

“How Do Christians Respond to the Fact of Evolution?”

After reading one of your articles on Creation vs. Evolution I understood every aspect of their respective arguments, I was just a little a confused as far as Christian responses to the arguments. Do Christians acknowledge evolution but then just say that God has pre-ordained this evolution to happen? Or do Christians just ignore the fact that evolution exists? Maybe I am making this too complicated. If Christians can see that an organism changes over time to adapt with the environment for absolutely no apparent reason, does this mean that they acknowledge this change happened for no apparent reason thus evolution, or just that God made this change possible?

Christians respond differently to the questions you propose. Some Christians, indeed, suggest that God ordained the evolutionary process as His means to create. These usually refer to their position as *theistic evolution* or *evolutionary creation*. As far as I know, no Christian ignores that “evolution” happens. All recognize microevolution as a real process in response to environmental change. This does not require mutation or the establishment of new genetic or morphologic systems. Change over time is only one form of evolution, which no one objects to. What we believe there is insufficient evidence for, is the notion that all life forms today are descended from a single original life form that itself evolved from purely chemical precursors around 4 billion years ago.

I hope this helps.

Respectfully,

Dr. Ray Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“How Do I Find Someone to Mentor Me?”

Hello Ray!

I am not sure if you know who I am, but I was one of the participants in your singles conference at _____.

I just spent some time on the Probe website and was reading one of Lou Whitworth's [articles on being God's man](#) (king, warrior, mentor and friend).

I know you spoke to us about having a mentor in your life. Since then, I have heard two of our pastors and Chuck Swindoll speak about the need for mentoring as well. I am really trying to allow God's will to direct my life and this subject keeps coming up. I believe this is a step He wants me to take, but I am not sure how to go about it. Would it be possible for you to help me find a mentor? If not, would you know someone who could help me?

Any assistance you could provide me is be sincerely appreciated.

Hi _____,

A mentor generally needs to be someone who is at least 10 to 15 years older and someone whose walk with the Lord you respect. Asking someone to be your mentor can be a little intimidating. But just asking if you can meet together to pray and enjoy some fellowship sounds a lot more doable to other men. Is there anyone you admire from afar? If no one comes to mind I would suggest inquiring of a pastor for suggestions. They often know of older saints who would be willing to enter into this kind of relationship but don't know of anyone

interested.

It's a real problem in the church and there are a lot of men willing to be mentored but a shortage of those willing to share their life's lessons with someone younger (often for fear of not looking so good in the process—a mentor needs to be real enough to admit failures but also have a healthy view of their strengths). They have no model to follow themselves. All that to say it is not likely that this will be a quick and easy search. Above all pray for the Lord's direction and for Him to prepare someone even now.

I commend you for sensing this need and reaching out to try and fill it!

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“What Will Keep Us From Being Jealous About Others' Rewards in Heaven?”

If Christians in heaven are given different amounts of [rewards in heaven](#), what prevents us from being jealous over other people's reward in heaven? I know that our body, mind, and soul all changed after we have got into heaven and that we should have no thoughts about jealousy. But if that is true, are we just like dummies, where we just think about good things? Are we prevented from thinking about jealousy in heaven? How can God prevent us from ever sinning again in

heaven if He doesn't mind control us, because Angels in heaven were once good, but Satan turned bad. How can an angel turn bad? If God wasn't able to prevent angels from turning bad, how can He prevent people in heaven from turning bad without mind controlling them?

Boy, lots of questions! Let me do my best:

If Christians in heaven are given different amounts of rewards in heaven, what prevents us from being jealous over other people's reward in heaven? I know that our body, mind, and soul all changed after we have got into heaven and that we should have no thoughts about jealousy.

The best way to understand this that I have encountered is this: When we become a Christian, God gives us a new heart, and He comes to dwell in our spirits. Our spirits are the part of us that were designed to be indwelt by God, but ever since the fall of Adam, all of us were born with our spirits dead. At salvation they become alive.

Now imagine that He plants a tiny seed of new life in our spirits at salvation. As we trust and obey Him, as we learn to love Him, as we pursue growth through prayer, Bible study, discipleship and submission, our spirit grows. Some people's growth is much greater than others who are content to coast along in spiritual mediocrity. (That has something to do with the differing rewards in heaven, too.) So our spirits can grow bigger and stronger inside. On the outside is our flesh, that part of us that functions apart from God—our own strength and power. This is the part of us where jealousy dwells (as well as other fruits of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21).

It has been suggested that at death, our flesh disappears, leaving our spirits and souls (personalities) to enter heaven. (That would make sense, since our flesh is unholy and only holy things can be in heaven.) So there we are in heaven, with whatever level of spiritual maturity and growth we had

attained at death. No matter how “big” our spirits are, there is nothing in those God-indwelled, God-built spirits that can be jealous like our flesh was. It’s sort of like what happens after you have an appendectomy or a tonsillectomy—there’s nothing there to get infected anymore, so you can’t get appendicitis or tonsillitis. It’s gone forever. Our flesh is “infected” with sin, so after the flesh falls away at death, there’s no spiritual infection anymore.

But if that is true, are we just like dummies, where we just think about good things? Are we prevented from thinking about jealousy in heaven?

Let’s go back to my appendectomy illustration. Would you remember the pain of appendicitis after your appendix is out? Sure. Would you want your appendix back? Not usually! We’ll remember feeling jealous like all our other sins, and we’ll be delighted to be rid of the infection of our sin. It will be like returning to health after a long illness, except that it will be more like gaining a new dimension of health we have never experienced on earth. It’s not that we’ll be robots, unable to think anything but “happy thoughts”. . . We will be free to ONLY think good thoughts and ONLY do good things, for the first time in our lives. That will be true freedom—to be the people we were created to be, without the dragging, disgusting, difficult influence of sinful flesh.

Or, to give another illustration, have you ever had a shopping cart with a wobbly wheel that kept veering off course when you wanted to go straight? It takes a lot of energy to make it go in the direction you want to go because of that corrupt, wobbly wheel. In heaven, it will be like having four perfect wheels that always take you where your true self wants to go—in ways that always glorify and please God. And you!

How can God prevent us from ever sinning again in heaven if He doesn’t mind control us?

This is a great time to point to the Lord Jesus as the perfect example of what mankind was supposed to be. The First Adam sinned and became so much less than what God intended us to be; but Jesus, the Second Adam, showed us what Adam's character would have looked like without sin. How did God the Father prevent God the Son from sinning when He was on earth? He didn't have to: the very nature of God the Son was to do the will of God and GLORY in that obedience and fellowship with the Father. Just as the nature of a fruit tree is to bear fruit and the nature of a domestic dog is to love and be loyal to its master, the true nature of man is to love God and enjoy Him forever. When we're in heaven, all the things that prevent us from being the people God made us to be will have been taken out of the way, and we will be free to be who we really are. There won't be anything in heaven tempting us or influencing us to sin, because the part that is vulnerable to sin (our flesh) will be gone. Just like the inflamed appendix.

because Angels in heaven were once good, but Satan turned bad. How can an angel turn bad? If God wasn't able to prevent angels from turning bad, how can He prevent people in heaven from turning bad without mind controlling them.

The angels, like us, had the gift of choice, to serve and obey God, or to rebel. God gave them the choice for the same reason He gave US the choice: because He wants to be freely wanted and pursued and loved, just like we do! They made their choice sometime between the creation of the world and the fall of Adam. They have been living with the eternal consequences of that choice ever since, either for good or for evil. When we're in heaven, we will be living with the delightful eternal consequences of our choice to trust Christ. It's not a matter of God mind-controlling us—it's a matter of God saying, "OK, the fight is over, now enjoy the freedom that comes with having made the right choice on earth. Your true heart's desire to BE good and DO good won't be compromised by your flesh here in heaven. Enjoy!" That's a long way from making us

puppets. It's like my privilege as a parent to say to my about-grown kids, "I'm so glad you chose to spend the weekend here with us instead of out carousing with people bent on self-indulgence and destruction. I've made your favorite dinner and I'd like to take you to your favorite store and get you a gift. Enjoy the fruits of your wise choice!" That's not controlling my sons—it's lavishing love on them. You could ask them if they feel that their dad and I are controlling them, and they'd look at you like, "Huh?"

I hope this helps.

Sue Bohlin

© 2001 Probe Ministries

Published November, 2001.

“When Was the Book of Job Written?”

When was the book of Job written? How do we know it was written then since we don't know who wrote the book and when Job lived?

Top Ten Reasons Why We Believe the Book of Job was Written During the Time of the Patriarchs

1. Job lived 140 years after his calamities (42:16). This corresponds with the lifespans of the patriarchs. For example, Abraham lived 175 years.

2. Job's wealth was reckoned in livestock (1:3; 42:12) which was also true of Abraham (Gen. 12:16) and Jacob (Gen. 30:43).

3. The Sabeans and Chaldeans (Job 1:15, 17) were nomads in Abraham's time, but in later years were not.
4. The Hebrew word (qsitah) translated "piece of silver" (42:11) is used elsewhere only twice (Gen. 33:19, Josh. 24:32). Both times are in reference to Jacob.
5. Job's daughters were heirs of his estate along with their brothers (Job. 42:15). This was not possible later under the Mosaic Law if a daughter's brothers were still living (Num. 27:8).
6. Literary works similar in some ways to the Book of Job were written in Egypt and Mesopotamia around the time of the patriarchs.
7. The Book of Job includes no references to the Mosaic institutions (priesthood, laws, tabernacle, special religious days and feasts).
8. The name (sadday) is used of God 31 times in Job (compared with 17 times elsewhere in the Old Testament) and was a name familiar to the patriarchs.
9. Several personal and place names in the book were also associated with the patriarchal period. Examples include (a) Sheba – a grandson of Abraham, (b) Tema – another grandson of Abraham, (c) Eliphaz – a son of Esau, (d) Uz – a nephew of Abraham.
10. Job was a common West Semitic name in the second millennium B.C. Job was also a name of a 19th-century-B.C. prince in the Egyptian Execration texts.

Kerby Anderson
Probe Ministries

What's the NT Understanding of Tithing?

I just finished reading your answer to the question concerning [the value of the Old Testament for New Testament Christians](#). How then, do we explain tithing? Does this mean that we are no longer bound to the command to give 1/10? Where in the NT does it give directions concerning tithes and offerings?

Thanks in advance for your guidance and your wisdom!

You ask a very good question and you are essentially correct in your observations. The Old Testament tithe, according to some estimates, actually approximated closer to 23% in total tithes and offerings! The New Testament, however, does not specify a particular percentage that believers are required to give. This being said, however, believers are most certainly encouraged to give (see Rom. 15:26-27; 1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8:7) and to give generously and liberally (see Rom. 12:8; 2 Cor. 9:11-13), each according to his own ability (Acts 11:29; 2 Cor. 8:12), with a willing, cheerful heart (2 Cor. 9:7). Even those who are poor are permitted to give, and praised for doing so (Mark 12:41-44; Luke 21:1-4; 2 Cor. 8:1-5). Paul sets forth Jesus as the believer's example for giving (2 Cor. 8:8-9). We should give out of a heart full of gratitude toward God for what He's done for us through Christ! It is clear, then, that sacrificial giving is very much encouraged (2 Cor. 9:5) – though not commanded (2 Cor. 8:8).

Of course, believers should still be careful who they give to. We must be good stewards of the resources which God has given us, look into different opportunities for giving, and give to those who are above reproach in their financial stewardship (2 Cor. 8:20-21).

Although there are many passages in the New Testament which address the issue of giving, the most detailed passage on this subject can be found in 2 Corinthians 8-9.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn

Probe Ministries

See Also:

- [Probe Answers Our E-Mail: "What Does the Bible Say About Tithing?"](#)
- [Probe Answers Our E-Mail: "Where Should We Give Our Tithe?"](#)

“What Does the Bible Say About Tithing?”

I enjoyed reading your article on the [will of God](#) and I agree with your point of view. I was wondering if in your opinion the Bible is clear about what we should do about Tithing?

I do not believe we are under the tithe obligation (10%) anymore. But this doesn't mean we aren't obligated to give. In fact, it might be that we should give *more!* I believe our responsibility is greater under the New Testament because now we don't have a simple figure (or percentage) given that we can follow, but rather must consider what the needs are around us and give accordingly. The model in giving, of course, was God the Father in giving His Son for us, and who continues to give to us bountifully. Jesus was pleased with the old woman who gave only a little bit because it was all she had: giving

was the important thing to her, taking care of the work of God rather than worrying about her own needs (Mk. 12:41ff). He also taught us not to fret about our personal needs but to lay up treasure in heaven (Mt. 6:19-21, 31-34). If we do what we are convinced is right, even if it costs us dearly, our Father in heaven will reward us in due time (Lk.6:38). Paul called on us to be cheerful givers, to look out for others ahead of ourselves. If all of us have that attitude, then we will find ourselves helping others and being helped in return (2 Cor. 3:13-15). He taught us to give bountifully (2 Cor. 9:6), but he taught us to give as we have purposed in our hearts, not under compulsion. And he promised God's provision for us (vv. 8-11).

A key issue in the matter of giving is fear. Do we see a need and not give out of fear? Do we out of insecurity or greed hold onto our material things or hoard our wealth to obtain more so we can buy more things or be secure if the economy takes a slide?

Another key matter is the ongoing ministries of the church. Are we behind our church leaders? Do we support them with our time, energies, gifts, and money? What about the work of Christ around the world? Are we giving so others can go and proclaim the Gospel?

We need to get away from the law mindset on this matter. Our minds and hearts should be focused on our church and the world around us, and we should be ready to give to help others and further the kingdom, even if we do without. We must have an eternal perspective; this world and its "goodies" are not what are important. The work of the kingdom of Christ should provide the focus and measure for everything we do and have.

I cannot tell you how much you should give. If your greatest desire is to further the kingdom of Christ, and everything you have is at His disposal, then the balance will be tipped toward giving. Imagine what the church could do if we all had

the attitude of the Israelites when it came time to build the tabernacle! (Ex. 35:5ff)

Rick Wade
Probe Ministries

See Also:

- [Probe Answers Our E-Mail: “What’s the NT Understanding of Tithing?”](#)
- [Probe Answers Our E-Mail: “Where Should We Give Our Tithe?”](#)

“What About the Apocrypha?”

The Catholic institution claims the apocrypha is inspired. Protestants don't. Therefore, within the Body, there are two different lists of supposedly God-inspired authoritative Scripture.

So... How can we claim the Bible is authoritative when there are two differing lists of supposed Scriptures within Christianity...Two different Bibles? My next question is akin to the first: How do we know with certainty which list is THE list?” Both of these questions center on authority. Who do we trust as our God approved authority able to testify for us on behalf of Scriptures?

It is no wonder that the other religions of the world do not take true Christianity seriously when such fundamental divisions exist within the Body.

The Apocrypha is not included as part of the inspired text because it does not meet the criteria of the [inspired canon](#). Here are just a few examples.

The Apocrypha contains historical errors. In Judith 1:1 Nebuchadnezzar is reigning in Ninevah instead of Babylon.

The Apocrypha contains unbiblical teaching. 2 Maccabees 12 teaches to pray for the dead. Tobit 12:9 teaches faith by works, a clear contradiction to the Bible (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Jesus and the Apostles do not quote the Apocrypha. We do not see it directly quoted in the New Testament.

Finally Jesus tells us where the inspired canon ends in Luke 11:51. He says the prophets extend from Abel (Genesis 4) to Zechariah (2 Chronicles 24:20-21). So the line of prophets ends with the Jewish Old Testament, the Masoretic text that Jesus used as authoritative.

The history of the Apocrypha is interesting. It was not part of the Catholic Church's inspired canon until 1545 AD. No council recognized it in the first four centuries. The historical evidence goes against the Apocrypha. It was incorporated by the Catholic Church in response to the Protestant challenge to several unbiblical teachings such as praying for the dead and penance. Hope this helps.

Patrick Zukeran
Probe Ministries

“Jesus Contributed to Drunkenness!”

I know drunkenness is condemned in Scripture, yet it seems that Jesus contributed to the drunkenness at the wedding feast

when he turned the water to wine.

I'm afraid we can't agree with your conclusions. First of all, Scripture doesn't say anything about drunkenness occurring at the wedding at Cana (John 2:1-11). Secondly, to blame the Lord Jesus for drunkenness by changing water into wine is like blaming God for the Great Chicago Fire because He created wood with the capacity to burn. No one is responsible for drunkenness except the person who chooses to overdrink. I think it's important to draw a distinction between the fact that God created good things in the first place, and the possibility that those good things can be abused. He is never responsible for our sinful choices.

Sue Bohlin
Probe Ministries

“Did the Early Church Fathers Accept the Apocrypha?”

I have been searching for some time to find quotes from the earliest church fathers (first through fourth centuries) that will demonstrate that they did not accept the books of the Old Testament Apocrypha (presently accepted by the Roman Catholic Church) as scripture. Do such evidences exist? Where might I find them? What was accepted as authoritative Old Testament scripture in the time of Jesus? Did certain copies of the Septuigint include the Apocrypha? Thank you for your assistance.

Let me try to answer your questions in order:

Do such evidences exist? Where might I find them?

F. F. Bruce uses extensive quotes from the early church fathers in both chapters five and six of his book *The Canon of Scripture* (InterVarsity Press, 1988). Chapter five includes church fathers in the east (Justin Martyr, Melito of Sardis, Origen and Athanasius, etc), while chapter six looks at the Latin west (Tertullian, Jerome and Augustine). The record is mixed; some accepted the apocryphal books with qualifications, others were more critical. Few accept them outright.

What was accepted as authoritative Old Testament scripture in the time of Jesus?

Both the Hebrew and Greek versions of the Old Testament were authoritative in Jesus' time. Bruce argues that Jesus read from and used the Hebrew version while Stephen, a Hellenist, would have used the Septuagint.

Did certain copies of the Septuagint include the Apocrypha?

The earliest extant copies we have of the Septuagint come from the Christian era (5th and 6th centuries). Although they include the apocryphal books, Bruce argues that there is no evidence of a wider canon for the Alexandrian or Greek Jews than was accepted by the Palestinian Jews. In fact, Philo (20 B.C – 50 A.D.) a Hellenistic Jew, does not mention the apocryphal additions.

Don Closson
Probe Ministries

“Did Jesus Cleanse the Temple

More than Once, Or Is There a Mistake in the Bible?"

In John 2:13-25 is the story of when Jesus cleansed the temple. It immediately follows Jesus turning the water into wine, and immediately precedes the conversation with Nicodemus. In Matthew 21:12-16 is the same story immediately precedes the cursing of the barren fig tree. In Mark 11:15-18 the cleansing of the temple takes place immediately after the cursing of the fig tree.

Now, as I see it, there are only three possibilities.

- 1) The text in either Matthew and Mark or in John is in error about the time of the cleansing of the temple. And either the text in Matthew or Mark is wrong about the time of the cursing of the fig tree.
- 2) The gospels were not written in chronological order.
- 3) The same incident happened more than once (highly unlikely).

What is your take on this? Did I overlook something?

Thanks for your question! You have raised an important (and relatively common) difficulty in interpreting the gospels. Let me first say that the gospels were not necessarily written in chronological order. In fact, it is generally accepted that many of the incidents recorded in the gospels were NOT written in chronological order. As a general rule, the only exception to this is Luke's gospel, in which he specifically states his intention "to write it out...in consecutive order" (Luke 1:3).

A good book which you may want to consult about some of these issues of gospel interpretation and harmonization is Craig Blomberg's *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (Inter-

Varsity Press, 1987). Since this is not an area of personal expertise for me, I will simply give you Blomberg's observations on possible ways in which the difficulties you have noticed might be resolved.

Concerning the cursing of the fig tree, Blomberg believes that Matthew has simply telescoped the events of two days "into one uninterrupted paragraph which seems to refer only to the second day's events." He points out that Matthew's introduction, "Now in the morning," does "not specify which day is in view, and there is no reason to exclude an interval of time between verses 19 and 20." He continues by noting, "Mark does not deny that the fig tree withered immediately, only that the disciples did not see it until the next day." He concludes by pointing out that the gospels leave out a wealth of detail (indeed, John states this explicitly in 20:30), and such omissions simply become more evident when compared with a more detailed account in another gospel.

Blomberg offers a couple of solutions to the problem of the cleansing of the temple. The first solution holds that John has simply woven this incident into his gospel thematically, rather than chronologically. In other words, there is only one cleansing and John, for thematic considerations, has simply chosen to relay this incident in a manner unrelated to its actual chronological occurrence in the life of Christ. He offers a couple of reasons in support of this view. The second solution (which commends itself to my mind) actually acknowledges two separate cleansings, one at the beginning and one near the end of Jesus' public ministry. He offers six arguments in support of this second position:

1. The details of the cleansing given in John's account are completely different from those given in the Synoptics (i.e. Matthew, Mark, Luke).

2. If Jesus felt strongly enough about the temple corruption to cleanse it once at the beginning of His ministry, it is not

really too difficult to believe that He might do it again at the end of His ministry.

3. Since cleansing the temple was an overtly Messianic act, about which some of the Jews would have approved, it is not surprising that He could get away with doing this once at the outset of His ministry. However, when the Jews began to realize that Jesus was not really the sort of Messiah they were looking for, a second cleansing would have almost certainly sealed His fate (see Mark 11:18).

4. In the Synoptics, Jesus is accused of having said that He would destroy the temple and rebuild another in three days not made with human hands (Mark 14:58). But a similar comment by Jesus is only explicitly mentioned in John 2:19. Furthermore, since the witnesses in Mark's gospel get the statement slightly wrong, and cannot agree among themselves (Mark 14:59), it may be a confused memory of something Jesus said two or three years earlier, rather than just a few days earlier.

5. Jesus' statement in the Synoptics is more severe than that in John. Only in the Synoptics does He refer to the Gentiles' need to pray at the temple, and only in the Synoptics does He refer to the Jews as "robbers".

6. In John 2:20 the Jews refer to the temple rebuilding project having begun 46 years earlier. This would mark the date of the cleansing at around AD 27 or 28. But Jesus was almost certainly not crucified until at least AD 30. And it is most unlikely that John would have simply made up such a figure. Therefore, it is quite likely that John is describing a distinct (and earlier) cleansing from the one mentioned in the Synoptics.

When I approach the gospel narratives with the attitude that they are innocent until proven guilty, keeping in mind that they have been thoroughly demonstrated to be generally

reliable historical sources, the six arguments listed above strongly incline me to the view that there were in fact two temple cleansings in the life of Christ—one at the beginning of His public ministry, the other at its conclusion. At any rate, that is my take on this particular issue.

Hope this helps!

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn

Probe Ministries