

The Intelligent Design Movement

Does the identity of the Creator really matter?

by Dr. Georgia Purdom on May 2, 2006; last featured November 21, 2006
Featured in *Answers Magazine*

The Intelligent Design (ID) movement has gained increasing recognition and publicity over the last several years at both local and national levels. It is especially well-known in educational realms, where it has been heralded as an alternative to Darwinism/naturalism.

The definition of ID can be best summarized as a theory that holds that “certain features” of living and nonliving things were designed by an “intelligent cause” as opposed to being formed through natural causes.¹ The ID concept does not name the intelligent cause, nor does it claim that everything is designed, thus allowing for evolution/natural causes to play a role.

The historical roots of the ID movement lie in the natural theology movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The current movement, however, uses more than just philosophical arguments for a designer; it uses scientific evidences drawn from biology, chemistry and physics.

ID uses irreducible complexity² (meaning that for something to function, it still requires a certain number of parts), to infer that living and nonliving things have been designed. Some examples are the biochemistry of vision and the mammalian blood-clotting pathway.³ These biological pathways consist of many factors, and all the factors are necessary for the pathway to function properly. ⁴ Thus, evolution—which works via the mechanism of small, gradual steps and keeping only that which is immediately functional—could not have formed these pathways. Evolution is goalless and purposeless; therefore, it does not keep the leftovers.

The question of whether or not a feature of a living organism displays irreducible complexity is answered by using what is called an “explanatory filter.” The filter has three modes of explanation:

1. Necessity: Did it have to happen?
2. Chance: Did it happen by accident?
3. Design: Did an intelligent agent cause it to happen?⁵

This is a very logical, common-sense approach used by individuals every day to deduce cause and effect. A feature of the universe or a living organism must be designed if the first two modes of explanation are answered as no.⁶

William Dembski states, “ID is three things: a scientific research program that investigates the effects of intelligent causes; an intellectual movement that challenges Darwinism and its naturalistic legacy; and a way of understanding divine action.”⁷ The ID theory focuses on what is designed rather than answering the questions of who, when, why, and how. Those within the movement believe this promotes scientific endeavor by looking for function and purpose in those things that are designed; whereas an evolutionary mindset presupposes waste and purposelessness and aborts further scientific investigation.

Positives and Problems with ID

The ID movement does have several positives. ID may serve as a useful tool in preliminary discussions about God and creation to gain an audience that might be turned off at the mention of the Bible.⁸ Since the movement is very careful not to associate itself with Christianity or any formal religion, some think it will stand a better chance of gaining acceptance as an alternative to Darwinism in the schools.⁹ The movement has produced many resources which support the biblical creationist viewpoint.¹⁰ It makes clear that Darwinism/naturalism is based on the presupposition that the supernatural does not exist, thus affecting the way one interprets the scientific evidence.¹¹

However, the major problem with the ID movement is a divorce of the Creator from creation. The Creator and His creation cannot be separated; they reflect on each other.

In today's culture, many are attracted to the ID movement because they can decide for themselves who the creator is—a Great Spirit, Brahman, Allah, God, etc. The current movement focuses more on what is designed, rather than who designed it. Thus, leaders in the movement do not have problems with accepting an old age for the earth or allowing evolution to play a vital role once the designer formed the basics of life.

Proponents of ID fail to understand that a belief in long ages for the earth formed the foundation of Darwinism.¹² If God's Word is not true concerning the age of the earth, then maybe it's not true concerning other events of the Creation Week; and maybe God was not a necessary part of the equation for life after all.

Without the framework of the Bible and the understanding that evil entered the world through man's actions (*Genesis 3*), God appears sloppy and incompetent. People ask why God is unable to prevent evil from thwarting His plans, resulting in such poor design, instead of understanding that because of the Fall there is now a cursed design.

God's role as Creator is foundational to His role as Redeemer.

In addition, because the ID movement does not acknowledge God as Redeemer, there seems to be no final solution for the evil in this world; and by all appearances it will continue to reign supreme. However, when trusting the Bible as opposed to neglecting it, we read that Jesus clearly conquered death with the Resurrection (*Romans 6:3–10*) and that one day death will no longer reign (*Revelation 21:4*). Again, the Creator and the creation reflect on each other.

Romans 1:20 states that all men know about God through His creation. However, recognizing that there is a designer is only the first step. *Colossians 1:15–20* and *2 Peter 3:3–6* demonstrate how God's role as Creator and Redeemer are inexorably intertwined. Again, God's role as Creator is foundational to His role as Redeemer. Recognizing a designer is not enough to be saved; submitting to the Redeemer is also necessary.

The Creator and His creation cannot be separated; therefore, knowledge of God must come through both general revelation (nature) and special revelation (the Bible). The theologian Louis Berkhof said, "... since the entrance of sin into the world, man can gather true knowledge about God from His general revelation only if he studies it in the light of Scripture."¹³ It is only then that the entire truth about God and what is seen around us can be fully understood and used to help people understand the bad news in Genesis and the good news of Jesus Christ.

Is the Intelligent Design Movement Christian?

by Dr. Georgia Purdom on May 6, 2010
Featured in *The New Answers Book 2*

Intelligent design can be defined as a theory that holds that “certain features” of living things were designed by an “intelligent cause” as opposed to being formed through purely natural means.

This chapter, adapted from the book *War of the Worldviews*, was graciously provided at no charge to Answers in Genesis by Master Books, a division of New Leaf Press (Green Forest, Arkansas).

One player in the “war of the worldviews” is the intelligent design movement. ID has gained increasing recognition and publicity over the last several years at both local and national levels. It is especially well known in educational circles, where it has been heralded as an alternative to Darwinism/naturalism.

Intelligent design can be defined as a theory that holds that “certain features” of living things were designed by an “intelligent cause” as opposed to being formed through purely natural means.¹ The ID theory does not name the intelligent cause, and it does not claim that everything is designed, thus allowing for evolution/natural causes to play a role.

The historical roots of the ID movement lie in the natural theology movement of the 18th and 19th centuries. William Paley (1743–1805) reasoned that if one walked across a field and came upon a watch, the assumption would be that there had to be a watchmaker—the complexity and purpose of the watch points to the fact that it is not the result of undirected, unintelligent causes, but the product of a designer.² Natural theology sought to support the existence of God through nature (general revelation) apart from the Bible (special revelation), since the Bible was facing much criticism at that time. The scientific knowledge of that time was grossly deficient, and it was thought that natural causes were sufficient to bring everything into existence.

In the last 100 years or so, there has been an explosion of knowledge about the complexity of cells, DNA, and microorganisms. Thus, the need for a designer has become even greater. The current ID movement has more than just philosophical arguments for a designer; it uses scientific evidence drawn from biology, chemistry, and physics.

Irreducible Complexity

The ID concept affirms that living things are designed and exhibit *irreducible complexity*. Some examples are the biochemistry of vision and the mammalian blood-clotting pathway. These biological pathways consist of many factors, and *all* the factors are necessary for the pathway to function properly. Thus, evolution (which works via the mechanism of small, gradual steps that keep only that which is immediately functional) could not have formed these pathways. For example, if only three of the blood-clotting factors (there are many factors in the complete pathway) were formed in an organism, blood would not clot, and thus the factors would not be kept because they are not currently useful to the organism. Evolutionary processes do not allow the organism to keep the three factors in the hopes that one day the rest of the blood-clotting factors will form. Evolution is goalless and purposeless; therefore, it does not keep the leftovers.

The question of whether a feature of a living organism displays design can be answered by using what is called an explanatory filter. The filter has three levels of explanation:

- 1- Necessity—did it have to happen?
- 2- Chance—did it happen by accident?
- 3- Design—did an intelligent agent cause it to happen?

This is a very logical, common-sense approach used by individuals every day to deduce cause and effect. For example, consider the scenario of a woman falling:

1. Did she have to fall? No, but she did.
2. Was it an accident?
3. Or was she pushed?

If we apply this explanatory filter to living organisms, a feature must be designed if the first two answers are no.

Let us evaluate the blood-clotting pathway with respect to these three questions:

1. The blood-clotting pathway is compatible with, but not required by, the natural laws of biology and chemistry; so it is not a necessity specified by natural phenomena.
2. It is complex because it is composed of many factors, thus the remote probability that it happened by chance. (Note that complex structures fall into two categories: ordered complexity and specified complexity. A snowflake, although complex structurally, has little information and thus is considered an example of ordered complexity. It is the direct result of natural phenomena rather than intelligent design³).
3. The blood-clotting pathway does show design, referred to as specified complexity, because it is complex and has a high amount of information. It is the direct result of an intelligent agent. All the factors must be present and interact with each other in a specified manner in order for the pathway to be functional. Thus, the blood-clotting pathway meets all the requirements for irreducible complexity, and so must be designed.

What the ID Movement Is and Is Not

William Dembski states, “ID is three things: a scientific research program that investigates the effects of intelligent causes; an intellectual movement that challenges Darwinism and its naturalistic legacy; and a way of understanding divine action.”⁴ The ID theory focuses on what is designed rather than answering the questions of who, when, why, and how. Those within the movement believe this promotes scientific endeavor by looking for function and purpose in those things that are designed, whereas an evolutionary mindset presupposes waste and purposelessness and aborts further scientific thinking. Although it may be a way of understanding divine action outside of a biblical framework, there are some serious implications for the Creator, which we will discuss later.

The ID movement does not speak to the optimality of design because it does not attempt to explain all designs. Remember, only “certain features” are designed, and evolutionary processes are not ruled out. The ID movement also claims not to be religiously motivated. It focuses not on the whom but on the what. This may sound very appealing at first glance. Some biblical creationists believe that the ID movement’s tolerance and acceptance of a wide range of beliefs about the supernatural could be useful in reaching a larger audience. Since the movement is very careful not to associate itself with Christianity or any formal religion, some think it will stand a better chance of gaining acceptance as an alternative to Darwinism in the schools, because it does not violate the so-called separation of church and state.

The ID movement does have several positives. The movement has produced many resources, including books and multimedia, that support the biblical creationist viewpoint. It makes clear that Darwinism/naturalism is based on the presupposition that the supernatural does not exist, thus affecting the way one interprets the scientific evidence. ID is based on the presupposition that the supernatural does exist.

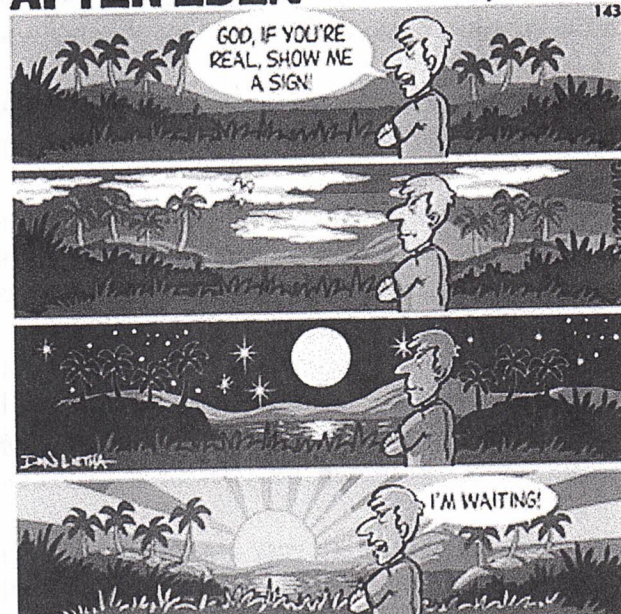
AFTER EDEN

by Dan Lietha



AFTER EDEN

by Dan Lietha



For since the creation of the world God's invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. Romans 1:20

ID may serve as a useful tool in *preliminary* discussions about God and creation to gain an audience that might be turned off at the mention of the Bible. However, in further discussions, the Bible as the biblical creationists' foundation should be primary.⁵

However, the central problem with the ID movement is a divorce of the Creator from creation. The Creator and His creation cannot be separated; they reflect on each other. All other problems within the movement stem from this one.

Those within the ID movement claim their science is neutral. However, science is not neutral because it works with hypotheses based on beliefs or presuppositions. It is ironic that ID adherents refuse to see this about their own science, considering that they claim the problem with Darwinism is the presupposition that nothing supernatural exists. All scientists approach their work with presuppositions. The question is whether those beliefs are rooted in man's fallible ideas about the past or rooted in the infallible Word of God, the Bible.

The natural theology movement of the 1800s failed because it did not answer the next logical question: if it is designed, then who designed it? Although most within this movement claimed that design pointed to the God of the Bible, by divorcing general revelation (nature) from special revelation (the Bible), they opened the door to other conclusions. Deism (another movement of the same period) took the idea of excluding the Bible to the extreme and said God can only be known through nature and human reason, and that faith and revelation do not exist.

Many are attracted to the ID movement because they can decide for themselves who the creator is.

In today's culture, many are attracted to the ID movement because they can decide for themselves who the creator is—a Great Spirit, Brahman, Allah, God, etc. The current movement does not have unity on the naming of the creator and focuses more on what is designed. Thus, adherents do not oppose an old age for the earth and allow evolution to play a vital role once the designer formed the basics of life. They fail to understand that a belief in long ages for the earth formed the foundation of Darwinism.

If God's Word is not true concerning the age of the earth, then maybe it's not true concerning other events of the creation week, and maybe God was not a necessary part of the equation for life after all.

The ID movement's belief in evolution also allows them to distance themselves from the problem of evil in the natural world. Examples of this include pathogenic microbes, carnivorous animals, disease, and death.

Without the framework of the Bible and the understanding that evil entered the world through man's actions (*Genesis 3*), God appears sloppy and incompetent, if not downright vicious. People ask why God is unable to prevent evil from thwarting His plans, resulting in such poor design, instead of understanding that because of the Fall there is now a "cursed" design. In addition, because the ID movement does not acknowledge God as Redeemer, there seems to be no final solution for the evil in this world, and by all appearances evil will continue to reign supreme. However, when we trust the Bible, we read that Jesus clearly conquered death by His Resurrection (*Romans 6:3-10*) and one day death will no longer reign (*Revelation 21:4*). Again, the Creator and His creation cannot be separated.

The attributes of God are very important when resolving apparent discrepancies in His creation. For example, according to the Bible, the earth is around 6,000 years old. However, starlight can be seen from stars millions of light years away. Also, according to the Bible, God does not lie. Therefore, we must lack some information that would resolve this apparent discrepancy. (Some good research has been done on this issue, and there are several plausible solutions.⁶)

Our Creator and Redeemer

Romans 1:20 states that all men know about God through His creation. However, just recognizing that there is a designer is only the first step. *Colossians 1:15-20* and *2 Peter 3:3-6* point to the inexorable link between God's role as Creator *and* Redeemer. In *Colossians*, Paul talks about God as Creator and moves seamlessly to His role as Redeemer. Paul sees creation as a foundation for redemption. In *1 Peter*, Peter states that people started disbelieving in the second coming of Christ because they started doubting God's role as Creator. Again, God's role as Creator becomes foundational to His role as Redeemer. Recognizing a designer is not enough to be saved; submitting to the Redeemer is also necessary. While some might consider ID to be a noble attempt to counter the evolutionary indoctrination of our culture, it falls far short of a thoroughly biblical response.

We must not separate the creation from its Creator; knowledge of God must come through both general revelation (nature) and special revelation (the Bible). The theologian Louis Berkhof said, "Since the entrance of sin into the world, man can gather true knowledge about God from His general revelation only if he studies it in the light of Scripture."⁷ It is only then that the *entire* truth about God and what is seen around us can be fully understood and used to help people understand the bad news in *Genesis* and the good news of Jesus Christ.

THE TRANSMISSION OF THE BIBLE

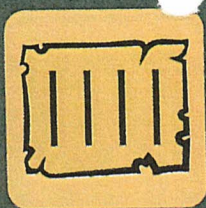
The transmission of the Bible refers to the manual copying of the Scriptures into the same language (Hebrew or Greek) they were originally written. This process was conducted by different groups of scribes in various geographical locations over hundreds of years. The process yielded thousands of Old and New Testament manuscripts that scholars use today to reconstruct the original Bible.



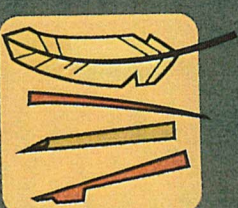
ANCIENT MATERIALS OF TRANSMISSION



CLAY—Artifacts reveal that writing occurred in ancient Sumer by 3500 BC by making impressions with a stylus on moist clay. This method of transmission extended to the biblical prophets to record their books (Jeremiah 17:1; Ezekiel 4:1).

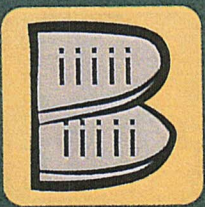


LEATHER—The more common method of treated animal skin (not pig) was used to ensure longevity and practical transport (Jeremiah 36:23). Durable vellum (calves' antelope, used after 200 BC) or parchment (sheep/goats; 2 Timothy 4:13) were the popular choices for transmitting the Scriptures for over 1,000 years. The *Codex Vaticanus* and *Codex Sinaiticus* are examples of vellum Scriptures (AD 325–350).

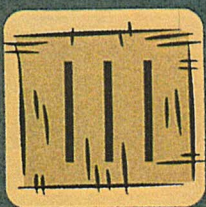


WRITING IMPLEMENTS

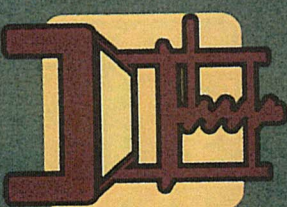
Ancient writing implements were available to all the writers of the Bible. These include a stylus for clay and wax tablets, chisel (or iron pen) for writing on stone, and beveled wooden styluses or turkey feathers were used for writing on papyrus and animal skins. The ink was held in an ink horn that the stylus or feather



STONE—Portions of the Old Testament Scriptures were chiseled on hard surfaces, such as the law (Deuteronomy 27:2–3; Job 19:24) and the Ten Commandments (Exodus 32:15–16).



PAPYRUS—Papyrus was an organic plant that flourished in Egypt by 2100 BC. The material from this plant was processed into paper and served as a common writing surface for the early New Testament transmission process (2 John 12; Revelation 5:1). Because papyrus manuscripts are derived from the plant, they are highly perishable. The oldest New Testament fragment (John Rylands Fragment/P52), a portion of the Gospel of John (John 18), is written on papyrus and dates from AD 117–135.



PRINTING PRESS

—By 1455, the Latin Vulgate was printed on paper using a moveable-type press invented by Johannes Gutenberg.

PERIODS OF TRANSMISSION

OLD TESTAMENT

Talmudic Period
(ca. 5th century BC–5th century AD)

- Sopherim (counterscribes)—5th century BC–3rd century BC
- Zugoth (scribe pairs)—3rd century BC–1st century AD
- Tannaim (teachers)—1st century AD–5th century AD

Masoretic Period
(5th century AD–10th century AD)

- Masora means “traditions”
- Extremely careful and reverent copiers
- Added punctuation and vowel points to the text

NEW TESTAMENT

- AD 100–300: This period of persecution, thus fewer manuscripts rely mostly on lectionaries and fragments written in uncial (majuscules).

- AD 300–500: As persecution of manuscripts exploded, papyrus and parchment.

- AD 60–1000: As the church lectured and copied the Scriptures.

- AD 1000–1400: As the Vulgate East and Europe, copied in Greek script (minuscules).

- AD 1400–1600: Though still produced during this popular mode of production, the Gutenberg Bible in 1455

BIBLE

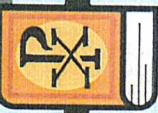
MOST SUPPORTED ANCIENT BOOK OF ALL TIME

PRODUCT

After 3,500 years of transmission, our Bibles today have more than 5,000 editions. The New Testament forms and language established the Bible world, offering readability and offering today's

TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE

For centuries, translators have endeavored to make the Bible available in various languages. Through today, Bible translators have rendered the Scriptures in nearly 3,000 different languages.



Latin Vulgate

In AD 382, Jerome began translating the Bible into Latin and finished by AD 405. This Bible was adopted by the Roman Catholic Church for the next 1,000 years.



Early Coptic, Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic

From AD 200-500, early translations in the Egyptian (Coptic), Latin, Syriac (Aramaic Peshitta), and Ethiopic languages were completed.



Wycliffe Bible

Early partial English translations were produced in Britain by Caedmon, Bede, Alfred the Great, and Aldred. John Wycliffe translated the whole Bible from Latin into English by AD 1382.



Tyndale Bible

William Tyndale translated, from the original languages, the complete New Testament in AD 1525 and part of the Old Testament by AD 1535.



King James Bible

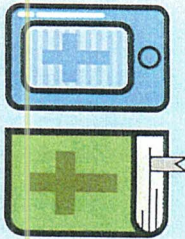
At the request of John Reynolds at the Hampton Court Conference in AD 1604, King James I of England enlisted Richard Bancroft to supervise dozens of scholars, divided into teams, to begin a major translation of the Old and New Testaments in English. The project was completed in AD 1611.

TYPES OF TRANSLATIONS

LITERAL TRANSLATION — Word-for-word translation that attempts to stay as close as possible to the biblical text (e.g., NASB).

DYNAMIC EQUIVALENCE — Thought-for-thought translation that modernizes the words and grammar from the biblical text for contemporary readers (e.g., NIV).

FREE TRANSLATION — Paraphrase of sentences and ideas to achieve readability rather than being bound to the original text (e.g., The Message, The Living Bible).

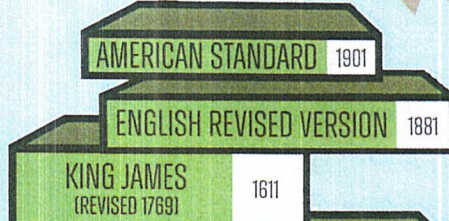
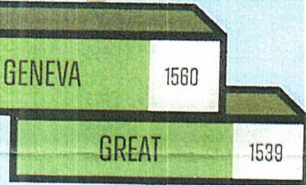
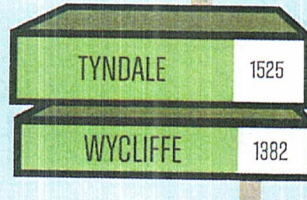


2004

MODERN ENGLISH

1952

HOLMAN	2004
MESSAGE	2002
ESV	2001
NLT	1996
CEV	1995
REB	1992
NRSV	1989-90
NKJV	1982
NIV	1978-84
GNB/TEV	1976
LIVING	1971
NASB	1971
NEB	1970
NAB	1970
JERUSALEM	1966
AMPLIFIED	1965
BERKELEY MLB	1959
RSV	1952



SEA SCROLLS (DISCOVERED 1947 AND FOLLOWING)

MOST WIDELY SOLD IN USA
NIV, NLT, NKJV, ESV, HOLMAN

FIRST BIBLE TAKEN TO AMERICA
GENEVA

FIRST ENGLISH BIBLE PRINTED IN USA
KJV PRINTED BY ROBERT ANKEN, 1782