

Theistic Evolution: A Theological Critique

Dr. Ray Bohlin concludes a four-part series covering some of the big ideas in Dr. Stephen Meyer's book 'Theistic Evolution' by examining some of the theological problems with this perspective.

Did God Create a World with Pain and Suffering Already In It?

In this article I review the theological critique of theistic evolution from the book, *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique*. (I have previously written on the scientific problems [here](#) and [here](#), and the philosophical problems [here](#).) First, I review a chapter in the philosophical section, "Bringing Home the Bacon: The Interaction of Science and Scripture Today" by Colin R. Reeves. I'm focusing on Reeves's section on theistic evolution's problem with theodicy.

A theodicy seeks to explain God's reasons for allowing evil. He says that many conservative Christians who have embraced theistic evolution simply view natural evil as having always existed. He writes, "If natural evil is of necessity a part of evolutionary history, and if evolution is the process instituted by God to, in the end, result in creatures on earth with whom he could have a relationship, then it follows that God is the direct cause of natural evil – it is part of his plan."[\[1\]](#) Reeves quotes evolutionary philosopher David Hull: "The God implied by evolutionary theory . . . is careless, wasteful, indifferent, almost diabolical . . . not the sort of God to whom anyone would be inclined to pray."[\[2\]](#) Hull's solution is to simply reject any notion of God. He mentions



theologian Christopher Southgate struggling with this problem. How does one “redeem” the notion that pain, suffering, and death are intrinsic to evolution, which Southgate accepts? Southgate settles for an underwhelming notion of what he calls a “pelican heaven,” symbolizing the hope that everything will be fine in the end. That is just bizarre. This seems to recognize the problem, but seeing no solution, this idea simply hopes that God has it figured out somehow.

Reeves refers to Denis Alexander, who simply recognizes that “God created a tough world . . . in which there is pain and death.” For many theistic evolutionists, since humans evolved from a population of at least 10,000 individuals, there was no Adam and Eve and therefore, no Fall. He then references John Schneider who seems to say that we just shrug our shoulders and stop worrying!

If I were a theistic evolutionist, I would be very worried. But since they embrace evolution with no hesitation, they figure there just *must* be a way out of this dilemma, so don’t make a big deal about it.

Did Adam and Eve Even Exist for Theistic Evolutionists?

Now I will focus on theologian Wayne Grudem’s opening chapter in the theological section of the book. He briefly discusses twelve points at which theistic evolution (as currently promoted by its prominent supporters) differs from the biblical creation account if it is taken as historical narrative. Now I’ll address the first three points:

1. Adam and Eve were not the first humans.
2. Adam and Eve were born of human parents.
3. God did not directly or specially create Adam out of the dust of the ground.

Something that needs to be understood concerning theistic evolution—or evolutionary creation as is now preferred—is that the human species came about as any other species, through naturalistic evolution. Calculations from some evolutionary creationists conclude that the human species can only be reduced to a population of around 10,000 individuals, certainly not just two. Some have even gone so far as to explicitly say that Adam and Eve did not exist. Others are willing to say that God chose a man and a woman from this population as Adam and Eve. But even this concession has problems of its own.

The primary question at this point is whether Genesis 1 to 3 is historical narrative. For evolutionary creationists, the simple answer is *no*. These initial chapters in Genesis are considered theological or allegorical but not a description of any actual events. But are they?

Grudem makes a significant case that these three chapters have always been understood as historical narrative and to consider them otherwise, one must bring an evolutionary viewpoint to the text. The text itself does not lead you to this conclusion.

Even if one assumes that God chose Adam and Eve out of the population of 10,000, they were born of human parents. God did not do anything supernatural to bring them into existence. This brings problems further down the line.

Were Adam and Eve Sinless?

Three more doctrines will be upturned if humans came about through a naturalistic evolutionary process. First, Eve wasn't formed from Adam's rib or side; second, Adam and Eve were not sinless; and third, if they weren't sinless, they didn't commit the first sin.

For evolutionary creationists, humans evolved and were not

specially created. Therefore, Eve was not formed from Adam's rib or side. But this raises some important questions. In Genesis 2, Adam gives names to all creatures (of course, theistic evolutionists say this didn't happen either). But he doesn't find a suitable helper. So, God creates Eve from Adam. Jesus refers to this passage in Matthew 19 where He addresses marriage. The context is that since Eve was taken from Adam, he is to hold fast to his wife. Paul also adds that man was not made from woman but woman from man (1 Corinthians 11:8). Elsewhere, he confirms that Adam was formed first, then Eve (1 Timothy 2:13). In both cases Paul indicates that Genesis 2 is historical narrative. It really happened this way.

Now we come to the issue of sin. If humans evolved and were not created, then all humans would have acted selfishly for the benefit of themselves and their offspring. This is a key feature of an evolutionary system. They likely cheated on their mates, stealing food or shelter. In other words, all humans were sinners from the beginning! However, at the end of day six (Genesis 1:31), God says that everything He made that day was not just good, but **very** good. This would preclude sin! According to theistic evolution, humans were not sinless, and Adam and Eve could not have committed the first sin. Indeed, God would have made a very difficult world, and humans were a part of that harsh reality. I think you can begin to see that theistic evolution plays fast and loose with significant doctrinal issue.

Were All Humans Descended From Adam and Eve?

To recap: In theologian Wayne Grudem's opening chapter in the theological section of the book *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique*, he briefly discusses twelve points at which theistic evolution (as currently promoted by its prominent supporters) differs

from the biblical creation account if it is taken as historical narrative.

I will now focus on points 7 to 9, which are rather distinct from each other.

1. Human death did not begin because of Adam's sin.
2. Not all human beings are descended from Adam and Eve.
3. God did not directly act in the natural world to create different kinds of plants and animals.

According to most if not all versions of theistic evolution, humans began as a population of at least 10,000 individuals. And since they evolved from an ape-like ancestor, death of humans had been around for hundreds of thousands of years. But when God informs Adam of the penalty of eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, He says, "You will surely die" (Genesis 2:17). Not something you would say to someone who already knew he was going to die. In addition, Paul tells us in Romans 5 that sin came into the world through one man and with it, death! In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul links death through the one man, Adam, with life through the one man, Christ. Death entered for humans through Adam's sin.

The next problem we see is that theistic evolutionists contend that not all humans descended from Adam and Eve. This should appear rather obvious, since Adam and Eve were supposedly just two of thousands of humans at the time. Humanity would have descended from this population, not just Adam and Eve. But later in Genesis (3:20), we read, "The man called his wife's name Eve because she was the mother of all the living," meaning all humans.

Last, it should seem obvious that theistic evolutionists accept that all life evolved and just about all of Genesis 1 is not historical. But in all of Genesis 1, God repeatedly acts. He doesn't just let matter alone do the work.

Evolutionary creation dismisses not just the historical

accuracy of Genesis but also many New Testament doctrines.

Summing Up the Problems with Theistic Evolution

Finally, I'll review the last three of the twelve events in Wayne Grudem's chapter and summarize his critique. Essentially, the last three events are:

1. Did God rest from anything on the seventh day?
2. Was the original creation a safe place?
3. After Adam and Eve's sin, there was nothing new. Thorns and thistles already existed.

As I have stated throughout this article, according to evolutionary creationists, God did not act in any kind of a direct way to bring anything into existence except matter and the physical laws of how matter operates. This means there was nothing for God to rest from. But Exodus 20:11 states clearly that God made heaven and earth and all that is in them and then rested. This is the basis for resting and keeping holy the Sabbath. Why would man need a rest day if God didn't?

Genesis is clear that the earth and specifically, the Garden of Eden was a safe environment and all that changed with their sin. Things were now much more difficult. Adam and Eve would sweat to get their bread. Thorns and thistles would grow where apparently, they hadn't before. God had cursed the ground so it wouldn't yield its fruit as easily. But evolutionary creationists affirm that nothing could have changed since there never was an idyllic Garden. So there was no curse on the land.

Grudem concludes with eleven significant Christian doctrines that are undermined or denied by theistic evolution. Time prohibits mentioning all of them, but some of them are the truth of the Bible, evidence in nature for God's existence,

and God's wisdom. Grudem closes with this paragraph: "Because theistic evolution denies the historicity of these twelve events, it also denies or undermines eleven significant doctrines. In sum, belief in theistic evolution is incompatible with the truthfulness of the Bible and with several crucial doctrines of the Christian faith." Amen. We heartily agree.

Notes

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Theistic Evolution – Part 2

Dr. Ray Bohlin reviews a second science critique of Theistic Evolution, asking if universal common descent is real. The evidence says no.

The Fossil Record and Universal Common Ancestry

In a previous article, I examined [the failure of neo-darwinism](#) on the basis of the landmark book ***Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique.***[\[1\]](#)

In this article, I'm reviewing the second science critique of theistic evolution. This section asks whether universal common descent or UCD is real. Universal common descent simply states that all organisms today are descended from one or a few early organisms by Darwinian evolution. UCD is usually if not always vigorously defended by theistic evolutionists, or, as they now prefer, "evolutionary creationists." UCD is considered beyond question. And doubters of UCD are compared



to flat earthers and those who believe the sun and planets revolve around the earth. In this section I'll review the first chapter in this section by Gunter Bechly and Stephen C. Meyer.

Bechly and Meyer simply ask if the fossil record records this smooth transition from a single common ancestor to all life forms today. They survey numerous gaps in the fossils where certain large groups appear suddenly again, and again, and again. When a variety of new forms appear, the fossil record is full of gaps. In an old earth perspective, which theistic evolutionists adopt, one of these gaps goes back to the earliest life on earth. Fossils of bacteria show up 3.8 billion years ago right after the Late Heavy Bombardment of the earth by asteroids from 4.1 billion years ago to 3.8 billion years ago. This leaves virtually no time for the origin of that first life.

Let's jump ahead to the Cambrian Explosion where nearly all animal Phyla show up in the fossil record suddenly, with no ancestors, 450 million years ago. Arthropods, Mollusks, Annelids, Chordates, and many others just show up, already fully differentiated from each other, with few clues of which phyla are most closely related to other phyla.

Then there is the Silurian-Devonian Radiation of Terrestrial Biotas. Here vascular land plants show up suddenly with no clue as to how and when they transitioned from marine plants to land plants.

Then there are the flowering plants. Charles Darwin called their sudden appearance in the Cretaceous period "an abominable mystery."

There are more problems in the animal kingdom. All the orders of mammals with placentas suddenly show up in a narrow time window, too narrow to have evolved from earlier animals. A paleontologist said, "Within approximately 15 million years of

dinosaur extinction most of the 20 orders of placentals had appeared.” And last, the orders of modern birds show up all at once in the fossil record around the same time. Whew, more tomorrow.

Universal Common Descent: A Comprehensive Critique (Part 1)

In this section I’m reviewing Casey Luskin’s chapter called “Universal Common Descent: A Comprehensive Critique.”

In this chapter, Luskin covers four main topics:

- evidence against common descent from biogeography,
- the fossil record,
- molecular phylogenies, and
- embryology.

Since I covered the fossil record in the above section, I’ll focus on biogeography here and molecular phylogenies in the next.

Why would biogeography even be considered by theistic evolutionists as evidence of common ancestry? Well, it was used by Darwin, when he saw that the fossil mammals in South America resembled the animals living on the continent today. Luskin looks at a most glaring example of a severe problem in this category, Platyrrhine monkeys. Two families have prehensile tails, which can grasp things like tree branches while their four limbs perform other tasks. While some old-world monkeys have tails, they are not prehensile.

The new world monkeys are said to have arrived in South America about 30 million years ago. At that time however, Africa and South America were at least 600 miles apart. So how did the platyrrhine monkeys, supposedly recently evolved from

old-world monkeys, cross the ocean? The usual response is to suggest that a group or even a single pregnant female rafted on some fallen trees and brush.

This seems incredibly improbable. First, it would require these branches or shrubs to provide food for at least one pregnant female. This drifting pile of branches would take several weeks or most probably months to drift from Africa to South America. This incredible hypothesis is offered because these two groups of monkeys are supposedly related by common ancestry, but on different sides of the ocean. So, there must be a way to preserve common ancestry of these two groups of monkeys no matter how improbable.

Biogeography hurts UCD far more than it helps.

Universal Common Descent: A Comprehensive Critique – (Part 2)

In this section on Casey Luskin's chapter on Universal Common Descent, my focus is on evidence from molecular phylogenies, where molecules like genes and proteins are compared to create trees based on molecules, not anatomy. Scientists can now determine the amino acid sequence of proteins and the nucleotide sequence of the gene that codes for the protein.

Previously, Darwin's tree of life was constructed by comparing anatomical similarities and differences to determine where a species or group of species belonged in the tree. And since it was thought that genes determine the anatomical structure of an organism, a tree constructed by comparing the gene sequences of a protein should give the same tree as the anatomical tree. This was the expectation of numerous scholars.

However, there has been no agreement between anatomical and

gene sequence trees except with very closely related species. Molecular phylogenies for different proteins reveal contradictory trees. Now, many scientists have abandoned Darwin's tree of life. In 1999, W. Ford Doolittle offered that "Molecular phylogenists will have failed to find the 'true tree' . . . because the history of life cannot properly be represented as a tree." The problem has only gotten worse. Several authors over the last 25 years are quoted by Luskin^[2]: one said that "Different proteins generate different trees" (1998); another said, "Evolutionary trees from different genes often have conflicting branching patterns," (2009). A third author wrote, "The problem was that different genes told contradictory evolutionary stories" (2009). And finally, a fourth author said, "Evolutionary trees constructed by studying biological molecules often don't resemble those drawn up from morphology."

Many evolutionists have abandoned the tree model altogether, which leaves Universal Common Descent in grave trouble.

Missing Transitions: Human Origins and the Fossil Record

Theistic evolutionists agree that humans show clear evidence of having a common ancestor with chimpanzees. But if humans evolved from an ape-like ancestor, was there a real Adam and Eve? Was there an actual fall? Many evolutionary creationists would say no. They hold that humans evolved from a population of at least 1,000 individuals, not two, and that humans were already sinful and therefore never fell into sin.

Casey Luskin explores whether the fossil record documents a steady series of fossils transforming an ape-like ancestor into humans over the last 6-7 million years.

Luskin focuses on three critical questions about the hominin fossils: first, are there candidates for something very close

to the common ancestor of humans and chimps; second, are the australopithecines intermediates between our ape-like ancestor and us; and last, is there a series of fossils linking australopithecines and humans?

Fragmentary fossils of three possible candidates for a common ancestor between chimps and humans have been found between 6.6 to 4.4 million years ago. But all three were eventually dismissed as simple apes or too fragmentary to draw any conclusions. All these fossils would easily fit inside a child's shoe box.

The second question is, were the australopithecines intermediates between our ape-like ancestor and us? The australopithecines ranged from 4 to 1 million years ago and have long been advertised as on the road to humans. But paleoanthropologists cannot agree about the roles, if any, the australopithecines had in human origins.

The third question asks, is there a series of fossils linking australopithecines and humans?

Homo erectus, the first species in the genus *Homo*, appeared about 1.8 million years ago, but we haven't found *any* potential intermediates between australopithecines and *Homo*. "Although the transition from *Australopithecus* to *Homo* is usually thought of as a momentous transformation, the fossil record bearing on the origin and earliest evolution of *Homo* is virtually undocumented." The so-called evolution of the human species is fragmentary and blotchy.

Evidence for Human Uniqueness

Most evolutionary creationists believe that humans and chimpanzees share a common ancestor around 6-7 million years ago. Above, I addressed the lack of fossil evidence for the human descent from this common ancestor. But equally, evolutionary creationists claim there is powerful evidence

linking humans and chimpanzees, that there is only a 1-2% difference of our DNA, indicating humans and chimps are closely related. Ann Gauger, Ola Hossjer, and Colin Reaves deal with this claim in their chapter, *Evidence for Human Uniqueness*.

This chapter uses an abundance of technical terminology. I will be avoiding many of those terms to save time needing to define them for you. I will be generalizing their discussion as much as possible.

If you simply compare the individual building blocks of DNA called nucleotides, where the sequences match up between human and chimp DNA, there is only a 1.23% difference between humans and chimps. But when you begin to include insertions, deletions, the number and location of repeated elements, as well as the extreme differences between the Y chromosomes of humans and chimps, the difference rises to at least 5%.

It's estimated that there are about 60 genes found in humans that have no similar genes in chimps. It's difficult to get just one unique gene in 6 million years, but 60? Impossible!! There are differences in non-coding DNA, how chromosomes are arranged in the nucleus in cells of different tissues, how genes are regulated, etc. Many of these differences are found in genes expressed in brain tissues.

These genetic differences bring about dozens of anatomical and physiological differences. Our brains are larger and constructed differently; our feet, necks, and location of the skull on the spine are different.

We think about past and future, we play, dance, make music, communicate through language, use symbolic logic, we write novels and poetry, use math and art, and show empathy for others. There are so many more differences. We do not share a common ancestor with chimps. There is not enough time for

evolution bring about all these differences.

I hope that now you are convinced that evolutionary creationist insistence that Universal Common Descent be fully accepted is not based on evidence, just a belief that evolution is true.

Notes

1. J.P. Moreland, Stephen C. Meyer, Christopher Shaw, Ann K. Gauger, and Wayne Grudem, Editors. *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017.

2. Pp. 380-382.

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Is Theistic Evolution the Only Viable Answer for Thinking Christians?

Steve Cable examines Francis Collins's arguments for theistic evolution from his book The Language of God and finds them lacking.

Francis Collins and Theistic Evolution

Dr. Francis Collins, recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom for cataloging the complete human DNA sequence, put forth his views on science and Christianity in his 2006 book, *The Language of God*[\[1\]](#). Could his theistic evolution view resolve the apparent conflict between modern science and the

Bible? In this article, we will examine this belief and his arguments for it.



Collins grew up agnostic but became an atheist in his student years. At twenty six, he took on the task of proving Christianity false. Like many before him^{2}, this hopeless task resulted in accepting Christianity as true: Jesus as God in the flesh bringing us eternal life. In his role as a medical researcher into the genetics of man, he found himself dealing in a world where many questioned the validity of Christian thought as anti-science.

These conflicting forces led him to develop views reconciling the current positions of science and the truths of the Bible. As Collins states, "If the existence of God is true (not just tradition, but actually true), and if certain scientific conclusions about the natural world are also (objectively) true . . . , then they cannot contradict each other. A fully harmonious synthesis must be possible."^{3} Certainly, this statement is one we all should agree on if we can agree on which scientific conclusions are objectively true.

His resulting beliefs rest on the following premises^{4}:

1. God formed the universe out of nothingness 14 billion years ago.
2. Its properties appear to have been precisely tuned for life.
3. The precise mechanism of the origin of life remains unknown,
4. Once evolution got under way, no special supernatural intervention was required.

5. Humans are part of this process, sharing a common ancestor with the great apes.

6. But humans are unique in ways that defy evolutionary explanation, pointing to our spiritual nature.

Rather than interceding as an active creative force, God built into the Big Bang the properties suitable for receiving the image of God at the appropriate time. Purely random mutations and natural selection brought about this desired result. Being outside of time, God would know that this uninvolved approach would result in beings suitable to receive the breath of God.

The Argument for Theistic Evolution

Is Francis Collins' theistic evolution the way to reconcile theology and science?

Collins argues the Big Bang and the fine-tuning of this universe are clearly the work of God. After that, no intelligent intervention occurred, even though scientists have no idea how life began.[\[5\]](#) At some point, God intervened—first, by giving humans moral and abstract thinking, and second, by sending Jesus Christ to perform miracles, be crucified and resurrected, and bring us eternal life.

In Collins's view, God is allowed to perform miracles to redeem mankind, but not in creating physical humans. The alternative theories make the scientific process messy and unpredictable. This position allows him to side with the naturalist scientists who hold sway today. However, it does not prevent naturalists from laughing at your silly faith.

He also appears to believe we are looking forward to new glorified bodies living in a new earth with Jesus. Apparently, at that time, God will disavow His penchant for not making changes in nature.

Collins wrote^{6} that our DNA leads him to believe in common ancestry with chimpanzees and ultimately with all life. His conclusion is partially based on the large amount of “junk DNA” similar across humans and other animals. If similar segments of DNA have no function, these must be elements indicating a common ancestry.

Subsequent research undermines this belief. “DNA previously dismissed as “junk” are . . . crucial to the way our genome works,. . . . For years,. . . more than 98% of the genetic sequence . . . was written off as ‘junk’ DNA.”^{7} Based on current research,^{8} almost every nucleotide is associated with a function. Over 80% of the genome has been shown to have a biochemical function and “the rest . . . of the genome is likely to have a function as well.”^{9} Collins agrees that his earlier position was incorrect.^{10}

In this case, the argument of reuse by an intelligent designer now makes more sense.

On theistic evolution, Collins could be right and it would not tarnish the absolute truth of the Bible. However, in all likelihood, Collins is wrong. From both Scripture and current observations, it appears much more likely God actively interceded in creation.

Irreducible Complexity

One area of Intelligent Design Francis Collins attacks is the concept of irreducible complexity.

ID researchers define it as: “[A] system of several well-matched, interacting parts that contribute to the basic function, wherein the removal of any one of them causes the system to cease functioning. [It] cannot be produced directly by slight, successive modifications of a precursor system, because any precursor . . . that is missing a part is by definition nonfunctional.”^{11} A mindless evolutionary process

cannot create a number of new, unique parts that must function together before creating any value.

However, Collins believes nothing is too hard for evolution given enough time. He states, "Examples . . . of irreducible complexity are clearly showing signs of how they could have been assembled by evolution in a gradual step-by-step process. . . Darwinism predicts that plausible intermediate steps **must have existed**, . . . ID. . . sets forth a straw man scenario that no serious student of biology would accept."[\[12\]](#)

One of Collins's examples, the bacterial flagellum, is "a marvelous swimming device"[\[13\]](#) which includes a propeller surface and a motor to rotate it. ID researchers identify it as an irreducibly complex. Collins suggests this conclusion has been "fundamentally undercut," stating that one protein sequence used in the flagellum is also used in a different apparatus in other bacteria. "Granted, [it] is just one piece of the flagellum's puzzle, and we are far from filling in the whole picture (if we ever can). But each such new puzzle piece provides a natural explanation for a step that ID had relegated to supernatural forces, . . ."[\[14\]](#)

Today, seven years later, ID researchers are not backing off. A recent article concludes, "The claim . . . to have refuted . . . the bacterial flagellum is unfounded. Although there are sub-components . . . that are dispensable . . ., there are numerous subsystems within the flagellum that require multiple coordinated mutations. [It] is not the kind of structure that one can . . . envision being produced in Darwinian step-wise fashion."[\[15\]](#)

Evolutionists have been trying for over 15 years to attack irreducible complexity. Rather than discrediting the theory, their efforts have shown how difficult it is to do so. Collins's claims put him in the company of those relying on the ignorance of their audience to cow them with logically flawed arguments.

God of the Gaps and *Ad Hominem* Attacks

Francis Collins states, "ID is a 'God of the gaps' theory, inserting . . . the need for supernatural intervention in places its proponents claim science cannot explain."[\[16\]](#)

This statement mischaracterizes Intelligent Design. "ID is not based on an argument from ignorance."[\[17\]](#) It looks for conditions indicating intelligence was required to produce an observed result. The event must be exceedingly improbable due to random events and it must conform to a meaningful pattern. "Does a forensic scientist commit an 'arson-of-the-gaps' fallacy in inferring that a fire was started deliberately. . .? To assume that every phenomenon that we cannot explain must have a materialistic explanation is to commit a converse 'materialism-of-the-gaps' fallacy."[\[18\]](#)

ID researchers identify signs that are consistent with intelligent design and examine real world events for those same signs. In addition, a number of non-ID scientists having reached the conclusion that Darwinism is not sufficient, are looking at other mechanisms to explain certain features of life.

Another aspect of Collins's defense of theistic evolution is using overstated and unsubstantiated attacks to discredit other views.

Of the young earth creationists, he states, "If these claims were actually true, it would lead to a complete and irreversible collapse of the sciences of physics, chemistry, cosmology, geology, and biology."[\[19\]](#) This is a gross overstatement. In truth, belief in a young earth creation does not prevent one from making predictions based on micro-evolutionary effects or investigating the physical laws of the universe from a microscopic to an intergalactic level.

Collins also states, "**No serious biologist** today doubts the

theory of evolution.”{20} And, “ID’s central premise . . . sets forth a straw man scenario that **no serious student** of biology would accept.”{21} So, those differing with Collins are not even serious students of biology. Collins ignores the over 800 Ph.D.s who signed a document questioning the ability of Darwinian theory to explain life.{22}

In discrediting ID, he misrepresents the premise of this field, saying ID is designed to resist an atheistic worldview. As one researcher, William Dembski, explains, “Intelligent Design attempts only to explain the arrangement of materials within an already given world. Design theorists argue that certain arrangements of matter, especially in biological systems, clearly signal a designing influence.”{23}

Collins would rather pursue an answer that was wrong and exclude the actions of an intelligent designer, than consider the possibility of intelligent design.

Perverting the Views of C. S. Lewis

Did C. S. Lewis support theistic evolution? Francis Collins quotes Lewis{24}, postulating God could have added His image to evolved creatures who then chose to fall into sin. Although consistent with theistic evolution, Lewis’ thoughts are more consistent with ID tenets.

Lewis begins, “For long centuries, **God perfected** the animal form which was to become the vehicle of humanity and the **image of Himself. He gave it** hands whose thumb could be applied to each of the fingers, . . .”{25} So, God was actively involved in bringing about the human form; God intervened to produce the desired outcome. This view contrasts with Collins’s view that God took whatever evolution produced and breathed into it His image.

BioLogos extends the thought, stating “(Lewis) is clearly a Christian Theistic Evolutionist, or an Evolutionary Christian

Theist.”{26} They point out passages from Lewis showing the evolutionary theory of physical change was not contradictory to the gospel. They suggest Lewis would accept today’s theories as truth and reject ID.

John West’s research{27} finds Lewis was not saying evolutionary theory was definitely true, but rather that it did not refute Christian belief. Lewis wrote, “belief that Men in general have immortal & rational souls does not oblige or qualify me to hold a theory of their pre-human organic history—if they have one.”{28} In *Miracles* he wrote, “the preliminary processes within Nature which led up to” the human mind “if there were any”—“were **designed** to do so.”{29} In both these quotes, Lewis caveats evolutionary theory by adding a big “if.”

Lewis did not embrace a simple-minded view of natural science as fundamentally more authoritative or less prone to error than other fields of human endeavor. Lewis argued that scientific theories are “supposals” and should not be confused with “facts.” . . . We must always recognize that such explanations can be wrong.{30}

Clearly, Lewis did not feel that a young earth view a necessity. But, he was adamantly against the thought that science trumped theology. Although, one cannot know with certainty, it appears that Lewis would resonate with the methodology and claims of Intelligent Design theorists.

I appreciate Collins’ faith journey. However, I wish he would say “We really don’t know the details of man’s creation, but we know God was intimately involved.”

Notes

1. Francis S. Collins, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* (New York: Free Press, 2006).
2. See for example, Josh McDowell’s story in *Undaunted: One Man’s Real-Life Journey from Unspeakable Memories to*

- Unbelievable Grace*, Lee Strobel's story in *The Case for Faith*, and Viggo Olsen's story in *Daktar, Diplomat in Bangladesh*.
3. Collins, p. 169.
 4. Collins, p. 200.
 5. Collins, p. 90.
 6. Collins, p. 109-142.
 7. *UK Guardian*, September 5, 2012.
 8. ENCODE is an acronym for the Encyclopedia of DNA Elements project.
 9. Casey Luskin, Junk No More: ENCODE Project Nature Paper Finds "Biochemical Functions for 80% of the Genome", 2012, www.evolutionnews.org/2012/09/junk_no_more_en_1064001.html (Accessed Mar. 30, 2014)
 10. Jonathan McLatchie, Has Francis Collins Changed His Mind On "Junk DNA"? www.evolutionnews.org/2011/03/has_francis_collins_changed_hi044601.html (Accessed Mar. 30, 2014).
 11. Michael J. Behe, *Darwin's Black Box: The Biological Challenge to Evolution* (New York: Free Press, 1996).
 12. Collins, p. 188-190.
 13. Behe, *Darwin's Black Box*.
 14. Collins, p. 192.
 15. Jonathan McLatchie, Two of the World's Leading Experts on Bacterial Flagellar Assembly Take on Michael Behe, March 2013, www.evolutionnews.org/2013/03/kelly_hughes_an069881.html (Accessed Mar. 30, 2014).
 16. Collins, p. 193.
 17. Jonathan McLatchie, Once Again, Why Intelligent Design is Not a "God-of-the-Gaps" Argument, 2013, www.evolutionnews.org/2013/01/why_intelligent068151.html (Accessed Mar. 30, 2014).
 18. Ibid.
 19. Collins, p. 174.
 20. Collins, p. 99.
 21. Collins, p. 190.
 22. www.dissentfromdarwin.org
 23. William Dembski, *Intelligent Design: The Bridge Between*

Science and Theology (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), p. 248.

24. C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), p. 69.

25. Lewis, p. 68.

26. Michael L. Peterson, C. S. Lewis on Evolution and Intelligent Design biologos.org/blog/series/lewis-id-series, p. 13 (Accessed Mar. 30, 2014).

27. John G. West, *The Magician's Twin: C. S. Lewis on Science, Scientism, and Society* (Seattle: Discovery Institute Press, 2012).

28. West, p. 114.

29. West, p. 131 quoting from *Miracles* by C. S. Lewis, 1960.

30. West, p. 140-141.

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

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

Christians respond differently to the questions you propose.

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

I hope this helps.

Respectfully,

Dr. Ray Bohlin
Probe Ministries