

## Spontaneous Generation

### Commentary for September 21, 2010 — Return of a Discredited Theory

The theory of “spontaneous generation” is being defended and promoted by eminent physicist Stephen Hawking<sup>1</sup> and coauthor Leonard Mlodinow in their new book *The Grand Design: New Answers to the Ultimate Questions of Life*. However, Hawking’s concept of the universe is more expansive than most such cosmological origins. Hawking wrote an explanatory review of the book on Amazon.com:

**“We question the conventional concept of reality, posing instead a ‘model-dependent’ theory of reality. We discuss how the laws of our particular universe are extraordinarily finely tuned so as to allow for our existence, and show why quantum theory predicts the multiverse — the idea that ours is just one of many universes that appeared spontaneously out of nothing, each with different laws of nature.”**

• [Stephen Hawking on The Grand Design](#)

Within Dr. Martin’s presentation “[Figures of Speech and Holy Scripture](#)” I wrote an “Addendum: ‘Congratulations, You’re Walking Dirt’” where I pointed out that popular and respected physicist Carl Sagan (creator of the 1980 PBS science series *Cosmos*) also advocated the theory of spontaneous generation as a cause of the universe coming into existence.

These “spontaneous expostulations” by scientists show their frustration and intense desire to consider anything but God as an explanation for the presence of creation, even advocating the theory that something can come from nothing. The theory of spontaneous generation or abiogenesis, which some say goes back to the time of Aristotle, holds that life can come from non-life.

Modern scientists such as Sagan, Hawking, and Mlodinow go beyond the traditional concept of spontaneous generation. In their new book Hawking and Mlodinow put forth the proposition that everything that exists comes from nothing. Hawking denies that God is involved in any way with any aspect of creation. Hawking feels he has shown that God is not necessary in the creation process and there is no evidence that God exists.

God says otherwise and He even has a definite opinion on the subject: **“The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’”** (Psalm 14:1). Sagan, Hawking, Mlodinow, and others are classic examples of wise men becoming fools. In fact, the apostle Paul wrote that it is a process: **“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools”** (Romans 1:22).

**“Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God has showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the**

---

<sup>1</sup> Professor Hawking is Director of Research for the Centre for Theoretical Cosmology at the University of Cambridge.

**world [Greek, *cosmos*] are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."**

• **Romans 1:19–20**

Sagan, Hawking, and Mlodinow probably mean well. They are trying to answer basic questions of existence (asked in the *Publishers Weekly* review on the same Amazon page with the above Hawking quote): "[1] **Why is there something rather than nothing?** [2] **Why do we exist?** [3] **Why this particular set of laws and not some other?"** Searching for answers to such questions is a valid quest. Searching without reference to God is unwise; indeed it is foolish. Solomon asked similar questions about life in his day:

**"I applied my heart to inquiring and exploring by wisdom concerning all that is done under the heavens: it is an experience of evil Elohim has given to the sons of humanity to humble them by it [the experience of evil]. I saw all the deeds that are done under the sun, And behold, the whole is vanity and a grazing on wind."**

• **Ecclesiastes 1:13–14, Concordant Version**<sup>2</sup>

In fact, according to the apostle Paul, Hawking and Mlodinow are deceiving themselves:

**"Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seems to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, 'He [God] takes the wise in their own craftiness' [citing Job 5:13]."**

• **1 Corinthians 3:18–19**

The origin of existence, of the cosmos, of creation, cannot be known, apart from God's revelation of Himself, even though they are obvious (Romans 1:19–20 above).

**"You, even you, are YHWH alone; you have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and you preserve them all; and the host of heaven worships you."**

• **Nehemiah 9:6**

**"YHWH by wisdom has founded the earth; by understanding has he established the heavens."**

• **Proverbs 3:19**

**"He has [1] made the earth by his power, he has [2] established the world by his wisdom, and has [3] stretched out the heavens by his discretion [understanding]."**

• **Jeremiah 10:12**

Rejecting God's revelation of Himself makes the important questions of life unanswerable. If revelation is rejected, then spontaneous generation may seem to make sense, but the understanding of scientists will continue to be foolish. Someday soon God will reveal Himself to the entire world in a dramatic way. Note Romans 1:18: **"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness."** Mankind will acknowledge God's presence in creation.

David Sielaff  
[david@askelm.com](mailto:david@askelm.com)

<sup>2</sup> This Concordant Version translation of Ecclesiastes 1:13–14 agrees with Paul's understanding of Christ learning humility from the evil that He experienced and endured (Hebrews 2:9–10).