

## CREATION: BELIEVE IT OR NOT\*

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*Naturalism has replaced Christianity as the main religion of the Western world. Though the teaching that natural evolutionary processes can account of the origin of all living species has never been proven, that teaching is central to the philosophy that now dominates Western scholarly thinking. Even evangelicals have become less willing to defend the early chapters of Genesis against the encroachments of evolutionary thought, although in actuality affirming an “old earth” theory and remaining evangelical is an inconsistency. A “framework” approach to those chapters does not square with a consistent hermeneutical approach to Scripture, because the first chapter of Genesis teaches that God created the world in a normal week of seven days. The purpose of evolution is to explain away the God of the Bible. The absurd teaching of the Big Bang theory of evolution is that nobody times nothing equals everything. It is a theory that raises an almost endless array of unsolvable problems. It is degrading to humanity, hostile to reasons, and antithetical to the truth that God has revealed. When one starts adapting the Word of God to fit scientific theories based on naturalistic beliefs, he has begun his journey on the road to skepticism.*

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### Introduction

Thanks to the theory of evolution, naturalism is now the dominant religion of modern society. Less than a century and a half ago, Charles Darwin popularized the credo for this secular religion with his book *The Origin of Species*. Although most of Darwin’s theories about the mechanisms of evolution were discarded long ago, the doctrine of evolution itself has managed to achieve the status of a fundamental article of faith in the popular modern mind. Naturalism has now

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replaced Christianity as the main religion of the Western world, and evolution has become naturalism's principal dogma.

*Naturalism* is the view that every law and every force operating in the universe is natural rather than moral, spiritual, or supernatural. Naturalism is inherently anti-theistic, rejecting the very concept of a personal God. Many assume naturalism therefore has nothing to do with religion. In fact, it is a common misconception that naturalism embodies the very essence of scientific objectivity. Naturalists themselves like to portray their system as a philosophy that stands in opposition to all faith-based worldviews, pretending that it is scientifically and intellectually superior precisely because of its supposed non-religious character.

Not so. *Religion* is exactly the right word to describe naturalism. The entire philosophy is built on a faith-based premise. Its basic presupposition—an a priori rejection of everything supernatural—requires a giant leap of faith. And nearly all its supporting theories must be taken by faith as well.<sup>1</sup>

Consider the dogma of evolution, for example. The notion that natural evolutionary processes can account for the origin of all living species has never been and never will be established as *fact*. Nor is it “scientific” in any true sense of the word. Science deals with what can be observed and reproduced by experimentation. The origin of life can be neither observed nor reproduced in any laboratory. By definition, then, true science can furnish no knowledge whatsoever about where the human race came from or how it got here. Belief in evolutionary theory is a matter of sheer faith. And *dogmatic* belief in any naturalistic theory is no more “scientific” than any other kind of religious faith.

Modern naturalism is often promulgated with a missionary zeal that has powerful religious overtones. The popular fish symbol many Christians put on their cars now has a naturalist counterpart: a fish with feet and the word “Darwin” embossed into its side. The Internet has become naturalism's busiest mission field, where evangelists for the cause aggressively try to deliver benighted souls who still cling to their theistic presuppositions. Judging from the tenor of some of the material I have read seeking to win converts to naturalism, naturalists are often dedicated to their faith with a devout passion that rivals or easily exceeds the fanaticism of any radical religious zealot. Naturalism is clearly as much a religion as any theistic worldview.

The point is further proved by examining the beliefs of those naturalists who claim to be *most* unfettered by religious beliefs. Take, for example, the case of Carl Sagan, perhaps the best-known scientific celebrity of the past couple of

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<sup>1</sup>Michael Ruse is an evolutionist who testified in the 1980s' infamous Arkansas creationism trial (McLean v. Arkansas). During the trial, he claimed that creationism is a religion because it is grounded in unproven philosophical assumptions. But Darwinism is a science, he said, because it requires no philosophical or religious presuppositions. Ruse has since admitted that he was wrong, and he now acknowledges that evolution “is metaphysically based”—grounded in unproven beliefs that are no more “scientific” than the set of beliefs on which creationism is based. See Tom Woodward, “Ruse Gives Away the Store: Admits Evolution is a Philosophy” on the “Origins” website (<http://www.origins.org/real/ri9404/ruse.html>).

decades. A renowned astronomer and media figure, Sagan was overtly antagonistic to biblical theism. But he became the chief televangelist for the religion of naturalism. He preached a worldview that was based entirely on naturalistic assumptions. Underlying all he taught was the firm conviction that everything in the universe has a natural cause and a natural explanation. That belief—a matter of faith, not a truly scientific observation—governed and shaped every one of his theories about the universe.

Sagan examined the vastness and complexity of the universe and concluded—as he was bound to do, given his starting point—that there is nothing greater than the universe itself. So he borrowed divine attributes such as infinitude, eternity, and omnipotence, and he made them properties of the universe itself.

“The cosmos is all that is, or ever was, or ever will be,” was Sagan’s trademark aphorism, repeated on each episode of his highly-rated television series, *Cosmos*. The statement itself is clearly a tenet of faith, not a scientific conclusion. (Neither Sagan himself nor all the scientists in the world combined could ever examine “all that is or ever was or ever will be” by any scientific method.) Sagan’s slogan is perfectly illustrative of how modern naturalism mistakes religious dogma for true science.

Sagan’s religion was actually a kind of naturalistic pantheism, and his motto sums it up perfectly. He deified the universe and everything in it—insisting that the cosmos itself is that which was, and is, and is to come (cf. Revelation 4:8). Having examined enough of the cosmos to see evidence of the Creator’s infinite power and majesty, he imputed that omnipotence and glory to creation itself—precisely the error the apostle Paul describes in Rom 1:20-22:

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools.<sup>2</sup>

Exactly like the idolaters Paul was describing, Sagan put creation in the Creator’s rightful place.

Carl Sagan looked at the universe and saw its greatness and concluded nothing could possibly be greater. His religious presuppositions forced him to deny that the universe was the result of intelligent design. In fact, as a devoted naturalist, he *had* to deny that it was created at all. Therefore he saw it as eternal and infinite—so it naturally took the place of God in his thinking.

The religious character of the philosophy that shaped Sagan’s worldview is evident in much of what he wrote and said. His novel *Contact* (made into a major motion picture in 1997) is loaded with religious metaphors and imagery. It is about the discovery of extraterrestrial life, which occurs in December 1999, at the dawn

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<sup>2</sup>Scripture quotations are from the New King James Bible unless otherwise noted.

of a new millennium, when the world is rife with Messianic expectations and apocalyptic fears. In Sagan's imagination, the discovery of intelligent life elsewhere in the universe becomes the "revelation" that affords a basis for the fusing of science and religion into a worldview that perfectly mirrors Sagan's own belief system—with the cosmos as God and scientists as the new priesthood.

Sagan's religion included the belief that the human race is nothing special. Given the incomprehensible vastness of the universe and the impersonality of it all, how could humanity possibly be important? Sagan concluded that our race is not significant at all. In December 1996, less than three weeks before Sagan died, he was interviewed by Ted Koppel on "Nightline." Sagan knew he was dying, and Koppel asked him, "Dr. Sagan, do you have any pearls of wisdom that you would like to give to the human race?"

Sagan replied,

We live on a hunk of rock and metal that circles a humdrum star that is one of 400 billion other stars that make up the Milky Way Galaxy, which is one of billions of other galaxies, which make up a universe, which may be one of a very large number—perhaps an infinite number—of other universes. That is a perspective on human life and our culture that is well worth pondering.<sup>3</sup>

In a book published posthumously, Sagan wrote, "Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark. In our obscurity, in all this vastness, there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves."<sup>4</sup>

Although Sagan resolutely tried to maintain a semblance of optimism to the bitter end, his religion led where all naturalism inevitably leads: to a sense of utter insignificance and despair. According to his worldview, humanity occupies a tiny outpost—a pale blue speck in a vast sea of galaxies. As far as we know, we are unnoticed by the rest of the universe, accountable to no one, and petty and irrelevant in a cosmos so expansive. It is fatuous to talk of outside help or redemption for the human race. No help is forthcoming. It would be nice if we somehow managed to solve some of our problems, but whether we do or not will ultimately be a forgotten bit of cosmic trivia. That, said Sagan, is a perspective well worth pondering.

All of this underscores the spiritual barrenness of naturalism. The naturalist's religion erases all moral and ethical accountability, and it ultimately abandons all hope for humanity. If the impersonal cosmos is all there is, all there ever was, and all there ever will be, then morality is ultimately moot. If there is no personal Creator to whom humanity is accountable and the survival of the fittest is the governing law of the universe, all the moral principles that normally regulate the human conscience are ultimately groundless—and possibly even deleterious to the survival of our species.

Indeed, the rise of naturalism has meant moral catastrophe for modern

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<sup>3</sup>*ABC News Nightline*, December 4, 1996.

<sup>4</sup>*Pale Blue Dot* (New York: Random House, 1994) 9.

society. The most damaging ideologies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were all rooted in Darwinism. One of Darwin's earliest champions, Thomas Huxley, gave a lecture in 1893 in which he argued that evolution and ethics are incompatible. He wrote that "the practice of that which is ethically best—what we call goodness or virtue—involves a course of conduct which, in all respects, is opposed to that which leads to success in the cosmic struggle for existence."<sup>5</sup>

Philosophers who incorporated Darwin's ideas were quick to see Huxley's point, conceiving new philosophies that set the stage for the amorality and genocide that characterized so much of the twentieth century.

Karl Marx, for example, self-consciously followed Darwin in the devising of his economic and social theories. He inscribed a copy of his book *Das Kapital* to Darwin, "from a devoted admirer." He referred to Darwin's *The Origin of Species* as "the book which contains the basis in natural history for our view."<sup>6</sup>

Herbert Spencer's philosophy of "Social Darwinism" applied the doctrines of evolution and the survival of the fittest to human societies. Spencer argued that if nature itself has determined that the strong survive and the weak perish, this rule should govern society as well. Racial and class distinctions simply reflect nature's way. There is therefore no transcendent moral reason to be sympathetic to the struggle of the disadvantaged classes. It is, after all, part of the natural evolutionary process—and society would actually be improved by recognizing the superiority of the dominant classes and encouraging their ascendancy. The racialism of writers such as Ernst Haeckel (who believed that the African races were incapable of culture or higher mental development) was also rooted in Darwinism.

Friedrich Nietzsche's whole philosophy was based on the doctrine of evolution. Nietzsche was bitterly hostile to religion, particularly Christianity. Christian morality embodied the essence of everything Nietzsche hated; he believed Christ's teaching glorified human weakness and was detrimental to the development of the human race. He scoffed at Christian moral values such as humility, mercy, modesty, meekness, compassion for the powerless, and service to one another. He believed such ideals had bred weakness in society. Nietzsche saw two types of people—the master-class, an enlightened, dominant minority; and the "herd," sheeplike followers who were easily led. And he concluded that the only hope for humanity would be when the master-class evolved into a race of *Übermenschen* (supermen), unencumbered by religious or social mores, who would take power and

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<sup>5</sup>"Evolution and Ethics," The Romanes Lecture, 1893. Huxley nonetheless went on to try to justify ethics as a positive result of humanity's higher rational functions, and he called upon his audience neither to imitate "the cosmic process" nor to run away from it, but rather to combat it—ostensibly by maintaining some semblance of morality and ethics. But what he could not do—what he and other philosophers of his era did not even bother attempting to do—was offer any justification for assuming the validity of morality and ethics per se on purely naturalistic principles. Huxley and his fellow naturalists could offer no moral compass other than their own personal preferences, and predictably, their philosophies all opened the door wide for complete moral subjectivity and ultimately amorality.

<sup>6</sup>Stephen Jay Gould, *Ever Since Darwin* (New York: Norton, 1977) 26.

bring humanity to the next stage of its evolution.

It is not surprising that Nietzsche's philosophy laid the foundation for the Nazi movement in Germany. What *is* surprising is that at the dawn of the twenty-first century, Nietzsche's reputation has been rehabilitated by philosophical spin-doctors and his writings are once again trendy in the academic world. Indeed, his philosophy—or something very nearly like it—is what naturalism must inevitably return to.

All of these philosophies are based on notions that are diametrically opposed to a biblical view of the nature of man, because they all start by embracing a Darwinian view of the origin of humanity. They are rooted in anti-Christian theories about human origins and the origin of the cosmos, and therefore it is no wonder that they stand in opposition to biblical principles at every level.

The simple fact of the matter is that *all* the philosophical fruits of Darwinism have been negative, ignoble, and destructive to the very fabric of society. Not one of the major twentieth-century revolutions led by post-Darwinian philosophies ever improved or ennobled any society. Instead, the chief social and political legacy of Darwinian thought is a full spectrum of evil tyranny with Marx-inspired communism at one extreme and Nietzsche-inspired fascism at the other. And the moral catastrophe that has disfigured modern Western society is also directly traceable to Darwinism and the rejection of the early chapters of Genesis.

At this moment in history, even though most of modern society is already fully committed to an evolutionary and naturalistic worldview, our society still benefits from the collective memory of a biblical worldview. People in general still believe human life is special. They still hold remnants of biblical morality, such as the notion that love is the greatest virtue (1 Cor 13:13); service to one another is better than fighting for personal dominion (Matt 20:25-27); and humility and submission are superior to arrogance and rebellion (1 Pet 5:5). But to whatever degree secular society still holds those virtues in esteem, it does so entirely without any philosophical foundation. Having already rejected the God revealed in Scripture and embraced instead pure naturalistic materialism, the modern mind has no grounds whatsoever for holding to *any* ethical standard; no reason whatsoever for esteeming "virtue" over "vice"; and no justification whatsoever for regarding human life as more valuable than any other form of life. Modern society has already abandoned its moral foundation.

As humanity enters the twenty-first century, an even more frightening prospect looms. Now even the church seems to be losing the will to defend what Scripture teaches about human origins. Many in the church are too intimidated or too embarrassed to affirm the literal truth of the biblical account of creation. They are confused by a chorus of authoritative-sounding voices who insist that it *is* possible—and even pragmatically necessary—to reconcile Scripture with the latest theories of the naturalists.

Of course, theological liberals have long espoused theistic evolution. They have never been reluctant to deny the literal truth of Scripture on any issue. But the new trend is different, comprising evangelicals who contend that it is possible to

harmonize Genesis 1–3 with the theories of modern naturalism *without* doing violence to any essential doctrine of Christianity. They affirm evangelical statements of faith. They teach in evangelical institutions. They insist they believe the Bible is inerrant and authoritative. But they are willing to reinterpret Genesis to accommodate evolutionary theory. They express shock and surprise that anyone would question their approach to Scripture. And they sometimes employ the same sort of ridicule and intimidation religious liberals and atheistic skeptics have always leveled against believers: “You don’t *seriously* think the universe is less than a billion years old, do you?”

The result is that over the past couple of decades, large numbers of evangelicals have shown a surprising willingness to take a completely non-evangelical approach to interpreting the early chapters of Genesis. More and more are embracing the view known as “old-earth creationism,” which blends some of the principles of biblical creationism with naturalistic and evolutionary theories, seeking to reconcile two opposing worldviews. And in order to accomplish this, old-earth creationists end up explaining away rather than honestly exegeting the biblical creation account.

A handful of scientists who profess Christianity are among those who have led the way in this revisionism—most of them lacking any skill whatsoever in biblical interpretation. But they are setting forth a major reinterpretation of Genesis 1–3 designed specifically to accommodate the current trends of naturalist theory. In their view, the six days of creation in Genesis 1 are long ages, the chronological order of creation is flexible, and most of the details about creation given in Scripture can be written off as poetic or symbolic figures of speech.

Many who should know better—pastors and Christian leaders who defend the faith against false teachings all the time—have been tempted to give up the battle for the opening chapters of Genesis. An evangelical pastor recently approached me after I preached. He was confused and intimidated by several books he had read—all written by ostensibly evangelical authors—yet all arguing that the earth is billions of years old. These authors treat most of the evolutionists’ theories as indisputable scientific fact. And in some cases they wield scientific or academic credentials that intimidate readers into thinking their views are the result of superior expertise, rather than naturalistic presuppositions they have brought to the biblical text. This pastor asked if I believed it possible that the first three chapters of Genesis might really be just a series of literary devices—a poetic saga giving the “spiritual” meaning of what actually occurred through billions of years of evolution.

I answered unapologetically: *No, I do not*. I am convinced that Genesis 1–3 ought to be taken at face value—as the divinely revealed history of creation. Nothing about the Genesis text itself suggests that the biblical creation account is merely symbolic, poetic, allegorical, or mythical. The main thrust of the passage simply cannot be reconciled with the notion that “creation” occurred via natural evolutionary processes over long periods of time. And I do not believe a faithful handling of the biblical text, by any acceptable principles of hermeneutics, can possibly reconcile these chapters with the theory of evolution or any of the other allegedly

scientific theories about the origin of the universe.

Furthermore, much like the philosophical and moral chaos that results from naturalism, all sorts of theological mischief ensues when one rejects or compromises the literal truth of the biblical account of creation and the fall of Adam.

I realize, of course, that some old-earth creationists *do* hold to the literal creation of Adam and affirm that Adam was a historical figure. But their decision to accept the creation of Adam as literal involves an arbitrary hermeneutical shift at Genesis 1:26-27 and then again at Genesis 2:7. If everything around these verses is handled allegorically or symbolically, it is unjustifiable to take those verses in a literal and historical sense. Therefore, the old-earth creationists' method of interpreting the Genesis text actually undermines the historicity of Adam. Having already decided to treat the creation account itself as myth or allegory, they have no grounds to insist (suddenly and arbitrarily, it seems) that the creation of Adam is literal history. Their belief in a historical Adam is simply inconsistent with their own exegesis of the rest of the text.

But it is a *necessary* inconsistency if one is to affirm an old earth and *remain* evangelical. Because if Adam was not the literal ancestor of the entire human race, then the Bible's explanation of how sin entered the world is impossible to make sense of. Moreover, if we did not fall in Adam, we cannot be redeemed in Christ, because Christ's position as the Head of the redeemed race exactly parallels Adam's position as the head of the fallen race: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive" (1 Cor 15:22). "Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous" (Rom 5:18-19). "And so it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being.' The last Adam became a life-giving spirit" (1 Cor 15:45; cf. 1 Tim 2:13-14; Jude 14).

So in an important sense, everything Scripture says about salvation through Jesus Christ hinges on the literal truth of what Genesis 1-3 teaches about Adam's creation and fall. There is no more pivotal passage of Scripture.

What "old-earth creationists" (including, to a large degree, even the evangelical ones) are doing with Genesis 1-3 is precisely what religious liberals have always done with *all* of Scripture—spiritualizing and reinterpreting the text allegorically to make it mean what they want it to mean. It is a dangerous way to handle Scripture. And it involves a perilous and unnecessary capitulation to the religious presuppositions of naturalism—not to mention a serious dishonor to God.

Evangelicals who accept an old-earth interpretation of Genesis have embraced a hermeneutic that is hostile to a high view of Scripture. They are bringing to the opening chapters of Scripture a method of biblical interpretation that has built-in anti-evangelical presuppositions. Those who adopt this approach have already embarked on a process that invariably overthrows faith. Churches and colleges that embrace this view will not remain evangelical for very long.

One popular view held by many old-earth advocates is known as the

“framework hypothesis.” This is the belief that the “days” of creation are not even distinct eras, but overlapping stages of a long evolutionary process. According to this view, the six days described in Genesis 1 do not set forth a chronology of any kind, but rather a metaphorical “framework” by which the creative process is described for our finite human minds.

This view was apparently first set forth by liberal German theologians in the nineteenth century, but it has been adopted and propagated in recent years by some leading evangelicals, most notably Dr. Meredith G. Kline of Westminster Theological Seminary.

The framework hypothesis starts with the view that the “days” of creation in Genesis 1 are symbolic expressions that have nothing to do with time. Framework advocates note the obvious parallelism between days one and four (the creation of light and the placing of lights in the firmament), days two and five (the separation of air and water and the creation of fish and birds to inhabit air and water), and days three and six (the emergence of the dry land and the creation of land animals)—and they suggest that such parallelism is a clue that the structure of the chapter is merely poetic. Thus, according to this theory, the *sequence* of creation may essentially be disregarded, as if some literary form in the passage nullified its literal meaning.

Naturally, advocates of this view accept the modern scientific theory that the formation of the earth required several billion years. They claim the biblical account is nothing more than a metaphorical framework that should overlay our scientific understanding of creation. The language and details of Genesis 1 are unimportant, they say; the only truth this passage aims to teach us is that the hand of divine Providence guided the evolutionary process. The Genesis creation account is thus reduced to a literary device—an extended metaphor that is not to be accepted at face value.

But if the Lord wanted to teach us that creation took place in six literal days, how could He have stated it more plainly than Genesis does? The length of the days is defined by periods of day and night that are governed after day four by the sun and moon. The week itself defines the pattern of human labor and rest. The days are marked by the passage of morning and evening. How could these *not* signify the chronological progression of God’s creative work?

The problem with the framework hypothesis is that it employs a destructive method of interpretation. If the plain meaning of Genesis 1 may be written off and the language treated as nothing more than a literary device, why not do the same with Genesis 3? Indeed, most theological liberals *do* insist that the talking serpent in chapter 3 signals a fable or a metaphor, and therefore they reject that passage as a literal and historical record of how humanity fell into sin. Where does metaphor ultimately end and history begin? After the Flood? After the tower of Babel? And why there? Why not regard all the biblical miracles as literary devices? Why could not the resurrection itself be dismissed as a mere allegory? In the words of E. J. Young, “If the ‘framework’ hypothesis were applied to the narratives of the virgin birth or the resurrection or Romans 5:12 ff., it could as effectively serve to minimize the importance of the content of those passages as it now does the content of the first

chapter of Genesis.”<sup>7</sup>

Young points out the fallacy of the “framework” hypothesis:

The question must be raised, “If a nonchronological view of the days be admitted, what is the purpose of mentioning six days?” For, once we reject the chronological sequence which Genesis gives, we are brought to the point where we can really say very little about the content of Genesis one. It is impossible to hold that there are two trios of days, each paralleling the other. Day four . . . speaks of God’s placing the light-bearers in the firmament. The firmament, however, had been made on the second day. If the fourth and the first days are two aspects of the same thing, then the second day also (which speaks of the firmament) must precede days one and four. If this procedure be allowed, with its wholesale disregard of grammar, why may we not be consistent and equate all four of these days with the first verse of Genesis? There is no defense against such a procedure, once we abandon the clear language of the text. In all seriousness it must be asked, Can we believe that the first chapter of Genesis intends to teach that day two preceded days one and four? To ask that question is to answer it.<sup>8</sup>

The simple, rather obvious, fact is that no one would ever think the time-frame for creation was anything other than a normal week of seven days from reading the Bible and allowing it to interpret itself. The Fourth Commandment makes no sense whatsoever apart from an understanding that the days of God’s creative work parallel a normal human work-week.

The framework hypothesis is the direct result of making modern scientific theory a hermeneutical guideline by which to interpret Scripture. The basic presupposition behind the framework hypothesis is the notion that science speaks with more authority about origins and the age of the earth than Scripture does. Those who embrace such a view have in effect made science an authority *over* Scripture. They are permitting scientific hypotheses—mere human opinions that have no divine authority whatsoever—to be the hermeneutical rule by which Scripture is interpreted.

There is no warrant for that. Modern scientific opinion is not a valid hermeneutic for interpreting Genesis (or any other portion of Scripture, for that matter). Scripture is God-breathed (2 Tim 2:16)—inspired truth from God. “[Scripture] never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet 1:21). Jesus summed the point up perfectly when He said, “Thy word is truth” (John 17:17, KJV). The Bible is *supreme* truth, and therefore it is the standard by which scientific theory should be evaluated, not vice versa.

And Scripture *always* speaks with absolute authority. It is as authoritative when it instructs us as it is when it commands us. It is as true when it tells the future as it is when it records the past. Although it is not a textbook on science, wherever

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<sup>7</sup>*Studies in Genesis One* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian & Reformed, n.d.) 99.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*

it intersects with scientific data, it speaks with the same authority as when giving moral precepts. Although many have tried to set science against Scripture, science never has disproved one jot or tittle of the Bible—and it never will.

It is therefore a serious mistake to imagine that modern scientists can speak more authoritatively than Scripture on the subject of origins. Scripture is God's own eyewitness account of what happened in the beginning. When science deals with the origin of the universe, all it can offer is conjecture. Science has proven nothing that negates the Genesis record. In fact, the Genesis record solves the mysteries of science.

A clear pattern for interpreting Genesis is given in the NT. If the language of early Genesis were meant to be interpreted figuratively, we could expect to see Genesis interpreted in the NT in a figurative sense. After all, the NT is itself inspired Scripture, so it is the Creator's own commentary on the Genesis record.

What do we find in the NT? In every NT reference to Genesis, the events recorded by Moses are treated as historical events. And in particular, the first three chapters of Genesis are consistently treated as a literal record of historical events. The NT affirms, for example, the creation of Adam in the image of God (Jas 3:9).

Paul wrote to Timothy, "Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression" (1 Tim 2:13-14). In 1 Cor 11:8-9, he writes, "Man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man."

Paul's presentation of the doctrine of original sin in Rom 5:12-20 depends on a historical Adam and a literal interpretation of the account in Genesis about how he fell. Furthermore, everything Paul has to say about the doctrine of justification by faith depends on *that*. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive" (1 Cor 15:22). Clearly Paul regarded both the creation and fall of Adam as history, not allegory. Jesus Himself referred to the creation of Adam and Eve as a historical event (Mark 10:6). To question the historicity of these events is to undermine the very essence of Christian doctrine.

Moreover, if Scripture itself treats the creation and fall of Adam as historical events, there is no warrant for treating the rest of the creation account as allegory or literary device. Nowhere in all of Scripture are any of these events handled as merely symbolic.

In fact, when the NT refers to creation (e.g., Mark 13:19; John 1:3; Acts 4:24; 14:15; 2 Cor 4:6; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2, 10; Rev 4:11; 10:6; 14:7), it always refers to a past, completed event—an immediate work of God, not a still-occurring process of evolution. The promised New Creation, a running theme in both Old and New Testaments, is portrayed as an immediate fiat creation, too—not an eons-long process (Isa 65:17). In fact, the model for the New Creation is the original creation (cf. Rom 8:21; Rev 21:1, 5).

Hebrews 11:3 even makes belief in creation by divine fiat the very essence of faith itself: "By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible." Creation *ex nihilo* is the clear and consistent teaching of the Bible.

Evolution was introduced as an atheistic alternative to the biblical view of

creation. According to evolution, man created God rather than vice versa. And as we have seen, the evolutionists' ultimate agenda is to eliminate faith in God altogether and thereby do away with moral accountability.

Intuition suggests a series of questions to the human mind when we contemplate our origin: Who is in control of the universe? Is there Someone who is sovereign—a Lawgiver? Is there a universal Judge? Is there a transcendent moral standard to live by? Is there Someone to whom we will be accountable? Will there be a final assessment of how we live our lives? Will there be any final judgment?

Those are the very questions evolution was invented to avoid.

Evolution was devised to explain away the God of the Bible—not because evolutionists really believed a Creator was unnecessary to explain how things began, but because they did not want the God of Scripture as their Judge. Marvin L. Lubenow writes,

The real issue in the creation/evolution debate is not the *existence* of God. The real issue is the *nature* of God. To think of evolution as basically atheistic is to misunderstand the uniqueness of evolution. Evolution was not designed as a general attack against theism. It was designed as a specific attack against the God of the Bible, and the God of the Bible is clearly revealed through the doctrine of creation. Obviously, if a person is an atheist, it would be normal for him to also be an evolutionist. But evolution is as comfortable with theism as it is with atheism. An evolutionist is perfectly free to choose any god he wishes, as long as it is not the God of the Bible. The gods allowed by evolution are private, subjective, and artificial. They bother no one and make no absolute ethical demands. However, the God of the Bible is the Creator, Sustainer, Savior, and Judge. All are responsible to him. He has an agenda that conflicts with that of sinful humans. For man to be created in the image of God is very awesome. For God to be created in the image of man is very comfortable.<sup>9</sup>

To put it simply, evolution was invented in order to eliminate the God of Genesis and thereby to oust the Lawgiver and obliterate the inviolability of His law. Evolution is simply the latest means our fallen race has devised in order to suppress our innate knowledge and the biblical testimony that there is a God and that we are accountable to Him (cf. Rom 1:28). By embracing evolution, modern society aims to do away with morality, responsibility, and guilt. Society has embraced evolution with such enthusiasm because people imagine that it eliminates the Judge and leaves them free to do whatever they want without guilt and without consequences.

The evolutionary lie is so pointedly antithetical to Christian truth that it would seem unthinkable for evangelical Christians to compromise with evolutionary science in any degree. But over the past century and a half of evolutionary propaganda, evolutionists have had remarkable success in getting evangelicals to meet them halfway. Remarkably, many modern evangelicals—perhaps it would even be fair to say *most* people who call themselves evangelicals today—have already

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<sup>9</sup>*Bones of Contention: A Creationist Assessment of Human Fossils* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992) 188-89.

been convinced that the Genesis account of creation is not a true historical record. Thus they have not only capitulated to evolutionary doctrine at its starting point, but they have also embraced a view that undermines the authority of Scripture at *its* starting point.

So-called theistic evolutionists who try to marry humanistic theories of modern science with biblical theism may claim they are doing so because they love God, but the truth is that they love God a little and their academic reputations a lot. By undermining the historicity of Genesis they are undermining faith itself. Give evolutionary doctrine the throne and make the Bible its servant, and you have laid the foundation for spiritual disaster.

Scripture, not science, is the ultimate test of all truth. And the further evangelicalism gets from that conviction, the less evangelical and more humanistic it becomes.

Scripture cautions against false “knowledge” (1 Tim 6:20)—particularly so-called “scientific” knowledge that opposes the truth of Scripture. When what is being passed off as “science” turns out to be nothing more than a faith-based worldview that is hostile to the truth of Scripture, our duty to be on guard is magnified. And when naturalistic and atheistic presuppositions are being aggressively peddled as if they were established scientific fact, Christians ought to expose such lies for what they are and oppose them all the more vigorously. The abandonment of a biblical view of creation has already borne abundant evil fruit in modern society. Now is no time for the church to retreat or compromise on these issues. To weaken our commitment to the biblical view of creation would start a chain of disastrous moral, spiritual, and theological ramifications in the church that will greatly exacerbate the terrible moral chaos that already has begun the unravelling of secular society.

With that in mind I undertook an earnest study of Genesis a couple of years ago. Although the bulk of my ministry has been devoted to a verse-by-verse exposition of the whole NT, I recently turned to the OT and began preaching a series on Genesis in our church. This article is part of the fruit of my research and teaching in Genesis 1–3. We find there the foundation of every doctrine that is essential to the Christian faith. And the more carefully I have studied those opening chapters of Scripture, the more I have seen that they are the vital foundation for everything we believe as Christians.

Sadly, it is a foundation that is being systematically undermined by the very institutions that should be most vigorously defending it. More and more Christian educational institutions, apologists, and theologians are abandoning faith in the literal truth of Genesis 1–3. I recall reading a survey a few years ago which revealed that in one of America’s leading evangelical accrediting associations, whose membership boasted scores of evangelical Bible colleges and universities, only five or six college-level schools remain solidly opposed to the old-earth view of creation. The rest are open to a reinterpretation of Genesis 1–3 that accommodates evolutionary theories. Scores of well-known Bible teachers and apologists see the whole question as moot, and some even aggressively argue that a literal approach to Genesis is detrimental to the credibility of Christianity. They have given up the

battle—or worse, joined the attack against biblical creationism.

I am thankful for those who are still faithfully resisting the trend—organizations like Answers in Genesis, the Creation Research Society, and the Institute for Creation Research. These organizations and others like them involve many expert scientists who challenge the presuppositions of evolutionists on technical and scientific grounds. They clearly demonstrate that scientific proficiency is not incompatible with faith in the literal truth of Scripture—and that the battle for the beginning is ultimately a battle between two mutually exclusive faiths—faith in Scripture versus faith in hypotheses opposed to the God of the Bible. It is not really a battle between *science* and the Bible.

My aim in this article is to examine what Scripture teaches about creation. Although I am convinced that the truth of Scripture has scientific integrity, for the most part I intend to leave the scientific defense of creationism to those who have the most expertise in science. My purpose is chiefly to examine what Scripture teaches about the origin of the universe, and to show why it is incompatible with the naturalists' beliefs and the evolutionists' theories.

As Christians, we believe the Bible is truth revealed by God, who is the true Creator of the universe. That belief is the basic foundation of all genuine Christianity. It is utterly incompatible with the speculative presuppositions of the naturalists.

In Scripture the Creator Himself has revealed to us everything essential for life and godliness. And it starts with an account of creation. If the biblical creation account is in any degree unreliable, the rest of Scripture stands on a shaky foundation.

But the foundation is *not* shaky. The more I understand what God has revealed to us about our origin, the more I see clearly that the foundation stands firm. I agree with those who say it is time for the people of God to take a fresh look at the biblical account of creation. But I disagree with those who think that calls for any degree of capitulation to the transient theories of naturalism. Only an honest look at Scripture, with sound principles of hermeneutics, will yield the right understanding of the creation and fall of our race.

The Bible gives a clear and cogent account of the beginnings of the cosmos and humanity. There is absolutely no reason for an intelligent mind to balk at accepting it as a literal account of the origin of our universe. Although the biblical account clashes at many points with naturalistic and evolutionary *hypotheses*, it is not in conflict with a single scientific *fact*. Indeed, all the geological, astronomical, and scientific data can be easily reconciled with the biblical account. The conflict is not between science and Scripture, but between the biblicist's confident faith and the naturalist's willful skepticism.

To many, having been indoctrinated in schools where the line between hypothesis and fact is systematically and deliberately being blurred, that may sound naive or unsophisticated, but it is nonetheless a fact. Again, science has never disproved one word of Scripture, and it never will. On the other hand, evolutionary theory has always been in conflict with Scripture and always will be. But the notion that the universe evolved through a series of natural processes remains an unproven and untestable hypothesis, and therefore it is not "science." There is no proof

whatsoever that the universe evolved naturally. Evolution is a mere theory—and a questionable, constantly-changing one at that. Ultimately, if accepted at all, it must be taken by sheer faith.

How much better to base our faith on the sure foundation of God's Word! There is no ground of knowledge equal to or superior to Scripture. Unlike scientific theory, it is eternally unchanging. Unlike the opinions of man, its truth is revealed by the Creator Himself! It is not, as many suppose, at odds with science. True science has always affirmed the teaching of Scripture. Archaeology, for instance, has demonstrated the truthfulness of the biblical record time and time again. Wherever Scripture's record of history may be examined and either proved or disproved by archaeological evidence or reliable independent documentary evidence, the biblical record has always been verified. There is no valid reason whatsoever to doubt or distrust the biblical record of creation, and there is certainly no need to adjust the biblical account to try to make it fit the latest fads in evolutionary theory.

Therefore my approach in this article will be simply to examine what the biblical text teaches about creation. My goal is not to write a polemic against current evolutionary thinking. I do not intend to probe in-depth scientific arguments related to the origin of the universe. Where scientific fact intersects with the biblical record, I will highlight that. But my chief aim is to examine what the Bible teaches about the origin of the universe, and then look at the moral, spiritual, and eternal ramifications of biblical creationism to see what it has to do with people in today's world.

I am indebted to several authors who have treated this subject before and whose works were very helpful in framing my own thoughts on these matters. Chief among them would be Douglas F. Kelly,<sup>10</sup> John Ankerberg and John Weldon,<sup>11</sup> Phillip E. Johnson,<sup>12</sup> Henry Morris,<sup>13</sup> and Ken Ham.<sup>14</sup>

Again, a biblical understanding of the creation and fall of humanity establishes the necessary foundation for the Christian worldview. Everything Scripture teaches about sin and redemption assumes the literal truth of the first three chapters of Genesis. If we wobble to any degree on the truth of this passage, we undermine the very foundations of our faith.

If Genesis 1–3 does not tell us the truth, why should we believe anything else in the Bible? Without a right understanding of our origin, we have no way to understand *anything* about our spiritual existence. We cannot know our purpose, and we cannot be certain of our destiny. After all, if God is not the Creator, then maybe He is not the Redeemer. If we cannot believe the opening chapters of Scripture, how can we be certain of *anything* the Bible says?

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<sup>10</sup>*Creation and Change* (Fearn, Ross-shire, U.K.: Christian Focus, 1997).

<sup>11</sup>*Darwin's Leap of Faith* (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House, 1998).

<sup>12</sup>*Reason in the Balance: The Case against Naturalism in Science, Law, and Education* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1995).

<sup>13</sup>*The Genesis Record* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976).

<sup>14</sup>*Creation Evangelism for the New Millennium* (Colorado Springs, Col.: Master Books, 1999).

Much depends, therefore, on a right understanding of these early chapters of Genesis. These chapters are too often mishandled by people whose real aim is not to understand what the text actually teaches but who want to adjust it to fit a scientific theory. The approach is all wrong. Since creation cannot be observed or replicated in a laboratory, science is not a trustworthy place to seek answers about the origin and fall of humanity. Ultimately, the only reliable source of truth about our origin is what has been revealed by the Creator himself. That means the biblical text should be our starting place.

I am convinced the correct interpretation of Genesis 1–3 is the one that comes naturally from a straightforward reading of the text. It teaches us that the universe is relatively young, albeit with an appearance of age and maturity—and that all of creation was accomplished in the span of six literal days.

To those who will inevitably complain that such a view is credulous and unsophisticated, my reply is that it is certainly superior to the irrational notion that an ordered and incomprehensibly complex universe sprung by accident from nothingness and emerged by chance into the marvel that it is.

Scripture offers the only accurate explanations that can be found anywhere about how our race began, where our moral sense originated, why we cannot seem to do what our own consciences tells us is right, and how we can be redeemed from this hopeless situation.

Scripture is not merely the best of several possible explanations. It is the Word of God. And my prayer for everyone who studies the opening chapters of the Bible is that he will believe what God has spoken.

#### **Creation: Believe It or Not (Gen 1:1)**

It is hard to imagine anything more absurd than the naturalist's formula for the origin of the universe: *Nobody times nothing equals everything*. There is no Creator; there was no design or purpose. Everything we see simply emerged and evolved by pure chance from a total void.

Ask the typical naturalist what he believes about the beginning of all things, and you are likely to hear about the Big Bang theory—the notion that the universe is the product of an immense explosion. As if an utterly violent and chaotic beginning could result in all the synergy and order we observe in the cosmos around us. But what was the catalyst that touched off that Big Bang in the first place? (And what, in turn, was the catalyst for *that*?) Something incredibly large had to fuel the original explosion. Where did that “something” originate? A Big Bang out of nowhere quite simply could *not* have been the beginning of all things.

Is the material universe itself eternal, as some claim? And if it is, why has it not wound down? For that matter, what set it in motion to begin with? What is the source of the energy that keeps it going? Why has entropy not caused it to devolve into a state of inertia and chaos, rather than (as the evolutionist must hypothesize) apparently developing into a more orderly and increasingly sophisticated system as the Big Bang expands?

The vast array of insurmountable problems for the naturalist begins at the

most basic level. What was the First Cause that caused everything else? Where did matter come from? Where did energy come from? What holds everything together and what keeps everything going? How could life, self-consciousness, and rationality evolve from inanimate, inorganic matter? Who *designed* the many complex and interdependent organisms and sophisticated ecosystems we observe? Where did *intelligence* originate? Are we to think of the universe as a massive perpetual-motion apparatus with some sort of impersonal “intelligence” of its own? Or is there, after all, a personal, intelligent Designer who created everything and set it all in motion?

Those are vital metaphysical questions that *must* be answered if we are to understand the meaning and value of life itself. Philosophical naturalism, because of its materialistic and anti-supernatural presuppositions, is utterly incapable of offering *any* answers to those questions. In fact, the most basic dogma of naturalism is that everything happens by natural processes; nothing is supernatural; and therefore there can be no personal Creator. That means there can be no design and no purpose for anything. Naturalism therefore can provide no philosophical basis for believing that human life is particularly valuable or in any way significant.

On the contrary, the naturalist, if he is true to his principles, must ultimately conclude that humanity is a freak accident without any purpose or real importance. Naturalism is therefore a formula for futility and meaninglessness, erasing the image of God from our race’s collective self-image, depreciating the value of human life, undermining human dignity, and subverting morality.

### **Evolution Is Degrading to Humanity**

The drift of modern society proves the point. We are witnessing the abandonment of moral standards and the loss of humanity’s sense of destiny. Rampant crime, drug abuse, sexual perversion, rising suicide rates, and the abortion epidemic are all symptoms that human life is being systematically devalued and an utter sense of futility is sweeping over society. These trends are directly traceable to the ascent of evolutionary theory.

And why not? If evolution is true, humans are just one of many species that evolved from common ancestors. We are no better than animals, and we ought not to think that we are. If we evolved from sheer matter, why should we esteem what is spiritual? In fact, if everything evolved from matter, nothing “spiritual” is real. We ourselves are ultimately no better than or different from any other living species. We are nothing more than protoplasm waiting to become manure.

As a matter of fact, that is precisely the rationale behind the modern animal-rights movement, a movement whose *raison d’être* is the utter degradation of the human race. Naturally, all radical animal-rights advocates are evolutionists. Their belief system is an inevitable byproduct of evolutionary theory.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) is well known for its stance that animal rights are equal to (or more important than) human rights. They maintain that killing any animal for food is the moral equivalent of murder; eating meat is virtually cannibalism; and man is a tyrant species, detrimental to his environment.

PETA opposes the keeping of pets and “companion animals”—including guide dogs for the blind. A 1988 statement distributed by the organization includes this: “As John Bryant has written in his book *Fettered Kingdoms*, [companion animals] are like slaves, even if well-kept slaves.”

Ingrid Newkirk, PETA’s controversial founder, says, “There is no rational basis for saying that a human being has special rights. . . . A rat is a pig is a dog is a boy.”<sup>15</sup> Newkirk told a *Washington Post* reporter that the atrocities of Nazi Germany pale by comparison to the killing of animals for food: “Six million Jews died in concentration camps, but six *billion* broiler chickens will die this year in slaughterhouses.”<sup>16</sup>

Clearly, Ms. Newkirk is *more* outraged by the killing of chickens for food than she is by the wholesale slaughter of human beings. One gets the impression she would not necessarily consider the extinction of humanity an undesirable thing. In fact, she and other animal-rights advocates often sound downright misanthropic. She told a reporter, “I don’t have any reverence for life, only for the entities themselves. I would rather see a blank space where I am. This will sound like fruitcake stuff again but at least I wouldn’t be harming anything.”<sup>17</sup> And the summer issue of *Wild Earth* magazine, a journal promoting radical environmentalism, included a manifesto for the extinction of the human race, written under the pseudonym “Les U. Knight.” The article said, “If you haven’t given voluntary human extinction much thought before, the idea of a world with no people in it may seem strange. But, if you give it a chance, I think you might agree that the extinction of *Homo sapiens* would mean survival for millions, if not billions, of Earth-dwelling species. . . . Phasing out the human race will solve every problem on earth, social and environmental.”<sup>18</sup>

That is worse than merely stupid, irrational, immoral, or humiliating; it is *deadly*.

But there is even an organization called The Church of Euthanasia. Their Web page advocates suicide, abortion, cannibalism, and sodomy as the main ways to decrease the human population. Although the Web page contains elements of parody deliberately designed for shock value,<sup>19</sup> the people behind it are deadly serious in their opposition to the continuance of the human race. They include detailed instructions for committing suicide. The one commandment church members are required to obey is “Thou shalt not procreate.” By deliberately making their views sound as outrageous as possible, they have received widespread coverage

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<sup>15</sup>Cited in Katie McCabe, “Who Will Live and Who Will Die?,” *The Washingtonian* (August 1986):114.

<sup>16</sup>Cited in Chip Brown, “She’s a Portrait of Zealotry in Plastic Shoes,” *Washington Post*, 13 November 1983, B-10.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>“Voluntary Human Extinction,” *Wild Earth*, vol. 1, no. 2, 72.

<sup>19</sup>They “advocate” cannibalism, for example, with the slogan “Eat people, not animals”—to make the point that in their view the act of eating any animal is the moral equivalent of cannibalism.

on talk shows and tabloid-style news programs. They take advantage of such publicity to recruit members for their cause. Despite their shocking message, they have evidently been able to persuade numerous people that the one species on earth that *ought* to be made extinct is humanity. Their Web site boasts that people in the thousands have paid the \$10 membership fee to become “church members.”

That sort of lunacy is rooted in the belief that humanity is simply the product of evolution—a mere animal with no purpose, no destiny, and no likeness to the Creator. After all, if we got where we are by a natural evolutionary process, there can be no validity whatsoever to the notion that our race bears the image of God. We ultimately have no more dignity than an amoeba. And we *certainly* have no mandate from the Almighty to subdue the rest of creation.

And if a human being is nothing more than an animal in the process of evolving, who can argue against the animal-rights movement? Even the most radical animal-rights position is justified in a naturalistic and evolutionary worldview. If we really evolved from animals, we are in fact just animals ourselves. And if evolution is correct, it is a sheer accident that man evolved a superior intellect. If random mutations had occurred differently, apes might be running the planet and humanoids would be in the zoo. What right do we have to exercise dominion over other species that have not yet had the opportunity to evolve to a more advanced state?

Indeed, if man is merely a product of natural evolutionary processes, then he is ultimately nothing more than the accidental byproduct of thousands of haphazard genetic mutations. He is just one more animal that evolved from amoeba, and he is probably not even the highest life-form that will eventually evolve. So what is special about him? Where is his meaning? Where is his dignity? Where is his value? What is his purpose? Obviously he has none.<sup>20</sup>

It is only a matter of time before a society steeped in naturalistic belief fully embraces such thinking and casts off all moral and spiritual restraint. In fact, that process has begun already. If you doubt that, consider some of the televised debauchery aimed at the MTV/Jerry Springer generation.

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<sup>20</sup>The fact that we can carry on this rational dialogue and animals cannot is itself reason to believe man is far above animals—possessing sensibility and personhood, which are totally absent in the animal realm.

**Evolution Is Hostile to Reason**

Evolution is as irrational as it is amoral. In place of God as Creator, the evolutionist has substituted chance—sheer fortune, accident, happenstance, serendipity, coincidence, random events, and blind luck. Chance is the engine most evolutionists believe drives the evolutionary process. Chance is therefore the ultimate creator.

Naturalism essentially teaches that over time and out of sheer chaos, matter evolved into everything we see today by pure chance. And this all happened without any particular design. Given enough time and enough random events, the evolutionist says, *anything* is possible. And the evolution of our world with all its intricate ecosystems and complex organisms is therefore simply the inadvertent result of a very large number of indiscriminate but extremely fortuitous accidents of nature. Everything is the way it is simply by the luck of the draw. And thus chance itself has been elevated to the role of creator.

John Ankerberg and John Weldon point out that matter, time, and chance constitute the evolutionists' holy trinity. Indeed, these three things are all that is eternal and omnipotent in the evolutionary scheme: matter, time, and chance. Together they have formed the cosmos as we know it. And they have usurped God in the evolutionist's mind. Ankerberg and Weldon quote Jacques Monod, 1965 Nobel Prize-winner for his work in biochemistry. In his book *Chance and Necessity*, Monod wrote, "[Man] is alone in the universe's unfeeling immensity, out of which he emerged by chance. . . . Chance *alone* is at the source of every innovation, of all creation in the biosphere. Pure chance, absolutely free but blind, [is] at the very root of the stupendous edifice of evolution."<sup>21</sup>

Obviously, that is a far cry from being created in the image of God. It is also utterly irrational. The evolutionary idea not only strips man of his dignity and his value, but it also eliminates the ground of his rationality. Because if everything happens by chance, then in the ultimate sense, nothing can possibly have any real purpose or meaning. And it is hard to think of any philosophical starting point that is more irrational than that.

But a moment's reflection will reveal that chance simply *cannot* be the cause of anything (much less the cause of *everything*). Chance is not a force. The only legitimate sense of the word *chance* has to do with mathematical probability. If you flip a coin again and again, quotients of mathematical probability suggest that it will land tails-up about fifty times out of a hundred. Thus we say that when you flip a coin, there's a fifty-fifty "chance" it will come up tails.

But "chance" is not a force that can actually flip the coin. Chance is not an intellect that designs the pattern of mathematical probabilities. Chance *determines* nothing. Mathematical probability is merely a way of measuring what actually *does* happen.

Yet in naturalistic and evolutionary parlance, "chance" becomes something

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<sup>21</sup>(New York: A. A. Knopf, 1971) 112-13, cited in John Ankerberg and John Weldon, *Darwin's Leap of Faith* (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House, 1998) 21.

that determines what happens in the absence of any other cause or design. Consider Jacques Monod's remark again: "Chance . . . is at the source of every innovation, of all creation." In effect, naturalists have imputed to *chance* the ability to cause and determine what occurs. And that is an irrational concept.

There are no uncaused events. Every effect is determined by some cause. Even the flip of a coin simply cannot occur without a definite cause. And common sense tells us that whether the coin comes up heads or tails is also determined by *something*. A number of factors (including the precise amount of force with which the coin is flipped and the distance it must fall before hitting the ground) determine the number of revolutions and bounces it makes before landing on one side or the other. Although the forces that determine the flip of a coin may be impossible for us to control precisely, it is those forces, not "chance," that determine whether we get heads or tails. What may appear totally random and undetermined to us is nonetheless definitively determined by something.<sup>22</sup> It is not caused by mere chance, because chance simply does not exist as a force or a cause. Chance is nothing.

Fortune was a goddess in the Greek pantheon. Evolutionists have enshrined chance in a similar way. They have taken the myth of chance and made it responsible for all that happens. Chance has been transformed into a force of causal power, so that *nothing* is the cause of *everything*. What could be *more* irrational than that? It turns all of reality into sheer chaos. It therefore makes everything irrational and incoherent.

The entire concept is so fraught with problems from a rational and philosophical viewpoint that one hardly knows where to begin. But let's begin at the beginning. Where did matter come from in the first place? The naturalist would have to say either that all matter is eternal, or that everything appeared by chance out of nothing. The latter option is clearly irrational.

But suppose the naturalist opts to believe that matter is eternal. An obvious question arises: What caused the first event that originally set the evolutionary process in motion? The only answer available to the naturalist is that chance made it happen. It literally came out of nowhere. No one and nothing made it happen. That, too, is clearly irrational.

So in order to avoid *that* dilemma, some naturalists assume an eternal chain of random events that operate on the material universe. They end up with an eternal but constantly changing material universe governed by an endless chain of purely random events—all culminating in magnificent design without a designer, and everything happening without any ultimate cause. At the end of the day, it is still irrational. It evacuates purpose, destiny, and meaning from everything in the universe. And it therefore it leaves no ground for anything rational.

In other words, nihilism is the only philosophy that works with naturalism. *Nihilism* is a philosophy that says everything is entirely without meaning, without

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<sup>22</sup>Scripture teaches that such "random" events are actually governed by God's sovereign providence (Prov 16:33; Matt 10:30). God himself ultimately controls all the factors that determine the flip of the coin. Nothing whatsoever happens by "chance."

logic, without reason. The universe itself is incoherent and irrational. Reason has been deposed by pure chance.

And such a view of chance is the polar opposite of reason. Common-sense logic suggests that every watch has a watchmaker. Every building has a builder. Every structure has an architect. Every arrangement has a plan. Every plan has a designer. And every design has a purpose. We see the universe, infinitely more complex than any watch and infinitely greater than any manmade structure, and it is natural to conclude that Someone infinitely powerful and infinitely intelligent made it. “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made” (Rom 1:20, NASB).

But naturalists look at the universe, and despite all the intricate marvels it holds, they conclude no one made it. Chance brought it about. It happened by accident. That is not logical. It is absurd.

Abandon logic and you are left with pure nonsense. In many ways the naturalists’ deification of chance is worse than all the various myths of other false religions, because it obliterates all meaning and sense from everything. But it is, once again, pure religion of the most pagan variety, requiring a spiritually fatal leap of faith into an abyss of utter irrationality. It is the age-old religion of fools (Ps 14:1)—but in modern, “scientific” dress.

What could prompt anyone to embrace such a system? Why would someone opt for a worldview that eliminates all that is rational? It boils down to the sheer love of sin. People want to be comfortable in their sin, and there is no way to do that without eliminating God. Get rid of God, and you erase all fear of the consequences of sin. So even though sheer irrationality is ultimately the only viable alternative to the God of Scripture, multitudes have opted for irrationality just so they could live guilt-free and shamelessly with their own sin. It is as simple as that.

Either there is a God who created the universe and sovereignly rules His creation, or everything was caused by blind chance. The two ideas are mutually exclusive. If chance rules, God cannot. If God rules, there’s no room for chance. Make chance the cause of the universe and you have effectively done away with God.

As a matter of fact, if chance as a determinative force or a cause exists even in the frailest form, God has been dethroned. The sovereignty of God and “chance” are inherently incompatible. If chance causes or determines *anything*, God is not truly God.

But again, chance is not a force. Chance cannot make anything happen. Chance is nothing. It simply does not exist. And therefore it has no power to do anything. It cannot be the cause of any effect. It is an imaginary hocus-pocus. It is contrary to every law of science, every principle of logic, and every intuition of sheer common sense. Even the most basic principles of thermodynamics, physics, and biology suggest that chance simply cannot be the determinative force that has brought about the order and interdependence we see in our universe—much less the diversity of life we find on our own planet. Ultimately, chance simply cannot account for the origin of life and intelligence.

One of the oldest principles of rational philosophy is “*Ex nihilo, nihilo fit.*” Out of nothing, nothing comes. And chance is nothing. Naturalism is rational suicide.

When scientists attribute instrumental power to chance they have left the realm of reason, they have left the domain of science. They have turned to pulling rabbits out of hats. They have turned to fantasy. Insert the idea of chance, and all scientific investigation ultimately becomes chaotic and absurd. That is precisely why evolution does not deserve to be deemed true science; it is nothing more than an irrational religion—the religion of those who want to sin without guilt.

Someone once estimated that the number of random genetic factors involved in the evolution of a tapeworm from an amoeba would be comparable to placing a monkey in a room with a typewriter and allowing him to strike the keys at random until he accidentally produced a perfectly-spelled and perfectly-punctuated typescript of Hamlet’s soliloquy. And the odds of getting all the mutations necessary to evolve a starfish from a one-celled creature are comparable to asking a hundred blind people to make ten random moves each with five Rubik’s cubes, and finding all five cubes perfectly solved at the end of the process. The odds against *all* earth’s life forms evolving from a single cell are in a word, impossible.

Nonetheless, the absurdity of naturalism goes largely unchallenged today in universities and colleges. Turn on the Discovery Channel or pick up an issue of *National Geographic* and you are likely to be exposed to the assumption that chance exists as a force—as if mere chance spontaneously generated everything in the universe.

One Nobel laureate, Harvard professor George Wald, acknowledged the utter absurdity of this. Pondering the vast array of factors both real and hypothetical that would have to arise spontaneously all at once in order for inanimate matter to “evolve” into even the most primitive one-celled form of life, he wrote, “One has only to contemplate the magnitude of this task to concede that the spontaneous generation of a living organism is impossible.” Then he added, “Yet here we are—as a result, I believe, of spontaneous generation.”<sup>23</sup> How did Wald believe this “impossibility” came about? He answered: “Time is in fact the hero of the plot. The time with which we have to deal is of the order of two billion years. What we regard as impossible on the basis of human experience is meaningless here. Given so much time, the ‘impossible’ becomes possible, the possible probable, and the probable virtually certain. One has only to wait: time itself performs the miracles.”<sup>24</sup> Given enough time, that which is impossible becomes “virtually certain.” That is sheer double-talk. And it perfectly illustrates the blind faith that underlies naturalistic religion.

There is no viable explanation of the universe without God. So many immense and intricate wonders could not exist without a designer. There’s only one

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<sup>23</sup>George Wald, “The Origin of Life,” *Scientific American* (May 1954) 46.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 48.

possible explanation for it all, and that is the creative power of an all-wise God. He created and sustains the universe, and He gives meaning to it. And without Him, there is ultimately no meaning in anything. Without Him, we are left with only the absurd notion that everything emerged from nothing without a cause and without any reason. Without Him we are stuck with that absurd formula of the evolutionist: nothing times nobody equals everything.

### **Evolution Is Antithetical to the Truth God Has Revealed**

By contrast, the actual record of creation is found in Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” It would be hard to state an answer to the great cosmic question any more simply or directly than that.

The words of Genesis 1:1 are precise and concise beyond mere human composition. They account for everything evolution *cannot* explain. Evolutionary philosopher Herbert Spencer, one of Darwin’s earliest and most enthusiastic advocates, outlined five “ultimate scientific ideas”: time, force, action, space, and matter.<sup>25</sup> These are categories that (according to Spencer) comprise everything that is susceptible to scientific examination. That simple taxonomy, Spencer believed, encompasses all that truly exists in the universe. *Everything* that can be known or observed by science fits into one of those categories, Spencer claimed, and nothing can be truly said to “exist” outside of them.

Spencer’s materialistic worldview is immediately evident in the fact that his categories leave room for nothing spiritual. But set aside for a moment the rather obvious fact that something as obvious as human intellect and emotion do not quite fit into any of Spencer’s categories.<sup>26</sup> A moment’s reflection will reveal that evolutionary principles *still* cannot account for the actual origin of *any* of Spencer’s categories. The evolutionist must practically assume the eternity of time, force, action, space, and matter (or at least one of these<sup>27</sup>)—and then he or she proceeds from there to hypothesize about how things have developed out of an originally chaotic state.

But Gen 1:1 accounts for all of Spencer’s categories. “In the beginning”—that’s *time*. “God”—that’s *force*.<sup>28</sup> “Created”—that’s *action*. “The heavens”—that’s *space*. “And the earth”—that’s *matter*. In the first verse of the Bible God laid out plainly what no scientist or philosopher ever cataloged until the nineteenth century. Moreover, what evolution still cannot possibly explain—the actual origin of everything that science can observe—the Bible explains in a few

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<sup>25</sup>*First Principles* (London, 1963), chapter 3.

<sup>26</sup>Spencer maintained that human consciousness is a manifestation of an infinite and eternal cosmic energy; hence even consciousness is ultimately a material, rather than a spiritual, reality. Many modern evolutionists still hold such a view.

<sup>27</sup>Spencer’s “solution” to this dilemma was to regard Force as eternal.

<sup>28</sup>Interestingly, Spencer spoke of Force as “the ultimate of ultimates” (*First Principles*, paragraph 50).

succinct words in the very first verse of Genesis.

About the uniqueness of the Bible's approach to creation, Henry Morris writes,

Genesis 1:1 is unique in all literature, science, and philosophy. Every other system of cosmogony, whether in ancient religious myths or modern scientific models, starts with eternal matter or energy in some form, from which other entities were supposedly gradually derived by some process. Only the Book of Genesis even attempts to account for the ultimate origin of matter, space, and time; and it does so uniquely in terms of special creation.<sup>29</sup>

And thus in that very first verse of Scripture, each reader is faced with a simple choice: Either you believe God *did* create the heavens and the earth, or you believe He *did not*. If He did not, He does not exist at all; nothing has any purpose; and nothing makes any sense. If on the other hand there is a creative intelligence—if there is a God—then creation is understandable. It is possible. It is plausible. It is rational.

Ultimately, those are the options every reader of Genesis is faced with. Either the vast array of complex organisms and intelligence we observe reflect the wisdom and power of a personal Creator (and specifically, the God who has revealed Himself in Scripture), or all these marvels somehow evolved spontaneously from inanimate matter, and no real sense can be made of anything.

Even among the best scientists who have left their mark on the scientific world, those who think honestly and make honest confessions about origins will admit that there must be a creative intelligence. (Einstein himself firmly believed that a “Cosmic Intelligence” *must* have designed the universe, though like many others today who accept the notion of “intelligent design,” he avoided the obvious conclusion that if there’s a “Cosmic Intelligence” powerful enough to design and create the universe, that “Intelligence” is by definition Lord and God over all.) And although the scientific and academic communities often mercilessly attempt to silence such opinions, there are nonetheless many men of integrity in the scientific community who embrace the God of Scripture and the biblical creation account.<sup>30</sup>

God *did* create the heavens and the earth. And there is only one document that credibly claims to be a divinely-revealed record of that creation: the book of Genesis. Unless we have a creator who left us with no information about where we came from or what our purpose is, the text of Genesis 1–2 stands for all practical purposes unchallenged as the only divinely-revealed description of creation. In other words, if there is a God who created the heavens and the earth, and if He revealed to humanity any record of that creation, Genesis *is* that record. If the God of

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<sup>29</sup>*The Genesis Record* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976) 18.

<sup>30</sup>Ankerberg and Weldon include a long section documenting evolutionists' attempts to silence and marginalize their colleagues who do not toe the naturalist line. See Chapter 6, “Professional Objectivity and the Politics of Prejudice,” in *Darwin's Leap of Faith* 93-111.

Scripture did *not* create the heavens and the earth, then we have no real answers to anything that is truly important. Everything boils down to those two simple options.

So whether we believe the Genesis record or not makes all the difference in the world. Douglas Kelly, professor of systematic theology at Reformed Theological Seminary, has written on this subject with great insight. He says, “Essentially, mankind has only two choices. Either we have evolved out of the slime and can be explained only in a materialistic sense, meaning that we are made of nothing but the material, or we have been made on a heavenly pattern.”<sup>31</sup>

He is right. Those are ultimately the only two options. We can either believe what Genesis says, or not. If Gen 1:1 is true, then the universe and everything in it was created by a loving and personal God, and His purposes are clearly revealed to us in Scripture. Further, if the Genesis account is true, then we bear the stamp of God and are loved by Him—and *because* we are made in His image, human beings have a dignity, value, and obligation that transcends that of all other creatures. Moreover, if Genesis is true, then we not only have God’s own answers to the questions of what we are here for and how we got where we are, but we also have the promise of salvation from our sin.

If Genesis is *not* true, however, we have no reliable answer to anything. Throw out Genesis and the authority of *all* Scripture is fatally compromised. That would ultimately mean that the God of the Bible simply does not exist. And if some other kind of creator-god *does* exist, he evidently does not care enough about his creation to provide any revelation about himself, his plan for creation, or his will for his creatures.

There are, of course, several extrabiblical accounts of creation from pagan sacred writings. But they are all mythical, fanciful, and frivolous accounts, featuring hideously ungodly gods. Those who imagine such deities exist would have to conclude that they have left us without any reason for hope, without any clear principles by which to live, without any accountability, without any answers to our most basic questions, and (most troubling of all) without any explanation or solution for the dilemma of evil.

Therefore if Genesis is untrue, we might as well assume that no God exists at all. That is precisely the assumption behind modern evolutionary theory. If true, it means that impersonal matter is the ultimate reality. Human personality and human intelligence are simply meaningless accidents produced at random by the natural processes of evolution. We have no moral accountability to any higher Being. All morality—indeed, all truth itself—is ultimately relative. In fact, truth, falsehood, goodness, and evil are all merely theoretical notions with no real meaning or significance. Nothing really matters in the vast immensity of an infinite, impersonal universe.

So if Genesis is false, nihilism is the next best option. Utter irrationality becomes the only “rational” choice.

Obviously, the ramifications of our views on these things are immense. Our

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<sup>31</sup>*Creation and Change* 15-16.

view of creation is the necessary starting point for our entire worldview. In fact, so vital is the issue that Francis Schaeffer once remarked that if he had only an hour to spend with an unbeliever, he would spend the first fifty-five minutes talking about creation and what it means for humanity to bear the image of God—and then he would use the last five minutes to explain the way of salvation.<sup>32</sup>

The starting point for Christianity is not Matthew 1:1 but Genesis 1:1. Tamper with the book of Genesis and you undermine the very foundation of Christianity. You cannot treat Genesis 1 as a fable or a mere poetic saga without severe implications to the rest of Scripture. The creation account is where God starts His account of history. It is impossible to alter the beginning without impacting the rest of the story—not to mention the ending. If Genesis 1 is not accurate, then there is no way to be certain that the rest of Scripture tells the truth. If the starting point is wrong, the Bible itself is built on a foundation of falsehood.

In other words, if you reject the creation account in Genesis, you have no basis for believing the Bible at all. If you doubt or explain away the Bible's account of the six days of creation, where do you put the reins on your skepticism? Do you start with Genesis 3, which explains the origin of sin, and believe everything from chapter 3 on? Or maybe you do not sign on until sometime after chapter 6, because the Flood is invariably questioned by scientists, too. Or perhaps you find the Tower of Babel too hard to reconcile with the linguists' theories about how languages originated and evolved. So maybe you start taking the Bible as literal history beginning with the life of Abraham. But when you get to Moses' plagues against Egypt, will you deny those, too? What about the miracles of the NT? Is there any reason to regard *any* of the supernatural elements of biblical history as anything but poetic symbolism?

After all, the notion that the universe is billions of years old is based on naturalistic presuppositions that (if held consistently) would rule out *all* miracles. If we are worried about appearing "unscientific" in the eyes of naturalists, we're going to have to reject a lot more than Genesis 1–3.

Once rationalism sets in and you start adapting the Word of God to fit scientific theories based on naturalistic beliefs, the process has no end. If you have qualms about the historicity of the creation account, you are on the road to utter Sadduceism—skepticism and outright unbelief about *all* the supernatural elements of Scripture. Why should we doubt the literal sense of Genesis 1–3 unless we are also prepared to deny that Elisha made an axe-head float, or that Peter walked on water, or that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead? And what about the greatest miracle of all—the resurrection of Christ? If we are going to shape Scripture to fit the beliefs of naturalistic scientists, why stop at all? Why is one miracle any more difficult to accept than another?

And what are we going to believe about the *end* of history as it is foretold in Scripture? All of redemptive history ends, according to 2 Pet 3:10-12, when the Lord uncreates the universe. The elements melt with fervent heat, and everything that

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<sup>32</sup>Cited in Kelly, *Creation and Change* 17.

exists in the material realm will be dissolved at the atomic level, in some sort of unprecedented and unimaginable nuclear meltdown. Moreover, according to Rev 21:1-5, God will immediately create a new heaven and a new earth (cf. Isa 65:17). Do we really believe He can do that, or will it take another umpteen billion years of evolutionary processes to get the new heaven and the new earth in working order? If we really believe He can destroy *this* universe in a split second and immediately create a whole new one, what is the problem with believing the Genesis account of a six-day creation in the first place? If He can do it at the end of the age, why is it so hard to believe the biblical account of what happened in the beginning?

So the question of whether we interpret the Creation account as fact or fiction has huge implications for every aspect of our faith. These implications become even more clear as the Bible recounts Adam's fall and subsequent events of human history. The place to hold the line firmly is at Gen 1:1.

And that is no over-simplification. Frankly, believing in a supernatural creative God who made everything is the only possible rational explanation for the universe and for life itself. It is also the only basis for believing we have any purpose or destiny.