
Carolus Linnaeus: The Biography and His Contribution to Science

THE BIOGRAPHY OF CAROLUS LINNAEUS

EARLY LIFE

Carolus Linnaeus was born to Christina Brodersonia and Nils Linnaeus, a church minister and botanist. Linnaeus was born in Rashult, Sweden on May 23, 1707. Growing up, Linnaeus was educated in the subjects of latin, religion and botany. Linnaeus's interest in botany flourished as he spent more of his time in his father's garden. When it was time for Linnaeus to start school, at the age of ten, he was described as a mediocre student. Many of his teachers believed him to be dense and unable to go to university. John Rothman, a medical doctor and one of Linnaeus' teachers, believed Linnaeus was highly intelligent. And that Linnaeus was not dense, but rather, he lacked interest in the conventional subjects of the time. As a result he requested to tutor Linnaeus in the field of medicine. Rothman tutored Linnaeus in anatomy, physiology and botany.

Linnaeus first began his university studies in Lund University at the age of 21, and later transferred to Uppsala University in 1728 in hopes of taking better courses. Sadly, this transfer did not offer Linnaeus what he wanted. Uppsala University lacked lecturers knowledgeable in the field of botany. Olof Celsius, who was a theologian, naturalist, and an uncle to Anders Celsius, the inventor of the celsius thermometer, began to take notice of Linnaeus' profound interest and knowledge of plants. Olof Rudbeck the Younger, a professor, was quite impressed with an essay written by the young Linnaeus, to the extent that he asked Linnaeus to become a lecturer. Linnaeus began teaching botany in 1730, at the age of 23.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO SCIENCE

Carolus Linnaeus travelled on an expeditions to Lapland, Finland and other parts of Sweden in the years 1732 to 1735. In the first year of his expedition, Linnaeus came to know over a 100 new plants. He also wrote a book called Flora Lapponica. It was at this time that Linnaeus began to use his new binomial system to describe the plants he had found, and would later be used for animals also. During his expeditions, Linnaeus was still a student, until he graduated from the University of Harderwijk in Holland. It was at this university that Linnaeus received his medical degree for his research in intermittent fevers, specifically malaria. Linnaeus' book, Systema Naturae (The System of Nature), was published in 1737, thanks to the help of Johan

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Frederik Gronovius, a Dutch botanist. In this manuscript, Linnaeus introduced taxonomy, also known as classification of nature. This system ordered nature into three Kingdoms: stones, plants, and animals. The kingdoms were further subdivided into classes, orders, genera, species, and varieties.

As Linnaeus continued to make new discoveries, he added them to the ever growing *Systema Naturae*. At the 30 year mark his manuscript had grown from 12 pages to 2,400 pages in its twelfth edition. Linnaeus is accredited for our modern taxonomic system because of the simplicity of his system. This classification system was organized by the resemblances between organisms. Linnaeus became a physician in Stockholm and established the Royal Swedish Academy of Science after his return to Sweden in 1738.

Later in 1741, Linnaeus married Sara Elisabeth Moraea and became a professor of medicine. In 1750 he became a rector at Uppsala University. Linnaeus never stopped in his research. By 1753, he published *Species Plantarum* (Plant Species), this work contained 6,000 new discoveries which he then classified using the binomial system. Linnaeus has been credited for naming and classifying about 13,000 lifeforms into categories like mammals, birds, fish, primates, canines, etc. Linnaeus was commended for his great contributions to science by the King of Sweden in 1747, he was given the position of chief royal physician. He then changed his name to Carl von Linné, after he was knighted in 1758.

Linnaeus passed away on January 10, 1778 due to a stroke, but he will forever be remembered for his revolutionary work in botany and creating our modern taxonomy system. Among many other contributions, Linnaeus was also the first ecologist.

FAITH

Linnaeus was raised in the Lutheran church and was a known creationist scientist. Linnaeus believed that it was the job of himself and others to study the creations of God and be in awe of its beauty. "The Earth's creation is the glory of God, as seen from the works of Nature by Man alone. The study of nature would reveal the Divine Order of God's creation, and it was the naturalist's task to construct a 'natural classification' that would reveal this Order in the universe" (Linnaeus, Carolus). Linnaeus had the original belief that God created every species that has ever existed or will ever exist, but as he was introduced to hybridization, his views changed/shifted. Hybridization is the idea that new species can develop when genetically varying organisms interbreed. Two organisms that can interbreed must descend from the same family. Linnaeus concluded that God created each species with the ability to form new species according to his own will.

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SCIENCE SUPPORTED BY SCRIPTURE

Is science supported by the Bible? There are many pieces of Scripture that can answer this very question. Since the beginning of time, man was given the authority over all living creatures that God had created. "Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground" (Genesis 1:26 NIV). It is our job as mankind to uncover all of God's creation. "It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings" (Proverbs 25:2 NIV). Is the earth round or flat? According to Isaiah 40:22, the earth is in fact round. "He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers. He stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in." This scripture is evidence for the scientific accuracy within the Bible. Although the Bible doesn't directly mention science, it is scientifically accurate.

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