

“CONSIDER THE LILIES”

How Biochemistry Supports Christ’s Divine Nature

By [The Analog Kingdom](#) | September 5, 2020

I never considered, nor understood, the many times I had read Jesus’ words in Luke 12:27, and Matthew 6:28, of His divine knowledge of the complexity of life. Instead, I would gloss right over the text, probably like most readers, not fully appreciating or comprehending what Christ was truly communicating through His profound teachings, especially in regard to the biochemical composition of organisms. That was until I increased my understanding of 21st century biochemistry which gave insight on the divine nature of Jesus as He taught from the perspective of 1st century knowledge.

In Luke chapter 12, Jesus instructs us not to be occupied with the things of this world: to fear God rather than men, to value the praise from God rather than men, to be rich toward God rather than for ourselves, laying up treasure in heaven and not on earth. He exhorts us not to worry or be anxious about our life, our flesh, what we will eat or what clothes we will put on, for life is more than these and God knows our needs. Instead, He says we should seek the kingdom of God first and all these things will be added to us (the ultimate fulfillment of which is found in [Revelation 7:14-17](#), where we will be clothed, sheltered and fed with the eternal). Hence, focus on the eternal, not the temporal. He uses the birds as an example of God’s care for us in verse 24, “for they neither sow nor reap, which have neither storehouse nor barn; and God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds?”¹ Then, in verses 27 and 28, He uses the example of the lilies, “Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith?”

Now the example of God providing for the birds who neither sow nor reap, and clothing the grass with beautiful lilies that neither labor nor spin is fairly straightforward, but the comparison of the lilies with Solomon in all his glory had been a bit of an enigma to me. Obviously, Christ is claiming that King Solomon, in all his glory, wasn’t even adorned like a single lily . . . but how? Can a lily be more gloriously adorned than one of the greatest kings that ever lived? Well, the word “consider” in

verse 27 is *katanoéo* in the Greek text and, according to *Strong's Concordance*, means: to observe fully -- behold, consider, discover, perceive.² And to understand this enigma, I needed to fully observe and discover the lilies. However, I did not set out to scientifically observe lilies, instead I discovered them quite serendipitously.

Many years ago, while reading *Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution*, by Michael Behe, I came across an astounding piece of knowledge. Under the section **Nucleic Acid Structure** in the appendix, *The Chemistry of Life*, that gives an overview of the principles of biochemistry that all life is predicated upon, Behe states that the amount of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) in an organism's cells varies with its complexity. DNA ranges from several million nucleotides (the building blocks of nucleic acids, like DNA) for bacteria to a high of several hundred billion for some flowering plants! To compare, humans have a little more than 3.2 billion nucleotides of DNA in genome size.³

Well, you can see where this line of intrigue was going, and when I had my epiphany, for my thoughts immediately went to Jesus' comparison of the lilies. Still, this transpired many years ago (1997?), and the internet was just a seedling and not the bolting information superhighway it is today. In fact, Wikipedia didn't even exist, and the human genome project wouldn't be completed until 2003. So, I didn't dig much deeper. I was still amazed and fascinated by the size of the genome of some flowering plants and the potential connection it had with Christ's teachings by begging the questions: is this how the lilies exceed Solomon in his glory? Are they one of the flowering plants that possess such an enormous genome size? And was this a glimpse into Christ's divine knowledge of creation? But the answers to those questions would have to wait for a future examination, and for the advancement in new technologies in genome research.

Then recently, while doing an in-depth study of Luke, I revisited the subject and, finally, did that deeper dive, and what I discovered really brought the lilies to bloom. According to Wikipedia sources, the largest known genome on the planet belongs to a rare Japanese flowering plant called *Paris japonica*. Its genome consists of 150 billion base pairs (150 Gb) of nucleotides, that's 46.9 times larger than the human genome! And guess what order it belongs to in the plant kingdom? Well, if you guessed the order of *Liliales*, then you guessed right.⁴ And prior to this 2010 discovery, one

species in the genus of *Fritillaria* in the lily family, *Fritillaria assyriaca*, one of the more widespread species in the genus and found in the Middle East, was for a long time the largest known genome, exceeding the largest vertebrate known to date, and more than 40 times larger than the human genome!⁵ In fact, *Fritillaria* represents some of the most extreme cases of genome size in flowering plants ranging from 30 to more than 85 billion base pairs (30-85 Gb) of nucleotides (nearly 10 to 27 times larger than the human genome), and many species are found in the Middle East.⁶

In a more recent article, published in the *Frontiers in Plant Science* journal, a comprehensive study involving the genus *Lilium*, with its “giant genomes,” was based on extensive sampling of 71 species, representing 65% of all *Lilium* species,⁷ and the results are even more impressive. The evaluation of genome size (GS) revealed considerable diversity among *Lilium* species. The GS estimates ranged from 44.88 pg, in *L. souliei*, to 168.58 pg, in *L. grayi*.⁸ Giant genome size is generally defined as >35 pg (\approx 34 Gb), thus, in picograms (pg), that equates to a range of 43.9 Gb to 164.9 Gb in GS.⁹ That’s 14 to almost 52 times larger than the human genome!

As we can see, lilies are quite remarkable creations. But what about Solomon? What made him so remarkable to be used for comparison? For those who are not familiar with Solomon, he was revered as one of the greatest kings of Israel and the last to rule over the united kingdom. As David’s son he was commissioned to build God’s temple, the first temple to house the Ark of the Covenant, which he decorated with the “shape of lilies” (1 Kings 7:22, 26). He was by far the wealthiest king of Israel establishing an empire that extended its borders far and wide, and the fame of his glory and wisdom, the wisdom God imparted to him through his petition, had influence on the surrounding nations. *Smith’s Bible Dictionary* declares, “Never before, and never after, did the kingdom of Israel take its place among the great monarchies of the East. Large treasures, accumulated through many years, were at his disposal.”¹⁰ And *Easton’s Bible Dictionary* comments, “He surrounded himself with all the luxuries and the external grandeur of an Eastern monarch. This was the ‘golden age’ of Israel. The royal magnificence and splendour of Solomon’s court were unrivalled . . . His fame was spread abroad through all lands, and men came from far and near ‘to hear the wisdom of Solomon.’”¹¹

Yet, even Solomon in all his glory couldn’t add one cubit, let alone one inch, to his “stature” (Gr.

hélikia, from hélíx)¹² as Christ makes clear in Luke 12:25 (& Matt. 6:27). He had virtually gained the whole world as an exalted king with his empire, palaces, treasures, wealth, royal apparel and wisdom, but he couldn't add a single nucleotide to his fundamental biochemical structure (i.e., DNA), and, thus, couldn't compare to a single lily, at least at the level of biochemical complexity. We can adorn ourselves with all kinds of outward glory, but we can't add to the fundamental fabric of our physical being. Nevertheless, one of Christ's most important teachings that He emphasized repeatedly, as in Matthew chapter 6, is the prevailing need for us to be transformed inwardly: turning our heart, mind and soul to righteousness. For a person is not just a Christian through outward observance. We must be transformed to be like Christ inwardly, circumcising our heart and seeking the praise from God rather than men.

When we think of Solomon and how richly he was arrayed, and then the remarkable lilies, "which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven," it is only natural that we would wonder about the promise and ask "how much more will He clothe" us? Again, the answer is found in Revelation when it defines the multitude arrayed in white robes: "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev. 7:14; cf. [19:7-8](#)). Christ's assurance is realized in the resurrection when God clothes us with the robes of righteousness as new creations. Then our glory will far outshine any lily. As Jesus foretells at the end of his explanation of the parable of the tares, "Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. 13:43).

After weighing the matter, literally, lilies with their giant genomes are some of the most complex organisms in creation, far more than any human biochemically. Christ's use of the lilies in His teaching and comparison with Solomon, especially from the perspective of 1st century AD science, demonstrates esoteric knowledge on the chemistry of life and, thus, reveals Christ's divine nature as the creator. For only the creator could possess such knowledge at that time in history, or any time prior to the 21st century. As Behe points out, "In ancient times *all* of biology was a black box, because no one understood on even the broadest level how living things worked. The ancients who gaped at a plant or animal and wondered just how the thing worked were in the presence of unfathomable technology. They were truly in the dark."¹³ Yet Christ understood, because He is the light that shines in the darkness, and the ancients who witnessed His work were truly in the presence

of unfathomable brilliance, power and glory. As the apostle John proclaims of Him, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it” (John 1:1-5).

Furthermore, the Greek word recorded in both Matthew 6:28 and Luke 12:27 is *krinon*, a lily by definition.¹⁴ Christ could have used a more generic term like flowers, but He didn't. He used a very specific flower, the lily, and the statistical probability of picking lilies out of all the flowering plants, or any other organisms on Earth, for his comparison is astronomical. Flowering plants are the most diverse and numerous land plants with an estimated range of 250,000 to 400,000 species.¹⁵ I highly doubt Christ's specific choosing of the lilies was some lucky conjecture. Rather, He chose it for a reason. So the next time you encounter a lily, consider its intrinsic beauty and marvel its complexity, and Christ's divine nature and knowledge as the creator.

NOTES

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