

Darwin's Theory of Evolution

The Paradigm Shift from Special Creation to Natural Selection



Chapter 6.2 – Evolution of Life Forms

The Historical Status Quo: Special Creation Theory



Before the 19th century, conventional religious literature dominated the understanding of life through the Theory of Special Creation, which rested on three primary connotations:



Immutable Species

All living organisms (species or types) that we see today were created exactly as such.



Static Diversity

The diversity of life was always the same since creation and will remain the same in the future.



A Young Earth

The Earth is only about 4,000 years old.

The Catalyst: Observation Over Dogma



These historical ideas were strongly challenged during the nineteenth century. The shift began with meticulous physical observation during a global sea voyage in a sail ship called the H.M.S. Beagle.

- Charles Darwin embarked on a multi-year journey around the world.
- He collected and analyzed existing living forms, observing their variations across different geographical environments.

The Shift: Biology moved from philosophical assumption to an empirical, observation-based science.



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The Clues: A Web of Biological Similarity

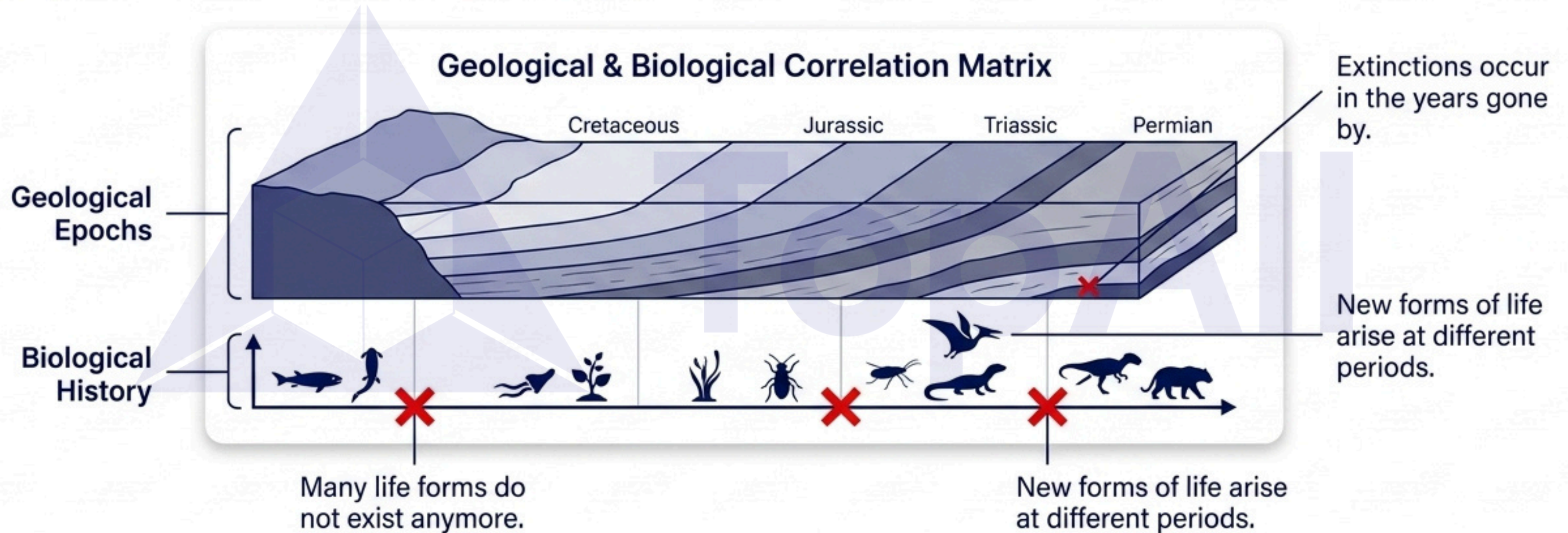
Based on his global observations, Darwin arrived at a groundbreaking conclusion that contradicted the idea of isolated, immutable species.



Existing living forms share similarities to varying degrees—not only among themselves, but also with life forms that existed millions of years ago.

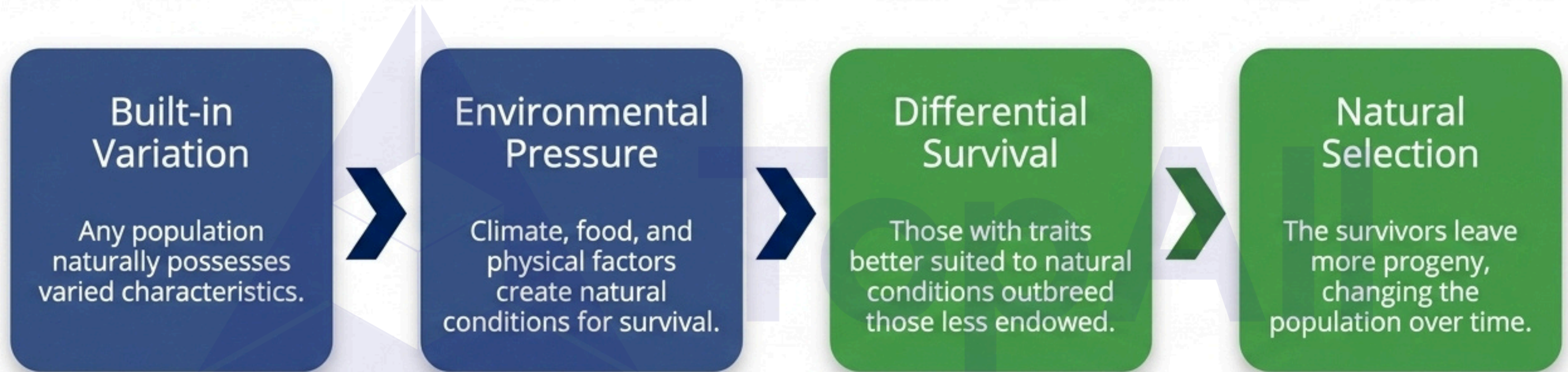
The Realization: Extinction and a Dynamic Earth

There has been a gradual, continuous evolution of life forms, closely tied to the shifting environments of Earth's history.



The Geobiological Link: The geological history of Earth closely correlates with its biological history.
Conclusion: Earth is not thousands, but billions of years old.

The Mechanism: Natural Selection



Amber Quick-Tip

Darwinian Fitness:

According to Darwin, fitness refers ultimately and only to reproductive fitness. Those who are a better fit leave more progeny.

Key Takeaway: The Unified Theory of Life

The Ancestral Web

In due course of time, new types of organisms become recognizable.

All existing life forms share similarities and share common ancestors that existed during different historical epochs.

Independent Confirmation

Alfred Wallace, a naturalist working in the Malay Archipelago, independently came to the exact same conclusions around the same time as Darwin.



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Evolution by Natural Selection is the mechanism that explains the immense, dynamic biodiversity of a billions-of-years-old Earth.



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