

The Creation

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Although various confessions of faith used by different Christian churches still mention God as the Creator of all things, many Christians have chosen to accept evolution as the concept to understand origins. A multitude of approaches are available today such as creationism, intelligent design, evolution, theistic evolution, and progressive creation. What does Scripture teach, and what was Jesus' approach to the question of origins?

I. Creation in the Bible

Throughout Scripture God as Creator of all things is confirmed. He was not dependent on preexisting matter but created material things and life through his Word (Heb 11:3; Ps 33:6). The Creator must always be distinguished from creation. It is only He who can create (Heb. *bara'*; Gen 1:1, 16, 27; 2:3, 4), while humans can reshape matter.

1. *Creation in the Old Testament*

- Gen 1:1-2:4a This comprehensive report of creation teaches that God created life on earth in six days and rested on the seventh day. Chronological statements in Genesis and elsewhere in Scripture make it clear that creation took place only some thousands of years ago.
- Gen 2:4a-25 This passage focuses on creation from a slightly different angle but is complementary to what goes before it, filling in details about the creation of Adam and Eve. The issue of choice and the possibility of death are introduced through the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Death is a reality only after the Fall (Gen 3-4).
- Exod 20:8-11 The Sabbath and the seven-day week are rooted in creation.
- Pss 19:1-6; 33:6 The wisdom books confirm God as the Creator of heaven and earth and all life (see also Job 38-41; Ps 8:4-10; 104:5-30; 136:4-9).
- Isa 40:26 The prophetic books give a similar testimony (see also Jer 10:11-13; 27:5; Amos 4:13; 5:8).

• **How can light exist if the sun, moon, and stars do not appear until the fourth day?** It is possible that the light on day one came from God Himself, who is light (see a similar description of the new creation in Rev 21:23). The point is that God should be worshipped and not the heavenly bodies as was and is done in pagan religions.

• **How long are the days in Genesis 1?** Some have suggested that the days consisted of thousands or millions of years. Thousands or even millions of years are not sufficient for macroevolution to work; 2 Peter 3:8 is not about creation but asserts that God is not limited to our concepts of time. Genesis is a historical narrative. It should not be understood metaphorically. The statements that each day of creation consisted of a dark period and a light period, the numbering of the days, the term "day" itself which in Genesis points to a literal day (2:17; 3:5, 8 etc.), and the connection of the creation days to the origin of the week and the weekly Sabbath (Exod 20:8-11) show that the author of Genesis had in mind normal days.

2. *Jesus and Creation*

Jesus not only pointed back to Genesis 1 and 2 but also referred to Abel (Matt 23:35), Noah (Matt 24:37-39), and the Flood (Matt 24:39), showing that He understood these persons and events literally—including the creation account.

Mark 13:19	The universe and all life were created by God. God's activity was the starting point for human history.
Mark 2:27-28	Jesus refers to the Sabbath commandment in Exod 20 where the Sabbath, understood as a 24-hour day, is made for human beings.
Matt 19:4-5	While discussing divorce Jesus quotes Gen 1:27 and 2:24, affirming that humanity was directly created by God.

The contribution of the New Testament to the creation debate, among other things, is that Jesus is the Creator (John 1:1-3; Col 1:15-16; Heb 1:2, 10). It provides a cosmic perspective which includes more than the creation of life on earth. It also makes clear that the One who *created* all things is able to *reconcile* all things through His blood shed on the cross. It is inconsistent to claim that Jesus provided salvation through His death and yet maintain that He created us through an evolutionary process of millions of years. Because of the Fall, we need to be recreated spiritually (Eph 2:10; 2 Cor 5:17).

3. Other New Testament Writers and Creation

1 Tim 2:13	Paul, like Jesus, based his theology on a literal reading of the Genesis accounts of Creation (Heb 4:4) and the Fall (2 Cor 11:3). Adam and Eve are real historical personages (1 Cor 15:22).
Rev 14:7	John indicates not only that God created all things (Rev 4:11; 10:6) but that the message of creation is part of God's last message to this world. The tree of life (Rev 2:7; 22:2, 19) and the springs of the water of life (21:6) as well as the serpent (Rev 12:9, 17; 20:2) remind us of the original paradise (Gen 2:9-10; 3:1, 3, 14, 22, 24). Revelation 21–22 pictures paradise restored in a new heaven and a new earth with the new Jerusalem.

II. Points about Evolution

1. Although the theory of evolution is widely assumed to be part of the scientific enterprise, the question of origins deals more with history and not with present circumstances replicable in a laboratory.
2. The theory of evolution is also dependent on philosophical presuppositions. Often it is based on naturalism which excludes supernatural activity. Theistic evolution allows God's involvement in the evolutionary process but sets limits on what He can do.
3. Serious questions have been raised in relation to chemical evolution, irreducibly complex systems, missing links and, when working on a macro level, the mechanisms of mutation and natural selection.
4. The theory of evolution has also influenced the study of the humanities, including theology (e.g., the evolution of biblical books as a natural process apart from inspiration).
5. Ethical questions arise out of the concept of the survival of the fittest as it seems to allow for genocide, exploitation of the underprivileged and absolute materialism.

III. Consequences of Evolution for the Biblical Worldview

1. The theory of evolution postulates death, not as an enemy (1 Cor 15:26) nor as the result of sin, but as bringing about better adaptations for life's challenges. However, according to Scripture, death is the result of sin. If sin is not biblically defined as the transgression of divine law, no savior is needed. Also, resurrection and a new earth without evil or death becomes merely a pious but unrealistic dream and human life is essentially meaningless.
2. The theory of evolution can easily lead to nihilism. Its acceptance also leads to the denial or drastic modification of major biblical doctrines.

3. The theory of theistic evolution also paints a strange picture of God, not as almighty but subject to natural law; not as loving but cruel because He has used a process for creating life that requires extreme suffering and death.
4. If the theory of evolution is correct, the biblical Sabbath becomes a human invention and can be easily discarded.
5. Also, the acceptance of evolution leaves us no future except through the unbiblical concept of an immortal soul, but such deification of humanity is even more questionable.

III. Conclusion

Neither evolution nor creation can be proven scientifically. Even though we do not have all the evidence to support divine creation, we do not need to postulate blind faith. The doctrine of creation is clear from the Word of God and remains the best explanation for the origin of life. It also provides a satisfying and harmonious biblical worldview.

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