

**Which Is True:
Creation or Evolution?**

Question #5: Which Is True: Creation Or Evolution?

A. WHAT ARE THE MAJOR OPTIONS?

**FIVE MAJOR VIEWS OF CREATION
(An Overview)**

1. Atheistic Evolution

1. STATEMENT OF THE VIEW

Everything in the universe has come into existence and has evolved into its present form as a result of natural processes unaided by any supernatural power.

2. POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE VIEW FROM ITS ADVOCATES

- a. It appears to explain the origin of everything.
- b. It offers a single explanation for everything that exists: it evolved.
- c. It offers the only real alternative to creation by God.
- d. It eliminates God and exalts man. It is thoroughly humanistic, and can be classified as a form of pantheism if one wishes to invoke a deity.

3. PROBLEMS WITH THE VIEW AND ANSWERS BY ITS ADVOCATES

IT CANNOT EXPLAIN THE ORIGIN OF MATTER.	MATTER IS ETERNAL.
IT CANNOT EXPLAIN THE COMPLEXITY OF MATTER.	MATTER IS THE PRODUCT OF BILLIONS OF YEARS OF EVOLUTION VIA CHANGE AND NATURAL SELECTION.
IT CANNOT EXPLAIN THE EMERGENCE OF LIFE.	PRIMORDIAL LIFE EVOLVED (VIA NATURAL SELECTION) FROM BIO-POLYMERS WHICH EVOLVED FROM BIO-ORGANICS WHICH EVOLVED FROM INORGANIC COMPOUNDS (IE. LIFE FROM NON-LIFE).
IT CANNOT EXPLAIN THE APPEARANCE OF GOD-CONSCIOUSNESS, CONSCIENCE, AND RATIONALITY IN MAN.	THIS TOO WAS THE PRODUCT OF EVOLUTION. IN ESSENCE RATIONALITY EMERGED FROM IRRATIONALITY.

4. EVALUATION OF THE VIEW

- a. It rests on a foundational hypothesis that cannot be proved to be true (i.e. matter is eternal); it is essentially a faith position (just like creationist positions).

- b. It is supported by little historical (geological) evidence (only the fossil record) which has many gaps in it and is open to subjective interpretation.
- c. It relies on mutations as a necessary mechanism for change, but mutations have never produced new species, and are almost always harmful and destructive.
- d. It is extremely improbable statistically.
- e. It rejects the special revelation of Scripture concerning creation.

5. MODERN ADVOCATES OF THE VIEW

Almost all non-Christian scientists such as Richard Dawkins, Steven Gould, Ernst Mayer, William Provine, Carl Sagan.

2. Theistic Evolution

1. STATEMENT OF THE VIEW

Everything in the universe has come into existence and has evolved into its present form as a result of natural processes guided by the God of the Bible (or some divine being).

2. POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE VIEW FROM ITS ADVOCATES

- a. It unites truth known by special revelation in the Bible with truth known by general revelation in nature and discovered by science.
- b. God seems to work according to this pattern in history interrupting and intervening in the course of events only rarely.

3. PROBLEMS WITH THE VIEW AND ANSWERS BY ITS ADVOCATES

IT PRESUPPOSES THE TRUTH OF EVOLUTION WHICH HAS NOT BEEN VALIDATED.	EVOLUTION IS A FACT, OR AT LEAST A STRONGLY ACCEPTED THEORY.
GOD HAS INTERVENED IN HISTORY MANY MORE TIMES THAN THE THEISTIC EVOLUTIONIST SUGGEST.	IN THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE GOD INTERVENED LESS FREQUENTLY.
DIVINE INTERVENTION IN THE EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS IS CONTRADICTORY TO THE BASIC THEORY OF EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS.	THE EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS DOES NOT RULE OUT DIVINE INTERVENTION.
THIS METHOD OF CREATION DOES NOT DO JUSTICE TO THE BIBLICAL RECORD OF CREATION.	THE BIBLICAL RECORD MUST BE INTERPRETED MORE FREELY AND LESS LITERALLY.

4. EVALUATION OF THE VIEW

- a. It cannot do justice to both the tenets of evolution and the teaching of Scripture. One must be given precedent over the other.
- b. It is ultimately destructive of biblical religion (at least this has been the case historically).

5. MODERN ADVOCATES OF THE VIEW

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (New York: Harper and Row, 1959). (He is a French Roman Catholic priest), scientist at schools like Baylor Univ., Calvin College, Wake Forest Univ., etc.

Some scientists and numerous theologians who have respect for but a deficient view of Scripture hold this view.

3. Progressive Creation (also known as the Day-Age Theory or Old Earth Creation)

1. STATEMENT OF THE VIEW

God created the world directly and deliberately, without leaving anything to chance, but He did it over long periods of time that correspond roughly to the geological ages and a 15-20 billion year old universe.

2. POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE VIEW FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THOSE WHO HOLD IT

- a. It provides a reasonable harmony between the Genesis record and the facts of science.
- b. The translation of “day” as “age” in Gen. 1 though rare, is an exegetically legitimate one.
- c. It is a tentative conclusion and acknowledges that not all the scientific evidence is in and our understanding of the text may change as biblical (and scientific) scholarship progresses.

3. PROBLEMS WITH THE VIEW AND ANSWERS BY ITS ADVOCATES

THERE ARE DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN THE FOSSIL RECORD AND THE ORDER IN WHICH PLANTS, FISH, AND ANIMALS ARE SAID TO HAVE BEEN CREATED IN GENESIS.	SCIENCE MAY BE WRONG AT THIS POINT, OR THE EARLIEST FORMS OF LIFE MAY BE OMITTED IN GENESIS.
TAKING THE SIX DAYS OF CREATION AS AGES IS UNUSUAL EXEGETICALLY.	BUT IT IS POSSIBLE AND BEST HERE.
“EVENINGS” AND “MORNINGS” SUGGEST 24-HOUR PERIODS.	BUT THE SUN DID NOT APPEAR UNTIL THE FOURTH DAY.
DEATH ENTERS THE WORLD BEFORE THE FALL.	IT TOOK ON ITS HORROR AT THE FALL BUT EXISTED BEFORE THAT EVENT.

4. EVALUATION OF THE VIEW

This view takes the biblical text quite seriously but adopts some unusual interpretations in order to harmonize with scientific data.

5. MODERN ADVOCATES OF THE VIEW

Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos* (Colorado Springs: Nav, 1993).

Many evangelicals who have a strong respect for some conclusions of science, including James Boice, Bruce Ware, and Bernard Ramm (and the Catholic Michael Behe).

4. Six-Day Creationism

1. STATEMENT OF THE VIEW

Genesis 1 describes one creative process that took place in six consecutive 24-hour periods of time not more than 6-20 thousand years ago (though many would allow for an older earth and creation date).

2. POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE VIEW FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THOSE WHO HOLD IT

- a. It regards biblical teaching as determinative.
- b. It rests on a strong exegetical base.
- c. It is the clearest meaning of the text.
- d. It is consistent with the laws of thermo-dynamics.

1. 1ST LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS: although energy can be changed in form, it is not now being created. Genesis 2:1-3; Hebrews 4:4-10.
2. 2ND LAW OF THERMODYNAMICS: all physical systems, if left to themselves, tend toward atrophy and become disordered. Romans 8:20-22; Hebrews 1:10-12.

3. PROBLEMS WITH THE VIEW AND ANSWERS BY ITS ADVOCATES

DATA FROM VARIOUS SCIENTIFIC DISCIPLINES (ASTRONOMY, RADIOACTIVE DATING, CARBONATE DEPOSITS, ETC.) INDICATES THE EARTH IS ABOUT 5 BILLION YEARS OLD AND THE UNIVERSE IS ABOUT 15-20 BILLION YEARS OLD	GOD CREATED THE COSMOS WITH THE APPEARANCE OF AGE AND MUCH OF SCIENTIFIC OPINION IS IN ERROR AND ALSO IN FLUX AND CHANGING.
A UNIVERSAL FLOOD CANNOT EXPLAIN THE GEOLOGIC STRATA FULLY.	IT CAN. THE PROBLEM IS MOST SCIENTISTS REFUSE TO EVEN CONSIDER IT DUE TO BIBLICAL BIAS.
CREATION WITH THE APPEARANCE OF AGE CASTS DOUBT ON THE CREDIBILITY OF GOD.	SINCE ADAM WAS EVIDENTLY CREATED WITH THE APPEARANCE OF AGE, OTHER THINGS COULD HAVE BEEN AS WELL. THIS IS SELF-EVIDENT IN THE TEXT.
THERE IS NO REASON WHY GOD WOULD HAVE CREATED THINGS WITH THE APPEARANCE OF AGE.	IT IS CONSISTENT WITH HIS CREATING A FULLY OPERATIONAL AND MATURE UNIVERSE.

4. EVALUATION OF THE VIEW

This view is based on the best exegesis of the text though it contradicts the present conclusions of several branches of science.

5. MODERN ADVOCATES OF THE VIEW

Creation Research Society, ICR (Henry Morris, Duane Gish, etc.).

Answers in Genesis (Ken Hamm).

Many conservative evangelicals.

5. The Gap Theory

1. STATEMENT OF THE VIEW

Between Gen. 1:1 and 2 there was a long, indeterminate period in which the destruction of an original world and the unfolding of the geological ages can be located. God then recreated our cosmos.

2. POSITIVE ASPECTS OF THE VIEW FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THOSE WHO HOLD IT

- a. It rests on an exegetical, biblical base.
- b. It is consistent with the structure of the creation account itself.
- c. It is possible to translate the Hebrew verb “to be,” in verse 2, as “become.”
- d. “Formless and void,” in verse 2, may be a clue to a preadamite judgment of God on the earth (cf. Isa. 45).
- e. It provides a setting for the fall of Satan (Isa. 14: Ezk. 28).

3. PROBLEMS WITH THE VIEW AND ANSWERS BY ITS ADVOCATES

IT IS AN UNNATURAL EXPLANATION SINCE THE TEXT IMPLIES AN ORIGINAL CREATION IN GEN. 1:2FF. (CF. EXOD. 20:11).	THIS INTERPRETATION IS A SUPERFICIAL CONCLUSION.
THE EXEGETICAL DATA THAT SUPPORTS THIS VIEW IS FAR FROM CERTAIN AND HIGHLY UNLIKELY.	THIS INTERPRETATION IS POSSIBLE.
THIS THEORY DOES NOT REALLY SETTLE THE PROBLEMS OF MODERN GEOLOGY.	THE UNIVERSAL FLOOD MAY HAVE PRODUCED SOME OF THE OTHER GEOLOGICAL PHENOMENA.

4. EVALUATION OF THE VIEW

While the view builds on a high view of Scripture, several of the interpretations required for it are based on improbable exegesis. In this light some have proposed moving the gap to between John 1:1 and Gen. 1:1. Still, virtually no Hebrew scholars hold this view.

5. MODERN ADVOCATES OF THE VIEW

Arthur C. Constance, *Without Form and Void* (Brockville, Ont: Doorway Papers, 1970).

Many conservative evangelicals including W.A. Criswell, Arthur Pink, C.I. Scofield, C.S. Lewis, M.R. DeHaan, and D.G. Barnhouse hold this view.

B. What are the major differences between Creation and Evolution Theories?

“Seven Tenets of the Creation and Evolution Models”

Creation	Evolution
I. The universe and the solar system were directly created by God.	I. The universe and the solar system emerged by naturalistic processes.
II. Life was suddenly created “ex nihilo” (out of nothing) by God.	II. Life emerged from non-life by naturalistic processes.
III. All present living kinds of animals and plants have remained fixed since creation, other than extinctions, and genetic variation in originally created kinds has only occurred within the limits of that species (micro-evolution).	III. All present kinds emerged from simpler earlier kinds, so that single celled organisms evolved into invertebrates, then vertebrates, then amphibians, then reptiles, then mammals, then primates, including man. (macro-evolution).
IV. Mutation and natural selection are insufficient to have brought about any emergence of present living kinds from a simple primordial organism.	IV. Mutation and natural selection have brought about the emergence of present complex kinds from a simple primordial organism.
V. Man and apes have a separate ancestry.	V. Man and apes emerged from a common ancestry.
VI. The earth’s geologic features appear to have been fashioned largely by rapid, catastrophic processes that affected the earth on a global and regional scale (catastrophism).	VI. The earth’s geologic features were fashioned largely by slow, gradual processes, with infrequent catastrophic events restricted to a local scale (uniformitarianism).
VII. The inception of the earth and of living kinds may have been relatively recent.	VII. The inception of the earth and then of life must have occurred several billion years ago.

C. What are some issues I need to consider?

1. Either God is eternal and made everything or matter is eternal and organized itself into the universe we have. Neither position can be proved. Both are essentially faith positions.
2. The fossil record is a problem for evolution. Transitional forms are still absent.
3. The issue of "irreducible complexity" of living organisms is a problem for evolution. The evidence screams for an "intelligent designer." (Hence the rise of the "I.D." movement).
4. Alleged "ape-man" discoveries like Piltdown man, Nebraska man, Peking man, Java man, Lucy Ramapithecus and Neanderthal man have all been proven to be either a hoax (Piltdown man) or a case of mistaken identification.
5. The age of the Earth/universe is not the best place or even a necessary place to wage the war of evolution/creation. Leave it open.
6. A historical Adam and Eve is a must and not negotiable for a Christian. The issue is both Christological (what did Jesus believe?) and soteriological (related to salvation).
7. Evolution is in trouble. The theory continually changes form. It is reasonable to believe that early in this century it will cease to be viable, at least in its present models.

Recommended Sources for Additional Study:

- Dembski, William, and Michael Behe. *Intelligent Design: The Bridge between Science and Theology*. IVP, 1999.
- Dembski, William. *What Darwin Didn't Know*. Harvest House, 2004.
- Johnson, Phillip. *Darwin on Trial*. IVP, 1991.
- _____. *Defeating Darwinism*. IVP, 1997.