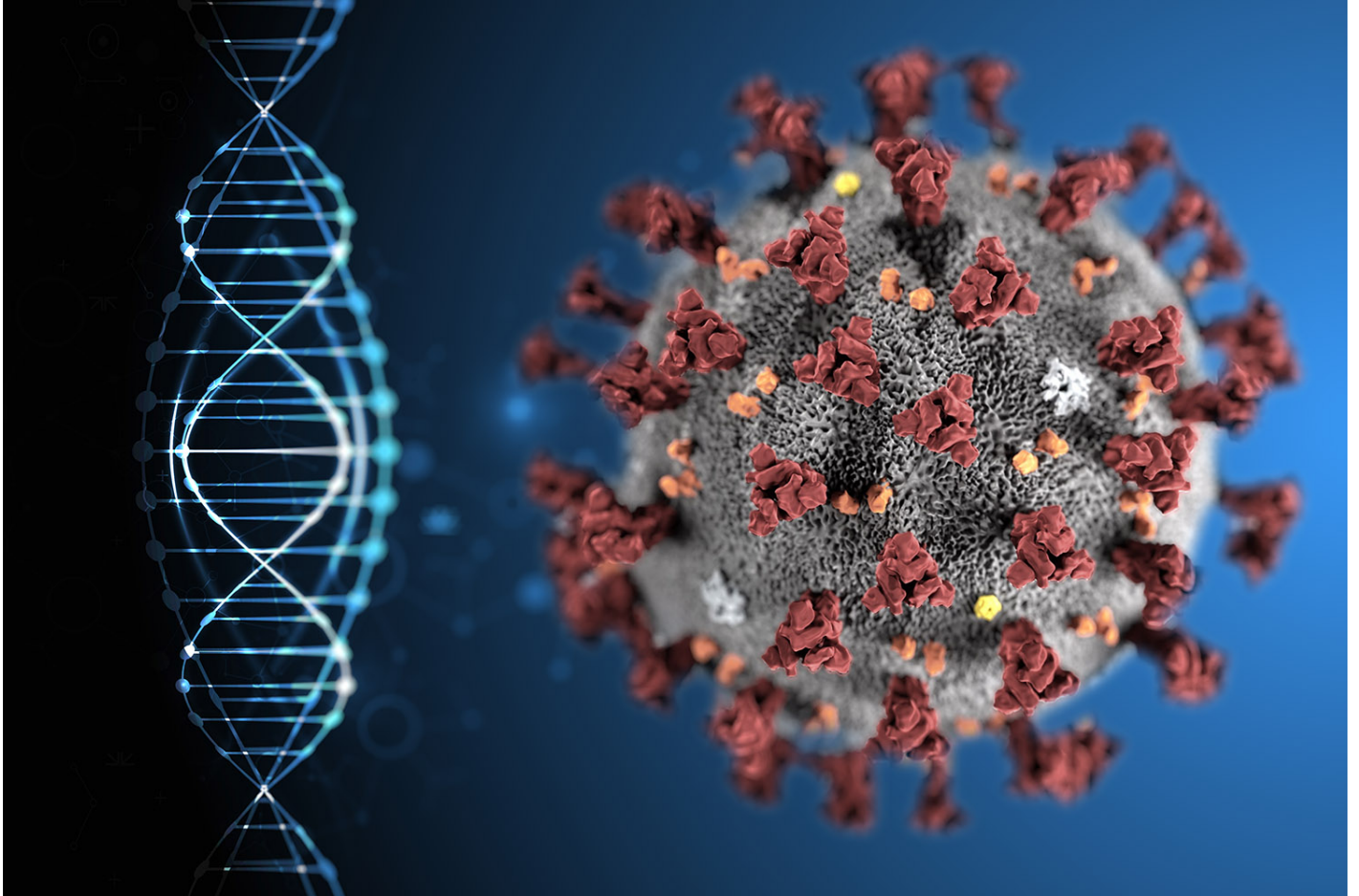


Viruses: What Are They and Where Did They Come From?

written by Tim Jennings, M.D. | March 17, 2020



Given the current COVID-19 pandemic I thought it might be helpful to have a blog on viruses, what are they and where did they come from?

Viruses are coded information that infect other systems and co-opt original function to replicate themselves.

In living organisms, viruses are made out of coded DNA or RNA that hijack the machinery of living cells to construct more of themselves, typically until either the cells or organisms die or the defense mechanisms of the organism eliminates them. Viruses are sometimes called “replicators” because they take the resources of the living cell and replicate more of the virus until the cell dies, explodes, and then infects other cells to do the same thing. If this process isn’t stopped by the body’s immune response, it results in the death of the host, along with the virus.

In computers, viruses are made of coded information written in the language of the program it is targeted to infect. These viruses will take over various operations of the original program and redirect the function of the computer to either replicate more virus code to infect more systems or carry out new

directives contrary to the original programming.

One commonly asked question about viruses is: Are viruses that infect living organisms alive? In other words, are viruses themselves living organisms? In the scientific world, this is often debated without a final conclusion, and viruses are often described as “being on the edge of life.” This is because the evolutionary worldview has no working explanations as to the origins of viruses and, thus, can’t decide whether they are truly alive.

But, in the biblical worldview, God created life on earth without disease, defect, or death. Life requires three elements to exist—physical matter, energy, and coded information found in the genetic material of all living organisms. God would not only have created the physical matter, such as the atoms He built together into proteins, lipids, carbohydrates, DNA, and RNA; He would not only have provided the life-giving energy (breath of life); but God would also have written the code—organizing the DNA and RNA letters into the complex coded information that is contained in our chromosomes and is necessary for life.

The life that God created in Eden was flawless, sinless, and without any “bad code” or defects of any kind. When Microsoft and Apple coders write the code necessary for their computers to operate, it is written without viruses. So too, God wrote the code that governs the operations of our physical bodies into our genes—and that code was written without defect and without viruses.

When Microsoft and Apple release their operating systems, viruses do not spontaneously generate from those systems. Likewise, when God created life on earth, it was virus-free and viruses did not spontaneously generate from His creation.

But malicious people can examine the computer operating systems and then choose to hack it, purposely writing new code designed to infect and alter the software’s original function. Satan does not have the power to create life, but being malevolent and intelligent, he is capable of corrupting God’s creation and, thus, after Adam sinned, Satan infected creation with physical viruses—code that was designed to corrupt the physical health of all living organisms on earth.

Jesus said,

The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. The owner’s servants came to him and said, “Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?” “An enemy did this,” he replied (Matthew 13:24–28 NIV84).

The apostle Paul said,

For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time (Romans 8:20–23 NIV84).

The Bible teaches that after Adam sinned, Satan had access to this world. He could now “hack” the genetic code, taking pieces of DNA and RNA, and manipulate it to construct viruses intended to damage and corrupt God’s creation, causing disease, defects, and death. One Bible commentary explains it this

way:

Not one noxious plant was placed in the Lord's great garden, but after Adam and Eve sinned, poisonous herbs sprang up. In the parable of the sower the question was asked the Master, "Didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? how then hath it tares?" The Master answered, "An enemy hath done this." All tares are sown by the evil one. Every noxious herb is of his sowing, and by his ingenious methods of amalgamation he has corrupted the earth with tares (Manuscript 65, 1899 [published in F. D. Nichol, Ellen G. White and Her Critics], Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary Vol. 1, p. 1086.2).

Viruses were not part of God's original creation; this is why our immune systems fight to eliminate them. Our immune systems operate like computer antivirus software, constantly monitoring for any infection and seeking to eliminate any virus when identified in order to restore us to health—to our original operations.

Viruses are also an apt metaphor for sin itself. Sin is an infection of the mind—a thought virus—bad code that takes over the original design of our minds and co-opts the system from love and trust to fear and selfishness, which it self-propagates. If not stopped, sin is fatal in 100% of cases.

God sent His Son in order to fix this sin-sick condition. Jesus, as a human, was tempted in every way just like we are but was without sin (Hebrews 2:14). Each one of us "is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed" (James 1:14 NIV84). But in the humanity of Jesus, God's original design for life, truth, love, and freedom overcame the viral infection of lies, fear, and selfishness. God's original programming was carried out by the choices of Jesus, who purged the sin-virus from the humanity He assumed. Thus, Jesus destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light (2 Timothy 1:10).

When we trust Jesus and open our hearts to Him, the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts and writes God's law (His original operating system) on our hearts and minds:

This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel
after that time, declares the Lord.
I will put my laws in their minds
and write them on their hearts (Hebrews 8:10 NIV84).

God's original code for life, for the operation of our hearts and minds, His design law of love, is restored in us as we become partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). Our characters are transformed, and we are restored in heart and mind to be at-one with God. Then, for all who have experienced this restoration of godly character from Christ, we will receive physical transformation when He returns. At the second coming of Christ, all the damage to the DNA and RNA code will be removed and we mortals will put on immortality, this corruption will put on incorruptions! (1 Corinthians 15:42).

So as the world struggles with the COVID-19 pandemic, don't be discouraged; we can be sure that, because of Jesus, God will heal and restore from every defect and disease all who trust Him.
