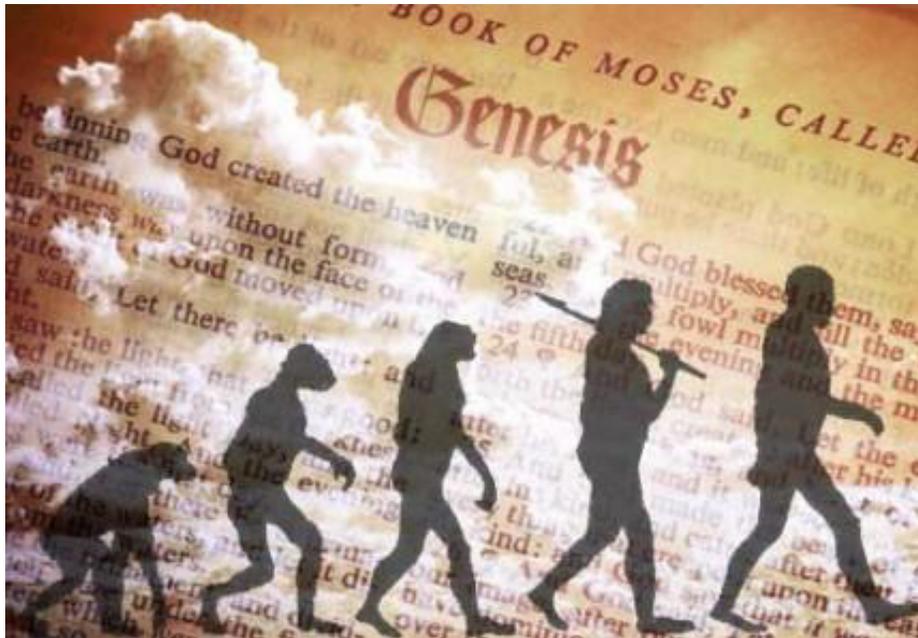


Theistic Evolution

Compatibility or Compromise?



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“In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.”

Genesis 1:1

Where did the world we know come from? How can we know? If God created it, how did He do it? The topic of the origin of the earth has been studied, theorized and debated,¹ resulting in three main worldviews; evolution, creation, and theistic evolution². Evolutionists believe that the world came about by purely natural processes.³ Creationists believe that God personally created the world in six, literal, 24-hour days. The theistic evolutionary worldview holds that God used some form of evolution to create the world. In this essay, we will explore theistic

evolution and evaluate its compatibility with the Bible. We will review our conclusions and their implications in light of God's Word. Many believers have been taught evolution and later embraced theistic evolution in their desire to include God. I hope to encourage these fellow Christians to begin investigating God's Word and the theistic evolutionary worldview.

Defining Theistic Evolution

Theistic evolution (TE) at its core is the belief that the God of the Bible used some form of evolution to create our world.⁴ Though there are exceptions, the theistic evolutionary viewpoint as a whole accepts the Darwinian timeline of the world's origins. The theistic evolutionary view also claims belief in the Bible.⁵

Among TE proponents, there are two common views. One sways almost into the territory of deism.⁶ Their core belief is that God laid down the building blocks and necessary components for the development of intelligent life but then stepped away, leaving His creation to run itself. The other view is commonly known as the "God of the Gaps" theory. This second group holds that God was involved with His creation, and He assisted evolution over the gaps that are unexplainable by naturalistic evolution.⁷

¹ Seegert, Jay. Creation and Evolution: Compatible or in Conflict? Green Forest, AR: Master Books Inc., 2014.

² "What is Theistic Evolution," <https://www.gotquestions.org/theistic-evolution.html>, Got Questions.org, (February 14, 2019) (Accessed March 20, 2019).

³ "Earth: Making of a Planet," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gTsJubN68WE&feature=player-embedded> (January 8, 2015).

⁴ "What is Theistic Evolution," <https://www.gotquestions.org/theistic-evolution.html>, Got Questions.org, (February 14, 2019) (Accessed March 20, 2019).

⁵ White, J. Gene, "Theistic Evolution---A Biblical and Scientific Analysis," www.sunnybrookepub.com/theistic-evolution.html (Accessed March 22, 2019).

⁶ "What is Theistic Evolution," <https://www.gotquestions.org/theistic-evolution.html>, Got Questions.org, (February 14, 2019) (Accessed March 20, 2019).

⁷ *Ibid.*

Theistic Evolution and the Bible

The Bible and evolution need to fit together for theistic evolution to successfully explain origins.⁸ However, many incompatibilities between the Bible and theistic evolution can be found starting right at the beginning. The evolutionary timeline dates the earth as 4.6 billion years old.⁹ Consistent with the Biblical timeline, significant evidence points to the earth being approximately 6,000 years old. The Evolution Handbook by Vance Ferrell lists 58 evidences for a young earth.¹⁰ One of them can be found in Niagara Falls, where the falling water erodes an average of 3.5 feet off the cliff per year. The length of the Niagara Falls gorge is about 7 miles. When calculated out, these factors indicate that the falls are 5,000-10,000 years old. The massive flood would have been responsible for a great deal of erosion, leaving the indicated date of the earth at about 6,000 years old.¹¹

In an attempt to stretch out the six days of Genesis 1, the day-age theory was proposed, suggesting that each day actually represents a long period of time.¹² However, the Hebrew word for day, “yom”, means a literal, 24-hour day.¹³ Exodus 20:11 says, “For in six days, the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is...” Genesis itself could not be clearer as it repeatedly states, “And the evening and the morning were the ... day.”

The controversy intensifies when humans come onto the scene. The Darwinian timeline asserts that man appeared only in the last 7 million years of 3.5 billion years of life evolution.¹⁴ The Bible states that man was created on the sixth day. TE decided that the Bible meant over 3.5 billion years into the evolutionary process.¹⁵ However, Jesus affirmed in Mark 10:6 that “from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.”

In the evolutionary worldview, there is no God in whose image we could be made, and humans are simply advanced apes.¹⁶ Major conflict has arisen over whether humans are made in God’s image. In Genesis 1:27, God asserts that He “created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him.” We are either made in God’s image or advanced apes.

⁸ Klink, Bart, “The Untenability of Theistic Evolution,” <https://infidels.org/library/modern/bart-klink/evolution.html> (2009) (Accessed March 29, 2019).

⁹ “Earth: Making of a Planet,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gTsJubN68WE&feature=player-embedded> (January 8, 2015).

¹⁰ Ferrell, Vance. The Evolution Handbook. Altamont, TN: Evolution Facts, Inc., 2001.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Ham, Ken. The Lie: Evolution. Green Forest, AR: Master Books, Inc., 1987.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ “Earth: Making of a Planet,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gTsJubN68WE&feature=player-embedded> (January 8, 2015).

¹⁵ Klink, Bart, “The Untenability of Theistic Evolution,” <https://infidels.org/library/modern/bart-klink/evolution.html> (2009) (Accessed March 29, 2019).

¹⁶ “Earth: Making of a Planet,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gTsJubN68WE&feature=player-embedded> (January 8, 2015).

Another creation/evolution inconsistency is the question of whether human beings have souls. Modern neurologists attribute the activities of the mind such as willing, thinking, and feeling to the brain.¹⁷ Evolutionists see no need for a soul because these functions have been assigned to the brain, and they do not believe there is anywhere the soul goes after death.¹⁸ TE cannot assign a certain time in which apes received a soul and became human. However, God puts tremendous emphasis on the soul. He clearly states in Genesis 2:7, “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.” Jesus says in Matthew 10:28, “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” Since Christians believe that a person’s soul lives on for eternity after they die, the whole Christian worldview collapses without a soul.

If God used evolution, death and suffering were already present in the world for millions of years before man’s existence¹⁹. Therefore, death and suffering could not have been brought about by man’s rebellion, because Earth was already corrupted. However, Genesis 3 records

the account of the fall of man when Adam and Eve disobeyed God and introduced sin, and thereby death and suffering, into the human race.²⁰

A few chapters and many centuries after the Fall comes Genesis 6-9, which records the judgment of God on a sinful world with a catastrophic worldwide flood. However, if humans were not responsible for evil in the world, why would God punish them? Naturalistic evolution adamantly denies the possibility of this global flood.²¹ The theistic evolutionary worldview tries to blend both opinions by two different explanations.

The first attempt at resolution offers that the flood was local, not worldwide. However, the Hebrew word used for flood, “eret”, makes it apparent that the whole earth was covered with water.²² God also makes himself abundantly clear about His actions. For example, in Genesis 6:17, God says, “And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and everything that is in the earth shall die.” Genesis 7:19-24 reinforces the statement. “And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail, and the mountains were covered. And all flesh died that moved upon the earth... All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the ...face of the ground...and they were destroyed from the earth...and the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days.” The Bible makes it clear that the flood was worldwide.

¹⁷ Klink, Bart, “The Untenability of Theistic Evolution,” <https://infidels.org/library/modern/bart-klink/evolution.html> (2009) (Accessed March 29, 2019).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Ham, Ken. The Lie: Evolution. Green Forest, AR: Master Books, Inc., 1987.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Klink, Bart, “The Untenability of Theistic Evolution,” <https://infidels.org/library/modern/bart-klink/evolution.html> (2009) (Accessed March 29, 2019).

With the first solution falsified, TE also sometimes offers the explanation that the creation, the fall, and the flood as recorded in Genesis are simply allegorical stories.²³ If this is the case, where do we draw the line between allegory and truth? Were Abraham, Moses, and David allegorical characters? What about the crucifixion and resurrection? Jesus, who is God Himself, believed that these individuals and events were literal (John 5:45-47, John 6:31-32, John 8:33-40, John 8:52-59, Matthew 22:41-45, Mark 2:25-26, Matthew 5:45, Matthew 19:4-6, John 3:16-18, Matthew 24:37-39, Luke 17:26-27). He declares in Matthew 24:38, “For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark. And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” Peter also states, “Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.” (2 Peter 3:6). In Romans 5:19, Paul points out, “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” Based on the testimony of Jesus and others, we can confidently receive these accounts as accurate, historical narrative.

Understanding that the Genesis accounts were not intended as allegory, many TE proponents make another attempt, suggesting that Genesis was only written to be understandable by its ancient contemporaries.²⁴ However, it would be entirely possible to make the account understandable and accurate. The author could have noted if humans descended from animals, he could have noted long intermittent time periods, and he could have treated Adam and Eve, the Fall, and the Flood metaphorically.²⁵ However, he did none of these.

Finally, one of the most significant, negative implications of theistic evolution is its impact on our view of God Himself. The idea that God used evolution destroys multiple aspects of His character. For example, evolution is, by its own admission, a cruel and merciless process filled with suffering.²⁶ Since mankind was supposedly nonexistent for almost the first 4 billion years, he could not have sinned and brought death and suffering into the world.²⁷ This makes all the cruelty, suffering, and death before mankind God's fault.²⁸ Furthermore, since in this view, mankind is not responsible for sin, death, and suffering in the world, punishing them for something they did not cause would be unfair of God. Another indictment against God's character is seen in His apparent wastefulness if He used evolution.²⁹ He allowed billions of pointless years, billions of cruel mutations and billions of extinct organisms in His progression toward mankind.³⁰ However, the Scriptures continuously remind us that our loving Creator is gracious and just and wise.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ DeWitt, David A., "Why I Rejected Theistic Evolution," <https://answersingenesis.org/theistic-evolution/why-i-rejected-theistic-evolution/> (January 12, 2004) (Accessed March 29, 2019).

²⁸ Ham, Ken. *The Lie: Evolution*. Green Forest, AR: Master Books, Inc., 1987.

²⁹ Klink, Bart, "The Untenability of Theistic Evolution," <https://infidels.org/library/modern/bart-klink/evolution.html> (2009) (Accessed March 29, 2019).

³⁰ *Ibid.*

On the Darwinian Tree of Life, there is no progression toward humans as though they were the final goal; instead they are only a small branch.³¹ In fact, they are only a different type of animal, and not unique. However, God says that humans are the pinnacle of His creation. In Genesis 1:28, God blessed mankind whom He just created in His image and breathed into him the breath of life, and He clearly is favoring them above all His other creation. "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.'" In Psalm 8:5-6, God again states the uniqueness and superiority of humans over the rest of His creation. "For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet:"

Evolution is Not a Rational Alternative

Now that the Bible and TE have been shown to be incompatible with one another, some Christians may feel themselves in a worse dilemma than before. Having been taught that evolution is the real science of origins and the Bible is a book of faith, how can we answer the original questions? Where did the world we know come from? How can we know? If God created it, how did He do it? Is it possible that evolution did not need to be involved at all? The evolutionary view has many significant and unbridged chasms as well.

One of the most foundational assumptions in evolutionary theory is abiogenesis, the idea that life can come from non-life.³² However, this has never been observed and is scientifically impossible. Only life produces life. So where did all the life around us begin? Many theories have been proposed, but all of them require abiogenesis because the possibility of an eternal God starting life is ruled out.³³ These impossible necessities have led many devoted evolutionists to question their stance.

Dr. Francis Crick, Nobel Prize-winning co-discoverer of the DNA molecule and outspoken atheist candidly lamented, "Every time I write a paper on the origin of life, I determine I will never write another one, because there is too much speculation running after too few facts."³⁴

Dr. Per Bak, theoretical physicist from the Niels Bohr Institute, Copenhagen, gives his opinion on the subject. "We are nowhere near understanding the origin of life. But let us try to avoid invoking miracles."³⁵

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Seegert, Jay. Creation and Evolution: Compatible or in Conflict? Green Forest, AR: Master Books Inc., 2014.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

Dr. Francis Crick acknowledges his difficulty with this statement. "An honest man, armed with all the knowledge available to us now, could only state that in some sense, the origin of life appears at this moment to be almost a miracle, so many are the conditions which would have had to have been satisfied to get it going."³⁶

One of the most crucial, unsolved problems with the evolutionary theory is the very existence of information. The laws of informational science tell us that information only arises from an intelligent source like a brain.³⁷ Nobody walks into a library looking for books written by mindless, random chance processes.³⁸ So how much more impossible is it to believe that the information in our DNA arose by random chance processes? Information demands intelligence, yet the information in our DNA, so complicated that even a computer cannot replicate it, is supposed to have written itself through mutations and natural selection.³⁹

Another unresolved difficulty in the evolutionary theory is seen in our planet's prime living conditions. Jay Seegert's book, Creation and Evolution: Compatible or in Conflict, lists thirteen

fine-tuned attributes critical for our survival.⁴⁰ If any one of these crucial parameters were not in place, our earth would not be habitable. How could chance strike this amazing balance? The mathematical lack of probability is astronomical. Evolution is incapable of satisfactorily explaining the perfect habitability of our planet with random chance processes.⁴¹

In Light of God's Word

As we have seen, the Bible and theistic evolution are inconsistent with one another. Evolution also has major unexplainable loopholes. We can believe God's Word. God is the only One who was an eyewitness, and He is the only One who claims to be. In Genesis 1-3, God tells us clearly how He created the earth in six days. I encourage you to examine the evidence in many different areas, such as the self-reproducing, complex and microscopic machines in cellular biology, the lack of transitional forms in the fossil record, and the evidence against a common ancestor in DNA sequencing. Scientist Francis Bacon asserted, "A little science estranges a man from God; a lot of science brings him back."⁴²

"For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist."

Colossians 1:16

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Kerby, Carl, "There's No Evidence for God," <https://www.rforh.com/portfolio-item/debunked-theres-no-evidence-for-god> (Accessed April 27, 2019).

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Seegert, Jay. Creation and Evolution: Compatible or in Conflict? Green Forest, AR: Master Books Inc., 2014.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² FB-AZ Quotes.com, <https://www.azquotes.com/author/751-Francis-Bacon> (Accessed April 26, 2019).

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