

LESSON 3A – Comparing Christian and Evolutionary Worldviews

(based on pp. 3-69)



Introduction – Where did life come from?

We all observe that life exists on this planet in incredible variety and complexity and delicate balance, but how did it get here? What are the only two options?

Empirical evidence is evidence verified by observation or experience rather than by theory or pure logic. A scientist's interpretation of empirical evidence depends on his or her worldview. A scientist with an evolutionary/agnostic/atheistic worldview will see evidence one way. A scientist with a Christian worldview will see that same evidence another way. This is not to say that *truth* is just a matter of interpretation. Empirical evidence indicates that it's impossible for simple chemical compounds to form themselves into the complex chemical compounds and building blocks needed for cellular life (i.e. proteins). Scientific observation shows that all life comes from preexisting life (the law of biogenesis). This roadblock to evolution has led many evolutionists to surmise that the first building blocks for life came to earth on asteroids or some other fantastical way. Others will conveniently skip this hurdle altogether and begin with the assumption of cellular life and all biological processes already functioning.

The difference between MACRO and MICRO evolution:

- Microevolution: subgroups of a species are either physically separated or via mutation or significant adaptations become incapable of interbreeding. However, the resulting species are still of the same kind. This means that the genetic information needed for them to adapt to their new environment was already present in their DNA. We can see this happening in real time and as Christians have no disagreements with it. It testifies to the complex information packed into God's creation.
 - Macroevolution: is the theory that over time whole new kinds of animal emerged that were genetically dissimilar from their ancestors (e.g. cold-blooded dinosaurs turning into warm-blooded birds or chimpanzee-like creatures developing into humans). This has never been seen nor proven and several genetic hurdles exist that prevent it from happening, most notably the introduction of NEW genetic information (not simply mutations) being added to an organism's genetic code.
1. Read Elizabeth's comments excerpted from pages 22-23. What phrases does she keep repeating that show she believes in evolution by faith and not by empirical data?

“I think [speciation is] a really huge question itself. If you think in a geographic sense, you could have sympatric speciation (i.e., species are slowly growing away from each other or something happens or maybe there’s an important mutation and all of the sudden there’s some group that can’t interbreed). Or Maybe there’s a change where some part of the population is mating during the day instead of the night. But then there’s also the idea that some sort of boundary comes up in between two populations, maybe a river goes through and separates these populations, so they’re split into two different pieces that can’t really cross and get to each other. ...I guess it could happen quickly... [but] it can be protracted, so scientists who try to model how speciation works take that into account: that it could be a very slow and gradual process, over several million years, but it could be faster.”

As Elizabeth said, there is no empirical evidence that supports macroevolution (one species evolving into another). On the other hand, there is no empirical evidence that contradicts the Genesis account. Before we look at specific examples, let’s compare the two worldviews.

A Comparison of Worldviews

Christian Worldview	Evolutionist/Agnostic Worldview
God, who is eternal (doesn’t change)	No god, only natural forces
God is omniscient	Knowledge is gained and refined via inquiry and experimentation and (periodically and easily) lost
God is omnipotent	None are all-powerful, if God does exist he is unable to stop evil (violence, pain, death, decay), in fact these are “good”
God is perfect in holiness	No absolute morality
God is perfect in love (cf. Exodus 34:5-6)	If God exists, he is uninvolved and unconcerned with the universe
God does all things and invests all things with purpose	Our existence is purely accidental and momentary

The God of the Bible is perfect in all of his qualities all of the time. Also, all of his qualities blend and work together completely and perfectly. The evolutionist/agnostic views God, if there is one, as only having some of these qualities some of the time to a varying degree, because, not being enlightened by the Bible (in particular human sin and God’s grace), they cannot comprehend how God can be all of these qualities at once. Let’s consider some additional differences that show how wide the gap is between these two worldviews:

Christian Worldview	Evolutionist/Agnostic Worldview
Origin of Life All things were made out of nothing in six 24-hour days by God speaking.	All things evolved from eternal primordial matter and natural forces over billions of years.
Angels All spiritual beings were created.	The existence of spiritual beings is an open question.
Demons Holy during the six days. A significant minority (“One-third”) of angels rebelled and now are demons.	The existence of spiritual beings is an open question.
Humankind Created to be like God in perfect holiness and love but now has a corrupted sinful nature.	They are highly evolved animals and continue to evolve along with society itself.
Humankind’s Purpose In joy and thankfulness to reflect God’s holiness and love back to him, to one another, and before all creation.	Find pleasure and escape pain. Be all they can be, make society as “good” as it can be, preserve nature.
Humankind’s Accountability To God.	To self, society, and/or the universe, or none at all.
Humankind’s Destiny Eternity with God through faith in Christ’s merits. Or without Christ, eternal separation from God.	Eternal nothingness; OR a “better place” becoming a spirit, a new being, or something else

- For an example of the way someone’s worldview can affect the interpretation of empirical evidence consider how some insist that the DNA similarities between all sorts of organisms supports evolution. How could a creationist look at the same DNA evidence from a different but equally plausible perspective?
- Does carbon dating provide empirical evidence that contradicts the Biblical assumption that the earth is thousands of years old instead of millions/billions of years old?

Closing Thought

Prayer

NEXT TIME: Comparing Creation and Evolutionary Worldviews (Part 2)