

# Origins Insights

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March 2004

## **The Creation of Bacteria and Viruses: From God In The Beginning?** **A Discussion Based on The Organosubstrate of Life: A Creationist Perspective of Micobes and Viruses as presented by Joe Francis at ICC #5 2003 [Part I]** **by Bob Harsh**

What are microbes and where did they come from? Biblical Creationists have not addressed the question of the origin of microbes to any great extent so far. We believe that all of the baramins [Kinds] of organisms were created during days three through six of creation week. When were microbes created?

Microbes are bacteria, algae, protozoa, and unicellular fungi. They are of course all so small that they can only be observed with the use of a microscope. Most biologists exclude viruses from being considered as living organisms. They cannot survive on their own but they have the ability to enter living cells, insert their DNA into the host's DNA, and reproduce many more of themselves. I believe viruses were created in the creation week along with "real living organisms". There certainly is a larger discontinuity between viruses and living organism than among living organisms with each other.

How do we normally view microbes and viruses? Most people view viruses and bacteria as agents of disease, parasites, and invasive competitive species. The bacteria *Borrelia burgdorferi* is carried by the deer tick and causes Lyme Disease. The protozoan, *Plasmodium* is carried by the female *Anopheles* mosquito and is the cause of one of the world's most devastating killers, Malaria.

In this article you will be introduced to a different view of microbes. Most of the material for this article was gleaned from "The Organosubstrate of Life: A Creationist Perspective of Micobes and Viruses" as presented by Joe Francis at the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference On Creationism held in August 2003.

Perhaps microbes were created to make survival possible for many plants and animals. Many microbes live in a "mutualistic" relationship with other organisms. These relationship are also known as symbiotic and may be described as

Aphids are insects that have sharp beaks that they use to suck up plant sap. The sap is mostly sugar. Aphids host symbiotic bacteria that produce all of the amino acids the aphids need to produce proteins. The bacteria live inside the aphids in special cells that form tissues called mycetomes. They are nourished by the food the aphids ingest.

What is the scriptural view of microbes and viruses? The authors of scripture knew nothing about microbes but they did know about their effects. They were agents of disease and judgment. A treatment in Numbers 5 involves soil bacteria. The leaven in bread making is yeast which is a microbe that was often treated as an invasive

**CSF Meeting**  
**Tuesday, 7:30 PM**  
**March 16, 2004**

**Dr. David C. Whitcomb**

Stem Cell Research and Cloning: The Promises and the Problems. What it is? How it is done? What are the moral implications? University of Pittsburgh Biology Professor David Whitcomb will help us understand what our attitude should be towards research that involves cloning.

competitive species. Many microbes could be compared to the thorns and thistles that were part of the Judgment in Genesis 3.

Today we know about microbes so what is our enlightened scriptural view of microbes and viruses? They were created as good and their role in the Creation was as beneficial organisms. After the fall, a few took on negative roles in nature. They became invasive outside of their originally created environment. Their pathogenesis is a secondary state to their original beneficial relationships.

Interaction among organisms seems to be characteristic of God's living creation. Many relationships are interwoven among organisms and are required for maintenance of life. There are cycles involving plants, animals, and microbes. The various organisms were created for the work and pleasure of humans; "Nature Lovers". Relationship is part of God's triune character. Relationship is symbolized and experienced in marriage. Relationship is symbolized in body of Christ, the Church.

The following is Joseph Francis' hypothesis;

I propose that microbes were created as an organosubstrate; a link between macro-organisms and a chemically rich but inert physical environment, to provide a substrate upon which multicellular creatures can thrive and persist in intricately designed ecosystems. Viewed in this context microbes and viruses could also be thought of as a single, complex, massive, multicellular, multitaxon organism with incredible and powerful life supporting properties. Just as tissues and organs cooperatively divide the many tasks in the body of a macro-organism, so microbes and viruses cooperatively divide the many tasks macro-organisms need performed to survive in this world. This paper reviews the biological data which supports the organosubstrate concept.

**If Dr. Francis' hypothesis gains enough support from more research we may be watching a major "theory" on the creation of certain types of living organisms developing right before our eyes. It is this writer's hope that this interesting hypothesis will be investigated further by many scientists.**

Microbes all interact with other organisms. They were all separately created. They all illustrate design features. Many demonstrate biochemical similarities. Their modern role as pathogens is a secondary state that is a result of the sin of Adam.

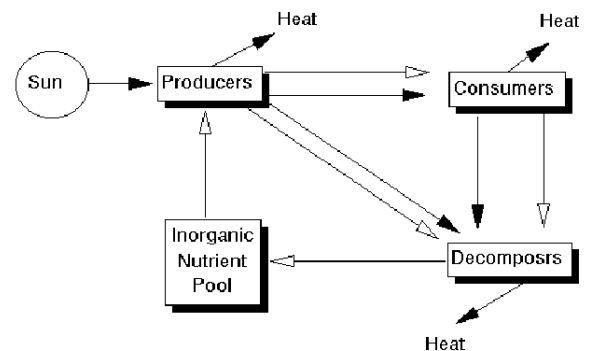
The degree of discontinuity with other types of organisms demonstrates that microbes were created separately. Their "Kinds" could be determined as unicellular organisms for some types or as multi-cellular organisms for others. The most radical part of Dr. Francis' hypothesis is his proposal that some microbes interact as a **multitaxon organism**.

## Would Life Exist on Earth Without Microbes?

The answer to that question is an emphatic NO! Microbes are absolutely necessary for life on Earth. They are the major recyclers of wastes from organisms and dead organisms to the air,

They are also the major providers of free oxygen for respiration.

Slime molds are strange organisms. They function as individual ameba-like cells that when stressed find each other and unite to form, what looks like a multi-cellular fruiting body. This behavior is so unique and discontinuous with other organisms that these cellular slime molds are probably a created "Kind". *Colerpotaxifolia* is a type of algae that can reach 8' in length, yet individual cells are not organized into true tissues. Without true roots stems or leaves, cells cooperate to form "root-like, stem-like, and leaf-like structures. This discontinuity probably qualifies *Colerpotaxifolia* and any organisms



like it as another created “Kind” or baramin.

Cows eat grass but cannot digest grass without the aid of certain protozoans that live in their digestive tract. It turns out that the protozoans don’t digest the grass without the association of certain bacteria. This is a three member association. The rumens of cattle house ciliated protozoans that have bacteria lined up on them that can digest cellulose. All three depend on each other. The discontinuity of this association suggests a multitaxon baramin!

The degree of discontinuity bacteria display is evidence that they were separately created. The structure of their genome is circular DNA as compared to linear in all other life forms. The process of replication of circular DNA is more complex. Evolutionists like to think that life evolved from “simple to complex” so it is unlikely that protists evolved from bacteria. To stay consistent on this point, evolutionists should be suggesting that prokaryotes evolved from eukaryotes!

Dr. Francis speculates that due to their unusual characteristics many microbes bear evidence of being separately created but they may have also been created as parts of multicellular creatures. Perhaps they were created as extracellular organelles or even as extraorganismal organs?

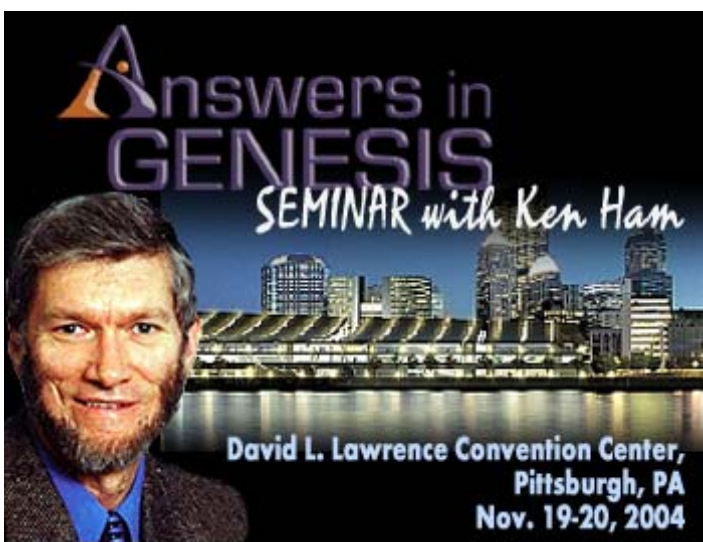
So on which day of creation week were they created? Possibly microbes were created on multiple days if created as part of multicellular creatures. Others may have been created as part of a nutrient rich soil on day two that made the earth “bring forth plants” on day three. Multicellular forms resemble plants. Their reproduction is similar to plants and they perform similar function to plants so maybe those were created on day three along with the plants.

Microbes were created as many different baramins because they were created to intimately associate with other creatures and they reflect the diversity of these creatures.

What kinds of purposes do microbes serve? Microbes were designed as parts of creation:

- to be abundant
- to be ubiquitous
- to form symbiotic communities
- to associate symbiotically with macro-organisms
- to free elements from the inorganic world
- to cycle elements in the biological world
- to cycle water
- for bioremediation

We will continue with this review of The Organosubstrate of Life in another issue of *Origins Insights*.



## AIG Seminar Committee

Members of the AIG Seminar Committee including members of your CSF board met at the D.L. Lawrence Convention Center on February 21 to review the facility arrangements. The members saw the main seminar area and discussed such items as the food concession, the location of the AIG and CSF book sale areas, the meeting areas to be used for the children’s programs and some transportation issues.

A great deal of work has yet to be done and much help will be needed as the year progresses toward this exciting event.

## CSF 2004 Calendar

- **March 16 – Dr. David C. Whitcomb**  
*Stem Cell Research and Cloning: The Promises and the Problems*
- **April 20 – Phil McCaffrey**  
*Plate Tectonics and Creationism*
- **May 18 – Creation Adventure Video**
- **June 15 – Biblical Geology, Presenter to be announced**
- **July 20 – Dr. Steve Rodabaugh**  
*Job's Park*
- **August 17 – Dr. Jerry Bergman**  
*Flood Myths*
- **September 25 – Carnegie Museum of Natural History Tour**
- **October 19 – Dr. Lionel Dahmer**  
*New Evidence That The Decay of Radioactive Materials Has Not Been Constant At Certain Times In The Past.*
- **November 19 and 20 – Ken Ham**  
*Answers in Genesis Seminar*  
*David L. Lawrence Convention Center*

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