

Are We Significant in This Vast Universe? – The Evidence Supports Belief in God

Steve Cable considers the question of why could we possibly be important in such a vast universe. Current research shows that there are reasons why God needed such a vast universe to house life on this planet. Understanding this idea can make it an apologetic for our faith rather than a fact which detracts from our faith. Science is the study of God's creation and the more we delve into it the clearer the hand of God becomes.

Why Is the Universe so Vast? Are We Truly Insignificant?

What do you feel when you look at the night sky? Awe? Insignificance? Adoration? Recently, my wife and I took three Ph.D. students from China for an overnight outing at a lake in West Texas. One of the things that impressed them most was the opportunity to view the night sky on a moonless night. Due to "light pollution," people in most cities can only make out a few hundred stars with the naked eye. These young women had never seen the night sky as King David did when he declared, "The heavens declare the glory of God!" (Psalm 19:1, NASU). They were so taken by the stars and the Milky Way that they spent several hours lying on the dock, looking up at the night sky.

These students were not Christians, and I was glad to have an opportunity to use what we know about the stars to talk to them about the overwhelming evidence for a Creator who is intensely interested in humans. However, another host may have used the same night sky to argue that if there is a God, we must not be



very significant to God. Which view is correct? In this article, we will look into the Bible *and* into current scientific theories to better equip us to answer this important question.

According to the Bible, the transcendent Creator of this universe made humans in His own image as the focal point of His creation. Skeptics of a biblical worldview often point to the vastness of the universe as evidence that humans cannot be the focal point of a theistic creation. The famous astronomer, author, and television personality Carl Sagan put it this way:

Our posturings, our imagined self-importance, the delusion that we have some privileged position in the Universe, are challenged by this point of pale light. 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.[{1}](#)

Famous physicist Stephen Hawking wrote, "Our Solar System is certainly a prerequisite for our existence but there does not seem to be a need for all these other galaxies."[{2}](#)

In other words, why would God create this huge universe, if He was primarily interested in His relationship with one species occupying a tiny planet?

I think this is a reasonable question. After all, based on observations from the Hubble Telescope, the current best estimate for the number of stars in the observable universe is 5 times 10 to the 22nd power; that is a 5 with 22 zeros after it. How many stars is that? Well, if you were to count one star every second, it would take you only fifteen hundred trillion years to count them. These stars are spread over billions of light years. Amazingly, all of these stars account for only about 1% of the total mass of the universe. Why did God create such a vast universe, placing us on a single small

planet with no reasonable hope of ever traveling beyond our solar system? Does the size of our universe run counter to a biblical worldview?

A Biblical Perspective of Humankind and the Vast Heavens

If God is the Creator of the universe, and the Bible is revelation directly from God, then accurate observation of the universe will ultimately prove to be consistent with His revelation. By combining the general revelation of science with the special revelation of the Bible, we should be rewarded with a greater understanding of the nature of our Creator and His intentions for mankind. Let's see if this is true in addressing the vastness of the universe.

First let's consider what God's special revelation for us, the Bible, has to say about the vastness of the universe. The Bible often refers to God's creative work in "stretching out the heavens" and filling it with stars (e.g. Job 9:8, Zech 12:1). A review of Bible passages on the stars and the heavens reveals a number of reasons why a vast universe is consistent with humans being the most significant part of creation.

We need to realize that creating a vast universe is not harder for God than creating a smaller universe. God brought the universe into existence out of nothing. He had no limits on the amount of matter and energy created. Consequently, it is meaningless to say that it would be a tremendous waste for God to create so many lifeless galaxies. The concept of waste only applies when there is a limited supply. When there is an unlimited supply, you can use all you desire; there is plenty more where that came from.

Within this vast universe, God placed earth in potentially the only place in the universe capable of supporting advanced life. There are many aspects of the universe that are hidden

from the casual observer, but the vastness of the heavens is not one of them. God created the earth and positioned it in an ideal place so that humans could observe the vastness of the heavens and the enormous number of stars. The Bible points out at least five purposes for humans observing this vast universe:

1. *To reveal His majesty and power.* Job refers to this understanding as he reflected on his sufferings stating,

*Who commands the sun not to shine,
And sets a seal upon the stars;
Who alone stretches out the heavens
And tramples down the waves of the sea;
Who makes the Bear, Orion and the Pleiades,
And the chambers of the south;
Who does great things, unfathomable,
And wondrous works without number.
Were He to pass by me, I would not see Him;
Were He to move past me, I would not perceive Him.
Were He to snatch away, who could restrain Him?
Who could say to Him, "What are You doing?" (Job 9:7-12).*

Later, God confronts Job with His lack of understanding the full power and majesty of His Creator:

*Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth?
Tell Me, if you have understanding,
Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades,
Or loose the cords of Orion?
Can you lead forth a constellation in its season,
And guide the Bear with her satellites?
Do you know the ordinances of the heavens,
Or fix their rule over the earth? (Job 38:4, 31-33).*

As we see in this passage, God intentionally did creative, wondrous works without number so that we could glimpse His

greatness.

2. *To emphasize our insignificance without God.* The vastness of the heavens highlights how insignificant humans are apart from God's concern for us. The primary lesson that Job learned through his experience was that we are in no position to critique God's actions over His creation. God's creation is so vast that any significance we have comes solely from God's choice to be concerned with us. Job stated it this way: "Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to You?" (Job 40:4)

King David was the most significant person in Israel during his reign, but when he considered the vastness of God's creation he acknowledged our insignificance:

*When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained;
What is man that You take thought of him,
And the son of man that You care for him (Ps 8:3-4)?*

3. *As a measure of His loving kindness toward us.* God uses the vastness of the heavens to help us understand the magnitude of His love for us, stating, "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, So great is His loving kindness toward those who fear Him" (Ps 103:11).

God's love for us is greater than the billions of light years which separate us from the most distant galaxies.

4. *As a picture of His faithfulness and forgiveness.* In a similar way, God uses our inability to completely grasp the breadth and depth of the universe to emphasize spiritual truths. Through Jeremiah, God promised a new covenant where He will remember our sins no more. God used the vastness of the heavens to convey His promise to never cast those in the new covenant away from Him with these words,

*Thus says the LORD, "If the heavens above can be measured
And the foundations of the earth searched out below,
Then I will also cast off all the offspring of Israel
For all that they have done," declares the LORD (Jer 31:37).*

Even today astronomers recognize that the universe we can observe is much smaller than the state of the universe as it exists today. Due to the finite speed of light, it is impossible to directly observe the current size of the universe or count the exact number of stars. Just as the heavens can never be measured, God will never cast us off from His presence.

5. *As a reminder that our understanding is limited.* Our Creator understands the universe from one end to the other and from the beginning of time to its end. As humans, we are just beginning to probe its mysteries. So, God reminds us, "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa 55:9).

It is clear that God intended us to observe and study the stars and the heavens. As a part of God's general revelation, the magnitude of the universe speaks to His greatness. Through God's special revelation, we see God using the vastness of His creation to teach us lessons about who we are and how we relate to Him. For a Creator who was willing to sacrifice His only Son on the cross for our redemption, it would be child's play to create a vast universe solely for our instruction. With this understanding, the vastness of the universe becomes a testament to our importance to God rather than evidence of our insignificance.

A Scientific Perspective of Humankind and the Vast Universe

If God is the Creator of the universe and the author of the

Bible, accurate observation of the universe will ultimately prove to be consistent with His revelation. By combining the general revelation of science with the special revelation of the Bible, we should be rewarded with a greater understanding of the nature of our Creator and His intentions for mankind.

In his recent book *Why the Universe is the Way It Is*^[3], Hugh Ross points out a number of areas where combining the latest observations of astronomy and physics with biblical theology provides us with fuller answers for some of the tough questions of life. One area he focuses on is the question we have been examining: “Does the vastness of this universe mean that we are insignificant and/or accidental?”

If we assume, as most skeptics and seekers would, that the physical laws of this universe have remained constant from the beginning of the universe until now, then the current state of scientific knowledge points to three reasons why the universe must occupy the mass and volume that it does in order for advanced carbon based life to exist on this planet.

1. *The exact mass of the universe was necessary for life supporting elements to exist.* Life requires heavier elements such as oxygen, carbon, and nitrogen. These elements are produced in the nuclear furnaces of stars. If there were less mass in the universe, only lighter elements such as helium would be produced. If there were more mass, only heavier elements, such as iron, would be produced. In fact, the amount of mass and dark energy in the universe must be fine tuned to less than one part in 10 to the 60^{th} power, or one part in one trillion trillion trillion trillion trillion, to have a universe that can create a life supporting solar system and planet.

2. *The exact mass of the universe was required to regulate the expansion of the universe to allow the formation of the sun and the solar system.* Amazingly, it turns out that the same total mass that results in the right mix of life supporting

elements also results in the right amount of gravity to dampen the expansion of matter across the surface of the space-time continuum to allow the formation of stars like the sun which are capable of supporting a planet like earth. If the universe were expanding faster, stars and solar systems would not form. If the universe were expanding slower, giant stars and black holes would dominate the universe. Once again the total matter in the universe is fine tuned to support life. And what an amazing coincidence: the number that creates the right mix of elements also creates the right expansion rate. This dual fine tuning is much less likely than achieving the financial returns guaranteed by [Bernie Madoff!](#)

3. *The vast volume of the universe is required to give the earth just the right amount of light and other electromagnetic radiation to support life and not destroy it.* Life not only requires a planet with the right mix of elements orbiting the right kind of sun in just the right solar system; it also requires a “just right” galactic environment. Astronomers has discovered what they call “the galactic habitable zone” for our Milky Way galaxy at a distance of about 26,000 light years from the center of the galaxy. Any planet closer to the center will experience deadly radiation levels. Any planet further away from the center would lack the mix of heavy elements necessary for advanced life. But the vast majority of this habitable zone is inside one of the uninhabitable spiral arms of the galaxy. Since stars revolve around the galactic center at a rate different than the spiral arm structure based on their distance from the center of the galaxy, most solar systems pass through deadly spiral arms over the course of time. Our solar system occupies a very special place as Hugh Ross points out: “The solar system holds a special position in the Milky Way . . . the one distance from the core where stars orbit the galaxy at the same rate as its spiral arm structure does.”[\[4\]](#)

Once again we are faced with a divine “coincidence”: the same

fine-tuned distance required to safely place a habitable planet is also the exact distance required to keep that planet out of the deadly spiral arms.

Not only must the earth be located far from the center of the Milky Way, the Milky Way must be located far enough away from other galaxies to maintain the stability of its spiral structure. Many aspects of the Milky Way appear to be very rare or unique in the universe.

As you can see, a logical application of current scientific orthodoxy based on the Big Bang and constant natural laws overwhelmingly supports the view that the vastness of the universe does not imply that human life is unremarkable and insignificant. On the contrary, the most reasonable conclusion from the evidence is that life on this planet is the primary purpose behind the vastness of our universe. Both the Bible and the results of scientific observation agree: our vast universe is the work of a Creator who considers life on earth as very significant.

Consequently, we don't have to convince a seeker that the world is much younger than it appears in order to answer the question, "Are we significant to our Creator?" We can say, "Whether you look to the teaching of the Bible or you look at the current prevailing models from the scientific community, the answer is definitely yes!" The important question is, "Is it possible to know more about my Creator and have a relationship with Him?" Beginning with the death and resurrection of Jesus, we can explain how to have an eternal relationship with God and why we believe the Bible is the reliable source of information about our Creator and our universe.

- Check out our article "[The Answer is the Resurrection](#)" at Probe.org for more information on using the resurrection to respond to key questions from seekers.
- For more information on topics related to the origins of our

universe and other science topics, check out our [Faith and Science](#) section.

- For further discussion on the age of the universe see “[Christian Views of Science and Earth History](#)” in our Faith and Science section.

- For further discussion of how the age of the universe debate relates to this discussion see [Appendix A: Theology vs. Science or Theology plus Science?](#) and [Appendix B: Apologetics and the Age of the Universe.](#)

Notes

1. Carl Sagan, *Pale Blue Dot: A Vision of the Human Future in Space* (New York: Random House, 1994).

2. Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes* (New York: Bantam, 1988).

3. Hugh Ross, *Why The Universe Is The Way It Is* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008).

4. Ross, *Why The Universe Is The Way It Is*, 66.

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Did Adam Really Exist?

Paul and Adam

In 2011, *Christianity Today* reported on the growing acceptance of theistic evolution in the evangelical community and one possible implication of it. If humans did evolve along with other species, was there a real historical first couple? Did Adam and Eve really exist?

In this article I'll address a couple of theological problems this claim raises and a question of interpretation. I'll look at the views of evangelical Old Testament scholar Peter Enns who denies a historical Adam; not, however, to single him out as a target, but rather because he raises the important issues in his writings.



Enns denies a historical Adam for two main reasons. One is that, as far as he is concerned, the matter of evolution is settled. There was no first human couple.[{1}](#) The other is his belief that Genesis 1 describes the origins of the world in the mythological framework of the ancient Near East, and thus isn't historical, and that Genesis 2 describes the origins of *Israel*, not *human* origins.[{2}](#) So Genesis doesn't intend to teach a historical Adam and Eve, and evolutionary science has proved that they couldn't have existed.

Let's begin with the question of how sin entered the world if there were no Adam.

In Romans chapter 5, the apostle Paul says sin, condemnation, and death came through the act of a man, Adam. This is contrasted with the act of another man, Jesus, which brought grace and righteousness.

However, if there were no historical Adam, where did sin come from? Enns says the Bible doesn't tell us.[{3}](#) The Old Testament gives no indication, he says, "that Adam's disobedience is the cause of universal sin, death, and condemnation, as Paul seems to argue."[{4}](#) Paul was a man of his time who drew from a common understanding of human beginnings to explain the universality of sin. Enns acknowledges universal sin and the need for a Savior.[{5}](#) He just doesn't know how this situation came about. The fact that Adam didn't exist, Enns believes, does nothing to take away from Paul's main point, namely, that salvation comes only through Christ for all people, both Jews and Gentiles. Is this

true?

Paul and Adam: A Response

There are a few problems with this interpretation. First, there is a logical problem. Theologian Richard Gaffin points out that, in Rom. 5:12, 17, and 18, a connection is made between the “one man” through whom sin came and the “all” to whom it was spread. If sin really didn’t come in through the “one”—Adam—and spread to the “all”—you and me—how do we take seriously Paul’s further declaration that “one man’s act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all”?

Second, there is a piling on of error in Paul’s claim. One of Enns’ foundational beliefs is that God used human understanding to convey His truths in Scripture. God spoke through the myths of the ancient world when He inspired the writing of Genesis.^{6} If Enns is correct, one would expect that God was using the Genesis myth to reveal something true in Paul’s claim about Adam. In other words, the Old Testament story would be opened up so a truth would be revealed. However, Paul’s first point, that sin came through Adam to the race (Rom. 5:12), is in fact false, according to Enns. The following truth, about righteousness coming through Christ, is beside the point here. Paul’s assertion about Adam isn’t simply a *historical* one; it is a *doctrinal* one, too. The traditional teaching of the church regarding the source of sin, death, and condemnation is therefore false. Paul delivered a false teaching based upon a non-historical myth. He should have left Adam out of his discussion. It does nothing to buttress his claim about Christ.

Enns says that this matter of the origin of sin is “a vital issue to work through, . . . one of the more pressing and inevitable philosophical and theological issues before us.”^{7} One has to wonder, though: if Paul didn’t have the answer, and he was taught by Christ directly, and if the rest of Scripture

is silent about such an important matter, can we really think we can ferret out the solution ourselves?

Paul's Use of the Old Testament

The use of the Old Testament in the New Testament is of great significance in this matter. How does Paul get the point he made out of Genesis if it isn't true?

Peter Enns believes the problem is related to the way Paul interpreted and used the Old Testament. Paul lived in an era which is now called Second Temple Judaism. Writers in this era, Enns says, "were not motivated to reproduce the intention of the original human author" in the text under consideration.^{8} Thus, we see Old Testament texts used in seemingly strange ways in the New Testament, strange if what we expect is a direct reproduction or a further development or deeper explanation of the Old Testament writer's original intent. Texts could be taken completely out of context or words could be changed to make the text say something the New Testament writer wanted to say. In this way, Enns believes, Paul used the Old Testament creatively to explain the universality of sin and of the cross work of Christ.

Some scholars speak of "christocentric" interpretation of the Old Testament. Enns prefers the term "christotelic" which refers to the idea that Christ is the *completion* of the Old Testament or the *end* toward which the Old Testament story was headed. Regarding Adam, Enns writes, "Paul's Adam is a vehicle by which he articulates the gospel message, but his Adam is still the product of a creative handling of the story."^{9} Paul presents Adam as a historical person, and then makes the further creative claim that Adam's sin is the reason we all sin. Neither of these are true, but this does no harm to the most important part of the text where Paul claims that salvation for all people came through Christ.

None of this should be problematic for us, in Enns' opinion, for he believes this view of the Bible is similar to our view of the Incarnation of Christ. In Jesus there are both humanity and divinity. Likewise, the Bible is a coming together of the divine and the human. God used the methods of Paul's day to convey the gospel message.

Paul's Use of Old Testament: A Response

How can we respond to this view of Paul's use of the Adam story?

Enns believes "that the NT authors [subsumed] the OT under the authority of the crucified and risen Christ."[{10}](#) However, Jesus never referred to the Old Testament in a way that showed the Old Testament incorrect as it stood. Even His "but I say to you" in the Sermon on the Mount appears to be more a matter of teaching the depths of the laws than a correction of the Old Testament text. He upheld the authority of the Old Testament such as when he said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them" (Mt. 5:17)."[{11}](#)

Bruce Waltke is an evangelical Old Testament scholar who accepts theistic evolution but who disagrees with Enns on this matter. He wonders why Jesus rebuked the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:25-27) for not understanding the plain language of Scripture if the plain historical sense isn't sufficient.[{12}](#) He argues that Enns' method of interpretation can't be supported by Scripture.

Paul said the gospel he preached was "in accordance with the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3-4) by which he meant the Old Testament.[{13}](#) Elsewhere he said that the Old Testament Scriptures are "profitable for teaching" in 2 Tim. 3:16-17.[{14}](#)

New Testament scholar Richard Bauckham disagrees with the

belief that Paul followed the interpretive methods of his day. The apostles weren't guilty of reading into the Old Testament ideas held independently of it. He says, "They brought the Old Testament text into relationship with the history of Jesus in a process of mutual interpretation from which some of their profoundest theological insights sprang."[15](#)

In fact, it was the apostles' high esteem for the Old Testament that forced them to come to grips with the Trinitarian nature of God given the claims of Jesus.[16](#)

This doesn't mean, however, that it's always easy to understand how the apostles used the Old Testament. However, what the apostles taught was understood to be in continuity with what they had received before, not as a correction of it.

The Matter of Inspiration

It is inevitable that a discussion of the denial of the historical Adam will turn to the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture. Old Testament scholar Peter Enns believes that Paul's incorrect use of Adam "has no bearing whatsoever on the truth of the gospel."[17](#) That's true, but it has a lot to do with how we understand inspiration and its bearing on Paul's writings.

The apostle Paul said that "all Scripture is inspired" or "breathed out" by God (2 Tim. 3:16). Peter explains further that "no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. . . . but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:20-21).

Paul, who claimed in 1 Thess. 2 that his teachings were the word of God (v. 13), intended to explain how sin and condemnation came into the world in Romans 5. Elsewhere, Peter spoke of Paul's writings as Scripture (2 Pet. 3:15-16). If Paul's explanation of this "vital issue," in Enns' words, was wrong, was it, then, of Paul's own interpretation? Either it

came from the Holy Spirit and was inspired Scripture, or it was merely Paul's interpretation and was not. Which is it?

Old Testament scholar Bruce Waltke writes this: "A theory that entails notions that holy Scripture contains flat out contradictions, ludicrous harmonization, earlier revelations that are misleading and/or less than truthful, and doctrines that are represented as based on historical fact, but in fact are based on fabricated history, in my judgment, is inconsistent with the doctrine that God inspired every word of holy Scripture."[\[18\]](#)

It might be objected here that I am confusing inspiration with interpretation. These are different things. However, if it is understood that all of Scripture comes from God who cannot lie, then we have to let that set limits on how we interpret Scripture. Interpretations that include false doctrines cannot be correct.

It seems to me that Enns has put himself into a difficult position. His conviction of the truth of human evolution isn't his only reason for denying the historical Adam, but it puts the traditional understanding of Adam and his place in Paul's theology out of bounds for him. It would be better to hold to what the church has taught for centuries rather than to the tentative conclusions of modern scientists.

Notes

1. Peter Enns, *The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Doesn't Say about Human Origins* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2012), ix, xiv, 122-23.
2. Ibid., 52.
3. Ibid., 124-26.
4. Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapid: Baker, 2005), 82.
5. Enns, *Evolution of Adam*, 91. See also 124-25.

6. See for example Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation*, 55-56.
7. Enns, *Evolution of Adam*, 126.
8. Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation*, 131.
9. Enns, *The Evolution of Adam*, 102.
10. Peter Enns, "Fuller Meaning, Single Goal: A Christotelic Approach to the New Testament Use of the Old in Its First-Century Interpretive Environment," in *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. Stanley N. Gundry et al. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008) 208; quoted in Don Collett, "Trinitarian Hermeneutics and the Unity of Scripture," p. 10, n.26; accessed on the web site of Trinity School for Ministry, bit.ly/liBGLYT.
11. See Collett, "Trinitarian Hermeneutics and the Unity of Scripture," 10-11.
12. Bruce K. Waltke, "Revisiting Inspiration and Incarnation," *Westminster Theological Journal* 71 (2009), 90.
13. See Collett, "Trinitarian Hermeneutics and the Unity of Scripture," 11; referencing Christopher Seitz, "Creed, Scripture, and 'Historical Jesus': 'in accordance with the Scriptures,'" in *The Rule of Faith: Scripture, Canon, and Creed in a Critical Age*, ed. Ephraim Radner & George Sumner (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1998), 126-35.
14. Christopher Seitz, "Canon, Narrative, and the Old Testament's Literal Sense," *Tyndale Bulletin* 59.1 (2008), 31-32.
15. Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 33.
16. See Collett, "Trinitarian Hermeneutics," 11-12. Cf. Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 54.
17. Enns, *The Evolution of Adam*, 102.
18. Waltke, "Revisiting Inspiration and Incarnation," 95.

The All-Powerful God

Michael Gleghorn examines the important doctrine of the omnipotence of God, and what it means for God to be all-powerful.

Introducing Omnipotence

When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her that she would give birth to Israel's promised Messiah, she was stunned. After all, she was a virgin. How could she possibly give birth to a son? But the angel informed her that God's power was more than sufficient to accomplish such a thing, "for nothing is impossible with God" (Luke 1:37; NIV).



A foundational element of a Christian worldview is a proper view of God. This article is about God's omnipotence. Although the term may sound a bit intimidating, it simply means that God is all-powerful. A number of scriptural passages speak to this issue.

For example, through the prophet Jeremiah God warned the people of Judah that because of their wickedness their land would soon be conquered by the Babylonians (Jer. 32:26-35). Nevertheless, God also promised that he would one day restore his people to their land and bless them with great prosperity (Jer. 32:37-44). As if to make clear that the Lord was completely able to fulfill his promise, the context twice leads us to reflect upon the fact that nothing is too difficult for God (Jer. 32:17, 27). The text, therefore, seems to clearly indicate that God is all-powerful, or omnipotent.

This power is revealed in a number of different ways. For example, the creation of the universe reveals his "eternal

power and divine nature” (Rom. 1:20; Heb. 1:3). The resurrection of Jesus reveals his “mighty strength,” which not only raised Christ from the dead, but which seated him at the right hand of God, “far above all . . . power and dominion” (Eph. 1:18-23). Finally, his might is also revealed in the gospel, which the apostle Paul described as “the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes” (Rom. 1:16).

In fact, He is often referred to as God *Almighty*. In the book of Revelation the twenty-four elders who are seated before the throne of God fall on their faces and worship the Lord declaring, “We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, the One who is and who was, because you have taken your great power and have begun to reign” (Rev. 11:17).

The cumulative picture is indeed a grand one—and quite naturally leads to the believer’s affirmation that God is all-powerful, or omnipotent. But how is this attribute to be understood? What exactly does it mean to say that God is omnipotent? These are some of the questions with which we’ll grapple in the remainder of this article.

Omnipotence and Creation

The Apostle’s Creed begins, “I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.”^{1} Not only does this statement affirm a central (and biblical) Christian truth-claim, namely, that God is the creator of the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1), it also clearly links this affirmation with God’s attribute of omnipotence by referring to him as “God the Father *almighty*.” By linking God’s omnipotence with creation in this way, the creed reaffirms what the Apostle Paul had previously taught in his letter to the Romans, that God’s “eternal power and divine nature” are “clearly seen in what has been made, so that men are without excuse” (Rom. 1:20).

But why does the Bible, and Christian tradition, link God’s

omnipotence with creation in this way? One of the most important reasons is to be found in the Christian doctrine of creation itself. You see, unlike certain pagan doctrines of creation, which taught that the universe was *formed* out of pre-existent matter, Christianity teaches that God *created* the universe out of nothing. And when we say that God created the universe “out of nothing,” we are claiming, as the theologian Thomas Torrance reminds us, that the universe “is not created out of anything.” Rather, “it came into being through the absolute fiat of God’s Word in such a way that whereas previously there was nothing, the whole universe came into being.”[{2}](#)

Now what’s astonishing about this is that it’s perfectly consistent with today’s standard Big Bang model of the origin of the universe! This is because, as physicist P. C. W. Davies observes, “On this view the big bang represents the creation event; the creation not only of all the matter and energy in the universe, but also of spacetime itself.”[{3}](#) Hence, the origin posited by this model is “an absolute origin” out of nothing.[{4}](#)

This is why omnipotence and creation are so closely linked in the Christian tradition. It’s one thing to merely *form* a universe out of pre-existent matter. It is another thing entirely to *create* a universe out of absolutely nothing! As Christian philosophers Paul Copan and Bill Craig observe, “It is difficult to imagine any more stunning display of God’s almighty power than the world’s springing into being out of nothing, at his mere command.”[{5}](#)

Omnipotence and Morality

Now you might be thinking that if God is all-powerful, then he can do absolutely anything. But if we adopt this understanding of omnipotence, we quickly run into conflict with the teaching of Scripture, for Scripture tells us plainly that there are

some things God cannot do.

For example, in Numbers 23:19 we read: "God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?" According to this text, God is not the sort of being to tell a lie. When he makes a promise, we can be confident that he will keep it, because God does not lie (see also 1 Sam. 15:29 and Tit. 1:2).

This is particularly important for New Testament believers, for God has made many wonderful promises to those who have trusted Christ for salvation. Is there any reason to fear that God may not keep some of these promises? No, there is not, for as the author of Hebrews reminds us, "it is impossible for God to lie" by making a promise and then failing to keep it. And because of this, our hope in Christ is "firm and secure" (Heb. 6:18-19).

But if we say that God cannot lie, or break a promise, or do anything else that is morally evil, then haven't we denied that God is all-powerful? Not necessarily. The vast majority of Christian theologians throughout the history of the church have consistently taught that God's omnipotence does not include the ability to do that which is logically impossible or contradictory.

Of course, there is no contradiction in saying that an omnipotent being can commit a morally evil act. But there does seem to be a contradiction in saying that a completely good, morally perfect being can perform such an act. As a morally perfect being, God not only has no moral faults, but as James reminds us, he cannot even be tempted by sin and evil (James 1:13). Hence, as one Christian philosopher observes, "for an essentially morally perfect being, doing what is wrong is just a special case of doing what is impossible for that being to do."⁶ And clearly, the inability to do what is morally evil should not be seen as detracting from God's omnipotence.

Instead, it should be viewed as exalting his moral perfection.

Omnipotence and Freedom

We've seen that omnipotence cannot mean that God can do absolutely *anything*. For as a morally perfect being, God is incapable of doing what is morally evil. This might lead us to think that God can do anything that is consistent with his morally perfect nature. But most theologians would still reject such a view. They would insist that some things are just logically impossible and that it can't count against God's omnipotence to admit that he cannot do such things.

Let's consider an example. A square is a geometrical object with four angles. A triangle has only three. This being so, what do you think the chances are of constructing a square triangle? Not very good, right? After all, if something has four angles, then it has more than three. And if it has only three angles, then it has less than four. Regardless of how much power one has, a square triangle is a *logical* impossibility.

With this in mind, let's now consider another example. Suppose that John is the kind of person who, if married, would *always* freely seek his wife's input before making any major financial decision. If this is true, then it would seem that not even God could create John, place him in such circumstances, and have him freely *refrain* from seeking his wife's input—for this is simply *not* what John would *freely* do in such circumstances.

Of course, God still has plenty of options. He could always refuse to create John, or refuse to let him get married, or refuse to let him be confronted with a major financial decision. Alternatively, God could put John in the circumstances we're considering, but *make* him decide not to seek his wife's input. But what he cannot do is place John in these circumstances and then *make* him *freely* decide not to

seek his wife's input. For to *make* John *freely* do something is as logically impossible as creating a square triangle.[{7}](#)

Of course, God's inability to perform a logically impossible task can't fairly count against his omnipotence. For this would suggest "that a task has been specified, that transcends the capacities . . . of Omnipotence. But no task at all has been specified by uttering a self-contradictory . . . mixture of words."[{8}](#) So we needn't worry that we've abandoned the doctrine of omnipotence by admitting that God cannot perform meaningless tasks! We've simply clarified the meaning of omnipotence.

The Importance of Omnipotence

The doctrine that God is omnipotent, or all-powerful, is, as one philosopher has observed, "not a bit of old metaphysical luggage that can be abandoned with relief." Instead, it's "indispensable for Christianity." After all, God has made many wonderful promises to his people. But if he "were not almighty . . . he might . . . sincerely promise, but find fulfillment beyond his power."[{9}](#) So only if God is omnipotent can we confidently bank on his promises. But this is a bit of a two-edged sword.

On the one hand, the doctrine of God's omnipotence can be very comforting for believers, who are rightly related to God through faith in Jesus Christ. After all, "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1). Whatever problems and difficulties we face in life, our omnipotent God has more than enough power to see us through. If he chooses, he can easily deliver us from fire or water, sword or famine, sickness or disease. And if he lets us go through such things, he can provide all the grace and strength we need to endure. While the suffering of God's saints can indeed be great, we must also remember that this life is not the end of our story, for "in keeping with his promise we are

looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness" (2 Pet. 3:11). A promise our omnipotent God is more than able to fulfill!

On the other hand, however, an omnipotent Deity is a most frightening prospect for anyone who persists in spurning his love and grace. For as the author of Hebrews reminds us, we are each "destined to die once, and after that to face judgment" (9:27) and "it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (10:31)—especially when that God is all-powerful! It's a sobering thought to remind ourselves that not one of us can ultimately escape God's power and judgment. If we make the omnipotent God our enemy, then no one can deliver us from his hand.

Thankfully, however, peace with God is available to anyone who wants it. The Bible tells us that God does not want anyone to perish, but for all to come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9). He pleads with men to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:16-21). "Whoever is thirsty," he says, "let him come . . . let him take the free gift of the water of life" (Rev. 22:17b). The omnipotent God offers us all good things in Christ—and nothing can prevent him making good on his offer!

Notes

1. John H. Leith, ed., *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: John Knox, 1982), 24.
2. Thomas F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God: One Being, Three Persons* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), 207; cited in Paul Copan and William Lane Craig, *Creation out of Nothing: A Biblical, Philosophical, and Scientific Exploration* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 14.
3. P. C. W. Davies, "Spacetime Singularities in Cosmology," in *The Study of Time III*, ed. J. T. Fraser (New York: Springer Verlag, 1978), 78-79; cited in Copan and Craig, *Creation out*

of Nothing, 222.

4. Copan and Craig, *Creation out of Nothing*, 223.

5. *Ibid.*, 26.

6. Edward Wierenga, "Omnipotence Defined," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 43, no. 3 (1983): 367.

7. See J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 539.

8. Antony Flew, ed., *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, Rev. 2nd ed. (New York: Gramercy Books, 1999), s.v. "impossibility."

9. All of these citations are taken from P. T. Geach, "Omnipotence," *Philosophy* 48, no. 183 (1973): 8.

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Evidence for God's Existence

Romans chapter 1 says that God has planted evidence of Himself throughout His creation so we are without excuse. Sue Bohlin looks at different types of evidence indicating that God really does exist.

A "Just Right" Universe

There's so much about the universe, and our world in particular, that we take for granted because it works so well. But Christian astronomer Dr. Hugh Ross has cited twenty-six different characteristics about the universe that enable it to sustain life. And there are thirty-three characteristics about our galaxy, our solar system, and the planet Earth that are finely-tuned to allow life to exist.[\[1\]](#) I do well to make the meat, potatoes, vegetables, and bread all come out at the same time for dinner; we're talking about fifty-nine different aspects all being kept in perfect balance so the universe

hangs together and we can live in it!

Our Earth, for instance, is perfectly designed for life. It's the "just right" size for the atmosphere we need. Its size and corresponding gravity hold a thin, but not too thin, layer of gases to protect us and allow us to breathe. When astronaut John Glenn returned to space, one of the things that struck him was how thin and fragile our atmosphere is (only 50 miles above the Earth). If our planet were smaller it couldn't support an atmosphere, like on Mercury. If it were larger, like Jupiter, the atmosphere would contain free hydrogen, which is poison for us.[{2}](#) Earth is the only planet we know of that contains an atmosphere that can support human, animal, and plant life.

The Earth is also placed at a "just right" distance from the sun and the other planets in our solar system. If we were closer to the sun, we'd burn up. If we were farther away, we'd freeze. Because Earth's orbit is nearly circular, this slightly elliptical shape means that we enjoy a quite narrow range of temperatures, which is important to life. The speed of Earth's rotation on its axis, completing one turn every 24 hours, means that the sun warms the planet evenly. Compare our world to the moon, where there are incredible temperature variations because it lacks sufficient atmosphere or water to retain or deflect the sun's energy.

Speaking of the moon, its important that there is only one moon, not two or three or none, and it's the "just right" size and distance from us. The moon's gravity impacts the movement of ocean currents, keeping the water from becoming stagnant.[{3}](#)

Water itself is an important part of a "just right" world. Plants, animals and human beings are mostly made of water, and we need it to live. One of the things that makes Earth unique is the abundance of water in a liquid state.

Water has surface tension. This means that water can move upward, against gravity, to bring liquid nutrients to the tops of the tallest plants.

Everything else in the world freezes from the bottom up, but water freezes from the top down. Everything else contracts when it freezes, but water expands. This means that in winter, ponds and rivers and lakes can freeze at the surface, but allow fish and other marine creatures to live down below.

The fact that we live on a “just right” planet in a “just right” universe is evidence that it all was created by a loving God.

The Nagging Itch of “Ought”

As a mother, I was convinced of the existence of a moral God when my children, without being taught, would complain that something wasn't “fair.” Fair? Who taught them about fair? Why is it that no one ever has to teach children about fairness, but all parents hear the universal wail of “That's not fa-a-a-a-air!” The concept of fairness is about an internal awareness that there's a certain way that things ought to be. It's not limited to three-year-olds who are unhappy that their older siblings get to stay up later. We see the same thing on “Save the Whales” bumper stickers. Why should we save the whales? Because we ought to take care of the world. Why should we take care of the world? Because we just should, that's why. It's the right thing to do. There's that sense of “ought” again.

Certain values can be found in all human cultures, a belief that we act certain ways because they're the right thing to do. Murdering one's own people is wrong, for example. Lying and cheating is wrong. So is stealing. Where did this universal sense of right and wrong come from? If we just evolved from the apes, and there is nothing except space, time, and matter, then from where did this moral sense of

right and wrong arise?

A moral sense of right and wrong isn't connected to our muscles or bones or blood. Some scientists argue that it comes from our genes – that belief in morality selects us for survival and reproduction. But if pressed, those same scientists would assure you that ultimate right and wrong don't exist in a measurable way, and it's only the illusion of morality that helps us survive. But if one researcher stole another's data and published results under his own name, all the theories about morality as illusion would go right out the window. I don't know of any scientist who wouldn't cry, "That's not fair!" Living in the real world is a true antidote for sophisticated arguments against right and wrong.

Apologist Greg Koukl points out that guilt is another indicator of ultimate right and wrong. "It's tied into our understanding of things that are right and things that are wrong. We feel guilty when we think we've violated a moral rule, an "ought." And that feeling hurts. It doesn't hurt our body; it hurts our souls. An ethical violation is not a physical thing, like a punch in the nose, producing physical pain. It's a soulish injury producing a soulish pain. That's why I call it ethical pain. That's what guilt is – ethical pain."[\[4\]](#)

The reason all human beings start out with an awareness of right and wrong, the reason we all yearn for justice and fairness, is that we are made in the image of God, who is just and right. The reason we feel violated when someone does us wrong is that a moral law has been broken – and you can't have a moral law without a moral law giver. Every time we feel that old feeling of, "It's not fa-a-a-a-a-air!" rising up within us, it's a signpost pointing us to the existence of God. He has left signposts pointing to Himself all over creation. That's why we are without excuse.

Evidence of Design Implies a Designer



If you've ever visited or seen pictures of Mount Rushmore (South Dakota USA), you cannot help but look at the gigantic sculpture of four presidents' faces and wonder at the skill of the sculptor. You know, without having to be told, that the natural forces of wind and rain did not erode the rock

into those shapes. It took the skilled hands of an artist.

William Paley made a compelling argument years ago that the intricacies of a watch are so clearly engineered that it cannot be the product of nature: a watch demands a watchmaker. In the same way, the more we discover about our world and ourselves, the more we see that like an expertly-fashioned watch, our world and we ourselves have been finely crafted with intentional design. And design implies a designer.

Since we live in our bodies and take so much of our abilities for granted, it's understandable that we might miss the evidence of design within ourselves – much like a fish might be oblivious to what it means to be wet. Dr. Phillip Bishop at the University of Alabama, challenges us to consider what would happen if we commissioned a team of mechanical engineers to develop a robot that could lift 500 pounds. And let's say we also commissioned them to design a robot that could play Chopin. They could probably do that. But what if we asked them to come up with a robot that could do both, and limit the robot's weight to 250 pounds, and require that it be able to do a variety of similar tasks? They'd laugh in our faces, no matter how much time or money we gave them to do it. But you know, all we'd be asking them to do is to come up with a very crude replication of former football player Mike Reid. [\[5\]](#)

Probably the greatest evidence of design in creation is DNA,

the material of which our genes are made, as well as the genetic material for every living thing on the planet. One of the startling discoveries about DNA is that it is a highly complex informational code, so complex that scientists struggle hard to decipher even the tiniest portions of the various genes in every organism. DNA conveys intelligent information; in fact, molecular biologists use language terms – code, translation, transcription – to describe what it does and how it acts. Communication engineers and information scientists tell us that you can't have a code without a code-maker, so it would seem that DNA is probably the strongest indicator in our world that there is an intelligent Designer behind its existence.

Dr. Richard Dawkins, a professor of biology who writes books and articles praising evolution, said in his book *The Blind Watchmaker*, "Biology is the study of complicated things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose." [\[6\]](#) Even those who desperately fear the implications of design keep running into it.

Those who deny the evidence of a designer are a lot like the foolish fisherman. If he fails to catch a fish, he says, "Aha! This proves there are no fish!" He doesn't want to consider the possibility that it might be he is an inept fisherman. Since science cannot measure the intangible or the supernatural, there are many people who say, "Aha! There is no Creator." [\[7\]](#) Foolish fishermen deny the evidence that God exists and has left His fingerprints all over creation.

The Reliability of the Bible

Every religion has its own holy book, but the Bible is different from all the others. It claims to be the very Word of God, not dropped out of the sky but God-breathed, infused with God's power as He communicated His thoughts and intent through human writers.

The Bible was written over a period of 1500 years, by about forty different writers, on three different continents. They addressed a wide variety of subjects, and yet the individual books of the Bible show a remarkable consistency within themselves. There is a great deal of diversity within the Bible, at the same time displaying an amazing unity. It presents an internally consistent message with one great theme: God's love for man and the great lengths to which He went to demonstrate that love.

If you pick up any city newspaper, you won't find the kind of agreement and harmony in it that is the hallmark of the biblical books. A collection of documents that spans so much time and distance could not be marked by this unity unless it was superintended by one Author who was behind it all. The unity of the Bible is evidence of God's existence.

One other aspect of the Bible is probably the greatest evidence that God exists and that He has spoken to us in His holy book: fulfilled prophecy. The Bible contains hundreds of details of history which were written in advance before any of them came to pass. Only a sovereign God, who knows the future and can make it happen, can write prophecy that is accurately and always – eventually – fulfilled.

For example, God spoke through the prophet Ezekiel against the bustling seaport and trade center of Tyre. In Ezekiel 26:3-6, He said He would bring nations against her: "They shall destroy the walls of Tyre and break down her towers; and I will scrape her soil from her, and make her a bare rock." Ezekiel 26-28 has many details of this prophecy against Tyre, which would be like Billy Graham announcing that God was going to wipe New York off the map.

Tyre consisted of two parts, a mainland city and an island a half-mile offshore. The first attack came from the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, who laid siege to Tyre for thirteen years. Finally, his battering rams broke through the walls,

and he tore down the city's towers. But the island part of the city wasn't yet destroyed, because this prophecy was fulfilled in stages. For 250 years it flourished, until Alexander the Great set his sights on Tyre. Even without a navy, he was able to conquer this island city in what some consider his greatest military exploit. He turned the ruined walls and towers of Old Tyre into rubble, which he used to build a causeway from the mainland to the island. When he ran out of material, he scraped the soil from the land to finish the land-bridge, leaving only barren rocks where the old city used to be. He fulfilled the prophecy, "They will break down your walls and destroy your pleasant houses; your stones and timber and soil they will cast into the midst of the waters"(Ez. 26:12).

Fulfilled prophecy is just one example of how God shows He is there and He is not silent. How else do we explain the existence of history written in advance?

Jesus: The Ultimate Evidence

The most astounding thing God has ever done to show His existence to us is when He passed through the veil between heaven and earth and came to live among us as a man.

Jesus Christ was far more than just a great moral teacher. He said things that would be outrageous if they weren't true, but He backed them up with even more outrageous signs to prove they were. Jesus claimed not to speak for God as a prophet, but to be God in human flesh. He said, "If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father" (John 14:9), and, "The Father and I are one" (John 10:30). When asked if He was the Messiah, the promised Savior, He said yes. [\[8\]](#) He told his contemporaries, "Before Abraham was, I am"(John 8:58). The fact that His unbelieving listeners decided then to kill Him shows that they realized He was claiming to be Yahweh, God Almighty.

When Jesus told His followers that He was the Good Shepherd (John 10:11-18), they would immediately be reminded of a

passage in the book of Ezekiel where Yahweh God pronounced Himself shepherd over Israel (Ez. 34:1-16). Jesus equated Himself with God.

But words are cheap, so Jesus backed up His words with miracles and signs to validate His truth-claims. He healed all sorts of diseases in people: the blind, the deaf, the crippled, lepers, epileptics, and even a woman with a twelve-year hemorrhage. He took authority over the demons that terrorized and possessed people. He even raised the dead.

Jesus showed His authority over nature, as well. He calmed a terrible storm with just a word. He created food out of thin air, with bread and fish left over! He turned water into wine. He walked on water.

He showed us what God the Father is like; Jesus was God with skin on. He was loving and sensitive, at the same time strong and determined. Children and troubled people were drawn to Him like a magnet, but the arrogant and self-sufficient were threatened by Him. He drenched people with grace and mercy while never compromising His holiness and righteousness.

And after living a perfect life, He showed His love to us by dying in our place on a Roman cross, promising to come back to life. Who else but God Himself could make a promise like that and then fulfill it? The literal, bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is the final, greatest proof that there is a God, that Jesus is God Himself, and that God has entered our world and showed us the way to heaven so we can be with Him forever. He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except by Me" (John 14:6).

God exists, and He has spoken. He made a "just right" universe that is stamped with clues of its Maker. He placed eternity in our hearts, as Ecclesiastes tells us, and all people have a strong moral streak because we are made in the image of a moral God. The evidence of design in our bodies, our world and

the universe is a signpost pointing to a loving, intelligent Designer behind it all. The unity of the Bible and the hundreds of fulfilled prophecies in it show the mind of God behind its creation. And we've looked at the way Jesus punched through the space-time continuum to show us what God looks like, and opened the doorway to heaven. Jesus is the clearest evidence of all that God does exist.

Notes

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6. Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1986), 1.

7. Bishop.

8. Mark 14:61-62; Matthew 26: 63-65; Luke 22:67-70

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Did Adam Really Exist?

Paul and Adam

In 2011, *Christianity Today* reported on the growing acceptance of theistic evolution in the evangelical community and one possible implication of it. If humans did evolve along with other species, was there a real historical first couple? Did Adam and Eve really exist?



In this article I'll address a couple of theological problems this claim raises and a question of interpretation. I'll look at the views of evangelical Old Testament scholar Peter Enns who denies a historical Adam; not, however, to single him out as a target, but rather because he raises the important issues in his writings.

Enns denies a historical Adam for two main reasons. One is that, as far as he is concerned, the matter of evolution is settled. There was no first human couple.^{1} The other is his belief that Genesis 1 describes the origins of the world in the mythological framework of the ancient Near East, and thus isn't historical, and that Genesis 2 describes the origins of *Israel*, not *human* origins.^{2} So Genesis doesn't intend to teach a historical Adam and Eve, and evolutionary science has proved that they couldn't have existed.

Let's begin with the question of how sin entered the world if there were no Adam.

In Romans chapter 5, the apostle Paul says sin, condemnation, and death came through the act of a man, Adam. This is contrasted with the act of another man, Jesus, which brought

grace and righteousness.

However, if there were no historical Adam, where did sin come from? Enns says the Bible doesn't tell us.^{3} The Old Testament gives no indication, he says, "that Adam's disobedience is the cause of universal sin, death, and condemnation, as Paul seems to argue."^{4} Paul was a man of his time who drew from a common understanding of human beginnings to explain the universality of sin. Enns acknowledges universal sin and the need for a Savior.^{5} He just doesn't know how this situation came about. The fact that Adam didn't exist, Enns believes, does nothing to take away from Paul's main point, namely, that salvation comes only through Christ for all people, both Jews and Gentiles. Is this true?

Paul and Adam: A Response

There are a few problems with this interpretation. First, there is a logical problem. Theologian Richard Gaffin points out that, in Rom. 5:12, 17, and 18, a connection is made between the "one man" through whom sin came and the "all" to whom it was spread. If sin really didn't come in through the "one"—Adam—and spread to the "all"—you and me—how do we take seriously Paul's further declaration that "one man's act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all"?

Second, there is a piling on of error in Paul's claim. One of Enns' foundational beliefs is that God used human understanding to convey His truths in Scripture. God spoke through the myths of the ancient world when He inspired the writing of Genesis.^{6} If Enns is correct, one would expect that God was using the Genesis myth to reveal something true in Paul's claim about Adam. In other words, the Old Testament story would be opened up so a truth would be revealed. However, Paul's first point, that sin came through Adam to the race (Rom. 5:12), is in fact false, according to Enns. The

following truth, about righteousness coming through Christ, is beside the point here. Paul's assertion about Adam isn't simply a *historical* one; it is a *doctrinal* one, too. The traditional teaching of the church regarding the source of sin, death, and condemnation is therefore false. Paul delivered a false teaching based upon a non-historical myth. He should have left Adam out of his discussion. It does nothing to buttress his claim about Christ.

Enns says that this matter of the origin of sin is "a vital issue to work through, . . . one of the more pressing and inevitable philosophical and theological issues before us."[\[7\]](#) One has to wonder, though: if Paul didn't have the answer, and he was taught by Christ directly, and if the rest of Scripture is silent about such an important matter, can we really think we can ferret out the solution ourselves?

Paul's Use of the Old Testament

The use of the Old Testament in the New Testament is of great significance in this matter. How does Paul get the point he made out of Genesis if it isn't true?

Peter Enns believes the problem is related to the way Paul interpreted and used the Old Testament. Paul lived in an era which is now called Second Temple Judaism. Writers in this era, Enns says, "were not motivated to reproduce the intention of the original human author" in the text under consideration.[\[8\]](#) Thus, we see Old Testament texts used in seemingly strange ways in the New Testament, strange if what we expect is a direct reproduction or a further development or deeper explanation of the Old Testament writer's original intent. Texts could be taken completely out of context or words could be changed to make the text say something the New Testament writer wanted to say. In this way, Enns believes, Paul used the Old Testament creatively to explain the universality of sin and of the cross work of Christ.

Some scholars speak of “christocentric” interpretation of the Old Testament. Enns prefers the term “christotelic” which refers to the idea that Christ is the *completion* of the Old Testament or the *end* toward which the Old Testament story was headed. Regarding Adam, Enns writes, “Paul’s Adam is a vehicle by which he articulates the gospel message, but his Adam is still the product of a creative handling of the story.”^{9} Paul presents Adam as a historical person, and then makes the further creative claim that Adam’s sin is the reason we all sin. Neither of these are true, but this does no harm to the most important part of the text where Paul claims that salvation for all people came through Christ.

None of this should be problematic for us, in Enns’ opinion, for he believes this view of the Bible is similar to our view of the Incarnation of Christ. In Jesus there are both humanity and divinity. Likewise, the Bible is a coming together of the divine and the human. God used the methods of Paul’s day to convey the gospel message.

Paul’s Use of Old Testament: A Response

How can we respond to this view of Paul’s use of the Adam story?

Enns believes “that the NT authors [subsumed] the OT under the authority of the crucified and risen Christ.”^{10} However, Jesus never referred to the Old Testament in a way that showed the Old Testament incorrect as it stood. Even His “but I say to you” in the Sermon on the Mount appears to be more a matter of teaching the depths of the laws than a correction of the Old Testament text. He upheld the authority of the Old Testament such as when he said, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Mt. 5:17).”^{11}

Bruce Waltke is an evangelical Old Testament scholar who

accepts theistic evolution but who disagrees with Enns on this matter. He wonders why Jesus rebuked the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:25-27) for not understanding the plain language of Scripture if the plain historical sense isn't sufficient.[{12}](#) He argues that Enns' method of interpretation can't be supported by Scripture.

Paul said the gospel he preached was "in accordance with the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3-4) by which he meant the Old Testament.[{13}](#) Elsewhere he said that the Old Testament Scriptures are "profitable for teaching" in 2 Tim. 3:16-17.[{14}](#)

New Testament scholar Richard Bauckham disagrees with the belief that Paul followed the interpretive methods of his day. The apostles weren't guilty of reading into the Old Testament ideas held independently of it. He says, "They brought the Old Testament text into relationship with the history of Jesus in a process of mutual interpretation from which some of their profoundest theological insights sprang."[{15}](#)

In fact, it was the apostles' high esteem for the Old Testament that forced them to come to grips with the Trinitarian nature of God given the claims of Jesus.[{16}](#)

This doesn't mean, however, that it's always easy to understand how the apostles used the Old Testament. However, what the apostles taught was understood to be in continuity with what they had received before, not as a correction of it.

The Matter of Inspiration

It is inevitable that a discussion of the denial of the historical Adam will turn to the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture. Old Testament scholar Peter Enns believes that Paul's incorrect use of Adam "has no bearing whatsoever on the truth of the gospel."[{17}](#) That's true, but it has a lot to do with how we understand inspiration and its bearing on Paul's

writings.

The apostle Paul said that "all Scripture is inspired" or "breathed out" by God (2 Tim. 3:16). Peter explains further that "no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. . . . but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit" (2 Pet. 1:20-21).

Paul, who claimed in 1 Thess. 2 that his teachings were the word of God (v. 13), intended to explain how sin and condemnation came into the world in Romans 5. Elsewhere, Peter spoke of Paul's writings as Scripture (2 Pet. 3:15-16). If Paul's explanation of this "vital issue," in Enns' words, was wrong, was it, then, of Paul's own interpretation? Either it came from the Holy Spirit and was inspired Scripture, or it was merely Paul's interpretation and was not. Which is it?

Old Testament scholar Bruce Waltke writes this: "A theory that entails notions that holy Scripture contains flat out contradictions, ludicrous harmonization, earlier revelations that are misleading and/or less than truthful, and doctrines that are represented as based on historical fact, but in fact are based on fabricated history, in my judgment, is inconsistent with the doctrine that God inspired every word of holy Scripture."[\[18\]](#)

It might be objected here that I am confusing inspiration with interpretation. These are different things. However, if it is understood that all of Scripture comes from God who cannot lie, then we have to let that set limits on how we interpret Scripture. Interpretations that include false doctrines cannot be correct.

It seems to me that Enns has put himself into a difficult position. His conviction of the truth of human evolution isn't his only reason for denying the historical Adam, but it puts the traditional understanding of Adam and his place in Paul's theology out of bounds for him. It would be better to hold to

what the church has taught for centuries rather than to the tentative conclusions of modern scientists.

Notes

1. Peter Enns, *The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Doesn't Say about Human Origins* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2012), ix, xiv, 122-23.
2. Ibid., 52.
3. Ibid., 124-26.
4. Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapid: Baker, 2005), 82.
5. Enns, *Evolution of Adam*, 91. See also 124-25.
6. See for example Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation*, 55-56.
7. Enns, *Evolution of Adam*, 126.
8. Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation*, 131.
9. Enns, *The Evolution of Adam*, 102.
10. Peter Enns, "Fuller Meaning, Single Goal: A Christotelic Approach to the New Testament Use of the Old in Its First-Century Interpretive Environment," in *Three Views on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. Stanley N. Gundry et al. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008) 208; quoted in Don Collett, "Trinitarian Hermeneutics and the Unity of Scripture," p. 10, n.26; accessed on the web site of Trinity School for Ministry, bit.ly/liBGLYT.
11. See Collett, "Trinitarian Hermeneutics and the Unity of Scripture," 10-11.
12. Bruce K. Waltke, "Revisiting Inspiration and Incarnation," *Westminster Theological Journal* 71 (2009), 90.
13. See Collett, "Trinitarian Hermeneutics and the Unity of Scripture," 11; referencing Christopher Seitz, "Creed, Scripture, and 'Historical Jesus': 'in accordance with the Scriptures,'" in *The Rule of Faith: Scripture, Canon, and Creed in a Critical Age*, ed. Ephraim Radner & George Sumner (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1998), 126-35.
14. Christopher Seitz, "Canon, Narrative, and the Old

Testament's Literal Sense," *Tyndale Bulletin* 59.1 (2008), 31-32.

15. Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 33.

16. See Collett, "Trinitarian Hermeneutics," 11-12. Cf. Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel*, 54.

17. Enns, *The Evolution of Adam*, 102.

18. Waltke, "Revisiting Inspiration and Incarnation," 95.

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"I Can't Recommend Probe Because of Your View of Creation"

Dear brother,

I am a Pastor and also teach Bible at _____ School. I have used some of your materials in my Church and ministry. I have also made Probe.org a resource for my Senior Bible Class. I must confess that I was greatly disappointed recently to see [your view related to creation](#). While I admire your view that six literal days of creation make the most sense I do not at all understand how you allow "overwhelming" scientific evidence to move you from that sensible position. Seems to me that one could make the same argument of the miracles or even the resurrection to be contrary to "overwhelming" scientific evidence. It would also seem from a scientific point of view the evidence was at one time overwhelming that the earth was flat. While I do not think it is your intention to place science above the Bible this is certainly what is happening among many of our youth today. I am sure in the long run it

makes little difference but I can no longer recommend your ministry to my students or my church. Rather than be a “fence sitter” to use your description I would urge you to stand up for the faith once delivered to the saints in the inspired Word rather than the ever changing observations of science.

Pastor,

I regret your decision to deprive your students of our material because of one cautious position on an issue of secondary importance. However, I understand your position. But your response has raised issues and questions I feel I must respond to.

While I admire your view that six literal days of creation make the most sense I do not at all understand how you allow “overwhelming” scientific evidence to move you from that sensible position.

This evidence is something that requires a simple and plain reading of facts that I and the other young earth creationists I have asked, have no answer for.

Seems to me that one could make the same argument of the miracles or even the resurrection to be contrary to “overwhelming” scientific evidence.

Not at all. There is no pertinent scientific evidence to contradict miracles in Scripture. But there is present and currently observable evidence to lead anyone to question the young earth view of a thousands of years old earth and universe.

It would also seem from a scientific point of view the evidence was at one time overwhelming that the earth was flat.

A spherical earth was recognized from the early Greeks onward. You are victim here of the naturalists' contrived view of the flat earth. The Bible never taught it and even early science never did.

While I do not think it is your intention to place science above the Bible this is certainly what is happening among many of our youth today.

That is certainly not my intent and I fully recognize the strong tendency that you mention. My contention is that it is not absolutely clear that Scripture teaches a young earth.

I am sure in the long run it makes little difference but I can no longer recommend your ministry to my students or my church.

I truly do not understand this position. But I have run across it frequently among my young earth friends. I find it sad and counterproductive.

Rather than be a "fence sitter" to use your description I would urge you to stand up for the faith once delivered to the saints in the inspired Word rather than the ever changing observations of science.

Where in Scripture does it say the earth and universe are only thousands of years old? There are many uncertainties here both scripturally and scientifically, I for one, do not consider myself so informed to conclude which position is correct. There is a resolution, I just don't know what that is. At least I am not refusing to consider all the evidence at hand. The young earth model now admits that all the supposed radioactive decay necessary to indicate billions of years actually occurred. But since the earth CANNOT be that old the decay must have been accelerated a million times or more. This means incredible heat and radiation that would have

annihilated all life on earth, even the life on the ark. But that couldn't have happened so they appeal to miracle and heat release nowhere indicated in Scripture. That is special pleading which I find disappointing.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin, Ph.D.

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Tron Legacy: A 21st Century Frankenstein

[Editor's Note: Movie spoilers ahead!]

A culture, like the human body, gives warning signs when it feels sick. If an infection enters the body, fever breaks out. This serves as a demand for treatment. Science fiction has served this purpose in modern culture since the first sci-fi novel, *Frankenstein*, appeared in 1818. A well-intended scientist creates new life that could impart immortality to all, only to immediately cast it aside. However, being an emotional creature, Frankenstein's creation will not be dismissed so easily and demands that his maker take responsibility and introduce him to the human community. Put very simply, all Frankenstein's Monster asked of his creator was to be loved! In the absence of love and acceptance the creature wreaks a terrible revenge and destroys his creator.

The story is so well-tread in popular culture that it provides a guiding motif for most sci-fi stories; thus it serves as a prophetic warning to all technological innovation. In

literature, folklore and the movies, a monster means WARNING! “Victor’s monster, then, which brings about his death, is a warning to us all. Monster derives from the Latin *monere*, to warn.”^{1} Science fiction acts as the Socratic gadfly of scientific advance. “From its very birth . . . modern science fiction has functioned as a critic of the scientific enterprise [It] both educates the general public in science and advises the scientists as to the appropriate projected goals of science [In] the context of explosive technological advance and ‘future shock,’ science fiction is the only literature that seriously attempts to explore the social consequences of scientific innovation.”^{2} Theologian Elaine Graham notes that the Greek word for monster is *teras*, which means something both abhorrent and attractive. The monster is pure paradox and incarnates a contradictory state of existence. “It is both a sight of wonder—as divine portent—and loathing, as evidence of heinous sin.”^{3} Awful and “aweful,” the monster embodies a liminal^{4} being caught between two worlds. It represents the ambivalence of our creations. “Monsters embody fearful warnings of moral transgression . . . [they] herald new possibilities . . . the otherness of possible worlds, or possible versions of ourselves, not yet realized.”^{5} This is not unlike ancient maps that demarcate unexplored territory with the warning: “HERE BE MONSTERS!” So our popular fictional monsters beckon us to heed their cries to take care for what we create.

The film *Tron Legacy* (2010, directed by Joseph Kosinski) continues this theme for the next generation. The movie is so visually spectacular in 3-D that the audience may easily forget its prophetic warning in a clear case where the medium threatens to overpower the message. As a visual spectacle *Tron Legacy* transforms the original *Tron* (1982, Steven Lisberger) from a cult movie following filmed in animation and live-action into a magnificent film that is also an amusement park ride.

The story follows Sam Flynn (Garret Hedlund) a disinterested majority share holder in Encom, a giant computer software company, as he pulls pranks on the board. Sam responds to a mysterious page sent from his father's old arcade haunt and stumbles upon a teleport machine and is transported into *The Grid*.

Sam's father, Kevin Flynn (Jeff Bridges), was a radical who believed quantum teleportation represents the "digital frontier." Inside the computer, humanity can alter itself to create the perfect world. "In there is a new world! In there is our future! In there is our destiny!" Flynn emphatically states in a public address. He wants to reshape the human condition through digital manipulation. Flynn, Sr. discovers a serendipitous miracle in the process of creating utopia: a new life form bursts into existence through spontaneous generation; he calls them "isomorphic algorithms" (ISO's). These self-forming programs hold the potential for solving all the mysteries of science, religion and medicine. They could end all disease and would be Flynn's gift to the world! However, Flynn's own created program CLU (Codified Likeness Utility)-designed to create perfection in The Grid-destroys the ISO's in a coup because they threaten their shared vision for creating perfection within The Grid. This traps Flynn in the digital world with the last surviving ISO, Quorra (Olivia Wilde), forcing them into hiding.

CLU (pronounced "clue"; Jeff Bridges playing his own clone) traps Sam in a vicious gladiatorial game-that he has stacked to be impossibly difficult, despite Sam's skill and determination-in an effort to lure Flynn Sr. from hiding. Quorra rescues Sam and brings him to his father. Flynn Sr. has been languishing all these years because he believes that his only viable option is to remain in his Zen Buddhist retreat. When Sam asks his father to fight CLU in order to escape with him back to the real world, his response is "We do nothing." The elder Flynn hopes against hope for the help of Tron, a

warrior program designed to resist assimilation; but we discover that even Tron has been co-opted by CLU. The "Son of Flynn," as programs call Sam, botches an escape attempt, triggering a surprise rescue by Flynn Sr. and Quorra, who then seize the opportunity to exit through the rapidly closing window on the portal back to the actual world. Unfortunately, a Program steals Flynn Sr.'s memory disc in the process, giving CLU complete control over the entire Grid. Using his newfound power, CLU raises an army ready to escape the digital world and enter the real one. "Out there is a new world! Out there is our victory! Out there is our destiny!" CLU proclaims to his troops in Hitlerian Nuremburg Rally style.

Sam and Quorra escape dramatically through the open portal with the help of Tron, who has finally decided that he fights for the Users (the people who write the Programs). In a dramatic climax, Flynn reintegrates with CLU, destroying both of them.

The movie recapitulates the Frankenstein-esque fear of technology turning on its creator. CLU represents the dark *doppelgänger*[\[6\]](#), or alter ego, of Kevin Flynn in his youthful days when he believed perfection was an attainable goal.

Biblical allusions emerge, as well. CLU demonstrates a Luciferian jealousy when Flynn discovers the ISO's and seeks their destruction to spite his creator's love for them. Trinitarian imagery abounds throughout the movie, especially in the continual triangular juxtaposition of Flynn the Creator, Son of Flynn and Quorra who represents new life and remains the heart and soul of the movie through her innocence. In one scene, Flynn resides in the background with a glowing halo over his head as Sam and Quorra sit adjacent to each other discussing the beauty of a sunrise, forming a perfect triangle in the center of the screen. This symbolism reminds us that humanity creates the digital world, much the same as the Creator did the real one, and this co-creation can just as easily turn on us. The human condition is one of rebellion

against creation. CLU's programmed perfectionism seeks eradication of all that is other than itself including the reclusive creator Flynn and plans to extend that stultifying perfection to the non-digital world.

Flynn's problem, like that of Victor Frankenstein, is that he no longer cares for CLU, but runs away and hides from his darker self. He rejects his creation and does not seek to reintegrate him into the society into which he has been "born," just as Victor Frankenstein disavows his creation. Technology critic Langdon Winner gives us an excellent explanation of the *Frankenstein / Tron* analogy, relating it to our spiritual reality. Winner argues that we fail to take sufficient care as to the consequences of our creations or how these innovations may change our lives negatively, and then we act shocked when they return to us as demonic powers instead of blessings. "Victor Frankenstein [Kevin Flynn] is a person who discovers, but refuses to ponder, the implications of his discovery. He is a man who creates something new in the world and then pours all his energy into an effort to forget. His invention is incredibly powerful and represents a quantum jump in the performance capability of a certain kind of technology. Yet he sends it out into the world with no real concern for how best to include it in the human community. . . . He then looks on in surprise as it returns to him as an autonomous force, with a structure of its own, with demands upon which it insists absolutely. Provided with no plan for its existence, the technological creation enforces a plan upon its creator." [\[7\]](#)

Sam emerges back into the real world with Quorra a changed man, refusing his father's Zen retreat and ready to assert responsibility for his company by taking it back from greedy executives. *Tron Legacy* warns of the dangers of the digital frontier including cell phones, online dating and WiFi. Only through our care to assert responsibility for our technology through ethical control will it bring positive change to the

human condition. But the movie also offers hope in the astounding potential digital technology offers through Sam's transformation coupled with Quorra's ability. The movie is a welcome tonic to a perfectionist and paranoid age obsessed with an elusive ideal of perfection. Flynn Sr. states, "Perfection is not knowable, but right in front of us all the time." The movie proclaims that utopia, or human happiness, is not an ideal such as a computer program, but is found in our loved ones who are right in front of us.

Notes

[1.](#) Eric S. Rabkin, "Imagination and Survival: The Case of Fantastic Literature" in Brett Cooke and Frederick Turner, eds. *Biopoetics: Evolutionary Explorations in the Arts* (Lexington, KY: ICUS, 1999), 304.

[2.](#) Joseph D. Miller, "The 'Novel' Novel: A Sociobiological Analysis of the Novelty Drive As Expressed in Science Fiction" in Brett Cooke and Frederick Turner, eds. *Biopoetics: Evolutionary Explorations in the Arts* (Lexington, KY: ICUS, 1999), 326.

[3.](#) Elaine L. Graham, *Representations of the Post/Human: Monsters, Aliens and Others in Popular Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 53.

[4.](#) According to Encarta Dictionary: English (North America) accessed via Microsoft Word, "liminal" [liminl] means: "belonging to the point of conscious awareness below which something cannot be experienced or felt."

[5.](#) Graham, *Representations of the Post/Human: Monsters, Aliens and Others in Popular Culture* 53, 54.

[6.](#) Encarta Dictionary: "dop·pel·gang·er [dɒp(ə)lgæŋər]: 1. someone who looks like someone else; 2. spirit that looks like someone alive; 3. a spirit that some people believe looks like someone who is alive.

[7.](#) Langdon Winner, *Autonomous Technology: Technics-out-of-Control as a Theme in Political Thought* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1977), 313.

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How to Talk to Your Kids About Evolution and Creation – What Kids Should Know About Evolution

Sue and Dr. Ray Bohlin bring decades of Christian worldview thinking and a PhD in science to the important topic of communicating a balanced rational position to our children and teenagers on questions that they will encounter in our society.

This article is the transcript of a Probe radio program the Bohlins recorded. Sue's questions and comments are in italics, followed by Ray's answers.

Problems with Evolutionary Theory

Why is there a problem with evolution in the first place? Someone once asked you, "What should I believe?" Remember what you told them?

Basically I said you should only believe what there is evidence for. After spending years studying evolution in bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs, I can tell you that, first of all, there **is** evidence for small changes in

organisms as they adapt to small environmental fluctuations.

Second, there **is** evidence that new species do arise. We see new species of fruit flies, rodents, and even birds. But when the original species is a fruit fly, the new species is still a fruit fly. These processes do not tell us how we get horses and wasps and woodpeckers.

Third, in the fossil record, there are only a few transitions between major groups of organisms, like between reptiles and birds, and these are controversial, even among evolutionists. If evolutionary theory is correct, the fossil record should be full of them.

Fourth, there are no real evolutionary answers for the origin of complex adaptations like the tongue of the woodpecker; or flight in birds, mammals, insects, and reptiles; or the swimming adaptations in fish, mammals, reptiles, and the marine invertebrates. These adaptations appear in the fossil record with no transitions. And fifth, there is no genetic mechanism for these large-scale evolutionary changes. The theory of evolution from amoeba to man is an extrapolation from very meager data.

So the problem with evolution is that it is a mechanistic theory without a mechanism, and there is no evidence for the big changes from amoeba to man.

The Evolution of the Horse

I have our son's eighth-grade biology textbook here. Every textbook, including this one, has a story about the evolution of the horse. It is always offered as proof of evolution. What do you say?

It does not prove much about evolution at all. David Raup, with the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago, says:

"Well, we are now about 120 years after Darwin and the

knowledge of the fossil record has been greatly expanded. We now have a quarter of a million fossil species but the situation hasn't changed much. The record of evolution is still surprisingly jerky and, ironically, we have even fewer examples of evolutionary transitions than we had in Darwin's time. By this I mean that some of the classic cases of darwinian change in the fossil record, such as the evolution of the horse in North America, have had to be discarded or modified as a result of more detailed information—what appeared to be a nice simple progression when relatively few data were available now appear to be much more complex and much less gradualistic. So Darwin's problem has not been alleviated in the last 120 years and we still have a record which does show change but one that can hardly be looked upon as the most reasonable consequence of natural selection.”{1}

There is no chronological sequence of horse-like fossils. The story of the gradual reduction from the four-toed horse of 60 million years ago to the one-toed horse of today has been called pure fiction. All that can be shown is the transition from a little horse to a big one. This is not significant evolutionary change, and it still took some 60 million years. It does not say anything about how the horse evolved from a shrew-like mammal.

Homologous and Vestigial Organs

Homologous organs: What are they?

Homologous organs are organs or structures from different organisms that have the same or similar function. Evolutionists say this similarity is due to common ancestry. The important question is, Do these organs look and function the same because of common ancestry or because of a simple common design? In other words, do they look this way because they are related to one another, or were they designed to perform a similar function? Homology is not a problem for

creationists; we have a different but reasonable explanation. It is the result of common design, not common ancestry.

What about vestigial organs, the ones that are supposedly left over from the evolutionary past? I remember being taught that the coccyx, the tailbone, is left over from when we were monkeys. And the appendix, same thing—we needed it when we were evolving, but we do not need it now. Vestigial organs are unused leftovers from our evolutionary past. Since we do not use them, they have diminished; they have become vestiges of their past function—according to evolutionary theory.

Yes, according to evolution. But we have discovered that these structures do have a function. The prime example is the one you mentioned, the tailbone. The coccyx serves as a point of attachment for several pelvic muscles. You would not be able to sit very well or comfortably without a tailbone.

The appendix was also long thought to be a vestigial organ, having absolutely no function within our bodies, but now we find it is involved in the immune system. It does have a function. It is true that you can live without it. However, as we learn more about the appendix, we realize that if it remains uninfected, it may be serving a very useful purpose.

So in other words, “vestigial organs” are not necessarily useless; we just may not have discovered what their role is.

Yes, very often we have called these things “vestigial” because we never bothered to investigate their function because of their reduced stature. Now we find that things like the coccyx and the appendix really do have a function. And if they have a function, then we cannot call them vestigial; they are not leftovers from our evolutionary past.

I am looking at pictures of embryos in this textbook that are very similar. The explanation given in the book is that they are similar because they have a common evolutionary ancestor. Obviously, this is being advanced as evidence of evolution. Is

that what it is?

Definitely not. Embryological development does not follow the history of our evolutionary past. [That idea was proven wrong 50 or 60 years ago.](#) It is unfortunate that this error is still in the textbooks. Obviously, there are some similarities among species very early in embryological development; for instance, among mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and birds. That is because they all start from a single cell. As development progresses, they become less similar. That is exactly what you would expect from an evolutionist or creationist perspective.

The Early Atmosphere of the Earth

You know, I was pretty happy with how this particular textbook treated evolution. It does not even use the word evolution, and it treats it strictly as a matter of theory, not fact. But you came across another, newer high-school textbook that is stridently pro-evolution. I am concerned about some things I see in this chapter on the origin of life. It is talking about the earth's early atmosphere, and this statement is in bold print (so the students know it's going to be on the test, don't you know!) <smile>

"The earth's first atmosphere most likely contained water vapor, carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide, nitrogen, hydrogen sulfide, and hydrogen cyanide."

Then in the very next section it talks about Stanley Miller's famous experiments in 1953. It says the atmosphere he was trying to recreate was made of ammonia, water, hydrogen, and methane. What is going on here?

This particular section is confusing at best and misleading at worst. Clearly they have described [Miller's classic experiment](#), but researchers today agree that the atmosphere used for that simulation did not exist. But yet Miller's experiment produced results. If you use the atmosphere that

the textbook describes as the real one, the results are much less significant. The textbook gives the impression that chemical evolution is easy to simulate. But this is far from the truth. One experimenter says:

At present, all discussions on principles and theories in the field [meaning the origin of life] either end in stalemate or in a confession of ignorance. {2}

But you would definitely not get that impression from reading this section of the book.

Phylogenetic Trees

I have another question. Here is this beautiful, tidy chart that shows how neatly different animals evolved from one common ancestor. This evolutionary tree has a crocodile-like animal at the bottom, and all these branches coming out from him, and we end up with turtles and snakes and reptiles and birds and mammals all descended from this one animal. Are we talking science fantasy here, or is there a problem with this evolutionary tree?

Evolutionary trees, or phylogenetic trees, are regularly misrepresented in high-school textbooks. The nice solid lines give the impression that there is plenty of evidence, plenty of fossils to document these transitions—but the transitions are not there. If we were to look at this same type of diagram in a college textbook, all those connecting lines—the transitions—would be dotted lines, indicating that we do not have the evidence to prove that these organisms are related. The transition is an assumption. They assume these organisms are related to each other, but the evidence is lacking. Stephen Gould, a paleontologist and evolutionist from Harvard, says,

“The extreme rarity of transitional forms in the fossil record persists as the trade secret of paleontology. The

evolutionary trees that adorn our textbooks have data only at the tips and nodes of their branches. The rest is inference, however reasonable: not the evidence of fossils.”{3}

In other words, these charts make pretty pictures, but they’re not pictures of reality.

That’s correct.

Natural Selection and Speciation

In this same high-school biology text, I am looking at the chapter on evolution called “How Change Occurs.” The big heading for this section is “Evolution by Natural Selection.” Natural selection always seems to be linked inseparably to evolution. What is it?

Natural selection is a process where the organisms that are fit to survive and reproduce, do so at a greater rate than those that are less fit. It sounds circular, but it is a simple process, something you can easily observe in nature.

There are some pictures here of England’s famous peppered moths. Why do they keep showing up in science textbooks?

They keep showing up because the [peppered moth](#) was the first documented example of Darwin’s natural selection at work. There were two different color varieties of the same moth: a peppered variety and a dark black variety. The peppered variety was camouflaged on the bark of trees, but the black variety was conspicuous. As a result, the birds ate a lot of black moths. The most common variety, therefore, was the peppered variety. But then the bark of the trees turned dark or black because of pollution. Now the dark form was hidden, but the peppered variety stood out, so the birds ate up the peppered variety. The proportion of peppered moths to black moths shifted in response to the change in the environment.

So here was a change of frequency. At one time we had more peppered moths, and now we have more dark ones. A clear example of natural selection taking place. But the question is, Is this really evolution? I don't think so. It just shows variety within a form. This does not tell me anything as a biologist and a geneticist about how we have come to have horses and wasps and woodpeckers.

When we are looking at peppered moths, we are dealing with natural selection within the same species. What about a whole new species; for example, Darwin's [Galapagos finches](#) off the coast of Ecuador. Isn't that an evidence of evolution?

Here is another area where we need to be careful. Speciation is indeed a real process, but speciation only means that two populations of a particular species can no longer interbreed. The two populations get separated by a geographical barrier such as a mountain range, and after a time they are no longer able to interbreed or to reproduce between themselves.

But all we have really done is split up the gene pool into two different, separate populations; if you want to call them different species, that's fine. But even Darwin's finches, although there are some changes in the shape and size of the bill, are clearly related to one another. Drosophila fruit flies on the Hawaiian Islands—there are over 300 species—probably originated from one initial species. But they look very much the same. The primary way to distinguish them is by their mating behavior.

There is a lot of variety within the organisms God created, and species can adapt to small changes in the environment. But there is [a limit to how far that change can go](#). And the examples we have, like peppered moths and Darwin's finches, show that very clearly.

Responding to Evolutionary Theory

You have given a creationist's response to evolution in textbooks, but apart from the books there is a personal issue to deal with. How do you think Christian students ought to react when they get to evolution in a science curriculum in school?

First, don't panic. This should not be a surprise; you knew it was going to come eventually. Second, understand that evolution is a very important idea in society today. It is important to know about it and to understand it. Try to explain it to your kids in that way. You do not have to believe it or accept it, but you need to understand it, know what people mean when they talk about evolution.

What about answering a question on a test?

Here it can get a little sticky. You may feel that you have to lie in order to give the answer the teacher wants. But I do not think that is the case at all. What you are doing is simply addressing the issue of evolution; you are showing that you understand it. You do not have to phrase your answer in such a way that says, "I believe this is the way it is." It may come down to how you state your answer. But you are simply demonstrating your knowledge about evolution, not your acceptance of it.

It seems to me that when you show you understand the concept of evolution, you are demonstrating respect for the teacher and really for the theory too, as the prevalent theory of our day, without having to make a statement of, "Yes, I believe this!"

Sure. The concept of respect, I think, is extremely important, because you have to realize that as a middle-school or high-school student, you are dealing with teachers who have studied or taught evolutionary theory for many years. Their level of

understanding is much deeper than yours. You cannot simply go in there and try to convince the class that the teacher is wrong, or that evolution is wrong; you need to play the role of a student. And the role of a student is to learn, to try to understand and comprehend the ideas being discussed. But you do not have to communicate in such a way that you appear to believe evolutionary theory.

I found this page in the textbook we have been looking at, right after the chapters on evolution. It is a message from the authors to the students. It says,

“Evolutionary theory unites all living things into one enormous family—from the tallest redwoods to the tiniest bacteria to each and every human on Earth. And, most importantly, the evolutionary history of life makes it clear that all living things—all of us—share a common destiny on this planet. If you remember nothing else from this course ten years from now, remember this, and your year will have been well spent.”{4}

I have never seen a message like this before, from the authors to the student. This textbook obviously has a very strong evolution bias.

Here we have to realize that what is being taught is not science anymore; this is a worldview. This is a statement of naturalism. Obviously, evolution is extremely important to the naturalistic worldview, and the authors are trying to communicate its significance. We are going to see [more and more of this bias in textbooks.](#)

Before Christian parents can talk to our kids about evolution, we first must have an understanding of evolution itself, as well as an understanding of the problems with it. We don't need to be afraid of this powerful theory; we do, however, need discernment, in sifting through the rhetoric and distinguishing it from the truth about God's world.

Genesis 1

Typically, if a child spends any time at all in Sunday school, he gets to the point where he realizes, "Hey, this doesn't relate at all to what I'm learning in school!" Our hope is that we can help parents integrate the truth of Scripture with what is known about origins in the world. As Christians, our starting point for thinking about origins is Genesis 1: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." From that point on, though, there are a lot of different perspectives explaining the rest of the chapter.

That is true, and unfortunately it not only gets confusing for many of us, but it gets very confusing for many of the academics and the scholars as well. There are a number of different ways to interpret Genesis 1. Let me just run through [three of the most prominent views](#) among evangelicals today.

The first is the **literal** or the **very recent** creation account. Some people would call the proponents of this view "young earth creationists." They believe that each of the six days of creation was a twenty-four hour period similar to our days today. These days were consecutive and in the recent past, probably ten to thirty thousand years ago. They hold that the flood was a world-wide and catastrophic event and that all the sedimentary layers were a result of Noah's flood. All the fossils, therefore, are a result of the flood of Noah.

The second way of looking at Genesis 1 is the **Day Age Theory**, sometimes called **Progressive Creation**. Here, each of the six days of creation is a very long period of time, perhaps hundreds of millions of years. God would have created progressively through time, not all at once. The flood was a local event in Mesopotamia or perhaps even a world-wide, but tranquil flood. Therefore, the flood did not leave any great scars or sediments across the earth.

The third view understands Genesis 1 as a **Literary Framework**.

This view suggests that Genesis 1 was not meant to communicate history. Peoples of the Ancient Near East used a similar literary device to describe a complete or perfect work; in this case, a perfect creation. God could have created using evolution or progressive creation; the point is that there is really no concordance between earth history and the days of Genesis 1.

We need to explain to our children the view that makes the most sense to us, but at the same time let them know that there is some disagreement between evangelicals. You may even be confused yourself, and it is okay to communicate to your children that you do not know, either, and that not knowing is all right. We need to give direction but leave the doors open for other options.

Can we know which one is the correct interpretation?

Creation is a mystery. We need to show respect, not only for the mystery, but also for those people holding different views. Evangelicals with backgrounds in Hebrew and Greek differ on their understanding of Genesis 1. So how can we expect a ten-year-old to grasp the problem and make an actual decision?

When we explain the creation account in Genesis 1, we need to communicate to our children that different scholars, all committed to the Bible as God's Word, interpret Scripture differently. The important thing is that we stress that God created the earth, the universe, and every living thing, especially humans.

Early Human History

Now we are going to look at some specific issues that arise from Genesis in terms of early human history. Let's start with Adam and Eve. Were they real people?

This is a very important question, and I think it is one that

most evangelical scholars can agree on. Adam and Eve were real people, and almost all evangelical scholars agree that they were created by God. The reason is that this is the one creation event where God gives us details as to how He went about it. When He created the other mammals and the sea creatures and the birds, He *made* them or He *created* them or He *formed* them, but we are given details about Adam and Eve's creation. We are told how God did it. Adam was formed from dust, and Eve was created from a rib taken out of Adam's side. It is clear that humans do not have an evolutionary origin.

What about australopithecines, those supposed ape-like human ancestors?

Australopithecines most likely are simply extinct apes. Some quibble as to whether they walked upright and therefore may have been on their way to developing into human beings, but even if they did walk upright, that is not a real problem. They are still extinct apes, and they really had no human qualities whatsoever. There is a very good book that you may want to look at called *Bones of Contention*. There are a couple of books called *Bones of Contention*, but this is a recent one by Marvin Lubenow. Lubenow goes into great detail about the actual fossil finds—what they mean, where they fit—all from a creationist's perspective, and he does a very good job. He talks about the fact that human remains seem to span the whole era of supposed human evolution from four million years ago to the present, and that even the one particular type of fossil called *homo erectus* covers a very broad range. *Homo erectus* does not really fit where he is supposed to, and the fossils seem to contradict evolutionary theory rather than support it.

There is one more question that keeps coming up again and again. Where did Cain's wife come from?

In some ways it is surprising that this question seems to be so perplexing to people, but in another way I really understand it. Clearly, Cain married a sister. We react

against that idea today because of the many laws we have today concerning incestuous relationships. We have laws against incest because the children that result from that type of relationship are often afflicted with a genetic disease. This is because all of us carry detrimental recessive genes within our chromosomes. Closely related family members may carry similar if not the same set of recessive genes. When we marry within the family, those recessives can pair up and result in a child who is genetically handicapped. But in the original creation, there was no such problem. These were the originally created beings, there were no genetic mutations to worry about.

When it comes to human origins, the Bible gives no room for anything other than God's personal fashioning of Adam and Eve. It is the fact that God personally created mankind that gives us such intrinsic value.

Noah's Flood

The flood of Noah is extremely important because several New Testament teachings depend on it. The Lord Jesus told us that the time right before He returns will be just like it was in the days before the flood. Peter reminds us that God's judgment fell once on the earth and He has promised to do it again. If the first judgment was not real, what are we to think of the second one?

But all too often what comes to mind when we think of Noah's flood is the image of a cute little round boat with the heads of fluffy sheep and tall giraffes and friendly elephants sticking out of it. We think of it as a harmless bedtime story like Cinderella or Scuffy the Tugboat, a remnant of childhood Bible lessons and storybook times. Did the flood of Noah really happen?

We are talking about an historical event and one that is very serious. It is spoken of in Genesis in a historical narrative.

But evangelicals do disagree as to just how it happened. There are basically three different views.

One is the universal catastrophic flood account, where the flood was a world-wide event. It did indeed cover all the high mountains at that time, and it was catastrophic—lots of tidal waves and breaking up of the fountains of the great deep.

The other view is that the flood was universal—it covered the whole earth—but it was a tranquil event and probably did not leave any scars or sediments on the earth.

And the third view is that the flood was just in the Mesopotamian area. Since its intent was to destroy mankind, and mankind had not spread very far, the flood only had to cover the Mesopotamian area. Again, as with the creation account, we need to tell our kids what our conviction is. What do we think about it? And again, if you are not certain, if you are not sure about your view, go ahead and communicate your uncertainty as well. It is okay to be uncertain about some of these things; scholars do not really know everything about them, either. And we have to be ready to realize that the kids might not even like our particular interpretation, or they may have heard things in school, Sunday school, or church that may differ with our view. But it is okay to give our kids a little bit of room on these kinds of issues.

With all of these different interpretations of the flood, what can we feel safe telling our children? What is the point of the flood? What is the bottom line of this event?

The purpose of the flood of Noah was to destroy mankind as it existed at that time. Where scholars differ is just how far mankind had spread. Some suggest that the human population may only have been a couple hundred thousand, so they may have been contained in the Mesopotamian area. But if humans had been around for four or five thousand years, and they had a chance to multiply and grow, there may have been several

millions or tens of millions of people spread across the earth. That may be why some suggest that, in order to destroy mankind, the flood had to be universal. But we still do not know whether the flood was a catastrophic or a tranquil event, and so there is some room for discussion. I think all these different theories are helpful because they allow us to investigate God's Word to the best of our ability and try to determine what it really means.

There is one view of the flood—the universal catastrophic flood model—that has really captured the attention of much of the Christian community. Several organizations propose this model. In fact, you spent a couple of weeks in the [Grand Canyon](#) with one of these organizations investigating the flood model for the formation of the canyon. We want to address a few specifics about this catastrophic model of the flood of Noah. Would you give just a brief outline of this model?

This catastrophic model definitely suggests a very different scenario than the cute animals or the little round boat. We are talking about the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep and huge amounts of water rocking back and forth across the earth. The young earth creationists suggest that most of the sedimentary layers were formed during the flood. Most of the fossils that we find in those sedimentary layers, therefore, would have been laid down as a result of the flood of Noah. There should also be evidence around the earth of the catastrophic formation of all these sedimentary layers.

How close to the truth is this model? Does it explain everything?

There are a lot of things that it does explain. There is evidence for catastrophic origin for most, if not all, sedimentary layers. Organisms seem to require a very rapid burial in order for them to be formed as fossils. But there are problems with this model as well, and I think it is important that we recognize what those are. For instance, all

the different types of sediment would have to be the result of just one event, a catastrophic flood. When we look at these sedimentary layers, we have sandstone, limestone, mudstone, shale—all different types of rocks—but they all would have had to come from the same event, and that is a bit of a problem. The majority of Christian geologists believe that the strata are due to other events like river floods, deposits from big storms or hurricanes that occurred periodically or, in some cases regarding the sandstones, even desert sand dunes. While the catastrophic model is a captivating idea, I do not see a need to force ourselves to accept it or reject it at this time.

There is a lot of work to be done concerning this model. If you have a curious, science-oriented child, why not encourage him or her to pursue a career in science and become a part of the group that tries to investigate it?

Cavemen

Another question the kids are often curious about: Where do cavemen fit into the Bible?

Most creationists believe cavemen were the early survivors of the flood. Remember, if the purpose of the flood was to destroy mankind, then most of these fossils would be individuals who survived the flood or lived soon afterwards. Cro-Magnon man and Neanderthal man, and probably even fossils described as *homo erectus*, are all post-flood humans, descendants of Noah's three sons. The so-called primitive characteristics could be due to genetic in-breeding, faulty diets, and life in a harsh environment.

Racial Differences

Where do the different races come from? If we are all descended from one couple, Adam and Eve, why are there

different colors of skin?

Races would have originated with Noah's three sons and their wives. Several sets of genes produce the wide variety of skin color present in the current population. It is not difficult at all to envision genetically-similar populations becoming isolated after the flood and being the progenitors of the different races. Much of this genetic variability may have been contained in Noah's sons' wives, arising from genetic segregation that took place since the creation of Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve were probably people of intermediate skin color with most, if not all, of the genetic variability present in their genes.

Dinosaurs

We cannot talk about explaining creation to our kids without addressing the inevitable question of the dinosaurs. Where do dinosaurs fit into the Bible?

There is no question that kids today, particularly boys, are really enamored of dinosaurs. The answer depends on what your approach is.

If you are approaching creation from an old earth perspective, then the dinosaurs have been extinct for seventy or so million years and there is no reason to expect them to be mentioned in the Bible at all. Men and dinosaurs never existed together.

If, however, you are approaching creation from a young earth model, where everything was created in the fairly recent past, then dinosaurs must have existed at the same time as man because they were created on the same day, only ten to thirty thousand years ago. And that raises the question as to whether Noah took dinosaurs on the ark.

It is difficult to imagine a brontosaurus getting on the ark, and most creationists answer that by suggesting he probably did not take adult dinosaurs on the ark, just juveniles or

small babies. The extinction of the dinosaurs then was probably due to the flood. Even if Noah did take some on the ark, apparently the climate and ecology of the earth had changed dramatically as the result of the flood and they were not able to survive following the flood.

But it also raises the very distinct possibility that some dinosaurs may still exist in small, isolated pockets around the world. I do not want to add too much credence to this, but there are very intriguing stories—and I just want to call them stories for right now, not fact—from the Congo of different kinds of dinosaurs being reported by villagers and even some missionaries seeing very large reptile-like creatures out in the swamps. We have cave paintings from South America of dinosaur-like creatures. We have legends from all over the world about dragons, in China and the East and in Europe during the Middle Ages. We seem to have it in our heads that big reptiles are out there somewhere. It is a lot easier to think of them as being left-overs from the flood rather than having existed in small pockets for sixty or so million years since they became extinct in an evolutionary perspective. It is also feasible that dinosaurs could be mentioned in the Bible.

You mean under a different name?

Yes. For instance, Job 40 talks of a creature called “behemoth” in verses 15 to 24. He feeds on grass, he has strength in his loins,

What we have tried to do in this discussion is help parents understand the biblical accounts of creation in the early earth so that they can explain it to their children. Although we have presented a few options instead of absolutes, we can still tell our kids that God is the Creator and Sustainer of all things, and that the flood was a real event, although some of the details of how these things happened may escape us at this time. This approach allows us to communicate clear

biblical truth while at the same time encouraging a child's curiosity and desire to investigate God's world. This is our Father's world, and it delights Him when His children want to discover it and search out the mysteries of the past, of history, of His story.

Notes

1. David Raup, "Conflicts Between Darwin and Paleontology," *Field Museum of Natural History Bulletin*, vol. 30, no. 1 (1979): 25.
2. Kraus Dose, "The Origin of Life: More Questions Than Answers," *Interdisciplinary Science Review* 13 (1988): 348-56.
3. Stephen J. Gould, *The Panda's Thumb* (New York: Norton, 1980), 181.
4. Kenneth Miller and Joseph Levine, *Biology* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1991), 335.

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See Also:

- [Pictures and Account of Ray and Sue Bohlin's Visit to the Galapagos Islands](#)
- [All the Probe articles on Origins](#)

"Is Dark Matter Another Attack on God?"

I was reading an article about experiments with dark matter in a very deep underground lab in South Dakota. What is dark matter and is this another secular atheist way to circumvent God?

The simple answer is that dark matter is material in space that cannot be directly detected with telescopes because it does not emit any type of radiation. Ordinary dark matter is made up of cold gas, stars with so little mass that they never ignite nuclear fusion, small rocks, etc. Even though astronomers cannot directly see dark matter, they can detect its presence through its effects, e.g. impact on movement of galaxies. (See the excerpt from an article by Dr. David Rogstad below for more information on this.) In attempting to measure the amount of dark matter required to create the observed effects, astronomers have developed a theory that there are two types of dark matter: ordinary dark matter and exotic dark matter. Exotic dark matter only weakly interacts with light and ordinary matter, so it is different than the material we normally deal with on earth. I would guess the experiments you were reading about were dealing with the study of exotic dark matter.

Based on this definition, the existence of dark matter does not directly bear on the existence of God. I have not seen any arguments from atheists that point to dark matter as supporting evidence for their claims. Given that dark matter in space can only be detected through very sophisticated, expensive methods, I would not expect the Bible to talk about it directly, and it does not. Of course, the Bible makes it clear that "For by Him [Jesus Christ] all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible" (Col. 1:16). No matter how you define dark matter, it is covered by this verse.

Going a little deeper, it is true that some (but not all) of the ways used to estimate the amount of dark matter in the universe assume that the universe has been expanding for billions of years. Some Christian scientists, such as those at Reasons to Believe, who promote a Biblical creation model based on a 13.7 billion-year-old universe, point out that the existence of dark matter in just the right quantities is

further evidence that our earth is fine tuned for life to such a degree that it could only be through the work of a transcendent, all powerful, intelligent creator. RTB has a number of articles on dark matter which you can see at www.reasons.org/search/node/?keys=%22dark+Matter%22.

If you are interested in understanding the different Christian perspectives on the origins of the universe, check out our Faith and Science section at www.probe.org; in particular you may be interested in "Christian Views of Science and Earth History" at www.probe.org/christian-views-of-science-and-earth-history

I hope this answer is helpful for you.

God bless,
Steve Cable

Excerpt from Dr. David Rogstad on history of dark matter: "Based on his observation that clusters of galaxies do not have enough matter to remain gravitationally bound, Fritz Zwicky proposed (in 1933) the existence of dark matter to provide the needed gravity. Since then, there has been a growing body of supporting evidence, including flat rotation curves in large spiral galaxies, larger-than-expected velocity dispersion in elliptical galaxies, and certain measured characteristics of the cosmic microwave background, all of which require the presence of dark matter for their explanation." [www.reasons.org/filling-gap]

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“How Does the Continental Divide Relate to Creationism?”

My 10-year-old son is studying the great continental divide in school—how does that relate to creationism? His teacher said it doesn't affect your view of creation, even though she is claiming it happened millions of years ago.

The fact that the great continental divide exists and how it got there are two very different issues. Honestly, for a 10-year old, he can probably learn all he needs to know about the divide without needing to debate how or when it arose. If the geological development is part of the lesson, your son can always regard the timeframe a separate issue, or simply resolve to understand how most geologists explain it without committing himself to accepting their entire explanation. I would recommend he learn what is required of him and simply resolve to keep his mind open to the timeframe issue. Creationist flood-model geologists would explain the rising of the Rockies (hence the continental divide) by the same mechanisms as evolutionary geologists, just over a much shorter time frame.

Hope this helps.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin
Probe Ministries