



Intelligent Design: Obvious and Yet Inadequate

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The prevailing philosophy of our scientific world today is naturalism. Naturalism teaches that all things in this universe evolved simply by random chance from non-life to life, and from simple to complex forms, over billions of years. Naturalism in the purest sense is atheism, for it denies the existence of God as our creator.

Many scientists today, including those who hold to the theory of evolution, are finding naturalism to be wanting. The more we learn about the complexity and design of this universe, more and more scientists are convinced there must have been an intelligent designer who brought it into being; it simply couldn't have happened naturally. This is the premise behind Intelligent Design. Proponents of Intelligent Design want students in the classroom to be presented both options concerning the origin of the universe, naturalism or intelligent design.

What are we as Christians to make of the Intelligent Design movement? Well to put it simply, Intelligent Design is obvious and yet inadequate. It's obvious because natural knowledge of God testifies to it. Natural knowledge comes from looking at our created world and listening to our conscience. Natural knowledge tell all people that God exists.

Consider these passages of Scripture.

Psalm 19:1 *"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."*

Hebrews 3:4 *"Every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything."*

Romans 1:20 *"Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse."*

If God gives all people natural knowledge of his existence, then why do so many people deny his existence and promote atheistic evolution instead? Sinful pride and the corruption of the human heart blind them to the truth. The Apostle Paul tells us that sinful men "suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them." Romans 1:19

Naturalists have a bias that leads them to reject outright any evidence which points to a creator. An evolutionary biologist once said, "Materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door."

Intelligent Design can be useful as a starting point in the discussion of origins. The Apostle Paul appealed to natural knowledge of God in his witness to the Athenians. Human reason tells us that every house was designed by an architect. If you were walking through the forest and came to clearing where a huge mansion stood, you could draw one of two conclusions. It simply fell out of the sky naturally or someone designed it and constructed it. Common sense would tell you it didn't happen by accident. There must have been an architect. Likewise this complex orderly universe of ours did not just evolve naturally. It had to have a designer.

Intelligent Design however is an inadequate concept, just as natural knowledge of God is inadequate for saving faith. Natural knowledge can tell you that God exists, but it can't tell you about the true God or lead you to trust in Jesus as your Savior from sin and death. Without the Bible to guide you, natural knowledge of God will simply make you a good idolater. Isn't that what we see in cultures throughout the ages? A study of religions around the world throughout time reveals that most people, guided only by natural knowledge, end up worshiping some sort of idol, such as Baal, or Zeus, or Re. Yes, without God's Word to guide them, in their blindness the heathen bow down to wood and stone.

That's why God revealed his saving truths to us in the Bible. Only the Gospel can convert people from unbelief to faith. Only the Gospel can convince someone to believe in the Triune God who created this universe in it and everything in it in six days by the power of his Word, as recorded in Genesis. "By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible." Hebrews 11:3

Intelligent Design is inadequate because it fails to specify who the intelligent designer is. It could be God, it could be Allah, or it could be whatever concept of God you can conceive in your own mind. Many of those who hold to Intelligent Design also still promote Theistic Evolution, that is the idea that God made the universe through the process of evolution. And so in many ways, Intelligent Design is severely wanting.

We don't simply believe in intelligent design. We worship the divine designer, the triune God of the Bible, who provided his own eyewitness account of how he created the world in Genesis 1 and 2. Intelligent Design can be a good starting point to discuss the existence of God, but to truly change hearts and convince people of the truth, the Holy Spirit must work faith in people's hearts through the power of his Word. As Christians then, our chief goal must be to bring people under the influence of God's divinely inspired and inerrant Word.
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