

The Case For A Creator

Lee Strobel makes the case for the existence of an intelligent designer
by Lee Strobel

This article is a very condensed synopsis of Lee Strobel's book - *The Case For A Creator*.

THE ISSUE: Does current scientific data support the theory that the universe was created with intelligent design?

WHAT SKEPTICS SAY: Belief in an intelligent designer is a religious theory that has no basis in science. Scientific data supports evolutionary theory, and everyone knows it.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands" (Psalms 19:1).

THE DESIGN HYPOTHESIS

"A big, fundamental question, like belief in God (or disbelief), is not settled by a single argument," said physicist-turned-theologian John Polkinghorne in *Quarks, Chaos, and Christianity*. "It's too complicated for that. What one has to do is to consider lots of different issues and see whether or not the answers one gets add up to a total picture that makes sense."

That's the approach I took in my investigation. I probed six different scientific disciplines to see whether they point toward or away from the existence of an intelligent designer.

When I opened my mind to the possibility of an explanation beyond naturalism, the theory denying any supernatural existence in the universe, I found that the design hypothesis - that says there is a purposeful, intelligent, created order to the universe - most clearly accounted for the evidence of science. Consider some of the facts from my investigation:

The Evidence of Cosmology

Thanks to scientific discoveries of the past 50 years, the ancient kalam cosmological argument has taken on a powerful and persuasive new force. As described by William Lane Craig, the argument is simple yet elegant: *First, whatever begins to exist has a cause.*

Second, the universe has a beginning. Based on the data, virtually all cosmologists now agree the universe began in the Big Bang at some specific point in the past. Craig stressed that even alternate theories for the origin of the universe require a beginning.

The conclusion then follows from the two premises: Therefore, the universe has a cause. Even once-agnostic astronomer Robert Jastrow conceded the essential elements of Christianity and modern cosmology are the same: "The chain of events leading to man commenced suddenly and sharply, at a definite moment in time, in a flash of light and energy."

The Evidence of Physics

One of the most striking discoveries of modern science has been that the laws and constants of physics unexpectedly conspire in an extraordinary way to make the universe habitable for life. For instance, said physicist-philosopher Robin Collins, gravity is fine-tuned to one part in a hundred million billion billion billion billion billion.

The cosmological constant, which represents the energy density of space, is as precise as throwing a dart from space and hitting a bull's eye just a trillionth of a trillionth of an inch in diameter on Earth. One expert said there are more than 30 physical or cosmological parameters that require precise calibration in order to produce a universe that can sustain life.

The Evidence of Astronomy

Similar to the fine tuning of physics, Earth's position in the universe and its intricately choreographed geological and chemical processes work together with exquisite efficiency to create a safe place for humans to live.

For example, astronomer Guillermo Gonzalez and science philosopher Jay Wesley Richards said it would take a star with the highly unusual properties of our sun - the right mass, the right light, the right age, the right distance, the right orbit, the right galaxy, the right location - to nurture living organisms on a circling planet. Numerous factors make our solar system and our location in the universe just right for a habitable environment.

What's more, the exceptional conditions that make life possible also happen to make our planet strangely well-suited for viewing and analyzing the universe and our environment. All of this suggest our planet may be rare, if not unique, and that the Creator wanted us to be able to explore the cosmos.

"If the universe had not been made with the most exacting precision, we could never have come into existence," said Harvard-educated astrophysicist John A. O'Keefe of NASA. "It is my view that these circumstances indicate the universe was created for man to live in."

The Evidence of Biochemistry

Darwin said, "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 absolutely break down." Biochemist Michael Behe has demonstrated exactly that through his description of "irreducibly complex" molecular machines.

These complicated, microscopic contraptions, such as cilia and bacterial flagella, are extremely unlikely to have been built piece-by-piece through Darwinian processes, because they had to be fully present in order to function. Other examples include the incredible system of transporting proteins within cells and the intricate process of blood clotting.

More than just a devastating challenge to Darwinism, these amazing biological systems which far exceed the capacity of human technology point toward a transcendent Creator. “My conclusion,” said Behe, “can be summed up in a single word: design. I say that based on science. I believe that irreducibly complex systems are strong evidence of a purposeful, intentional design by an intelligent agent.”

The Evidence of Biological Information

The six feet of DNA coiled inside of every one of our body’s one hundred trillion cells contain a four-letter chemical alphabet that spells out precise assembly instructions for all the proteins from which our bodies are made. Cambridge-educated Stephen Meyer demonstrated that no hypothesis has come close to explaining how information got into biological matter by naturalistic means.

On the contrary, he said that whenever we find a sequential arrangement that’s complex and corresponds to an independent pattern or function such as books and computer code, this kind of information is always the product of intelligence.

“Information is the hallmark of a mind,” Meyer said. “And purely from the evidence of genetics and biology, we can infer the existence of a mind that’s far greater than our own - a conscious, purposeful, rational, intelligent designer who’s amazingly creative.”

The Evidence of Consciousness

Many scientists are concluding that the laws of chemistry and physics cannot explain our experience of consciousness. Professor J.P. Moreland defined consciousness as our introspection, sensations, thoughts, emotions, desires, beliefs and free choices that make us alive and aware. The “soul” contains our consciousness and animates our body.

According to a researcher who showed that consciousness can continue after a person’s brain has stopped functioning, current scientific findings “would support the view that ‘mind,’ ‘consciousness,’ or the ‘soul’ is a separate entity from the brain.”

As Moreland said, “You can’t get something from nothing.” If the universe began with dead matter having no conscious, “how, then, do you get something totally different - consciousness, living, thinking, feeling, believing creatures - from materials that don’t have that?” But if everything started with the mind of God, he said, “we don’t have a problem with explaining the origin of our mind.”