

The Origins Debate in the News

Late last month, a news release was reported on by [sciencedaily.com](http://www.sciencedaily.com) regarding a joint study by researchers from the psychology departments of the University of British Columbia, and the Union College in New York.¹ This study examined the role played by a person's belief in the origins of humans in the response of study participants to their perspective on their own death. One part of the study demonstrated that “existential anxiety” influenced the participants to reject an evolutionary perspective on death, and instead accept a view that includes “intelligent design”² as a basis for facing death. Participants were to think about dying, and then express their feelings about that event. The study director said “...results suggest that when confronted with existential concerns, people respond by searching for a sense of meaning and purpose in life... For many, it appears that evolutionary theory doesn't offer enough of a compelling answer to deal with these big questions.”³

Could it be that these study participants realized that evolutionism ascribes to man no greater place in the universe than that of an animal, and worse yet, a descendant of pond slime? This worldview is the nihilistic perspective on life of “eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”⁴ Does that worldview bring any purpose to life?

The Biblical perspective of life is much different. Genesis 1 and 2 states that humans are created in the image of God and are specially created with the purpose of stewarding God's earth, and dwelling in fellowship with Him. Further, the Bible tells us that everyone is accountable to their Creator for their actions, and one day, all people are going to face a final judgment.⁵ For those whose faith is placed in the sacrifice of Jesus as opposed to their own efforts to earn merit through good works, that judgment will turn out much differently than for those who reject their Creator and Savior.⁶

Later, the article informs that study participants did come to grips with an “evolutionized” perspective on life and death after reading some quotes written by the noted atheist, the late Carl Sagan. The author of the article said that Sagan's passage “*argues that naturalism—the scientific approach that underlies evolution, but not intelligent design--can also provide a sense of meaning.*” Further, the article states that the study participants “*showed reduced belief in intelligent design after being reminded of their own mortality.*” Perhaps this part of the study was planned from the beginning, or perhaps it was in response to the initial results of the study to help reverse the trend set by the first study. The lead researcher asserted that “[t]hese findings suggest that individuals can come to see evolution as a meaningful solution to existential concerns, but may need to be explicitly taught that taking a naturalistic approach to understanding life can be highly meaningful.” Consider this quote from the lead researcher: “*Natural science students have been taught to view evolutionary theory as compatible with the desire to find a greater sense of meaning in life...presumably, they already attain a sense of existential meaning from evolution.*”

It came as no surprise that the article insinuates that belief in intelligent design is “unscientific” and shouldn't be taught in schools, while evolution is a proven fact that shouldn't be questioned. This should not be a shock considering the tenacity at which those who view the world through an “evolutionized” perspective hold to their beliefs. Based upon this, it would seem that the intent of the author of the article is to make those who hold to any view (i.e. intelligent design, or biblical creation) differing from the standard evolutionary worldview appear to be ignorant, and “unscientific.”

¹ <http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/03/110330192201.htm>

² This is a term for a generalized belief in a “higher being” (an Intelligence) which is responsible for forming the universe. This belief could be in a personal God (such as the Christian God) or an impersonal force. Intelligent Design, although it may be a “baby-step” in the right direction, is not a Biblical position as it does not specify, nor glorify the Designer.

³ **Emphasis mine**

⁴ See 1 Corinthians 15:32

⁵ See Hebrews 4:12, 13 and 9:27

⁶ See Ephesians 2:1 – 10 and Titus 3:3 - 7