Think Believe

Discover Creation...Worship the Creator

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Sexual Reproduction. Why?

by Mark Sonmor

I still remember my biology teacher's profound blandness as he mumbled something about mitosis vs. meiosis and that we would "need to remember it for the test." Even as a junior in high school, I sensed the wonder and design of one of the oldest mysteries in biology. Yet, he was speaking of it as if he were deciding where to go for lunch.

Most evolutionists assume that life sprang from single-celled organisms that reproduced asexually – self replication. Spores, for example, accomplish this through "simple" cell division called mitosis. Yet, in spite of the seeming advantages of asexuality, 99% of complex organisms – from coelocanths to cedars – reproduce sexually. With all that's involved, why and how would a single-celled organism leave the asexual reproduction of mitosis to experiment with something as risky and complicated as sexual reproduction?

It is reasoned that sexual reproduction persists because it provided the genetic variation needed to adapt to changing environments and compete for survival. For example, Scientists in Scotland studied offspring of the water flea, which reproduces both sexually and asexually. When exposed to parasites, twice as many sexually-produced offspring survived over their asexually-produced siblings. Their conclusion? Sexual reproduction has been retained in nature because it prevents disease.

While this may explain why sexual reproduction is an advantage in this case and under these conditions, it doesn't explain how or why natural selection and mutations could have produced sexual reproduction in the first place.

When it comes to producing sex cells (gametes), a process called meiosis is used rather than mitosis. To start, a germ cell divides, divides again, and gives rise to four gametes – each possessing half the number of chromosomes in the original cell(see page 2). The complimentary number of chromosomes can only be attained by the union of gametes from the opposite sex. It's like an author, who, upon writing a novel, rips every other page out, and stands on the corner and waits for another author who has torn the pages out of his novel. Together, these novels mesh together to produce a brand new, coherent story – similar, but different!

We are told that *variation* is necessary for offspring to survive, Yet, the end goal is the *fixity* of the species. If you could speak "water flea" you might hear one side argue, "Progress! Change is beautiful." and the other shouting, "Tradition! Keep our species great!" Meanwhile, a single water flea wonders what it was like to be the first single-celled organism. Why reproduction in the first place? Why create more competition for yourself? Also, how does an organism know it's going to die and needs to reproduce in the first place? It's a tough task to explain sexual reproduction simply in terms of survival.

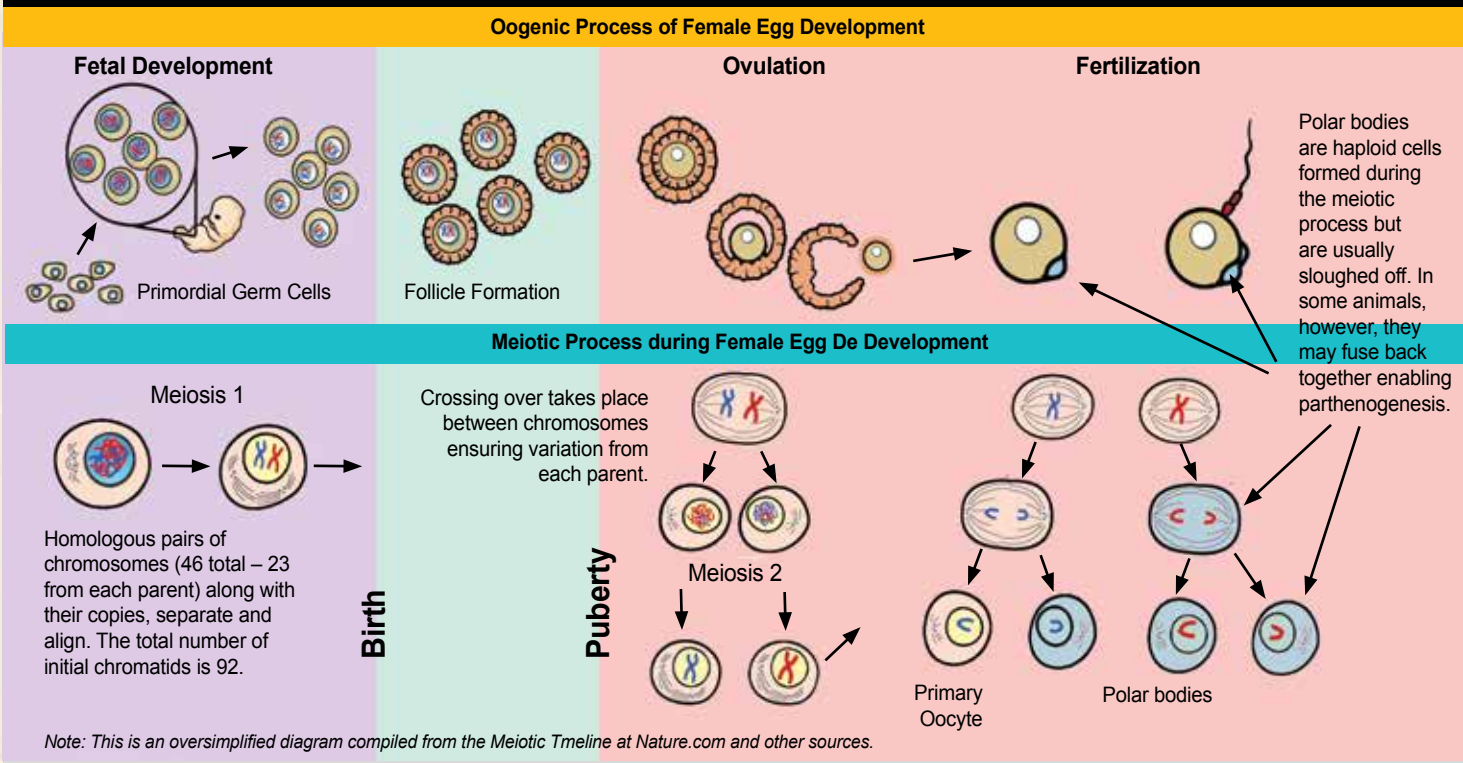
Creationists, however, can also ask. "Why couldn't God have just continued creating additional offspring for each species as He saw fit? Additionally, why didn't he make all creatures asexual?

First, God may be conveying that He values relationship. Sexual reproduction requires the cooperation of two independent organisms with two independent wills. Secondly, I believe God values responsibility. He set up a structure where his creatures are given the gift of living out His design and intention for them. Third, God rested. He chose to rest after His creation and not remain in a state of continual activity or constant enabling.

I encourage you to go beyond my high school biology teacher and ponder the fascinating implications surrounding sexual reproduction. We can learn much about God's character as we consider the world in light of His Word. AOI

Journey of a Germ Cell

by Mark Sonmor



Note: This is an oversimplified diagram compiled from the Meiotic Tmeline at Nature.com and other sources.

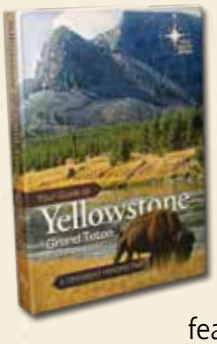
In human reproduction, germ cells develop outside the embryo as it is forming and migrate to the gonads when ready. Once there, they divide repeatedly to ensure sufficient numbers. Then, the process of meiosis begins with the separation and reduction of chromosomes. The ultimate goal is to reduce from 46 (diploid) to 23 (haploid).

In females, the first stage of meiosis begins while still in the womb. By the time of ovulation, Meiosis 1 is completed as well as part of Meiosis 2. This stage won't be finalized until fertilization. In some animals, however, the diploid state can be restored at various stages and through various means including fusing haploid chromosomes back together or duplicating them. In some animals, the egg can be produced by mitosis resulting in exact clones of the mother. *Source: Qubeshub.org "The Science Behind Parthenogenesis: Interesting things happen when meiosis goes "wrong"*

Guides to Yellowstone and The Tetons

by Mark Sonmor

If you want a new perspective on the amazing Yellowstone region, this True North guidebook is essential. Not only is it attractive, with colorful foldouts and appealing design, it gives a concise, creationist viewpoint regarding the geology, ecology, and history of each of the area's attractions. You'll receive facts and interpretations that can be found in no other source.



Along with explaining the parks' geologic features, this handy guide helps you plan your trip with helpful travel information and items of interest. Even if you aren't planning a trip this year, there are nearly 3,500,000 others who are.

Because so many are influenced by the naturalistic explanations promoted throughout the parks, this guide book is essential. Sections 7 & 8 offer concise, easily-understood explanations of worldview, dating methods, fossilization, and unique design features of flora and fauna. (Did you know mistletoe eject their seeds up to 30 ft. at 60 mph?)

If you know of someone who is planning to go – even a skeptic – it would make a great gift. This book is available from AOI for **$19** +Shipping & Handling.

Also, receive creation-based responses to mainstream explanations of the park by downloading AOI's Yellowstone App. It includes area info, history, many related creation articles on volcanics, glaciation, and design features. The app is keyed to GPS and features a hands-free voice mode. **Free** at www.DiscoverCreation.org/Yellowstone-App/ (donations appreciated). AOI

Weird, Wacky, What a Wonderful World

by Mark Sonmor

"I see trees of green...red roses too... I see them bloom for me and you...and I think to myself...what a wonderful world" I can hear Louis Armstrong, with his gravelly voice singing this tune. If he knew what was happening under the surface, however, he might have written different lyrics.

Recently, I read an article about the Marbled Crayfish which went from reproducing sexually, to reproducing asexually through a process called Parthenogenesis. Researchers believe that two Slough Crayfish got together with one having two sets of chromosomes instead of one. The result was a new type of crayfish containing three sets of chromosomes![1]

As a result, the Marbled Crayfish (all females) can essentially clone itself without the need for a mate. It's doing quite well, by the way, spreading from Germany to Africa, and is considered a pest in some locations. While this challenges the standard "variety-equals-better-survival" reason that evolutionists give for sexual reproduction, it opens the door to a host of unsettling genetic scenarios surrounding birth and reproduction.

According to ICR's Brian Thomas, Phd,"More than 80 varieties of fish, amphibian, and reptile mothers are able to lay eggs that have not been fertilized and yet produce offspring."[2] Sea turtles, Komodo dragons, sharks, whiptail lizards, mayflies, and California Condors are just some on the growing list of species known to reproduce asexually. "What's the world coming to?" One might say, "It seems even the animals have gender confusion! Or, is there another explanation?

Doctors in Japan were amazed when a 25-year-old woman had an ovarian tumor removed only to find out it was a teratoma – a partial fetus produced by parthenogenesis. While most teratomas are chimeric masses containing bits of hair, teeth, and bone, this was more mature, displaying "...considerable differentiation, forming a doll-like structure."[3]

Because of these aberrations, some have wondered whether Jesus was a product of parthenogenesis. However, certain genetic and epigenetic markers are required from both father and mother in order to initiate proper gene expression in mammals. Without the markers from the father, a cell may develop to a certain point but can't proceed further. Why mammals have produced these blocks to parthenogenesis remains a mystery to evolutionists. It's one thing to develop sexual reproduction, but to go the extra mile to safeguard it in this way is even harder to explain.

Because our abilities to perform genetic testing have improved significantly, we know things about plants and animals that would have gone undetected years ago. Unless you saw it happen in a zoo, for instance, there would be no reason to suspect an animal was produced by parthenogenesis.

While questions abound as to what triggers this phenomenon in animals, many have suggested environmental stress, temperature, and lack of viable mates. It may be that God has provided alternative methods of reproduction when the traditional means are stressed or unavailable.

Frogs, for example, can change their sex while in the tadpole stage. However, there is not a clear link between this behavior and external factors such as water purity. Is it possible that God has endowed some creatures with instincts that extend beyond what we currently know?

In the case of the California Condor, a female in captivity "chose" to produce parthenogenically even when a viable male was present. Could it be that she instinctively knew it would be better genetically to do so? Like a rusting boat, all of creation fights mutations. While sexual reproduction promises a safeguard through variety, it can also open the door for greater, and more harmful mutations. Parthenogenesis might be one provision that allows organisms to keep their genes "in house" in order to cope with an increasingly corrupt genome. It might be the lesser of two evils – especially in small, endangered populations like the California Condor.

While the world is weird, wacky and wonderful, these genetic irregularities are not evolution. No new genes or information are being created. Phenomena such as these may be unsettling and threaten to undermine our faith. Over time, however, they can serve to deepen it as we gain more facts and expand our understanding. AOI

[1] Creation.com/asexual-crayfish-highlights-evolution-sex-problem
[2] icr.org/article/self-cloning-lizards-fit-for-survival
[3] Naohiko Kuno, Kenji Kadomatsu, Makoto Nakamura, Takahiko Miwa-Fukuchi, Norio Hirabayashi, Takao Ishizuka, Case Review, *Clinical and Molecular Teratology*, January, 2004.

Director's Column – Camps & Tours

by Dave and Mary Jo Nutting

Why do we do camps and tours? Velna Jackson and family came to AOI's family camp 10 years in a row. That led to almost 34 years of friendship and multiple speaking events in Texas (Including a 2024 eclipse viewing party.) Recently, Velna wrote: "Blessed 1st anniversary of the Great American total solar Eclipse 2024!

"Psalm 8:1: **'O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! Who has set thy glory above the heavens!'** Psalm 8:3: **'When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars (our sun is a star), which thou hast ordained;'** Psalm 8:4&5 **'What is man that thou art mindful of them? For thou has made them a little lower than the angels and has crowned them with glory and honor!'** "

"Think about the fact that on April 8, 2024, our mighty Creator, Jesus Christ, allowed us tiny human beings, in comparison to the infinite magnitude of His heaven, to witness His amazing beauty, handiwork, power, wisdom, and love in the Total Solar Eclipse 2024 at Stonewall Valley Ranch, TX! Go online and watch a video of the eclipse and then break out in song and praises to our God, Jesus. **'Our God is an awesome God!** He reigns with wisdom, power, and Love! Our God is an awesome God!' Remember that we Jacksons first learned that praise song from Tim [Nutting age 15] at Creation Family Camp in 1991! Have a blessed April 8, 2025! Love you all to the moon and back, Velna." AOI

Interested in hosting a seminar?

Email AOI@DiscoverCreation.org or call (970)523-9943 to schedule a seminar.

Your Support of AOI.

Thanks to all who responded to our March 26 letter! Your support is helping! Please keep it up.

Creation Training

Be trained to stand firmly and teach others!

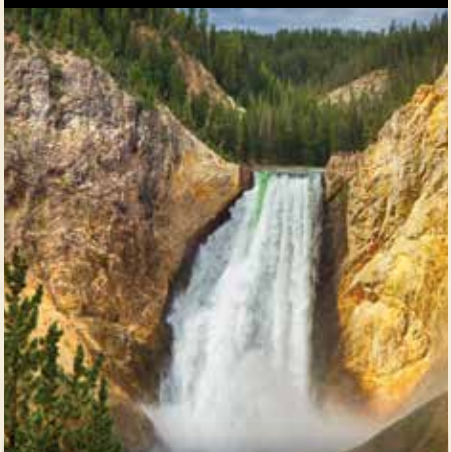
- Short-term or intern training
- Online or in-person

Working or retired? Do something that makes a significant impact.

Yellowstone Creation Tour

Note date change!

June16-20, Aug 25-29, Aug 29-Sep 2



Great family adventure!

For more information, visit:

www.discovercreation.org/camps-tours/yellowstone-national-park-creation-tour/

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Winter, 2026

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