

THE FACE OF THE HOBBIT

Recently, Brazilian graphics expert Cícero Moraes (and others) published a picture of the Hobbit, the female whose skeletal remains (labelled LB1) were found in an Indonesian cave in 2003. She was hailed as a new species of ‘hominin’, *Homo floresiensis*.

To produce the picture, the team separately fitted the LB1 skull to both a chimp skull and a human skull in a technique called anatomical deformation. Then, they blended the two images they obtained into one. Note how this assumed up front what they clearly wanted to show, that the Hobbit was a mixture of ape and man—i.e. ‘ape-man’. This logical fallacy is called ‘begging the question’ (see *Creation* 45(4):36–37).

All the same, the image they produced is rather human-looking, even though its nose protrudes less than for humans. However, the nasal bones that could have informed on this were not found.

Some prominent evolutionists claimed the LB1 specimen represented a modern human with pathology, with some suggesting it suffered from cretinism. This was when it was ‘dated’ to about 18 thousand years ago (ka). It was later redated to an age (60–100 ka) conveniently predating, on the evolutionary timeline, the arrival of *Homo sapiens* in the region.

Whether evolutionists advocating the pathological modern human hypothesis were silenced by the new dating is unclear, but they have been quiet since. The redating illustrates the fickle nature of age estimates obtained from evolutionary dating methods.

A possible creation explanation for the *H. floresiensis* LB1 specimen, given its similarities with Javanese *Homo erectus*, is that it was a robust type human (e.g., *H. erectus*) with cretinism (see Line article referenced below for more detail).



Nalewicki, J., See the face of the ‘Hobbit,’ an extinct human relative, [livescience.com](https://www.livescience.com), 27 Jun 2023.

Line, P., Revisiting *Homo floresiensis*, *J. Creation* 36(3):82–91, 2022.

DNA IN TURTLE FOSSIL CHALLENGES MILLIONS OF YEARS

Researchers recently discovered a turtle fossil in Panama ‘dated’ to about 6 million years old. Remarkably, the fossil included bone cells with traces of DNA. Finds like this in dinosaur bone have already caused huge problems for the ‘millions of years’ timeline, because DNA breaks down rather rapidly.

Fossil moa bones from New Zealand with DNA, assigned radiocarbon ages of thousands of years, have been used to obtain a set of temperature-dependent ‘decay rates’ for DNA in fossil bone. The calculated decay was much slower than observed in the lab, which could in part be because the radiocarbon ages were not adjusted for the effects of the global Flood on atmospheric carbon isotope ratios.

But even if we take this decay rate as published, the turtle DNA could only (just) have lasted for 6 million years if it was *constantly at below-freezing* temperatures!

Since geological burial itself generates heat, and since Panama is in the tropics, the turtle’s *maximum* age would be more in the vicinity of 22,000 to 131,000 years. Even at a totally unrealistic 5 °C above freezing, it would still not be anywhere near one million, let alone six million years!

Small wonder the turtle researchers say their find “could challenge traditional hypotheses that consider the preservation of these biomolecules in deep-time tropical environments ... as extremely unlikely.” Bottom line—this is strong evidence against deep time and completely consistent with Genesis.



Cadena, E.-A. *et al.*, An Upper Miocene marine turtle from Panama that preserves osteocytes with potential DNA, *J. Vertebr. Paleontol.* 43:e2254356, 2023.

Allentoft, M.E. *et al.*, The half-life of DNA in bone: measuring decay kinetics in 158 dated fossils, *Proc. Royal Society B* 279(1748):4724–4733, 7 Dec 2012.

EVOLUTIONARY GRASS STORY GROWS LONGER

In 2005, researchers discovered that titanosaurs from India ate rice and other types of grass. This was a shock since, evolutionists, from their perspective, maintained that grass did not exist until 56 million years (Ma) ago at the earliest, some 10 million years after the supposed dinosaur extinction. Since then, things have only become worse for them.

In 2015, pollen, parts of flowers, and phytoliths (silica microbodies in plants) from bamboo (a type of grass) were found in Myanmar amber. This instantly doubled the evolutionary time since the origin of grass to 110–113 Ma.

In 2018, phytoliths from *Joinvillea* were discovered on hadrosaurs' teeth from China. This is a grass-like flowering plant only found in Malaysia/Singapore today. Its fossil traces were 'dated' at

101–131 Ma; the authors suggest these grasses could have existed as early as 125 Ma ago.

Each of these discoveries forced evolutionists to drastically revise their narrative on the origin of grass.

Manske, L., The age of grasses has recently doubled to 113 million years, *Dickinson Research Extension Center, Report DREC 22-1198*, Mar 2023.

Oard, M., The origin of grass pushed well back into the 'Mesozoic', *J. Creation* 21(1):9, 2007.



'JUNKY-LOOKING' DNA FINE-TUNES GENE EXPRESSION

Only 1% of our DNA codes for proteins. It was long thought the rest was mostly leftover 'junk' accumulated during evolution. However, this idea has been giving way to relentlessly accumulating facts, as more and more functions of this 'junk' emerge.

Yet it was still easy to think that the ~5% of the genome that consists of STRs (short tandem repeats) was definitely 'junk'. These are sequences of typically 2–6 DNA 'letters' repeated many times in a row (e.g., CAGTCAGTCAGTCAGT ... etc.).

Now a recent paper says that STRs function like "rheostats" (e.g., dimmer switches on room lights) to fine-tune gene expression. Transcription factors (TF proteins) regulate the way genes are transcribed and hence expressed;

the researchers showed that at least 90% of TFs bind to various types of STR.

The accompanying *Science* commentary says that "STRs tune transcription factor binding to precisely regulate gene expression" and that they play "a role in enhancing the speed at which organisms can respond to changing environments."

Letter substitutions happen far more readily in STRs than in coding DNA. They appear to be part of a *preprogrammed* non-Darwinian mechanism that helps creatures respond rapidly to new or changing environments. This is of interest to creationists studying rapid variation and adaptation, especially in the immediate post-Flood period.

Horton, C. *et al.*, Short tandem repeats bind transcription factors to tune eukaryotic gene expression, *Science* 381(6664): eadd1250, [science.org](https://www.science.org), 22 Sep 2023.

Luskin, C., Former "Junk DNA", STRs found to be "rheostats" that "precisely regulate gene expression", [evolutionnews.org](https://www.creationnews.org), 27 Sep 2023.

PLANETS FLOATING TWO BY TWO

Astronomers have been stunned by finding planets the size of Jupiter (a gas giant without a solid surface)—floating through space unconnected to any star ('rogue planets').

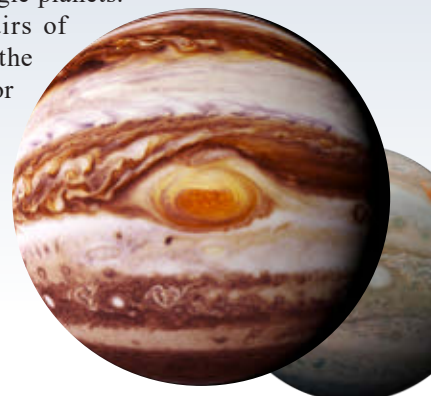
What's more, they come in pairs. A very detailed James Webb Space Telescope survey of the Orion Nebula in our galaxy has turned up 40 of these pairs, nicknamed JuMBOs (Jupiter Mass Binary Objects).

This is baffling for traditional theories of how planets supposedly 'evolve' around stars. Among competing ideas to explain these many travelling twins, the current leading contender is that they were ejected from the star system in which they formed.

There are indeed ways within current physical models that this could happen—to single planets.

"But how do you kick out pairs of these things together?", says the European Space Agency's senior science adviser. "Right now, we don't have an answer."

Amos, J., James Webb telescope makes 'JuMBO' discovery of planet-like objects in Orion, *BBC News*, [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com), 2 Oct 2023.



MADAGASCAR'S UNIQUE ANIMALS

Most animals on the large island of Madagascar, 400 km east of Africa, are unique—not found anywhere else in the world. Secular scientists have debated for decades how the animals arrived on Madagascar. It was once thought they were carried there by a supercontinent split. But fossil and ‘molecular’ data indicate that the animals arrived well after the split. So, transport on moving land masses is rarely considered today.

That leaves three other possibilities: arrival on land bridges that have since submerged, island hopping, or rafting on vegetation. A recent review by Ali and Hedges claims that the first two are improbable, but they believe rafting on vegetation likely occurred many times.

However, long-distance rafting on the puny vegetation rafts they envision, torn off by localized storms, is also improbable. But the

huge log and vegetation rafts that would have inevitably formed in great numbers during the global Flood catastrophe are a different matter (see ebook *The Genesis Flood and floating log mats*, creation.com/s/35-4-514).

These would have been capable of transporting animals after the Flood for many years. As such, they are an excellent way to explain the unique animals on Madagascar originally spreading from the “mountains of Ararat”.

Ali, J. and Hedges, S., A review of geological evidence bearing on proposed Cenozoic land connections between Madagascar and Africa and its relevance to biogeography, *Earth-Science Reviews* **232**:1–19, 2022.

Mazza, P.P.A., Buccianti, A., and Savorilli, A., Grasping at straws: a re-evaluation of sweepstakes colonisation of islands by mammals, *Biological Reviews* **94**:1364–1380, 2019.



SPIRAL GALAXIES THAT ‘SHOULDN’T EXIST’?

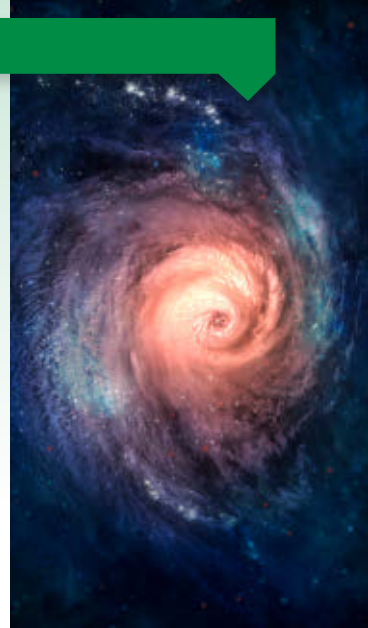
The James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) observations are challenging secular (big bang) cosmology. “Thousands of disk galaxies like our own Milky Way were spotted in the early universe, where they shouldn’t exist.” So reads the commentary.

What is the problem? According to the big bang, galaxies ‘evolved’ over time. There were none at the beginning when there were not even any stars. Indeed, spiral galaxies like our Milky Way are considered ‘mature’ and were said to take ~10 billion years to ‘evolve’. Considering that the big bang was supposedly 13.8 billion years ago, there should be no galaxies like ours within a few billion years of the big bang. One

of the researchers said, “Using the Hubble Space Telescope we thought that disk galaxies were almost non-existent until the universe was about 6 billion years old.”

Yet that has all changed with the JWST. It can see much further and more clearly, and is finding *lots* of such galaxies. Since God created the stars on Day 4 of Creation Week, and only about 6,000 years ago (Earth time), we might not be surprised to see ‘mature’ galaxies wherever we look in the universe.

Turner, B., James Webb telescope spots thousands of Milky Way lookalikes that ‘shouldn’t exist’ swarming across the early universe, 27 Sep 2023, livescience.com.



MATHEMATICAL PATTERN IN HUMAN CELLS

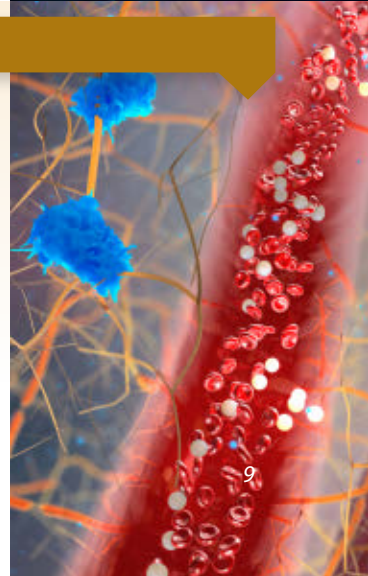
Researchers have recently found that different types of cells seem to follow a stable mathematical pattern of cell size and count across the entire human body. This mathematical symmetry suggests an unknown developmental process that follows a planned path often observed in nature.

There is a vast difference in size and count between different cell types, from the smallest red blood cells to the largest muscle fibres. But the researchers found that cell size is inversely

proportional to cell count (bigger cells, smaller count); cells within a given size class contribute equally to the body’s total cellular biomass.

So far, there is no evolutionary explanation for this pervasive pattern. Nor does evolution predict it. Rather, it plausibly reflects a deeper underlying physical design feature in God’s world.

Hatton, I.A. and 3 others, The human cell count and size distribution, *PNAS* **120**(39):e2303077120, 2023.



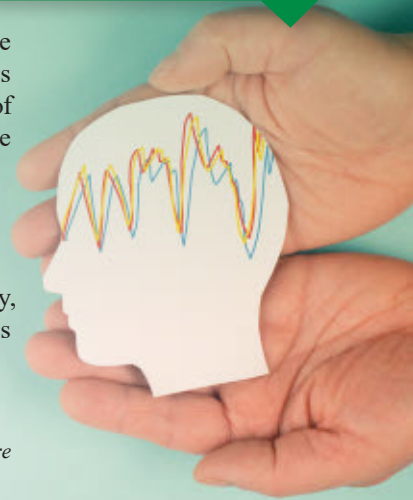
BRAIN SPIRALS

Mysterious spiral signals were discovered in the human brain using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). They think these “might be used to link different parts of the brain and help process information faster.” Said to involve the wrinkled, outermost brain layer (cortex), the exact function of these ‘vortices’ is admitted to be unknown. Scans in 100 healthy adults found “intricate brain wave patterns of various sizes that rotated around central points”. Xu *et al.* describe these observed spiral patterns as moment-by-moment fluctuations of human cortical fMRI signals.

Beefed-up headlines claimed this could unlock the secrets of cognition—how we know, think and experience the world. But that would require understanding the link between brain and mind (see creation.com/brain-soul). The fMRI signals are an epiphenomenon (side effect) of brain activity, and only indirectly indicate brain activity by measuring blood flow. So this study actually tells us very little about this crucial brain-mind connection.

Turner, B., Mysterious spiral signals in the human brain could be key to our cognition, livescience.com, 20 Jun 2023.

Xu, Y. *et al.*, Interacting spiral wave patterns underlie complex brain dynamics and are related to cognitive processing, *Nature Human Behaviour*, 15 Jun 2023.



DARWINISM INSPIRES MEDICAL ADVANCES?

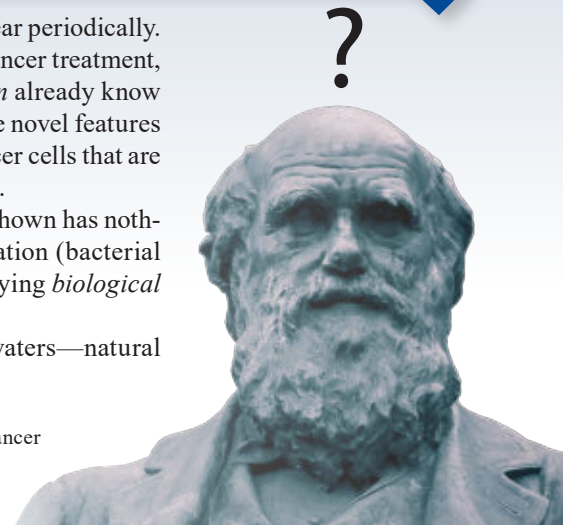
A BBC article claims Darwinism is leading to medical advances. Such assertions appear periodically.

A major part of the article focuses on one Robert Gatenby’s approach to prostate cancer treatment, claiming his insights come from ‘Darwinian medicine’. However, readers of *Creation* already know that his thinking actually runs counter to evolutionary notions that mutations generate novel features that explain microbe-to-man evolution (creation.com/cancer-darwin). The mutant cancer cells that are resistant to the chemotherapy drugs are *less fit* to survive in the absence of the drugs.

The article’s other major claim involves antibiotic resistance, which we have also shown has nothing to do with ‘Darwinian’ insights (see: creation.com/antibiotic). Stopping conjugation (bacterial ‘mating’), to reduce the transfer of *existing* antibiotic resistance genes, is simply applying *biological knowledge*; it has nothing to do with ‘evolution’.

The article repeatedly conflates natural selection with evolution, muddying the waters—natural selection can only *eliminate*, but not create.

Quaglia, S., The relatively new discipline of evolutionary medicine is making strides in the fields of cancer treatment and antibacterial resistance, BBC Future, bbc.com, 7 Sep 2023.



HUGE ELEPHANT TRUNK HAS MICRO-MUSCLES

An elephant’s trunk can reach up to 2 metres (6.5 feet) long and lift 300–400 kg (660–880 lb). It has no bones, just muscles and compartments filled with incompressible liquid. Thus, like squid and octopus arms, it is called a *muscular hydrostat*.

But the trunk is also remarkably versatile. Controlled by at least 40,000 motor neurons and many sensory ones, it can pluck single leaves, pick up small objects, and caress other elephants. It can be used as a snorkel when underwater and can suck in water before squirting it out for drinking or bathing.

But how can this trunk show such dexterity? German biologists made a 3D image of a baby elephant trunk with micro-CT scanning. They discovered that the trunk’s muscles are contained in about 90,000 tiny bundles called *fascicles*. About 8,000 are in the tip alone. The ‘finger’ has fascicles with a microscopic average volume of only 0.01 mm³ (0.0000006 in³).

The researchers make the obligatory homage to evolutionary origin. But they call the trunk musculature “one of a kind”. They even suggest it could inspire soft robotic designs.

Longren, L.L. *et al.*, Dense reconstruction of elephant trunk musculature, *Current Biology*, 26 Sept 2023; cell.com.



ANTIMATTER ATTRACTION SHATTERS BIG BANG

Physicists at CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research, have uncovered a huge headache with the secular origins story for the formation of the universe. In their scenario, the big bang created *everything from nothing* at the beginning, equal quantities of matter and antimatter. If you put matter and antimatter together, they release energy and destroy each other.

This is a serious problem for the big bang: the equal amounts of matter and antimatter should have annihilated each other, and we would not be here to talk about it. But we are, because there is much, much more matter than antimatter in the universe.

What is the solution (other than abandoning the big bang)? A ‘go to’ idea was that antimatter is repelled by gravity, the opposite of normal matter. Thus, gravity forced nearly all the antimatter away from the ordinary matter in the early universe, so they did not cancel each other out.

Physicists at CERN tested the idea that antimatter is repelled by gravity. They found that antimatter hydrogen atoms behaved exactly as normal hydrogen atoms do. They



were not driven away by gravity. And this fulfilled a prediction of Einstein’s General Relativity theory.

This remains a huge problem for the idea that a big bang created—from nothing—all the universe’s matter, which then supposedly went on to form stars, planets, and all living things.

Anderson, E.K., *et al.*, Observation of the effect of gravity on the motion of antimatter, *Nature* **621**:716–722, 2023.

Smith, B, Antimatter feels gravity’s pull, and one of biggest mysteries of the Universe stays unsolved, *ABC Science*, abc.net.au, 28 Sep 2023.

‘EARLIEST’ STRUCTURAL USE OF WOOD

In 2023, Barham *et al.* reported archaeological evidence for the ‘earliest’ structural use of wood. This was two logs found at Kalambo Falls, Zambia, with notches cut into them, allowing them to be joined transversely. ‘Dated’ by luminescence as at least 476,000 years old, the logs were preserved supposedly because they were in waterlogged sediments. The authors say:



At Kalambo we also recovered four wood tools from 390 ka to 324 ka, including a wedge, digging stick, cut log and notched branch. The finds show an unexpected early diversity of forms and the capacity to shape tree trunks into large combined structures.

It’s hard to believe a time gap of > 80,000 years between the logs and the tools. While unsure of exactly what the wooden structure was (e.g., raised platform, shelter, etc.), according to Callaway it pre-dated modern humans “by more than 100,000 years, hinting that hominins that lived long before our own species were already working wood.” He said:

The two large objects befuddled Barham until he got his hands on

US building toys called Lincoln Logs. These are notched at the ends, allowing two pieces to be securely stacked perpendicular to one another. The notch on the Kalambo log could serve the same purpose, Barham says.

Leaving aside dubious dates (how likely is it that wood would have stayed undecomposed for that long?), whoever built these structures were undoubtedly fully human.

Callaway, E., These ancient whittled logs could be the earliest known wooden structure, nature.com, 20 Sep 2023.

Barham, L. *et al.*, Evidence for the earliest structural use of wood at least 476,000 years ago, *Nature* **622**:107–111, 2023.

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