specific shape of the particular protein. If Darwin were here today, he would have the challenge of explaining how the individual amino acids came together in just the most basic way to form the first protein. We now know that the amino acids have to come together in a specific way, like writing a sentence with letters, to form the protein. There are at least 30,000 different types of proteins that are constructed from the same 20 amino acids, just as we can make thousands of words from the 26 letters of our alphabet. If our letters are not sequenced correctly, we don't get understandable words that we can read. In a similar way, if the amino acids are not arranged correctly, they don't form functional proteins!

Now the odds of these acids coming to gather in a meaningful a specific way like this are extremely remote. It's about the equivalent of being able to randomly drop scrabble pieces and form a meaningful sentence. Imagine trying to do this. Imagine trying to throw up a handful of Scrabble pieces and hope to form just a single sentence from one of Shakespeare's plays, "to be or not to be, that is the question". What are the odds of you being able to accomplish that? If you calculate the odds mathematically, you'll discover that you have one chance in one thousand, eight hundred and ten trillion octillion. That is an incredibly small chance! Let's take a look at a simple protein, made up of say, just one hundred amino acids. The very simplest of proteins are made of this small number of acids. What are the odds of this kind of protein coming together by chance? Remember that the amino acids have to come together in just the right order or they will not adhere and become a protein! The odds of this kind of simple protein forming spontaneously by chance are less than one chance in 10 to the 65th power (that's a 1 with 65 zeros behind it)! To put this in real terms, the odds here are similar to the odds of finding the winning ticket for the state lottery lying in the street, and then finding another one on the very next day, and continuing to find a new ticket lying on the street on consecutive days for a thousand years!! Not very likely...

But calculating odds doesn't have much value for us unless we can translate that calculation

into time. And if we do that, we quickly discover that there is not enough time in the history of the universe to form even a single protein! For this simple 100 amino acid protein to form, we've got to translate the odds into time. Scientists have estimated that on a planet covered with the waters of the "primordial soup" and filled with complete sets of all 20 types of amino acids, the time necessary to assemble a simple functioning protein would be roughly equivalent to their estimated age of the universe, 15 billion years multiplied by 10 to the 60th power. In essence, there simply isn't enough time in the history of the universe to form a single protein by chance. See, it's not really as simple as Darwin first assumed. He was operating under the premise that the smallest elements of our environment had the smallest number of parts and processes. Of course, as we are better able to understand the microscopic, we recognize the incredible complexity of the miniature universe. Darwin was wrong from the outset.



God Knew About the Invisible Complexity

God has been trying to tell us that there is an entire universe at this microscopic level. Even before Darwin began his work, God was trying to tell us that he alone was responsible for the large things we observe in our environment, and the tiny invisible things that we cannot see:



Hebrews 11:3

"By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible."



Random or Specific?

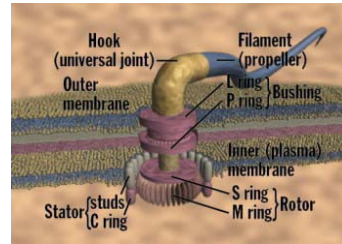
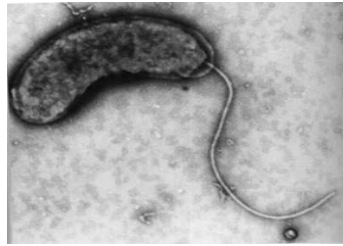
Clearly, on the issue of simplicity or complexity, the evidence leans toward a complex universe! Now let's take a look at the next required element in the argument for evolution. Is the assembly of smallest matter random or is it specifically ordered and organized in a specially required way? If random chance is not an adequate explanation of the creation of simple proteins, it is certainly not able to explain the existence of the smallest cells! Take, for example the simplest ameba cell, made up of about 2000 proteins. The odds of this kind of organism arising randomly is one chance in 10 to the 40,000th power! The odds of snatching a single specific atom out of the entire universe is only 1 in 10 to the 80th power, imagine then, how impossible it would be to form the amoeba! When Sir Fred Hoyle realized this fact, he said that the odds of random assembly are "enough to bury Darwin and the whole theory of evolution. There was no primeval soup, neither on this planet nor any other, and if the beginnings of life were not random they must therefore have been the product of purposeful intelligence." (Nature, Vol. 294, November 12, 1981)

To make matters worse, scientists have discovered that the great variety of cells in nature are very specific in their job description. They exist like members of a community, each doing a specific job for the benefit of the larger organism! As they look closely at these tiniest of cells, they realize that they have the ability to move in specific ways and accomplish certain specific functions. In fact, the more you look at the nature of cells and their role within the organism, the more you recognize their similarities with the mechanized world. These tiny cells look more and more like machines!



The Amazing Bacterium

To illustrate this observation, let's take a look at a specific single cell bacterium and examine something amazing. These bacteria have the ability to move rapidly and change direction! They are clearly very active when examined under the microscope. How do they do it? How do they move around like they do? Well, if you look very closely, you'll see that they are powered by a small 'tail' (for lack of a better word)! The bacteria use these tails (known as 'flagellum') to 'power' themselves around their environment. The flagellum spins and whips around at the rate of 200 to 1000 rpms, just like a motor propeller! These flagellum tails can change direction and tilt to speed up or decelerate the bacteria and change their direction.



The Bacteria Flagellum

Only in the very recent past have we been able to examine the flagellum under a microscope that is able to magnify the image 50,000 times. And you won't believe what we found! The flagellum IS actually a small motor, just like other motors that are designed by humans! When we look at the flagellum under magnification, we see a specific assembly of specialized parts that have been assembled in a specific way to form a motor that is then used to propel the bacterium! Now this flagellum is constructed from 40 individual parts. These parts are assembled in a meaningful way and the flagellum CANNOT function unless all the parts are present at the same time!



The Rules of Natural Selection

But the question of course is, how did these flagellum mechanisms come into being? If we are to believe they came into being as a result of natural selection, then we are going to have to explain a few things! See, natural selection argues that small changes occur over time. The first part of the motor appears in the bacterium, then thousands of years later, another part appears, then when all the parts appear, they come together to form the flagellum. But the laws of natural selection would actually work AGAINST this possibility, because Darwin argued that organisms only KEEP elements that BENEFIT the organism. Useless pieces are discarded and are NOT passed down to the next generation of the organism. So as these parts of the flagellum motor slowly appeared in the bacterium, they would have no function on their own and would have been selected OUT and eliminated if natural selection is to be believed. 30 of these parts are unique to the flagellum and don't exist in any other capacity in the bacterium. They only exist to assemble the motor, and they have to come together in a specific way and a specific order!

Just like a house that is assembled from a set of blueprints, the flagellum motor has to be assembled in a specific order, from a specific set of instructions. You can't lay the foundation for a house AFTER you've put on the roof, and there is also a specific order for the assembly of the flagellum! Let's imagine for a minute that the tail of the flagellum first appears on the

bacterium, but it shows up without all the other necessary interdependent parts of the motor. Without all 40 pieces appearing at the same time, the tail has no effective function and the bacterium just sits there, unable to move. If natural selection is correct, we wouldn't have the bacterium to look at today, because the tail would have been eliminated over time as an unnecessary element of the bacterium. No tail, no movement, no bacterium! If Darwin is right, no assembly of parts can take place over time unless each little piece of the assembly benefits the organism, but in this example of the flagellum, all 40 pieces must appear together and assembled to benefit the bacterium!



Irreducible Complexity

It's very similar to a mouse trap in which all the pieces must exist in the assembled form in order to function. Any one of the pieces on its own (the board or the pin or the spring or the wire hammer) are useless unless they work in harmony with the other pieces. There is a function MINIMUM requirement here. You cannot reduce the mousetrap beyond a certain point. There is a minimum number of pieces that must be assembled to make the trap work. It must be at least this complex to function at all. This level of reduction is called "irreducible complexity". It is the minimum point beyond which the machine cannot function! Now think again about the flagellum. It too has a minimum level. It has an irreducible complexity. It requires all 40 parts to appear at the same time, assembled in a specific way in order to work! But if this is true, then it defies the teaching of natural selection even as it was recognized by Darwin. He agreed that if there were organisms with this type of irreducible complexity, his theory was faulty:

Charles Darwin

"If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive slight modifications, my theory would break down."

Well the bacterium flagellum is just one of thousands of irreducible structures that break down the theory of natural selection. If Darwin was alive today, he would not be able to support the theory of natural selection!



The Irreducible Complexity of a Protein

Now let's take a look again at the simple protein and see how it is assembled out of amino acids. These acids have to come together in a specific way and if they do, then they begin to fold up onto themselves to form the specific shapes and clusters that we call proteins. But ask yourself the question: how do these amino acids know how to join to each other? Is there a natural attraction between the acids that acts like magnets coming together? No, it's not a matter of natural attraction like magnets at all! When scientists discovered DNA, they unlocked a powerful secret within the cell. They realized that the acids come together in response to INFORMATION and DIRECTION from the DNA molecule which exists alongside the acids and proteins! The DNA directs the assembly of the acids and provides a blueprint for the operation! And DNA is the most densely packed molecule in the known universe. It is a highly complex, highly ordered and extremely large assembly of information containing more data than the largest human library and posing a far greater problem for evolutionists to explain than the most complicated proteins!

DNA poses a dilemma. Proteins cannot form without the DNA information and direction. But

DNA is highly complex, ordered and informational. Where does it come from? As it turns out, the DNA molecule is filled with specific information that directs the assembly of the overall organism. And it is required for the protein to exist. The 'irreducible complexity' of the protein is not just a number of simple amino acid chemicals. The 'irreducible complexity' of the protein also includes the most complex known molecule in the universe: the DNA molecule. 'Irreducible complexity' of the protein demonstrates that the random forces of nature cannot explain the origin of life.



God Already Told Us

God has also been trying to tell us this from the very beginning. He tells us in scripture that the irreducible complexity of our human body is a model for the church as a whole, and by saying this, He explains the interdependence of the human organism. In essence, he explains the very reason why natural selection could never account for His creation:



1 Corinthians 12:25-26

The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don't, the parts we see and the parts we don't.



Accidental or Intelligent

Now let's look at the last piece of the puzzle. It's clear that our world is not a simple or random assembly of evolve 'parts' but is actually a complex and specifically ordered environment. But let's finish by looking at the evidence to see if all of this is the product of accident or intelligence. When we look out at the world we clearly recognize when we are seeing something that has been designed by mankind. We recognize the handiwork of men when we see it. And when look at the ancient artifacts of mankind and immediately recognize that the pyramids, the ancient goddess statues, the hieroglyphic carvings; none of these things could come about as the result of natural processes. We look at them and we recognize that they are the product of intelligent design!

Why do we recognize these things as intelligent design? Well a lo of thinking has been done about this process of identifying design when we see it in our environment, and there is a simple test to apply to the things we see in our world to determine whether or not they have been designed.

(1) Is it probable that the object could have occurred by accident?

Is it likely that the final shape of the object or organism could come about accidentally if given enough time?

(2) Is the structure of the object 'specific'?

Is it possible to recognize a similarity with other existing patterns?



Two Examples

Let's look at an example for a minute. Let's say that you walk on the beach and come across a beautiful arrangement on the sand. The ocean waves have gently pushed the sand into a variety of ripples and shapes. You might think that it is beautiful to look at, but you probably would not think that someone can along and purposefully designed and shaped the sand. If, on the other hand, you were walking on the

beach and encountered a large heart drawn on the sand with the words, “John Loves Mary”, you wouldn’t for a minute believe that this occurred naturally. You would say that someone came along and wrote the words in the sand. You would say that the words and shapes are the result of intelligent design. Why? First, you would recognize the fact that there is virtually no probability that the writing could occur as the product of natural forces. The odds are just overwhelmingly against it. Second, you would recognize that the shapes and letters match patterns that are found in other designed objects. You would see letters and shapes that you recognize from the past and from the world of designed fonts! You would conclude that the writing is the result of intelligent design.



Chance vs. Design

Imagine that you were looking at a beautiful mountain of rock. The shapes and forms are striking and the crack and crevices are immense. You could probably conclude that the forms and shapes are the product of natural forces and this is certainly reasonable. But if you were to look up at the mountain and see the faces of presidents embedded there (as in Mount Rushmore) you would have to question the possibility that natural forces could account for them. You again would conclude that the faces are the product of intelligent design! Why? Once again, you would first recognize the fact that it is highly improbable that the faces could occur by accident or as the result of some random natural process! And secondly, you would recognize that the shapes match existing patterns that are contrary to the natural formation of the rock. In this case the shapes match the designed portraits of these dead presidents!!! You would, therefore, conclude that they are the result of intelligent design.



Back to the Bacterium

Now let’s look once again at the flagellum motor. We’ve already discussed the improbability issues of ‘irreducible complexity’. It is more than unlikely that the assembly could come together as a matter of time and probability. But let’s look at the mechanism. Do we recognize patterns that exist in other designed objects? The Flagellum bears a striking resemblance to other designed motors! If we came upon an outboard boat motor sitting in the wilderness, we would know with certainty that it is the product of intelligent design, and the flagellum is no different. It displays all the same design factors that are present in the outboard motor. It too is the obvious result of intelligent design. And as we look at the entire cell, with all of its ordered and specific machinery, and observe the way in which these cellular machines operate with each other, we recognize that it is impossible for these elements to come together as the result of time and chance, and we also recognize the patterns of specificity. We recognize the fact that the cell is the product of intelligent design



God is the Intelligent Designer

God told us from the very beginning that he was the source of all the order and design that we observe in the universe. He is the majestic and powerful designer who put everything in its proper place:



Isaiah 45:18

For the LORD is God, and he created the heavens and earth and put everything in place. He made the world to be lived in, not to be a place of empty chaos.



Take a Final Look

So, let's take a final look. Is our world simple or complex? Is it random or specific? Is it accidental or intelligent? Is it the result of natural random forces or an all-powerful, creative and intelligent designer? The evidence speaks for itself. But what implications does a designed universe and the presence of an intelligent designer have for us as humans? If there is an intelligent designer responsible for all that we see, we are going to have to recognize that we are the creation of that designer, created in love and created for a purpose. God knows us personally and has a plan for our lives:



Psalms 139:13-14, 16

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made... All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

The information on this webpage is a simple consolidation of the work of some great Christian thinkers, philosophers and scientists! If you really want to hit the information from a higher level, please visit the work of Michael Behe (especially related to Intelligent Design and Irreducible Complexity) at his website [HERE!](#)