

# **Scientific Apologetics – Lesson 1**

**Romans 1:20** “For since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead so that they are without excuse.”

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- I. **Christian Roots of the Scientific Revolution**
  - a. Founding fathers of scientific disciplines
  - b. James Clerk Maxwell (Psalm 111:2) “Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them.”
  - c. Johannes Kepler (“thinking God’s thoughts after Him”)
- II. **The Rise of Scientific Naturalism**
  - a. Reliance on sensory experience to gain knowledge about nature
  - b. Nature viewed as all that there is – (immaterial realities / intelligent causes no longer allowed)
  - c. Richard Lewontin quote
- III. **The recent Intelligent Design (ID) Movement**
  - a. Scientific discoveries have been exposing naturalistic explanations as very inadequate
  - b. ID methodology – attempt to make “inferences to the best explanation” based on scientific data
  - c. Some of the prominent spokespersons among ID scientists and philosophers
  - d. Stephen Meyer – Director of the Center for Science and Culture at Discovery Institute
    - i. **The biological information problem**
      1. DNA is a digital or alphabetic code conveying information
      2. Cells are not what Darwin thought – they are automated microscopic factories that use digital code in DNA to store, transmit, and process information to make proteins
      3. In our uniform and repeated experience such language systems and information come only from minds – specified complexity doesn’t derive from chemistry/physics
      4. This shouldn’t be considered unscientific (SETI, archaeology, etc. – intelligent causes must be considered / not just natural causes)
      5. A purposeful design or *teleological argument* for God follows logically
    - ii. **The realization by science that the universe had a beginning (matter is not eternal)**
      1. Scientists coming into the 20<sup>th</sup> century expected to confirm the universe (space, matter, and time) were eternal and had no need of explanation
      2. Evidence has mounted that contradicts this expectation – most everyone accepts that the universe had a beginning now (there are differences on “how” that beginning occurred but no question that there was a beginning)
      3. The philosophical implications of the fact that nature began to exist are big
      4. A version of the *cosmological argument* for the existence of God follows logically
    - iii. **The fine tuning of the universe (“Goldilocks” principle)**
      1. Physical parameters of the universe at all levels are fine-tuned or “just right” for life
      2. Physicists have noted the implausibility of sustaining a universe, elements, basic chemistry, and life if any of a number of parameters varied much at all
      3. Examples – gravity, Saturn and Jupiter in our solar system; solar eclipse, etc.
      4. What is the impact of the ID challenges? What alternative explanations are given?
- IV. **A problem with ID methodology** – “Inference to the best explanation” from scientific data is limited
- V. **Distinction between operational/experimental science and historical/forensic science**

## **Resources:**

Our book room has some *Illustra Media* and Intelligent Design DVDs for checkout (or use YouTube)

Phillip E. Johnson Books (*Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds*, *The Wedge of Truth*, *Darwin on Trial*)