

Biblical Creation is an Essential Doctrine

This past decade the church in America has experienced an astonishing (and appalling) stampede to adopt science's version of origins, namely Darwinian evolution and billions of years. Theologians, Bible scholars and church leaders seem to be embarrassed at the Bible's creation narrative. They prefer what science says about origins to what God has said in Scripture. So they attempt to harmonize what science claims with Scripture. For us, therefore, the issue is no longer creation vs. evolution, but creation vs. what I call theistic evolution (the notion God "created" using Darwinian evolution). Let's explore this issue.

I Biblical creation is necessary theologically (10 reasons). *More is at stake than the correct interpretation of certain physical evidences. Our theology determines our worldview, our values and beliefs. It therefore must be rightly based.*

1. Biblical creation explains the origin of all things, including our origin. Evolution by definition is based on chance. Even if God is invoked somehow in the process, it is dehumanizing. We need to know that we were specially and deliberately made by a good, loving, all-powerful Creator. If we came into existence by an evolutionary process over millions of years, the god who is allegedly there is inept, uncaring, and indifferent to humanity. Morality and truth vanish with this god.
2. Biblical creation implies that existence has purpose. Special creation implies that we're here for a purpose. God is purposeful, which means that all that He does has meaning. So humans have immense significance to God and His will. If "creation" required billions or millions of years, that necessarily means the god who theistic evolutionists suppose "created" had no purpose. And if chance were involved, as evolution requires, that aggravates the issue beyond recognition, because their supposed god couldn't control what he supposedly purposed. The god of theistic evolution is pathetic. Theistic evolution severely impugns the God of Scripture. And life is devoid of meaning beyond what we construct.
3. Biblical creation implies that we have a destiny. A beginning necessarily means that there is an ending. History is linear and is going somewhere. The end of the Bible, that is, the last four chapters of the Book of Revelation, show that at the end the issues that arose at the outset are resolved. The Bible documents God's program to restore us to an even greater position than was given at creation so that, at the end, we have communion with God forever in His heavenly abode. A literal, historical creation is the basis for the glorious hope we have of eternal life. A desultory beginning, especially one ruled by chance, nullifies any notion that a specific destiny was in view at the outset. It's a vain hope that the rest of the Bible can compensate for the loss suffered by adopting evolution with its billions of years of slow, gradual, random processes.
4. Biblical creation tells us that God has a claim on us. A significance of Genesis chapter one is that nothing exists independent of God. We are under obligation to fulfill God's creation purpose. We are not free to take the gift of life and run off to do with it as we please. We're not autonomous, we're accountable to God for what we do with the life He gave us. As Creator, He has the right to stipulate what He expects us to do with the gift of life, and to require it of us. This implies that God will judge us one future day for what we did with what He gave us. If evolution explains our origin, as theistic evolutionists suppose, any attempt to impose obligations on us is contrived and illegitimate and is done only by force.
5. Biblical creation teaches that God determines what is good. God is good. And it is His prerogative as Creator to determine what is right and what is wrong and to require us to obey Him. And when we do we honor Him and exhibit faith that He knows what is good. Evolution knows nothing of a good God, because it requires that life as we know it came into existence by processes that necessitated predation, suffering and death. So man can only try to decide autonomously what is good, without reference to God's revealed will, which is a usurpation of God's authority.
6. Biblical creation explains why we inhabit an exceedingly ordered universe. Extremely complex processes exist in every domain of nature. The massive amount of information encoded in the genes argues forcefully for fiat creation. We do not live in a world ruled by random events, as evolution requires. Random events are a *disordering* process. If evolution were true, nature should be chaotic. It isn't.
7. Biblical creation explains the origin of sin and evil. God's original creation was "very good." God was pleased or delighted with what He had made. It was beautiful and good, and He enjoyed it. This would rule out any type of evolutionary development employing mutations, struggle for existence and death as God's method of creating. Sadly, the first couple's failure to obey God in Genesis chapter three resulted in disaster. By their one act of disobedience, sin entered the human race. A literally interpreted creation narrative explains why evil exists in a world that was created by a good God. Apart from this explanation, man has no way to account for the existence of evil.
8. Biblical creation explains the fact of death. Death has intense moral significance: Death occurs because God pronounced it as a judgment upon Adam and through Adam upon the entire human race. The great hope of all believers is that after death we will be raised to newness of life. The origin of death, the reason for it, and resurrection, which is God's answer to death, can only be understood by a literal reading of the creation narrative. Evolution can explain death only in

biological terms, and that is totally – absurdly! – inadequate. Theistic evolutionists believe that death was occurring for millennia as the process by which life developed. They brazenly contradict the plain teaching of Paul in Romans 5:12-14.

9. Biblical creation refutes materialism. Creation not only means that all things exist purposefully, it forcefully implies that we have an obligation to live in a way that pleases the One from whom our existence derives. Materialism says that natural— and *only* natural—processes account for all of reality. Evolution stems from this materialist hypothesis. Adopting evolution, theistic evolutionists believe in God yet accept as a first principle, as evolution’s core presupposition, the *non*-existence of God. They believe an oxymoron! They try to harmonize two mutually exclusive, contradictory and opposing belief systems. Materialism claims that matter always existed, contrasting with biblical creation as *ex nihilo*. There’s no harmony here, but flat out contradiction. Evolution is implacably at odds with theism. No compromise or harmony is possible between the two.

10. Biblical creation is revelation. We can know about origins only because of the Bible. We would have no way of knowing about creation except that it is supernaturally revealed to us. God is transcendent, unknowable apart from revelation by Him. When science tells us that evolution explains our existence, it is bluffing because there is absolutely no way apart from the Bible to know what our origin was. Scientists are guessing, speculating, making up narratives. That Christian leaders would look to science for an explanation of origins is bizarre, because they should know epistemology (how we can know that what we think is true is really true) better than anyone. Their view of Scripture is sadly defective. Key to our relationship with God is confidence in His Word. Rejecting biblical creation in favor of human imagination dishonors God.

II Biblical creation is essential to the Bible’s narrative (10 reasons). *Scripture doesn’t begin with the call of Abraham!*

1. Biblical creation tells us what God is like. The fact that God created *ex nihilo* tells us that He is transcendent, all-powerful, eternal, self-existent, and immense. As Creator of everything, He sovereignly controls everything that is narrated in Scripture. He has a master plan and He is bringing it to fruition. The biblical theme that God is in sovereign control contradicts evolution because randomness is the antithesis of control. The text of Genesis chapter 1, stating repeatedly that everything that God made was “good,” implies further that He is a good God, because someone good can make only something good. No glory would accrue to a Creator who uses naturalistic processes such as survival of the fittest, which results in the cruel death of massive numbers of creatures, in order to reach His desired good end. It is preposterous to suppose that the God who reveals Himself in the Bible as sovereign, all-powerful, loving and good would “create” using neo-Darwinian processes such as random mutation and struggle for existence. Theistic evolution impugns God. The Bible reveals God as glorious Creator as well as gracious Redeemer.
2. Biblical creation provides the need and basis for redemption. Redemption is a key theme of the entire Bible, yet the reason redemption is necessary is God’s creation purposes are threatened. It is Scripture’s creation narrative that explains the necessity for redemption. Rejecting Genesis 1-11, calling it “myth,” as theistic evolutionists do, hides the basic reason we need to be redeemed: Sin? Where did that come from? Sin nature? How did we get that? Judgment? How do we know it’s coming? Gentile nations languishing in pagan idolatry? Why, and what to do about it?
3. Biblical creation explains ownership and responsibilities. God owns everything and He has the right to say who may possess what, as well as to say what the conditions of ownership are. As *ex nihilo* Creator, God owns everything (see also Job 41:11). He made it, and it’s all His. He therefore may determine who shall possess anything (“What do you have that you didn’t receive?” 1 Corinth 4:7b). Delegated ownership of property or goods carries responsibilities. In a sense, all God’s laws are based on creation: we are guests on His planet, stewards of whatever He has entrusted to us. We live under God’s continual careful surveillance. This claim can’t be made if we arrived here by an evolutionary process.
4. Biblical creation explains the Bible’s progressive narrative. God cursed the ground (Genesis 3) because of human sin. Because God cursed the ground as a result of man’s sin. So nature frustrates and opposed us. This creation therefore must come to an end and be replaced by a wholly new creation. The story of the Bible, encompassing redemption, proceeds toward this great climax. Believers will one day experience a new heaven and new earth (2 Peter 3; Revelation 21). This answers to and is a necessary result of creation and its immediate aftermath, which theistic evolutionists deny happened.
5. Biblical creation explains blessing and cursing. It is part of the creation story that God uses His creation to bless or to curse, which continues as a general theme throughout the Bible. God desires to bless man. That is a principal reason for creation. With Adam’s fall into sin, cursing was introduced into the Bible’s story. God repeatedly uses His creation to judge sinful men. But God’s intent nevertheless is to bless. The blessing of Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 is the seed promise of blessing that develops progressively throughout the Bible, as God continues His program to bring blessing to man. Creation sets the stage for and is the context of all blessing and cursing in the Bible.
6. Biblical creation explains the person and work of Jesus, the “second Adam.” At creation, Adam was given dominion over nature. But by disobeying God, Adam forfeited that dominion and privilege. In the life and work of Jesus the Messiah, the power over nature that God at creation originally intended for man was expressed. Jesus’ miraculous healings and restoring of persons to life showed His ability to rescue sinners from the effects of sin. Whereas Adam was

disobedient, Jesus, the second Adam was perfectly obedient, even to the point of going to the cross in order to save from eternal judgment those He loves. The whole basis of Jesus' ministry is the historical creation. Theistic evolution can't account for this. If one of the purposes of creation is to prepare a stage (so to speak) on which the perfections of the Son might be gloriously displayed, the notion that a gradual, evolutionary process is the means of achieving that end couldn't be more absurd.

7. Biblical creation is reprised explicitly throughout Scripture. The use of *toldot* to organize the Book of Genesis. The Sabbath, and a 7-day week to organize time. The references to nature as glorifying God. Marriage of a man and woman. Jesus as well as Old and New Testament authors affirmed both a literal creation and Adam and Eve as the first humans. The Psalmists understood creation to be literal and historical (e.g., Psalm 33:6-9). Jesus believed in the Bible's creation narrative (see, for example, Mark 10:6; 13:9; Luke 11:50-51; and John 8:44). During the account of Christ's passion, recursive allusions to motifs from Genesis chapter 3 such as "tree," "sweat," "thorns," and "death" seem deliberate. The text wants us to understand that Christ's death answers to the sin problem that erupted when Adam disobeyed God, and a literal reading of the creation narrative is in view. The genealogy in Luke chapter 3 traces Jesus back to Adam; just as all the others in the long list of names were historical figures, so Adam must have been historical. New Testament authors often refer to Adam and Eve as historical figures (Luke 3:38, Acts 17:26, 1 Corinthians 11:8-9, 2 Corinthians 11:3, and 1 Timothy 2:13-14). In Romans 5:12-21, Paul not only refers to Adam as a historical figure, he goes on to say that death did not occur before Adam's fall. This forcefully affirms a creation of six literal days and gives the lie to all notions of a period of evolutionary development. The New Testament also holds the flood narrative of Genesis chapters 6 to 8 to be factual. Jesus affirmed the historicity of Noah and the flood in Matthew 24:37-39. Three times in his two epistles the Apostle Peter refers to that universal flood as historical. The author of Hebrews (11:7) did too, as did the Psalmist (104:5-9) and Isaiah (54:10). Theistic evolutionists all repudiate the historicity of the universal Flood narrated in Genesis 6-8, and they do so at their peril. The author of Hebrews specifically refutes evolutionary ideas in 11:3. The Bible leaves absolutely no space anywhere for evolution or any gradual evolutionary process over long ages.

8. Biblical creation explains the overarching Scriptural theme of salvation through judgment. What the first human couple (whom most theistic evolutionists deny existed) experienced sets the pattern for salvation throughout the Bible. Adam and his wife sinned by disobeying God. For that, a judgment of death was pronounced. They weren't promptly put to death, although they did experience an immediate spiritual death and the dying process began. An animal was sacrificed to cover their alienation. By being allowed to continue to live, they were in a sense saved from the judgment they deserved. This theme of salvation from deserved judgment was promptly evidenced again in the grace that Cain experienced after he murdered his brother Abel; Cain was judged, yet saved from the penalty he deserved. Noah and his family in the ark experienced salvation through judgment. Lot was saved while the people of Sodom were judged for their sins. At the Exodus, Israel exercised faith and was saved while Egypt experienced judgment. And in the Book of Joshua, Rahab was saved because of her faith while everyone else in Jericho was destroyed. This theme can be identified throughout the O.T. Scriptures. It's in the New Testament too. Jesus, bearing our sins, is judged, and those who believe in Him are saved. The Church experiences salvation while unbelievers are judged and cast into hell. Throughout the Bible we see the progressive working out of what happened in cameo form at creation. A literal creation narrative is the basis of salvation.

9. Biblical creation explains the motifs of Word, Man, and Earth that recur throughout the Bible. When God created Adam, He commanded him to obey His word so that the earth and all in it could be blessed. But Adam disobeyed. As a result, Adam's seed was corrupted. In the context of an earth full of rebellious nations under God's judgment, God called Abraham to mediate His blessing to the nations, thereby fulfilling God's creation plan. In contrast to the story of Adam in the creation narrative, by trusting God's Word Abraham received God's promise of land and an incorruptible seed. Later, God called the nation of Israel into existence and commanded them to obey His Law so that all the nations of earth could be blessed. But, like Adam, Israel was unfaithful and disobedient to God's Word. Israel's story is essentially a retelling of the creation story. Later, God used Jesus, and now the church, through the Gospel to bring blessing to all nations on earth, by trust in God's Word. Jesus, the second Adam, the seed of Abraham, the Servant of Israel, was faithful and obedient. He fulfilled the plan God had in creating, for Adam, Abraham and Israel. This motif of Word, Man and Earth ties together the entire Bible, and it originates in creation. Looking at it another way, Adam failed God. Reprising that narrative, Israel also failed God. Jesus however didn't fail. A literal reading of a literal, historical creation is essential to understand these themes of the Bible.

10. Biblical creation accounts for the cosmic conflict that serves as the plot of the Bible. In Genesis chapter 3, a crisis erupts that develops progressively through all of Scripture, a crisis that we could term the literary plot of the Bible. This plot is the conflict between Satan and man. Satan is at war with humanity, seeking the destruction and loss of every human soul. God however has a purpose for man, namely, the purpose for which God created man and the world. And God is determined that His purpose is fulfilled. The outworking of this great conflict is the story of the Bible. We find this conflict tersely summarized in Revelation 12, where the plot is made explicit. The story of the Old Testament is the story of Satan attempting to prevent the seed promised in Genesis 3:15 from coming, because it's a seed that would "crush his

head.” In verse 17 is the story of the New Testament and Church age. At the very end of Revelation, in chapters 19 to 22, the epic conflict ends and the crisis that erupted at the very outset of history is gloriously resolved. Two subplots exist. First, there are two “seeds” or offspring of Eve. One is a righteous seed that will continue through history and eventuate in the promised Seed that will crush Satan. The other is an unrighteous seed, the seed of Satan, which will oppose the righteous seed and serve as Satan’s agent attempting to prevent the promised Seed from coming. At the end of the Bible, in Revelation, these two seeds are found as heaven-dwellers and earth-dwellers. The unrighteous seed or earth-dwellers are judged and punished, while the righteous seed are taken to heaven to dwell with God forever. The story of the Bible depicts the role of each seed. The other subplot is that man must be changed. As a result of Adam’s Fall, all of mankind is depraved and lost in sin. As a result, man is alienated from His Creator and there can be no communion with God unless man is radically transformed. In spite of having been so wonderfully blessed by God, Israel had no heart for Him. The means by which the needed transformation can occur is revealed in the New Testament. By grace, God has made every provision necessary so that the beloved creatures He made can join Him to be blessed by His exceedingly great Person and presence. The very end of the Bible documents that many will avail themselves of what God has provided and will be joined to Him forever. Or . . . Another way to see the central plot of the Bible is the expulsion of the first couple from the Garden, and the mission of God to bring humanity back to Himself. So initial exile followed by restoration, that pattern repeated later for the Nation, and then a permanent, ultimate exile in hell at the end. However we look at it, Genesis 3 is key to the Bible’s plot.

Biblical creation explains a lot more. It explains the origin of human consciousness, morality, and sense of beauty. (Evolution cannot explain these most basic elements of anthropology.) It also explains, for example, two sexes (and only two), the origin and permanence of marriage, wearing clothing, and the universal prohibition on murder. Creation explains the origin and purpose of sexuality, and it accounts for the prohibitions on sexual sins in God’s law. And Genesis chapters 10 and 11 explain the origin of the many people groups and languages of the world. Resurrection will be an instantaneous re-creation. Idolatry and pride derive from the Serpent’s appeal to the woman in the Garden. The Bible’s creation narrative has enormous explanatory value, which theistic evolutionists ignore with astonishing indifference.

The point of this lengthy discussion is that the plot, subplots and themes of the Bible are grounded in creation. A recent and abrupt creation of all things, including a literal Adam and Eve and a literal fall, is the basis of almost everything else that occurs in the Bible. Biblical creation is not an option. It is not something that can be jettisoned in favor of the invented story that science offers. Creation is the essential foundation upon which theology and biblical truth is built.

III The Bible, Science, and Epistemology.

Many theistic evolutionists will reply, “I agree with all you’ve said. I agree that the Bible is coherent. But Genesis 1-11 is myth. It’s great literature, but it is not historically true. Science looks at the physical evidence in nature and is able to determine what actually happened in history. We go with that.” This is nonsense! Genesis 1-11 is written as history and understood by all Bible authors and even by Jesus as history. Christian faith, after all, is in a God who intervened in time and space and left a historical record. The problem is, these intellectuals just don’t want to believe it. Scientists who assert that evolution is “true” and has been “proved” are either bluffing or are self-deceived. It is in the nature of empirical science that it can never know anything that is truly true. Truth can only be known by revelation, and the Bible is truth because its ultimate author is God, who cannot lie. Theologians have studied epistemology and so should know that. But it’s worse: Joining the ungodly, essentially religious beliefs of modern science regarding origins to the Scriptures is idolatrous. Those who believe that the Bible is God’s Word must not combine the fantasy called evolution with God’s revealed truth. There is no need to fear the epithet “fundamentalist” or to be embarrassed by creation. What is needed instead is to uphold God’s Word and not allow science to preempt or take priority over the certainties of Scripture.

IV Conclusion.

I have tried to show that evolution is not theologically neutral. It is modern man’s way of contradicting and disparaging the Word of God. That is exactly what the Serpent did in the garden in Genesis chapter 3. Throughout history, the seed of the serpent has sought to persuade men and women to disbelieve God’s Word so that, as a consequence, they would fall under God’s judgment. Trying to harmonize Scripture with the Serpent’s origin’s narrative is wacko. Hey, if evolution were to disappear from science tomorrow, so would theistic evolution. Holding that evolution is the way that God created is at least syncretistic, at worst it is idolatrous because it trusts and honors Science in the place of God. Exceedingly complex design is evident at all levels of reality. That is God’s signature, written indelibly everywhere in nature, affirming our Creator’s existence and majesty. The coherence and unity of the Bible is another such signature. God can be taken at His Word. There is no reason to give science primacy over the straightforward statements of the Bible. And there is no need to pay mere lip service to creation. We need to believe it and proclaim it to the glory of God.