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Was Charles Darwin Rational?

Evolutionists don't want you to know the real reason the father of evolution abandoned the Bible.

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- [23-10-2019](#)

Most college-educated people think the theory of evolution is *arational*, *scientific* explanation for creation. They think the Bible's account of creation is *irrational*, *faith-based religion*. They consider Charles Darwin to be the unbiased scientist who liberated people from religious superstition by allowing evidence and logic to guide his thinking.

In 2009, Harvard Professor Janet Browne urged her listeners to use the 200th anniversary of Darwin's birth to reaffirm their faith in Darwin as a "figurehead of rational science."

Every high school and college student learns Darwin's ideas concerning evolution. But few study the life of Darwin himself.

Who was Charles Darwin? What motivated him?

What you are about to read is unknown by most people, even students of biology. Evolutionists want this information kept secret!

Rejecting Genesis

Charles Darwin was born in England on Feb. 12, 1809. His father was not religious, and his grandfather, Erasmus Darwin, believed the theory of transmutation, which holds that one species transforms into another over many generations. Charles's mother was a Unitarian Christian. His parents had him baptized into the Anglican Church as a baby, and Charles's mother taught him to pray and to read the Bible. Charles accepted his mother's Unitarian beliefs as he grew up and went off to medical school.

While at the University of Edinburgh, Charles read his grandfather's theories about transmutation. He wasn't so sure about them. Erasmus Darwin had written that plants and animals could pass on features they developed during their lifetime to the next generation. He condemned religion as a psychological disease. He especially condemned the idea that unbelievers burn forever in hell.

Charles was not a good student and eventually dropped out of medical school.

His father then sent him to Cambridge University to become an Anglican priest. Here, Charles studied William Paley's *Natural Theology* and the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion by the Anglican Church. Paley directly criticized Erasmus Darwin's idea that organisms could pass on acquired characteristics to their offspring by noting that Jewish children are not born circumcised just because their fathers are circumcised. He also offered rational proof of God's existence by arguing that a creation requires a Creator, the same as a watch requires a watchmaker. Paley's book deeply impressed Charles. He later wrote, "I do not think I hardly ever admired a book more than Paley's *Natural Theology*: I could almost formerly have said it by heart." But he was not sure about the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion.

The Thirty-nine Articles stated that Jesus Christ “went down into hell” after His crucifixion. Like his grandfather, Charles hated the idea that God eternally tortures people. He thought that his grandfather might be wrong about how one kind of animal transmutes into another, but he was beginning to have doubts about a God who would eternally torture people like his grandfather in hell. (To understand what the Bible actually teaches about hell, read our free article “What Is Hell?”)

Upon graduating in 1831, one of Charles’s botany professors arranged for him to work as an unpaid naturalist on the HMS Beagle. Before the ship departed, the ship’s captain gave Darwin a copy of Charles Lyell’s *Principles of Geology*. This is when his religious beliefs really began to change.

Charles Lyell was a Scottish geologist who would later become friends with Darwin. He hated the Bible and, in his own words, wanted to free science “from the old dispensation of Moses.” Lyell’s book argued that rocks and geological formations were formed gradually by natural force over millions of years. He mocked the prevailing idea that such formations were formed in great catastrophes like Noah’s Flood.

Darwin’s mind was still grappling with doubts about what the Anglican Church taught about hell. So he began to accept some of Lyell’s arguments and reconsidered his grandfather’s ideas on transmutation.

“During these two years, I was led to think much about religion,” Darwin wrote in his autobiography. “Whilst on board the Beagle I was quite orthodox, and I remember being heartily laughed at by several of the officers (though themselves orthodox) for quoting the Bible as an unanswerable authority on some point of morality. ... But I had gradually come by this time [i.e. 1836 to 1839] to see that the Old Testament from its manifestly false history of the world, with the tower of Babel, the rainbow as a sign, etc., etc., and from its attributing to God the feelings of a revengeful tyrant, was no more to be trusted than the sacred books of the Hindoos, or the beliefs of any barbarian.”

The Bible’s first chapter, Genesis 1, states that God re-created Earth after it had become “without form and void.” This means God could have created the planet millions of years ago. Yet Darwin still used the vastness of geological time as an excuse to reject the Old Testament!

Rejecting Christianity

Even after rejecting Genesis, Darwin still believed that God created all forms of life in separate acts of creation. But as he studied finches in the Galapagos Islands, he noticed that there were different varieties of these songbirds, with each variety having a special beak enabling it to eat different types of food. As a naturalist, Darwin faced a choice. He could interpret what he saw as evidence that God created different shapes of finch beaks. Or he could interpret what he saw as evidence that finch beaks evolved over many generations to match their environment by some accidental, unguided force.

By the time he returned home, Darwin’s notebooks were filled with speculations on transmutation and musings on how the Bible was unreliable and contradictory. He decided to pursue a career in science.

He began considering marriage to his cousin, Emma Wedgwood, and his father recommended that he conceal his doubts about the Bible from his future wife. Charles ignored his father’s advice and told Emma that he believed in Christian morality, but doubted that God had a plan for mankind. He did not believe in the Old Testament, and he noted that since the New Testament cites Old Testament prophecy, it must not be true either.

More than any scientific theory about the age of rocks or the shape of bird beaks, questions about the existence of suffering, cruelty and pain fueled Darwin’s ideas.

Charles and Emma had 10 children—three died by age 10 and another three ended up unable to have children themselves. The death of his favorite daughter, Annie, had a profound effect on Charles. He attributed her sickness to inbreeding, since he and Emma were first cousins. As he began to muse on why weak organisms die, he further developed his ideas on *transmutation*—the weak die, the strong survive, and children perish because nature is cruel and God has abandoned the world.

Decades later, Charles Darwin’s great-great-grandson, Randal Keynes, would recount how profoundly Annie’s death affected Charles’s thinking about the natural world and the struggle for life.

“After Annie’s death, Charles set the Christian faith firmly behind him,” Keynes wrote in *Annie’s Box*. “He did not attend church services with the family; he walked with them to the church door, but left them to enter on their own and stood talking with the village constable or walked along the lanes around the parish. He did, though, still firmly believe in a divine Creator. But while others had faith in God’s infinite goodness, Charles found Him a shadowy, inscrutable and ruthless figure. ... Charles continued to work on the ‘laws of life,’ but was now sharply aware of the elimination of the weak as the fit survived.”

Darwin’s disillusionment with traditional Christianity had been growing for years—even before Annie died. Additionally, his father had died an “unbeliever” three years previous, leading Charles to again ponder eternal punishment. He would later write in his autobiography: “I can indeed hardly see how anyone ought to wish Christianity to be true; for if so, the plain language of the text seems to show that the men who do not believe, and this would include my father, brother and almost all my best friends, will be everlastingly punished. And this is a damnable doctrine.”

Charles Darwin, a troubled and pained individual, did indeed turn his back on the Bible. This was not because of any

scientific discovery, but because he could not understand why a loving God would allow people to suffer and eventually die, only to be eternally tortured in fire!

Rejecting God

After Annie died, Darwin finally began converting his “transmutation” notebooks into a book called *Origin of Species*. He changed “transmutation” to “evolution” since that term sounded more scientific. He claimed that one species gradually changes into another over multiple generations as the weak die and the strong survive. He called this the theory of “natural selection.” His friend Herbert Spencer called it “survival of the fittest.” This theory offered no explanation as to how new traits are created, but Darwin desperately hoped some future scientist would discover an explanation.

He did not want to believe in God.

Seven years after Darwin published *Origin of Species*, a lady wrote him to ask whether or not she could believe in both God and evolution. Charles replied: “It has always appeared to me more satisfactory to look at the immense amount of pain and suffering in this world as the inevitable result of the natural sequence of events, i.e. general laws, rather than from the direct intervention of God.”

This is why Darwin rejected the Bible. His book, *Origin of Species*, was never based on rational science. It was a stab-in-the-dark hypothesis about why pain and suffering exist.

At the end of his life, Charles said he was agnostic, someone who thinks the existence of God is unknowable. He struggled to explain how life could arise from nonliving matter. “I hardly know what to say,” he wrote to a schoolteacher in Liverpool who had asked about his views on God’s existence. “Though no evidence worth anything has yet, in my opinion, been advanced in favor of a living being being developed from inorganic matter, yet I cannot avoid believing the possibility of this will be proved some day in accordance with the law of continuity If it is ever found that life can originate on this world, the vital phenomena will come under some general law of nature. Whether the existence of a conscious God can be proved from the existence of the so-called laws of nature ... is a perplexing subject, on which I have often thought, but cannot see my way clearly.”

Almost 140 years later, no scientist has produced “evidence worth anything” showing how a living organism can develop from inorganic matter. Living things come only from other living things.

Darwin never discovered proof that one kind of animal could evolve into another. All his theories were the confused musings of a tortured man mourning the loss of his daughter and haunted by the thought that his grandfather, father, brother and friends were being everlastingly punished in hellfire!

Rejecting Rationality

Charles Darwin was a troubled and pained individual, misled by the religious leaders of his day about what the Bible says. For most of his adult life, he suffered from anxiety attacks. Heart palpitations accompanied these attacks, as did shortness of breath, vomiting, feelings of impending doom, and hysterical crying. He wrote his doctor in 1865, six years after completing *Origin of Species*, complaining that his vomiting bouts were often “preceded by ringing of ears, treading on air, and visions”

A medical debate about what was wrong with Darwin has raged for over a century. But a 1997 study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* concludes that he might never have revolutionized modern science with his theory of evolution if he had not suffered from chronic mental illness.

“Had it not been for this illness, his theory of evolution might not have become the all-consuming passion that produced *On the Origin of Species*,” wrote Thomas Barloon and Russell Noyes in their study.

This is a startling admission! The theory of evolution by means of natural selection forms the foundation of modern science. Yet there is no scientific proof of this theory. It was devised by a depressed man looking for answers to some of life’s biggest questions. Pointing out that Darwin came to the wrong conclusions is not a personal attack against him. It is important to realize, however, that intellectual atheists and promoters of evolutionary ideas claim Darwin’s beliefs are rational when they are not.

The outspoken atheist Richard Dawkins says, “Darwin gives courage to the rest of science that we shall end up understanding literally everything, springing from almost nothing—a thought extremely hard to comprehend and believe.” Yet Darwin understood almost nothing and died unsure of his own theory.

Even scientists acknowledge that Erasmus Darwin’s theory of inheritance of acquired characteristics is totally false. Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution by means of natural selection does not explain how new genetic information is created. Evolution utterly fails to explain the origin of life and the biodiversity of our world.

What evolutionists are promoting is not science. It is an *irrational* belief that life can spontaneously develop from dead matter, and that one kind of animal can change into a different kind of animal.

Without any proof or scientific knowledge whatsoever, promoters of evolutionary ideas believe what they want to believe, because they rebelliously refuse to believe the truth.

This is why the Bible proclaims, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Psalm 14:1).

Rational science is based on the undeniable fact that a rational Creator designed the universe. When you reject this undeniable fact, you reject rationality itself and start embracing foolish beliefs. In the Bible that Darwin rejected, the Apostle Paul explains how those who refused to acknowledge God become fools.

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done” (Romans 1:18-22, 28; English Standard Version).

Darwin’s faith in the Bible was weakened by a religion that claimed to teach the Bible, yet taught pagan superstitions about hell and confusion over why God allows human suffering. But once he stopped acknowledging God, he became a fool.

That is not a personal attack on Darwin or those who believe his theories. It is just a matter of fact.

Evolution is not science. It is a secular religion—a belief; a faith—based on the dogma that the strong rule the weak; only the fittest survive. By suppressing the truth, evolution has become the religion of fools!

Sidebar: The Evolutionist You Probably Haven’t Heard About

Ask almost anyone who is most responsible for the mainstreaming of evolutionary thought, and they will likely answer Charles Darwin. Yet a naturalist named Alfred Russel Wallace proposed almost exactly the same theory around the same time. His paper was presented to the Linnaean Society on July 1, 1858, the same day Darwin’s paper was presented.

Why don’t you hear more about Alfred Wallace?

Wallace was once considered a leading “expert” on the geographical distribution of animals. Unlike Darwin, who spent most of his life at home, Wallace did extensive fieldwork in the Amazon rain forest and Malay Archipelago. He had read about “transmutation” and hoped to discover proof of the idea in the jungle.

After seven years of study, he still could not think of a way one kind of animal could evolve into another. Then in February 1858, Wallace suffered a severe attack of tropical fever in the village of Dodinga on a remote Indonesian island. The fever caused him to experience visions and hallucinations about evolution. When he recovered, he believed that animals evolve “perpetually” by adapting to their environment. He wrote a paper that month and mailed it to Charles Darwin with a note asking him to show it to Charles Lyell.

Darwin had intended on waiting longer before publishing *Origin of Species*. But when he found out that Wallace had independently come to the same ideas as he had, he quickly wrote a journal article on evolution that could be presented to the Linnaean Society along with Wallace’s paper that summer.

These two papers shook the scientific world, but Wallace’s name faded into obscurity shortly after his paper’s publication. He had experimented with hypnotism in his youth, and his vivid hallucinations about evolution left him curious about spiritualism. After returning to England he started attending séances. He visited a photographer who took a “spirit photograph” of him and with the “spirit” of his long-dead mother. And he publicly defended spiritualist mediums against allegations of fraud.

Wallace’s public advocacy of spiritualism strained his relationship with Darwin and other scientists, who were afraid that Wallace was going to discredit the whole theory of evolution. You do not hear much about Wallace today because he attributed his hallucinations to spiritual intervention, while Charles Darwin attributed his own hallucinations to some undiagnosed physical ailment. Despite the differences between Darwin’s and Wallace’s hallucinations, it is particularly worth noting that *both* of these “leading experts” promoting the evolutionary concept were, in fact, hallucinating!

Sidebar: The Dangers of Intellectual Vanity

By Gerald Flurry

It should be no surprise that most scientists today reject the Creator. After all, those in Christ’s day reviled and denied the Son of God in the flesh. “And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day” (Matthew 11:23). Those in Capernaum were “exalted unto heaven,” filled with intellectual vanity. They wouldn’t even be taught by Jesus Christ! That is the problem with scholars, scientists and man in general.

“But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee” (verse 24).

Intellectual vanity is more dangerous than the sexual sins of Sodom!

Consider: Modern civilization has enormous amounts of knowledge, some of it good, some of it evil—and we find that our greatest problem today is whether or not the human race will even *survive*!

“At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes” (verse 25). God purposely keeps most scientists, intellectuals and the vast majority of mankind under a cloak of ignorance. Only the humble, teachable *few* can receive God’s truth.

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge,” God says (Hosea 4:6). This clearly isn’t referring to physical knowledge: Human beings have that in abundance. People are sorely lacking in the *knowledge of God*.

Mankind simply is not equipped to solve world problems. *Physical knowledge—good mixed with evil—isn’t enough!* We are missing the Spirit of God, which combines with the human spirit to give human beings *real* understanding, understanding that can actually begin to *solve* our evils. Without God’s Spirit, the carnal mind is naturally hateful toward God (Romans 8:7) and *unable* to solve its evils.

“But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them” (Matthew 13:16-17). Those whom God blesses with this understanding possess the only true academic freedom.

Science has only scratched the surface of the tremendous wonder that fills the universe. But a superior wonder is about to return to Earth in the personage of Jesus Christ Himself! He will cut man’s suffering short and establish God’s Kingdom. That is the vision we all should be living for.

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