



Origin of Information: DNA and the Signature of Design

Introduction

One of the most significant scientific discoveries of the 20th century was that life is fundamentally based on **information**. In 1953, James Watson and Francis Crick revealed the **double-helix structure of DNA**, showing that the molecule carries coded instructions essential for building and sustaining life. This discovery transformed biology from the study of organisms to the study of information.

For naturalism, this raises a profound challenge: how did such information originate without a mind? Random mutations and natural selection may explain variations within existing genomes, but they do not account for the origin of the first information itself. As Stephen Meyer and others argue, the most logical inference is **design**. Scripture long affirmed this truth: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). Just as **DNA** operates like a word-based code, the Bible points to the divine Word as the source of life.

This article examines the nature of DNA, the challenge of naturalistic explanations, and how information unmistakably points to a Creator.

DNA as the Language of Life

DNA (**deoxyribonucleic acid**) is composed of four nucleotides—adenine (A), thymine (T), cytosine (C), and guanine (G). These form sequences that function like letters in an alphabet, encoding instructions for proteins.

Watson and **Crick** famously declared: “We have discovered the secret of life.” Yet what they really discovered was the **language of life**.

- Each cell contains billions of nucleotide “letters.”
- The sequence of letters forms meaningful instructions.
- This information must be read, transcribed, and executed by molecular machines within the cell.

The psalmist’s words resonate: “In thy book all my members were written” (Psalm 139:16). DNA is like a book, written in advance, containing the blueprint of life.



The Information Problem

The central question is: how did this information arise? Random chemical reactions cannot explain the origin of code. Chance may form simple molecules, but meaningful sequences require intelligence.

Consider this analogy: if sand on a beach formed the words *WELCOME HOME*, we would not attribute it to the tide but to an intelligent writer. Similarly, DNA's sequences carry specified meaning, not random patterns.

Scripture affirms that meaning comes from the mind: "The entrance of thy words giveth light" (Psalm 119:130). DNA reflects the light of **God's Word** written into creation.

Naturalistic Explanations Attempted

Several theories have attempted to explain the origin of DNA information:

- **Chance hypothesis:** Random combinations of molecules somehow produced a functional code. The odds, however, are astronomically small—comparable to typing out an encyclopedia by accident.
- **Self-organization hypothesis:** Laws of chemistry arranged nucleotides in functional patterns. Yet chemical affinities do not produce the specific sequences needed for life.
- **RNA world hypothesis:** RNA, a simpler molecule, is said to have preceded DNA. But RNA is unstable and itself requires information to function.

These theories fail because they cannot explain how information itself arises.

Information and Intelligent Cause

In all human experience, information originates from intelligence. Minds, not accidents, write books, codes, and languages. The exact inference applies to DNA.

John begins his Gospel with the Logos—the Word—as the source of life (John 1:3-4). Just as language requires a speaker, life's code requires a Creator.

The Signature in the Cell

Stephen Meyer's book *Signature in the Cell* develops this argument:



- DNA contains digital code.
- Code is a hallmark of intelligence.
- Therefore, DNA is best explained by an intelligent source.

Meyer likens the discovery of DNA to finding a library inside every cell. Each cell is a miniature information-processing center, comparable to sophisticated computers but far more advanced.

Scripture affirms: “For by him were all things created... and by him all things consist” (Colossians 1:16-17). Christ holds together not only atoms but also the instructions that govern them.

The Cambrian Connection

The Cambrian explosion illustrates the information problem in a dramatic manner. Within a geologically short window, dozens of new body plans appear in the fossil record. Such innovations require vast amounts of new genetic information. Random mutation and natural selection cannot explain this sudden burst.

DNA’s signature points instead point to purposeful input of information at key junctures of life’s history.

Information Theory and Probability

Information theory, developed in the 20th century, measures complexity in terms of meaningful sequences. Applying probability to DNA reveals staggering odds:

- The chance of forming a functional protein by random assembly is astronomically slight (10^{77} or lower).
- A single cell requires thousands of proteins, each of which is precisely sequenced.
- Random processes lack the creative power to produce such specificity.

The psalmist declared: “Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite” (Psalm 147:5). Infinite wisdom, not chance, explains life.

The Word and Creation

The Bible repeatedly links God’s Word to creation:



- “By the word of the LORD were the heavens made” (Psalm 33:6).
- “He spake, and it was done” (Psalm 33:9).

DNA as code echoes this reality: creation is built on God’s language. The Logos that spoke creation into being is reflected in the code that sustains life.

Human Language and Divine Language

Human language is symbolic, abstract, and meaningful. DNA is also symbolic, with letters representing the building blocks of proteins, known as amino acids. This parallel suggests a common source: the mind. Just as humans bear God’s image in rationality (Genesis 1:27), creation bears His signature in informational structure.

Objections Addressed

Critics argue that ID is a “science stopper.” Yet inferring design does not halt research; it redirects it. Recognizing design encourages exploration of purpose and function in biology.

Others claim DNA evolved gradually. But the origin of information precedes natural selection—there must be something to select. Without initial code, evolution cannot begin.

Paul reminds us: “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Romans 1:22). Denying design in DNA ignores the obvious.

DNA and the Gospel

DNA’s information also connects to the gospel. Just as the genetic code sustains physical life, God’s Word sustains spiritual life. Jesus declared: “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63).

Believers are not accidents of chemistry but intentional creations, redeemed by the Word made flesh (John 1:14).

Application for Believers

The design in DNA teaches us:

- **Dignity.** We are purposefully created, not cosmic accidents.
- **Worship.** Life’s complexity inspires awe at God’s wisdom.



- **Mission.** Evidence of design strengthens apologetics and evangelism.
- **Hope.** The same God who wrote our genetic code writes our names in the Book of Life (Revelation 20:15).

Conclusion

DNA reveals life's most profound mystery: information. Random processes cannot account for this code. The signature in the cell points unmistakably to a Designer. Scripture identifies that Designer as the Logos, Christ, through whom all things were made. Just as DNA carries instructions for physical life, God's Word holds the promise of eternal life. Believers can rejoice that the language of life testifies to the Word of Life.