

Can Christians Believe in Evolution?

How did life originate? Among the big questions that people ask, this is one of the biggest. It's also one of the most important; the answer determines whether or not life has meaning. In the last 150 years, the theory of Darwinian evolution has presented an opposing worldview to the Bible's explanation of origins. Is this theory compatible with Christianity. Can a Christian believe in evolution?

What is one of God's last messages to the world?

"Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Revelation 14:6-7).

Revelation 14 depicts three angels carrying God's end-time message to the human race. This message includes a reminder to worship God as Creator. This call is made at a time in Earth's history when belief in the Bible's creation account is popularly considered to be narrow-minded, anti-intellectual, and backward. Are there good reasons to accept the Bible's account of the origin of life?

Did Jesus believe the Bible's creation account?

"And Jesus answered and said unto them...from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female" (Mark 10:5-6).

How did life originate?



ery zero being, say, ten point type), it would fill up a large portion of the universe¹

The laws of science, as we know them at present, contain many fundamental numbers, like the size of the electric charge of the electron and the ratio of the masses of the proton and the electron...The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life.²

The cosmos has been found to be intrinsically structured in a way that permits human presence within it...It seems to point beyond the brute fact of physical law and require to be set in a context of deeper intelligibility.³

How careful was God in creating Earth?

“He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing” (Job 26:7).

The Bible says that God took extra special care in forming and placing the earth. Interestingly, science agrees that an amazing set of “coincidences” have combined to make our world a safe place for life.

It is the right distance from the sun.

Had Earth spun in an orbit only five percent closer to the sun... it would have experienced a runaway greenhouse effect, creating unbearable surface temperatures and evaporating the oceans... And had Earth been positioned just one percent farther out...it would have experienced runaway glaciation, locking its surface water in ice for eternity.⁴

It is the right distance from the moon.

The sun is about 400 times larger in diameter than the moon, but is also 400 times farther away from Earth than the moon is. This allows the observation of perfect solar eclipses, which

1 Robert J. Spitzer, *New Proofs for the Existence of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010), p. 59.

2 Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (Bantam Books, 1988), p. 125.

3 John Polkinghorne, “God and Physics,” in *God is Great, God is Good*, William Lane Craig and Chad Meister, eds. (IVP Books: Downers Grove, IL; 2009), p. 70.

4 Gregg Easterbrook, “Are we Alone?” *Atlantic Monthly*, (August 1988).

in turn has made possible the calculation of ancient calendars (such as those required for the calculation of certain Bible prophecies).

It is the right mass.

Unless a planet reaches a certain mass, any surface air will gradually escape. But if the planet grows too big, its internal temperature will tend to convert surface water into vapor. Earth's mass turned out to be ideal for holding an atmosphere yet preserving liquid water.⁵

Earth's core contains the right materials.

Earth's core contains the right content to create a strong magnetic field, which helps protect against powerful solar flares.

Its surface contains the right mix of land and water.

The oceans contain enough water to cover a spherical Earth to a depth of about 4000 meters. If the surface of the planet varied only a few kilometers in elevation, Earth would be devoid of land. . . Thus the planet's remarkable mixture of land and oceans is a balancing act.⁶

Could complex life forms like humans evolve by chance?

As amazing as the physical universe is, the existence of complex life forms, and human beings in particular, is extraordinarily amazing. Is it possible that a human being could have arisen by mere chance, given enough time? Consider the following facts:

1. The possibility that molecules randomly connecting by chance could create a single cell or a complex organism are extremely small.

Edward Argyle, a Canadian astronomer, has estimated that the maximum number of bits of information that interacting chemicals can produce by sheer random trial is about 200. By Argyle's calculation, making a single-cell organism requires about 6 million bits of information. Making a human being entails about 240 million bits.⁷

2. There are approximately 200,000 types of protein in the human body. The odds against the random synthesis of any one of these proteins is about 1 in 50,000,000,000,000,000.⁸

5 Easterbrook, "Are we Alone?"

6 Ward and Brownlee, *Rare Earth*, p. 53.

7 Gregg Easterbrook, "Are we Alone?" *Atlantic Monthly*, (August 1988).

8 Fred Hoyle, *Intelligent Universe*, p. 12

3. Enzymes are special proteins that must be made of an exact ordering of amino acids in order to function properly. There are about 2,000 enzymes in the human body, and the odds of finding all 2,000 in the order required is about 1 in $10^{40,000}$.⁹

God says, “Come now, and let us reason together...” (Isaiah 1:18). The mathematical probabilities involved with the random development of enzymes, proteins, and single- or multiple-celled organisms are so extremely small that they approach impossibility. A reasonable view of origins must admit the possibility, or even probability, that life was created and didn’t arise by chance.

Did God predict the rise of the evolutionary worldview?

“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation” (2 Peter 3:3-4).

Amazingly, the Bible prophesies that in the “last days” people would argue that God, or a god, has never intervened in human history, but rather that life has developed slowly over the ages in a steady evolutionary tread. This theory is known as uniformitarianism, and it has been the dominant scientific view for nearly two hundred years.

Perhaps the most dangerous aspect of the evolutionary worldview is that it is not confined to scientific ques

*In the
beginning*

**God
created the
heaven and
the earth.**

(Genesis 1:1)

⁹ Fred Hoyle, *Intelligent Universe*, pp. 15-18.

tions about origins.¹⁰ In the last 150 years evolutionary philosophy has invaded nearly every corner of modern society and culture.

Is evolution a theory, a system, or a hypothesis? It is much more—it is a general postulate to which all theories, all hypotheses, all systems must henceforth bow and which they must satisfy in order to be thinkable and true. Evolution is a light which illuminates all facts, a trajectory which all lines of thought must follow—this is what evolution is.¹¹

What are the spiritual implications of evolutionary thinking?

The life-forming forces of life in evolutionary philosophy—adaptation, natural selection, mutation, and chance—become deadly when placed in the spiritual arena.

Adaptation

Simply molding ourselves to match the spiritual environment around us is spiritually deadly, and is forbidden by God (Deuteronomy 13:6-17). Christians are called to be a light on a hill (Matthew 5:14).

Natural selection

Competition and survival of the fittest are spiritually deadly traits. Salvation is offered freely to everyone; there does not have to be a loser in order for you to be saved (Isaiah 55:1).

Mutation

Darwinism relies on mutations, or changes, in an organism's DNA. The law of God written on the mind and heart (Hebrews 8:10) is a Christian's "DNA," for it controls and guides the Christian's behavior. Unlike the mutations that supposedly led to the development of more complex life forms, the law of God cannot be changed (Matthew 5:17-19).

Chance

We are called to choose God and make a conscious, deliberate decision to serve Him (Joshua 24:15). Chance plays no part in the spiritual development or salvation of a Christian.

10 This pamphlet is referring to macro-evolution, the theory that new species and ultimately life itself can arise through completely natural processes. Micro-evolution, on the other hand, refers to the gradual adaptation within a species to environmental and genetic variation.

11 Theodosius Dobzhansky, *Mankind Evolving* (Bantam ed., 1970); quoted in Philip E. Johnson, *Darwin On Trial* (Washington, DC: Regnery Gateway, 1991), p. 130.

How are Christians to live and think?

“For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:16).

Rather than allowing our beliefs and thinking to be swallowed up by the prevailing theories of the world, Christians are called to have the “mind of Christ.” They are called to reason Biblically and with faith. They are called to weight the wisdom of the world, including the theory of evolution, against the inspired and logical weight of evidence revealed in Scripture and science.

What is the Bible’s formula for creating life?

“And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light” (Genesis 1:2-3).

The opening verses of the Bible reveal that God created life through the combined power of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. Scripture reveals that God uses the same formula in creating spiritual life in the hearts of men. In His earthly life Jesus (the Word of God, John 1:1-5) was filled with the Spirit (Luke 4:1). The result was life to all who came to Him in faith. It is our privilege to grow in the same way as the Holy Spirit applies the Word of God to our lives. Jesus said, “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life” (John 6:63; see also Ephesians 1:13; 6:17).

How quickly can God re-create spiritual life us?

“And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham” (Luke 19:9).

The good news of the gospel is that God can re-create spiritual life within us instantly. It does not take Him millions of years to “forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9). Instead, salvation can come *today* if we repent and believe.

Why is belief in God as Creator so important?

“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else” (Isaiah 45:22).

God claims very clearly in the Bible to be not only the Creator but the Savior of the world as well. This makes sense: only the Cre-

ator can create new spiritual life in people. Biblical Christianity, therefore, is fundamentally opposite from the evolutionary worldview. In one, God created everything and life therefore has meaning. In the other, life arose through chance and contains no meaning at all.

Two worldviews are locked in deadly battle today: naturalism with its evolutionary theory and supernaturalism with its belief in Jesus Christ as the Creator of the heavens and the earth and all within them. It is a major fight in the end-time controversy between Satan and Christ. Satan hates Christ. Evolutionary theory is one of his many schemes to direct attention away from Him. Belief in evolution distances Christ from humanity in its origin, removing the fall of humanity so that the atonement by Christ is not necessary.¹²

The Word of God and the Holy Spirit are what created life on Earth and they are the only powers that can create new spiritual life in people. Is it your desire to worship God as your Creator, and to trust in His Word—the Bible—and the Holy Spirit to guide your spiritual decisions? The Bible declares that this is the path to life!

Can Christians believe in evolution? They are certainly free to; one of the wonderful things about the God of the Bible is that He grants freedom of choice to all people. He will never force anybody to believe in Him or to serve Him. However, the Biblical worldview is completely at odds with the idea that life arose from chance, or even that God used evolutionary principles to create life. Biblically-guided Christianity accepts the Genesis creation account as inspired and accurate, and celebrates the fact that the God of the Bible is working today with the same power to redeem that He exercised in the original creation of life.

¹² Norman R. Gulley, “Evolution: A Theory in Crisis,” in *Creation, Catastrophe, and Calvary*, John Templeton Baldwin, ed. (Review and Herald Publishing Association: Hagerstown, MD, 2000), p. 152.

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