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Theistic Evolution - Curse of the Church

It Does Matter How God Created

Theistic Evolution - Curse of the Church

by Bert Thompson, Ph. D.

The subject of origins is a thorny and controversial topic and the center of many a discussion, many a debate, many a written polemic. On the one hand there is the position of atheistic, organic evolution which affirms that man is the result of purely naturalistic, mechanistic, uniformitarian forces operating eternally in nature. Atheists rejoice in the theory and defend it eagerly, while the more conservative, fundamental Christians view it as an all-out attack on the one living God. On the other hand there is the position of special creation, which states that the one true and living God created the universe and all that in it is, exactly as the Bible states. (Genesis 1-2; Exodus 20:11, et al.) Bible believers ardently defend special creation as not only the *only true* viewpoint on origins, but are quick to point out that it fits the facts of science (e.g.: Law of Causality, Law of Biogenesis, Laws of Thermodynamics, etc.) while the theory of evolution does not.

Oddly enough, amidst all the discussion concerning evolution and creation, there has arisen a group of people who believe that *both* evolution *and* creation are true! These people hold to “theistic evolution” (also called “religious evolution,” “mitigated evolution,” “progressive creationism,” or “threshold evolution”), all the while claiming that it sustains them in their religious belief, yet allows them to “mix and mingle” with the rank and file evolutionists. Their name is Legion; their tribe is increasing.

Theistic Evolution Defined

The word “theistic” comes from the Greek word *theos*, which means God. Therefore, when one claims to be a “theistic” evolutionist, he is claiming to believe in both God and evolution at the same time. As one writer has well stated: “‘Theistic evolution’ states that God did create and

develop the universe and its components, but that He did it by evolutionary processes.”¹ Another writer has said: “There are many in the religious world, and a few in the New Testament church, who think that Genesis can and must be harmonized with evolution. They are theistic evolutionists who maintain that evolution was God’s method of creation.”² The point is clear. The theistic evolutionist believes evolution was simply “the way God did it” as he brought the universe and its contents into existence.

Is Theistic Evolution Popular?

Is theistic evolution popular? Indeed it is! Many people today take it as a “way out” of having to make a decision in favor of either evolution or creation. It has become the “middle of the road” position which so many have already taken on a myriad of other issues (e.g.: verbal, plenary inspiration, the virgin birth, miracles, etc.). As Dr. R. L. Wysong points out:

“Theistic evolution has been advocated in the past by men like Augustine and Aquinas. Today it is vogue. It is downright hard to find anyone who does not believe in evolution in one form or another, and it is also difficult to find anyone who does not believe in a creator in one form or another. This hybrid belief has given reprieve to those not wishing to make a total commitment to either side.”³

People have accepted theistic evolution for a multitude of reasons. One of the reasons often given by theistic evolutionists for their acceptance of this position is that they believe it is not only *not contradictory* to the Bible, but is, in fact, compatible with the Divine Record. Dr. Neal Buffaloe, for example, has plainly stated: “the concept of evolution is neither degrading to man, detrimental to human dignity, nor in conflict with the Bible.”⁴ Many people believe in evolution because they are convinced the “evidences” for evolution are simply too strong and too numerous. Nobel laureate George W. Beadle put it this way: “One must accept all of evolution or

none. And the evidence for organic evolution is overwhelmingly convincing ... belief in evolution, including the spontaneous origin of life from non-living antecedents, need in no way conflict with religion.”⁵ John Clayton, author of *The Source*, comments: “If we look carefully at the issues about which we are talking, however, we can find that evolution and the Bible show amazing agreement on almost all issues and that one is not mutually exclusive of the other.”⁶ Still others believe in theistic evolution because they feel it simply doesn’t matter all that much. Dr. Buffaloe has stated: “What do we care that man the animal is a product of evolution as long as man the spirit is begotten of God?”⁷

What’s Wrong With Theistic Evolution?

Is theistic evolution biblical and therefore acceptable? NO! It is one of the most dangerous compromises ever to befall the Bible-believer. To compromise on the matter of origins is certain to lead, at some point or another, to compromise in other areas of the Holy Writ. If the first chapter of the Bible is untrustworthy (and therefore subject to compromise), why should we think any of the other chapters are any different? Theistic evolution is a God-denying, Jesus-denying, Holy Spirit-denying falsehood. Christians who value their souls will shun it and urge others to do likewise. Here are just a few of the things *wrong* with theistic evolution.

1. *Theistic evolution is wrong because there is no theistic statement which shows it to be true.* God never said he used evolution to create. In fact, he said just the opposite.

“... God could have accomplished the origin of life in any way He chose, by evolution or by creation, but an admission that there is a God and that He made such an accomplishment in any way, means that we are totally dependent upon His revelation to determine which way. His revelation declares creation, not evolution.”⁷

The texts of the Bible (Genesis 1-2; Exodus 20:11; Exodus 31:17, et al.) plainly teach fiat creation and do not even hint at any kind of evolutionary process. God said he used creation;

that settles it!

2. *Theistic evolution is wrong because it makes a liar out of Jesus Christ.* Jesus stated in Mark 10:6 (*cf.*: Matthew 19:4): “But from the beginning of the creation male and female made he them.” Jesus affirmed that Adam and Eve had been on the earth “from the beginning of the creation.” Paul affirmed in Romans 1:20-21 that the things God had made were being “perceived” even “since the creation of the world.” Who, Paul, was there to “perceive” these things “since the creation of the world”? Moses told us. Paul told us. Adam and Eve were their names. Jesus affirmed their status here on the earth “from the beginning of the creation.” Now if the evolutionists are correct and man has been here on the earth some 4 million years or so, it doesn’t take very much intelligence to figure out that four million years out of an alleged earth history of 4.5 billion years is not, by any stretch of the imagination, “from the beginning.” Rather, it is “from the end.” The choice is this: either Jesus lied and the evolutionists are correct, or Jesus told the truth and evolution is wrong. To accept any part of evolution makes Jesus Christ a liar (not to mention Moses and Paul)!

3. *Theistic evolution is wrong because it cannot explain Eve.* This problem has haunted theistic evolutionists since the very inception of their false theory. The Bible makes it abundantly clear that God put Adam to sleep and took from his side material from which he made woman. (Genesis 2:21-23.) Eve is even named by Paul in 1 Timothy 2:13 as being a real, historical character. Yet evolution says that the sexes evolved, and *that* simultaneously, in the same geographical region, with one being male and one being female. There is nothing similar in the two incidents. How will the theistic evolutionist explain this “problem of Eve”? Most theistic evolutionists, when faced with this problem, attempt to “do away” with Eve by making the first eleven chapters of Genesis mythological or allegorical - anything but true, literal history. Yet this at the same time has far-reaching

consequences. For example, Abraham, father of the Hebrew race, is mentioned in chapter 11 of Genesis. Was Abraham mythical? And what about the flood of Noah in Genesis 6-8? Was it mythical? Peter didn't think so; he referred to it in 2 Peter 3:1-13 as being a real, historical event. Was the tower of Babel figurative and allegorical? If so, from where have the various languages come? Furthermore, Paul mentions Adam in 1 Corinthians 15:45, and compares him to the "last Adam" (Jesus!). If the first Adam was mythical, is the last? Are proponents of theistic evolution ready to accept this logical conclusion?

4. *Theistic evolution is wrong because it logically denies the fall of man.* The Bible makes it clear that man started on the earth in a covenant relationship with God. (Genesis 1, 2.) Genesis 3 then tells of the breaking, by man, of that covenant, and his need for a Redeemer to bring him back into a covenant relationship with the Creator. Evolution says that man did not start out at the top and then fall to the bottom, but instead started at the bottom as some primordial slime, and has through the eons of geological time "risen." Which is true? Did man start at the top, or did he start at the bottom?

5. *Theistic evolution is wrong because the Bible teaches catastrophism; evolution teaches uniformitarianism.* Over and over again the Bible speaks of catastrophic events (the flood of Genesis 6-8; the plagues of Egypt in Exodus 7ff.; etc.). The miraculous is an intrinsic part of the Bible. On the other hand, evolution requires uniformitarianism with its trite phrase "the present is the key to the past" as its watchword. Evolution states emphatically that all things are going on today just like they always have and always will. The Bible plainly denies this. The resurrection of Christ is enough to send evolution to its grave once and for all.

6. *Theistic evolution is wrong because it cannot explain where man acquired his soul.*

"To be consistent evolutionists, theistic evolutionists must maintain that the image of God, in man, was evolved. If they call on God and a miracle to get the image of God in man, why so hesitant to call on God and a miracle for the

giving of the life of the body to a physical body formed of the dust of the earth? Their non-theistic evolutionistic colleagues will not find the creation of the image of God in man any more acceptable than the creation of the body of man. What do theistic evolutionists affirm of the origin of the image of God?"⁸

This problem, has, of course, bothered theistic evolutionists for literally centuries. Because of it, the fallacious doctrines of "progressive creationism" and "threshold evolution" were invented - yet without success. The Bible plainly states that God created man in the image of God, and gave him a soul. Did that soul evolve along with all the other parts? How will the theistic evolutionist get a soul into man?

Conclusion

What is it about this ugly, degrading, anti-biblical system that makes it appealing to so many? It is nothing but a serious compromise which turns the inspired writers into liars. What is wrong with the way *God* said *he* did it? Or isn't his word on the matter good enough for us anymore?

Footnotes

1. Jennings, Mark. *Theistic Evolution*. (a tract) Star Bible Publications. Fort Worth, Texas. No date. p 3.
2. Bales, J. D. "Theistic Evolution and Genesis." IN: GOSPEL ADVOCATE. 1-24-74. p 52.
3. Wysong, R. L. *The Creation-Evolution Controversy*. Inquiry Press. East Lansing, Mich. 1976. p 63.
4. Buffaloe, Neal. "God or Evolution?" IN: *Mission*. April, 1969. Pp 17, 20, 21.
5. Beadle, George W. Quoted in footnote #4 above.
6. Clayton, John. *The Source*. 17411 Battles Rd. South Bend IN. 1976. p130.
7. Camp, Robert. "Theistic Evolution." IN: *A Critical Look at Evolution*. Religion, Science and Communication Research & Development Corp. Atlanta, GA. 1972. pp 205-206.
8. Bales, J. D. *op cit*. p53.

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by Bruce Malone

*“The cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be.”*¹ Thus the late Carl Sagan began his famous and influential book, COSMOS, with a statement which is more akin to religion than science. *“The heavens declare the glory of God”*² Thus states the Bible which claims to be the inspired word of this God.

Here, then, is the sharp contrast between the two mutually exclusive worldviews which are currently locked in combat for preeminence of thought in the Western World. The winner will determine the course of world history. But why not just say, “God used evolution to create ...,” and be done with the controversy?

First, Christians are always to look for the truth. Anything else would dishonor the very God in whom we profess to believe. Evolution and creation cannot both be true because they are mutually exclusive worldviews. One must be wrong if the other is right. How can we claim to be followers of the One who claimed to be *“The Truth”*³ if we aren’t willing to search for the truth.

Second, Jesus Christ said that we could tell a tree by its fruit.⁴ Have you ever heard anyone sincerely state, “I’m glad I have learned the evidence for evolution. It has led me to the reality of God’s personal love for me. Now that everything can be explained by random chance, I feel purpose and meaning in my life.” On the other hand, many people confess that hearing the evidence for creation has strengthened their faith in God’s existence, in His personal

involvement with His creation, and in the Bible as God’s revealed truth to mankind.

Third, the Bible is very clear that human behavior is tied closely to basic beliefs. Take time to read Romans 1:17-26. This passage states that because of the evidence of creation, no one has an excuse for disbelief in God. However, if God used evolution to bring everything about, then there is no evidence for God’s existence from observing his creation, and this Bible passage is contradicted. The verses in Romans go on to list the results of denying God’s existence: a society with widespread homosexuality, greed, envy, murder, hatred toward the God of Christianity, and many other consequences. Does this sound like America today? **The primary tie of the physical world to a spiritual God is the reality of creation.** This is why the Bible equates belief in God with the acknowledgment of Him as creator. As any society accepts evolution as reality, the relevance of God decreases, and the tie to an absolute source of right and wrong is broken. The result is a drift toward humanism and the devaluation of human life.

Fourth, the Bible is very clear concerning God’s method of creation and the history of our planet. Unlike the numerous creation stories from cultures all over the world, the Biblical creation account is precise, concise, and provides testable predictions concerning the world around us. For instance, the Bible

describes a humanity with a tendency toward evil and decline. This appears to be the case, because every society in the history of the world has ended in tragedy and bloodshed. Not one has lasted more than a few centuries. The Bible describes a worldwide flood, and there is abundant evidence that this event happened. The Bible describes the creation of separate animal and plant “kinds”. That is exactly what the fossil record shows.

In the face of this evidence, why not consider the possibility that the Bible is exactly what it claims to be - God’s inspired revelation to humans to be read and understood in a normal, straightforward manner? Jesus was more to the point in Luke 16:31, *“If they hear not Moses [who passes down the creation account] ... neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”* Jesus is largely ignored today.

A physician does not treat just the symptoms when he is treating a dying patient. Our country shows many tragic symptoms of a society drifting away from God. The root causes of this are the denial of God’s existence and the Bible’s authority. This would be inconceivable had not several generations been taught that evolution is a fact.

1. Carl Sagan, *Cosmos*, Random House Publishers, 1980, p 4.
2. The Bible, Psalms 19:1
3. The Bible, John 14:6
4. The Bible, Matthew 12:33

A complete set of articles examining science and reality from a Christian perspective can be found at SearchfortheTruth.net and in the book Search for the Truth by Bruce Malone.