**Is Belief In God Reasonable?**

**What The Fossil Record DOES Show (SR: Ps. 104:5-9)**

 How we view our origins makes a profound impact on our worldview and on our values. Either we come from a Creator or we are mere happenstance in a chaotic and pointless universe. Which viewpoint would YOU like to have?

 The Bible tells us that we are the reflection of God’s image, that we are incredibly valuable and loved, and that our lives have meaning and purpose. The Bible also affirms that we have a Grand Designer that is responsible for the incredible diversity and complexity of life on Earth. The number one worldview in opposition to this, the worldview taught in schools around the world, on vacations to landmarks and national parks, in textbooks, and everywhere else you can imagine, is macroevolution which denies this identity and meaning. It is dangerous and it tears people away from God every single day. It is our responsibility to resist this onslaught of Satan by equipping ourselves by the power of God (Is. 41:10-13). It’s our duty to give a reason for the hope within us (1Pet. 3:15).

 In our previous lesson, we demonstrated that the fossil record – one key source of information about the world around us – does not support the theory of macroevolution. Included in this demonstration were that the fossil record does NOT support the evolutionary timeline and expectation or the validity of alleged transitional forms (either between animals or humans). This lesson will demonstrate what the record does show.

**I. Basic Facts In The Fossil Record (Gen. 1:11f, 21, 24f)**

 A. Top-down not bottom-top – disparity precedes diversity

 1. When the Bible describes Creation, namely the creation of plants and animals, it specifies that God created things according to “kinds”. It also specifies that they would reproduce according to these “kinds”.

 2. The Hebrew word for “kinds” in this passage is מִין (Pronounced “mean”). This is a broad term. The *Outline Of Biblical Usage* explains: *“Groups of living organisms belong in the same created ‘kind’ if they have descended from the same ancestral gene pool. This does not preclude new species because this represents a partitioning of the original gene pool. Information is lost or conserved—not gained. A new species could arise when a population is isolated and inbreeding occurs. By this definition a new species is not a new ‘kind’ but a further partitioning of an existing ‘kind’.”*

 3. Examples of “kinds” that we can observe today would include: Ursids (Bears), Cannids (Dogs), Felids (Cats), Equuids (Horses). The variation among these original kinds is illustrated in different species that display different characteristics that differentiate those species from other species within kinds (miniature horse vs. a Clydesdale).

 4. So, the Bible tells us that we start with several basic and very different “kinds” that diversify through species. This would suggest a top-down pattern and it is exactly what we see in the fossil record! Evolution would expect the opposite (i.e. all from a single ancestor). (Is. 45:9f)

5. *“The course of appearance of taxa in the fossil record is top-down. What is more dramatic is that the number of phyla, which should increase by stages over long periods of time, actually decreases...Darwin’s assumptions have been literally ‘overturned’ in the fact of the fossil record, and paleontology has definitely and clearly invalidated his theory.”* (Joseph Seckbach and Richard Gordon, Divine Action and Natural Selection: Science, Faith, and Evolution, 312)

 B. Explosive origins of information and design – We see intricate body plans & genetic material unparalleled in complexity *from the beginning* (Is. 40:26).

1. *“...the principal ‘types’ seem to appear rapidly and fully equipped with the signature features of the respective new level of biological organization. No intermediate ‘grades’ or intermediate forms between different types are detectable.”* (Koonin, Eugene, “The Biological Big Bang Model for the Major Transitions in Evolution,” *Biology Direct*, 2007, 2:21.)

2. *“The animal forms that arose in the Cambrian not only did so without any clear material antecedent; they came on the scene complete with digital code, dynamically expressed integrated circuitry, and multi-layered, hierarchically organized information storage and processing systems.”* (Stephen C. Meyer, Darwin’s Doubt, 381).

3. Powerfully illustrated at the Burgess Shale in British Columbia, Canada & Maotianshan Shale near Chengjiang, China.

 C. Discontinuity & Stasis – animals exist with a form, then go extinct in the same form, with no transitions found

1. *“It is as though they [fossils] were just planted there, without any evolutionary history. Needless to say this appearance of sudden planting has delighted creationists. …Both schools of thought (Punctuationists and Gradualists) despise so-called scientific creationists equally, and both agree that the major gaps are real, that they are true imperfections in the fossil record. The only alternative explanation of the sudden appearance of so many complex animal types in the Cambrian era is divine creation and (we) both reject this alternative.”* (Dawkins, Richard, The Blind Watchmaker, 1996, pp. 229-230.)

2. *“...intelligent design also explains the observed stasis in the fossil record...Cambrian species tend to persist unchanged in their basic forms over time. Animal body plans that define the higher taxa, including classes and phyla, also remain especially stable in their basic architectural design, showing ‘no directional change’ over geological history after their first appearance in the Cambrian. As a result, the morphological disparity between distinct animal body plans remains unbridged.”* (Stephen C. Meyer, Darwin’s Doubt, 377)

**II. Soft-Tissue Preservation (unfeasible in the evolutionary timeframe)**

 A. “Dakota” (1999) – a mummified, nearly intact Hadrosaur

B. “Leonardo” (2000) – duck-billed dinosaur; 90% of skeleton covered in soft tissue

C. The “Four-Legged Tank” (2011) – Nodosaur, best preserved fossil of its kind

 D. Wooly Mammoths ranging from Mexico to Russia with soft tissue preservation

 E. “B. Rex” – In 2000, the skeleton of an adolescent T. Rex was found by Bob Harmon. The skeleton was broken up in order to be transported. One of the teams, led by Mary Higby Schweitzer, broke the thighbone and examined the inside of it. What they found has rocked the scientific community. Inside of this dinosaur bone were found blood vessels, cells, and developmental protein matrix! Rarely do these survive 1,000 years, let alone 65 million years!

 F. Kevin Anderson (Microbiologist) – Van Andel Creation Research Center – found dino bones with tissues and cells and possibly even proteins like collagen – how is that preserved?! Temperature changes, breakdown, destroys these things; triceratops horridus, August 3, 2012 – Northridge, CA found soft tissue and intact detailed cells in triceratops horn!

 G. Scientists have also been able to show that fossilization can take place in a mere 24 hours under the right circumstance (namely, heat and pressure intense enough, but not too intense so as to destroy the fossil). Fossilized hammer.

I**II. Variation And Adaptive Ability WITHIN KINDS (Gen. 1:11f, 21, 24f)**

 A. Variation & adaptation are undeniably taught in the Scriptures (Acts 17:24-31).

 B. Classic Animal Examples (True, but misapplied to justify macroevolution):

 1. Darwin’s Finches

 a. Even though Darwin studied the finches on the Galapagos Islands, he never speaks of them in his infamous work *On the Origin of Species*! They only became icons many years later by those with allegiance to materialism.

 b. There is no doubt that variation is present in the finch kind, esp. in the Galapagos Islands, but this merely illustrates adaptation.

 2. Peppered Moths

 a. Bernard Kettlewell in Birmingham, England was one of the first to study these fascinating creatures. He noticed two main variations of color within the species. One was a very light color and the other was a very dark color.

 b. Evolutionists often cite these moths as proof of macroevolution. They claim the darker version was able to thrive more because they could blend into darker birch trees, thus hiding from predatory birds. Interestingly, pictures are often staged with moths being pinned onto birch tree bark to prop up this hypothesis. In actuality, these moths typically do not rest on the bark, but rather on the underside of its leaves! (2Pet. 3:16f)

 c. If this really is why the darker moths became more prevalent, which is itself suspect, this shows adaptation, not macroevolution.

 C. Variation In Humans – Shown in the Smelser family (Scott, Bertina, Zachary); some variability in skull structures of different fossils is to be expected as it is today among clearly humans – Aborigines, Eskimos, Masai warriors; etc.);

 D. As incredible as these variations can be, they are constrained. Developmental mechanisms restrict the degree to which organisms may vary without deleterious consequences. (Chap. 13 in Darwin’s Doubt by Stephen C. Meyer)

**IV. Does Show Evidence For A Global Flood (Gen. 6-8) – Perhaps the greatest tool!**

 A. Rapid Deposition – What we’d expect from the Flood (Ken Ham, Andrew Snelling)

 1. *“The flood was an event of supreme uniqueness, and nothing like it has ever been witnessed since. The worldwide flood of Noah’s day would have significantly changed the topography and geology of the world as it was known then and may be responsible for many of the formations we see today.”* (Dr. Bo Kirkwood)

 2. Rapid deposition of plants and animals, which creates polystrate fossils. Additionally, just considering that the preservation of fossils is very difficult – weather, animals, erosion – necessitates rapid burial to explain the vast fossil beds we find preserved to the degree in which they are preserved. Graded bones also require mass devastation.

 3. Rapidly established sediment layers across continents (red sandstone, chalk beds, coal beds)

 4. Rapid erosion boundaries between sediment levels. Most significant boundary is the “Great Un-Conformity” at the granite foundations of the Earth. There are no fossils below this layer.

 5. Bent and folded sedimentary strata

 6. Waving Crossbeams On Sedimentary Layers seen in Sedona, Arizona (Steve Austin, PhD Geology and John Whitmore have illustrated these were caused by underwater sand erosion)

 B. The Nature Of The Animals Found In The Fossil Record

 1. 1st layer – shallow water invertebrate fossils; 2nd layer – amphibians; 3rd layer – reptiles; successive layers are mammals and birds

 2. The Flood began in the world’s ocean basins (fountains of the great deep broke open), that means ocean floor broke open, creating tsunamis which would have dumped shallow water invertebrates onto continents first, then suffocated fish, then amphibians, then reptiles, mammals, and birds. Not just true of animals but also of habitats!

 3. Moreover, footprints in fossil record of more mobile creatures confirms flood because they would have sensed the flood and moved to try and escape but eventually become overwhelmed. Macroevolutionists who find these tracks allege that there are millions of years between these tracks and the animals that created them!

 4. Long transport of animals and sediments.

 When you ask the right questions, you get the right answers! In this series of lessons, we have been asking the right, challenging questions. And what is the reasonable conclusion? The Bible is reliable, God does exist, and the history of our world shows an origin that confers importance and value on us (cf. Jer. 2:26-28; 2Pet. 3:3-7). The fossil record is a tool available to us to provide evidence for belief in God. In no way does it demonstrate the validity of macroevolution; rather, it unequivocally agrees with the Bible.

 We sincerely hope that if you have struggled with the seeming irreconcilability of science and God, that these lessons have clarified matters for you. You are created in the image of God but have tarnished that image because of your sins. Let the One Who created you, recreate you in His beautiful and perfect image.