



Square Halo Books

Some Thoughts on the Faith Required to Believe in Evolution

It is common to hear people who believe in evolution scoff at the “faith” (meaning ignorant blind adherence to a scientifically unsupported biblical teaching) of those who believe in creation. The idea that any particular God created matter out of nothing appears to contradict the strong scientific evidence or proof that is thought to be in place supporting evolution. Many have focused on fossil records, carbon dating and other scientific methods that are understood to deny a biblical creation. There have been debates by scientists on both sides of the issue and it often seems that the choice is between the scientific truth of the majority of scientists and the faith influenced science of Christians.

It is not the intent of this article to wrestle with the various scientific arguments. Rather, the intent of this paper is to point out the level of “faith” required to believe in evolution. A major element in the theory of evolution is that with enough time and the proper conditions (chemical components, heat, light, and energy) non-organic matter can and has become single cell life and then from those modest origins developed into more complex multi-cellular organisms. In this way a path is seen to lead from non-life to simple life to apes to humans. Other paths lead to other complex animals. At first glance it may not seem that faith is required at all. What is needed is time to allow this progression to take place.

What is sometimes overlooked is that the most significant elements in the evolutionary chain must occur within a very short time. Those most critical parts of the evolutionary chain require several things to happen within years, months or even days. For evolution to be successful, it is not enough that a mutation occurs that changes an animal from one species to another. What is needed is for that event to occur twice within the reproductive lifespan of the specific species experiencing this change. If only one animal experienced this change, the new species would not be viable because it would not be able to reproduce.

To clarify, supporters of the theory of evolution sometimes point to changes within species due to mutations that allow a creature to adapt more effectively to his surroundings. So, for example, a species of moth, that originally was predominantly white when the bark of the local trees was white but now is predominately grey and matches the color of the bark on those same trees when they

changed color due to pollution, has adapted well to his environment. There are many examples of such adaptations within species and they do not conflict with either evolution or creation. Creationists do not deny that mutations occur and are perpetuated within species. What they deny is that mutations provide a path between species that lead from one creature to another more complex creature that is unable to mate with the original species but is able to mate within the new species. Evolution proposes that mutations produce changes that move a creature from species A (perhaps an ape) to species B (an early human species) that result in a superior new species that cannot mate with the original species. (If the new creature was able to mate with the old, it could be expected that the genes from the new mutant would enter the gene pool of the old and produce diversity rather than a new species distinct from the old.)

What is needed then, in the long timeline of evolution, is two simultaneous mutations to occur within the reproductive lifetime of both creatures that make them unable to mate with the original species but able to mate with each other. It should be noted that the reproductive life of a creature is normally significantly shorter than the lifespan of that creature. Suppose two animals mutated to a new species and the younger was born when the older could reproduce. If the younger animal had to age for several years before it could reproduce as is normally true for more complex creatures and if by that time the older animal was no longer fertile, that species would never perpetuate itself and so would exist only briefly with these individuals.

That appears to be a bit of a problem. For evolution to work, two similar or identical mutations must occur in compatible creatures that are of opposite genders within years of one another. That does make it a bit more difficult to believe in evolution because all the actual changes (the mutations) have to occur multiple times within a relatively short period of less than a century. But the problems with evolution have only begun. In an isolated case where the beings were elephants, the window of opportunity could be relatively large, perhaps as much as 100 years or more. Likewise, other creatures that live for a long period, such as apes or humans, could have a window of opportunity that lasted for decades. Animals or



fish or plants that have long lives could have a reproductive lifespan of many years. But in terms of evolution, the mutative path to a higher order is a process that has been thought to have credence because that process was able to take place over millions of years. It could be imagined that in a few instances two beings could receive the same species-changing mutation within 100 years of each other and that they could be of opposite genders. But there is another condition that has to be met. The newly mutated beings must live, during their reproductive lifespan, in relatively close proximity to each other and they must be able to find each other and mate during that period. It does no good if the first being is born in Italy and the second is born in Antarctica. They would never meet so that they could mate. So what is required for evolution is the following series of circumstances:

Two or more similar mutations in compatible beings

Those mutations create a new species unable to mate with the original species

The beings mutating are of opposite genders

The beings mutating are both fertile

The mutations do not damage the beings (some mutations result in genetic diseases)

The mutations occur within a period where the reproductive lifespan of the creatures overlaps

The mutated beings are in relatively close physical proximity

There is sufficient mutual attraction that the beings mate

The mating successfully results in progeny (clearly not all fertile people who mate have progeny the first several times they mate)

The mutated beings must successfully raise their progeny to an age where they can reproduce (the pandas in the Washington zoo demonstrate that this is not always true)

The children of the mutated beings must be able to mate with one another without any negative implications (recessive damaging genes, etc)

This process must be true for every animal, insect and plant species that exists in its current form due to a process of change through mutation called evolution.

It may appear that it requires a great deal of faith to believe that non-living chemicals and energy over a long time have led to the explosion of life seen in thousands of species, each of which has come into being by meeting the requirements described above. However, even more faith is required. Plants normally do not move. That makes it potentially more difficult for plant mutations to lead to many new species. Additionally, much of the discussion above assumed higher order animals. The change process is even more challenging when lower orders of life, having very brief reproductive lifespans are considered.

There is a species of butterfly whose entire reproductive lifespan is ten days. It attracts a mate by giving off an odor that another butterfly of an opposite sex can sense as long as it is within one mile of the odor generating butterfly. If the same criteria are applied to this butterfly, it does not appear very likely that it would exist. The likelihood of two butterflies of this mutated species being born of opposite genders, within ten days of each other and within approximately a mile of each other would seem almost impossible. It is not entirely impossible. It simply requires a great deal of faith in the view that requires this highly unlikely event to occur. While not every species requires all of these requirements to be met within such a small window of time, all species do require all of these requirements to be met within some short period for evolution to be correct. Annual flowers live only one year. The compatible mutation would have to occur in the same year for two compatible plants in close proximity. Many insects live only one year, they too would need to have all the criteria above met within a one year period. The incredible diversity of nature would tend to deny the possibility that evolution could be true. How many species exist within the insect kingdom? How many among birds? How many reptiles and mammals and other animals? How many species of fish are there? All of these species are believed to come from non-organic sources and to have mutated to their current form. Yet to have evolved to their current form, each mutation to a new species requires that the new species originated as a pair of genetically compatible beings, who are fertile, of different genders, who live within close proximity of one another, within the period that both creatures are able to reproduce.

It may seem that evolution has a problem, but the case has not yet been fully made. The mutations that have led to the current diversity of creatures did not proceed directly from the single celled creatures that first were called life to the animals or plants or



insects currently living. There have been many steps in the process from single celled creatures to multi-celled creatures to forms of life having simple internal organs to more complex creatures eventually resulting in the forms of life seen today. Each step of this process had to satisfy the requirements above. Very simple creatures might not have distinct genders or might be able to change genders but all of the other criteria apply. There would literally have to be thousands of preceding mutations to come to the place where the predecessors of that butterfly were ready to mutate one final time into the insect in its current form. The same is true for every species of insect, animal and plant. That means that many millions of species-modifying mutations would have to occur for evolution to be true. That is in addition to the many non-successful and non-species changing mutations that would occur. The simpler forms of life do not normally live as long as more complex forms of life. There would have to be many instances where the reproductive window of opportunity for creatures on the lower rungs of the evolutionary ladder would be quite short. Yet to believe in evolution one must be prepared to propose millions of species changing mutations a small percentage of which meet the criteria above. It appears that most such changes are not successfully propagated for one reason or another. Evolutionary faith requires belief in thousands of species being the product of millions of species changing mutations with the majority of those mutations not being successfully passed on. But for this to be true it would have to be expected that within recorded human history there would be many species upgraded through mutation to a higher level. This is not what is observed in nature.

Ultimately it comes down to faith. As preposterous as it seems, many people will accept that all of the millions of mutations required by the theory of evolution occurred and met the criteria above. They will believe that it is reasonable that there is a pattern of creatures changing from simple forms to more complex forms. This appears to be counter-intuitive in light of the scientific views that suggest things by nature tend to become more random and disordered. It appears that it requires less faith to believe that there is a God who has the power and desire to create widely diverse groups of creatures. Yet if someone chooses to believe that thousands of species resulted from millions of identical mutations to 2 or more compatible creatures, within the reproductive lifespan of all those creatures, where they were fertile, geographically close and of opposite sexes and met all the other criteria above, God bless them. They have more faith than me.