

Handout 5: The “Eyes” Have It!

by Holly Varnum

“ How could anyone possibly believe that something so obviously designed for a specific purpose is a product of evolution?

This rather rhetorical question (or so I thought) was posed by my daughter after she shared scads of information from her Anatomy & Physiology book, enthusiastically declaring how absolutely amazing the intricacies of the human eye are. “Cool!” I thought to myself, “but what do I *really* know about it” (certainly, not as much as I wanted to)? So, being a lover of learning, I had to start investigating this intriguing topic—the human eye.

As a believer in Christ, I am interested first of all in what God’s Word has to say on the subject, and because of my biblical worldview, I believe that the eye is one of the most miraculous products of God’s amazing design within the human body. Psalm 139:4 says, “I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”

In case there was any doubt after reading this verse, Proverbs 20:12 says *specifically*, “The hearing ear and the seeing eye, the LORD has made them both.” Though God doesn’t talk specifically about the spleen, gallbladder, or the thyroid, when He does talk about anatomy in His Word, it shows us that He takes a special interest in *us* and how He designed us.

As part of my research, I also did what I advise my daughters to do when they have a burning question—Google it! My “design of human eye” search brought **almost 51.6 billion** (and counting) **results in less than half a second!** It was the result at the very top of the first page, however, that caught my eye (no pun intended), probably because it seemed so contrary to what I had just read in the Scriptures—“Is the Human Eye Really Evidence *Against* (italics mine) Intelligent Design?”¹ (Wells, 2018).

More than half of this six-page article shared the consensus of nine highly respected and popular people of science (Richard Dawkins, George Williams, Kenneth Miller, Douglas Futuyma, Jerry Coyne, Kenneth Mason, Jonathan Losos, Susan Singer, and Nathan Lents). Each of these scientists made claims that because of the supposed “backward design” of the human retina and the resulting blind spot, that no intelligent engineer would have claimed it as a product of their work. Phrases they used to describe the eye’s design included that it “would offend any tidy-minded engineer!”²; was “stupidly designed”³; a “functionally nonsensical arrangement”⁴; and “not an optimal design for obvious reasons,”⁵ to name a few.

Dr. Wells then proceeded to “debunk” these claims with observable, rational, and common-sense, scientific principles. (I have cited the article and included the link below in the footnotes in case you want to read it for yourself.) All of the research sources Dr. Wells conveyed to the reader in defense of his claim were published before, *and I repeat before*, Dawkins published his book, *The Blind Watchmaker*.

“...Dawkins and the other critics of intelligent design didn’t bother to check the scientific literature. They simply assumed that evolution is true and that they knew how an eye *should* be designed. Then they concluded that the human eye is badly designed, claimed it as evidence for evolution, and ignored the contrary evidence. Good empirical science searches for explanations that fit the evidence. But another kind of ‘science’ is committed to telling materialistic stories about unguided evolution, even when those stories don’t fit the evidence” (Wells, 2018).

Without going into a lot of detail, let's note a short list of the empirical evidence to which Dr. Wells was referring.

- Eyes are made up of over 2 million working parts.
- Each individual eye contains 107 million cells, and all are light sensitive.
- About half of the human brain is dedicated to vision and seeing.
- In order to see, your eyes twitch 30-70 times per second. If they didn't, you wouldn't be able to see anything that is stationary—it would disappear from your line of vision.
- The iris alone, the colored part of the eye, has 256 unique characteristics.

Just these five observable pieces of evidence about the eye are more than enough to confirm design, a Designer, AND to dispel any notion that the eye is a product of “something-from-nothing, random-chance-processes” evolution. And there's so much more to the eye than meets the, uh, well you know what I mean. Let's take a quick, metaphorical “peek” into the peculiar pertinence of these prodigious ocular orbs.

- We know innately that the eyes tell us a lot about how a person is feeling, both emotionally and physically.
- The eyes communicate— “if looks could kill,” “a loving look,” “a pained look”—so much so that words are often unnecessary to convey a message.
- When someone takes the time to look at you and make eye contact, that might be all it takes to make you feel noticed and valued by that person.
- We know that we are close to God's heart and are protected by Him because we are “the apple of His eye” (Psalm 17:8).
- We can often “read people” by looking in their eyes and noting pupil dilation which reflects the degree to which emotions are affected.⁶
- Notably, one of the first actions of a newborn baby is to look at faces—fuzzy black and white vision though it may be—to fulfill the longing for human connection.

Yes indeed, as stated so eloquently in the work of William Shakespeare, “The eyes are windows to the soul.” But it's more than just poetry: We can confidently assert that the multi-modal (physical, emotional, relational) design of our optics is without a doubt a masterpiece of our all-knowing, all-seeing, all-wise, loving Creator.

In conclusion, I want to leave you with a simple call to action:

Christians, don't allow secular scientists to scare or bully you into believing lies that are based on opinion and not real science. Instead, let's embrace the biblical worldview together— “seeing” everything in this world through the “lens” of the truth of God's Word. When we do that, the evidence we notice around us confirms true science, and that, my friends, is *always* consistent with the Bible.

Be bold!

To reinforce this idea, scan this QR code to watch “Evolution is a Fact,” DeBunked 15.



Notes

¹ Jonathan Wells, “Is the Human Eye Really Evidence Against Intelligent Design?” *Evolution News & Science Today* (April 13, 2018). <https://evolutionnews.org/2018/04/is-the-human-eye-really-evidence-against-intelligent-design/>

² Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1986), 93.

³ George Williams, *Natural Selection: Domains, Levels, and Challenges* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 73.

⁴ Douglas Futuyma, *Evolution*. (Sunderland, MA: Sinauer Associates, 2005), 49.

⁵ Nathan Lents, “The Poor Design of the Human Eye,” *Human Evolution Blog* (January 12, 2015). <https://thehumanevolutionblog.com/2015/01/12/the-poor-design-of-the-human-eye/>

⁶ Christina Leuker, Wouter van den Bos, and Jon M. Jachimowicz, “To Read Someone’s Mind, Look into Their Eyes,” *Scientific American Blog* (September 29, 2017). <https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/observations/to-read-someones-mind-look-into-their-eyes/?print=true>