

Legos and Change by John Knapp II

LEGOS AND CHANGE: What Do You Tell a Child about Evolution? And What About Intelligent Design?

Whether you're a regular reader of the Torah Class website, or not, I'll assume you have some questions about evolution...

As do I.

First, as I've often said, we must define terms. The charged word "evolution" basically means "change," and nobody disagrees that changes occur in all living things. Dog or cattle breeding provides clear examples, though an "outside hand" is involved, but, setting that aside, observe the differences that "naturally" occur among cats, dogs, and other animals that live in the wild.

By *evolution* here I mean *naturalistic evolution* which states or implies that all changes in living organisms from the simplest single-celled organisms to higher forms of life, such as the person writing these words, are solely *random (possible) events, or "accidents," involving mutation, and natural selection, that occur over long periods of time without any purposeful tinkering or guiding from any outside force*. By implication, if not directly said, no "God" or supernatural power is involved at any point.

Intelligent design, however, hypothesizes something else: Something beyond nature, or what we know from nature, must be involved. For "higher," more complex, organisms to have appeared (as they have), or for life to have first appeared

at all, there had to have been some “outside help,” or certain action that science has never explained. “The science we know demands our saying that,” they would say. (Books¹ take this much further, not our purpose here.)

Naturalistic evolutionists accept “by faith” these unknown mechanisms and processes because, for one reason, not to do so would imply interference by the supernatural. “And, of course,” say or think some, “that would be giving in to unverifiable superstition.”

Please realize that those who hypothesize Intelligent Design are not automatically saying that the God of the Bible “did it,” though ID thinking is friendly to that idea. Some who accept Intelligent Design are atheists. Why? Because they recognize that naturalistic evolutionists are assuming too much without facts. Rather, ID is the result of the honest searching of many² to recognize what science does *not* know, and may never learn, from what it does know.

But how do you explain this to children?

In the September 2010 Focus on the Family (church) Bulletin Insert³, Jennifer Walker (as part of a larger lesson) suggests this:

“Ask your child:

“• If I dump a box of LEGO pieces on the floor, what do you think the LEGOs will make? Why wouldn't they fall out in the shape of a robot?

“•If I put the LEGO blocks and the robot directions together for a few days, would I find an amazing creation? Why not? What do you need in order to make something?

“• What would you think if someone told you that everything in the world is here because all the building blocks had been dumped together? Can things be built by chance? Think of everything that exists—from a bug to an iPod to a person. Does anything exist that wasn’t made by someone?”

“That’s not fair!” A naturalistic evolutionist might say. “You’re biased and oversimplifying!”

Okay, but how might naturalistic evolutionists logically explain how life developed? Perhaps they might say something like this: “Everything began billions⁴ of years ago when all matter and energy all on its own blew out from a single point in space and eventually, but accidentally, made Earth, which *on its own* allowed the forming of simple living cells, which *on their own* after many surprises and accidents changed, and became new cells that joined other cells, which *on their own* had more surprises and accidents that eventually became us—talking about these surprises and accidents. As all this took place, of course, some of the new life that formed was better than what came before it, so it eventually replaced living things that were less fortunate.”⁵

And yes, the fossil record, from “bottom to top,” suggests that life began simple and moved toward more complexity. But the links on the chain that runs from simplest to most complex—if they exist at all—are hardly useful, at least yet, for holding real weight. “Naturalistic evolution is fact!” is far too rigid a conclusion to draw from known science. (Of course, “naturalistic” is almost always excluded, and unfairly so, from this common statement.)

So, how helpful are each of these two stories? And how fair are they?

Something to think about.

Through the years I've taught big kids and little kids, and even wrote lessons for elementary science texts⁶.

Don't hesitate to ask even little kids big questions: What does science know and not know? What's the difference between "faith" and "fact"? What's the difference between ID and naturalistic evolution? Where do we go to learn and "believe in" important things that don't come from science alone?

Don't worry about making mistakes.

You will!

But you can start kids on the road to being thinking, committed, honest adults. Putting those LEGOs in a jar and shaking them up every day for a week can be a powerful visual reminder that kids can carry with them for years, a foundation they can build upon in years to come.

¹For more on Intelligent Design, see "Resources" on my website www.johnknapp2.com for books on ID by Michael Behe, William Dembski, Jonathan Wells, and others. (This is a good list, but ends at 2005.)

²See previous endnote.

³Jennifer Walker, Focus on the Family Bulletin Insert, Sept. 2010 (Vol. 23, No. 8). The three comments preceded by bullets are by Walker.

⁴I have no problem with 13.7 billion years as the time of

the Big Bang, when God created the universe. Science has provided overwhelming support for this, and it fits well with the Genesis account of beginnings in the Bible.

⁵I wrote this. Am I being fair? If any of you naturalistic evolutionists reading this can in 100 words or less offer a better way to present to, say, 3rd graders an explanation of how modern life came to be, I would like to hear from you. (Use the forum on this website. Maybe you'll be cited in a future feature!)

⁶During the late 70s and early 80s I was one of four authors for the elementary science series, *Science: Understanding Your Environment* published by Silver Burdett.

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Winners of "Hidden Bible Puzzle"—from New Zealand, South Africa, and Indiana (USA), and NY State (USA) are cited at end of article—just beyond the endnotes...

You're not done, there's more!

Now for the "Hidden Bible Puzzle" winners: Four of you found at least half of the 66 books in the Bible (the Tanakh and B'rit Hadasha, or Old and New Testaments as known to most Christians)

Individual results:

35 found by Annette from Mpumalanga, South Africa

35 found by Eric from Indiana (USA)

35 found by Susan from New York state (not "city," she insists)

33 found by Pat R. from New Zealand

Thank you for your participation. May I encourage you to offer comments and ask questions at the forum on the website.

For those of you wondering what this is all about, let me encourage you to “dig up” the puzzle in the archives of this website.

And, if you still want more adventure, consider taking on my romance/adventure novel *EARTH IS NOT ALONE*, available at www.johnknapp2.com, www.amazon.com, or elsewhere. In a few weeks EINA will be available in eBook form for Kindles and most other eBook readers for only \$3.99. Says reviewer Grace Bridges from New Zealand (www.titletrakk.com), “Sci-fi and mystery...teen romance...the first book I’ve ever seen that truly tackles the concept of life in other worlds from within a Christian worldview.”