

Can the Biblical Account of Creation Be Harmonized with Evolution?

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Throughout history there have been many stories attempting to explain how humans and all other living things came to exist. Today there are three main positions regarding this issue:

1. Living things came into being through processes of **chemical evolution**, in which some organic chemicals eventually began to take on the characteristics of life. After this, living things began to **evolve new characteristics** until all the animals, plants and other life that we see today came into being.
2. **God created** every kind of living thing in six days according to the details laid out in the Bible. (Genesis 1–2)
3. **Theistic evolution** (merging points 1 and 2): all living things evolved into being, but at God’s direction, taking over a billion years to do it.

The belief that living things arose through a process of evolution is widespread today, and is especially prominent among scientists. Because so many smart people hold to evolutionary theory, many Christians today think that it must be true. A Gallup opinion poll that was released in 2017 stated that 38% of U.S. adults believe that human beings came about as a result of evolutionary processes but that God guided those processes.

People naturally don’t like to swim against the flow of public opinion. Especially when that opinion seems to be represented by society’s brightest individuals! No one wants to be thought of as being “ignorant” or “less intelligent” than others. Others are afraid of the ridicule that comes with admitting that they believe the world was created by God in only six days. The number of people who believe that God created humans in their present form without using evolutionary processes dropped, according to a recent Gallup poll, from 47% in 2012 to 38% percent in 2017. Clearly Christians are being influenced by the evolutionary indoctrination that is occurring in schools, over the airways, and online.

The idea that God created living creatures through a slow process of gradual change over billions of years can be inviting. By believing that

evolution occurred but was guided by God, a source of embarrassment for some Christians is removed. “After all,” they say, “evolution is a well accepted theory and, surely, thousands of scientists across several fields of science can’t be wrong.”

Why then do some Christians continue to insist that the Bible teaches that God created everything in six days a relatively short time ago?

The reason that some Christians believe that God created all living things in a short time is that the plain reading of Scripture demands this interpretation. Genesis chapter 1 clearly spells out that God created everything in six days. Not only that, but God even goes on to define what He means by a day. In Genesis 1:5 He defines the first day as a morning and an evening. Then, after telling us what He created on each succeeding day, He defines the other five days also as a morning and an evening.

But, you might ask, couldn’t God have used a process of evolution to create everything? Of course He could have. God can do anything He wants. But what does God say that He did? He tells us in Exodus 20:11, “For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.”

The problem with trying to harmonize Scripture with evolutionary theory is that what the Bible teaches about creation is so different from what evolution teaches that we can’t harmonize them without distorting the teachings of one side or the other—as the chart on the next page reveals. Ultimately, the conflict between the two worldviews hinges upon what it means to be human, to be made in God’s image, and to be redeemed by God.

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Scripture Teaches

Evolution Teaches

Earth and the universe are approximately the same age. (Genesis 1:1)	The universe is approximately 14 billion years old.
The earth is less than ten thousand years old. Matthew 19:4 states that man and woman were made at the beginning. The genealogies in the Bible imply that the earth can only be a few thousand years old.	The earth is approximately 4.5–5 billion years old.
Life on earth (as stated above): Thousands of years old.	Life on earth is approximately 3.5 billion years old.
Everything was created good and complete.	Mutations in the DNA of living things evolved to more and better genes. This led to more efficient proteins, and eventually new kinds of living things.
Mankind was created in God's image.	There is no image of God in people or anything else. <i>(Note: Christian evolutionists may disagree with this, but upon what basis can they object?)</i>
There was no death until Adam sinned. No death of animals with the breath of life in them. (Genesis 2:17) Man brought about death, through sin. Death is an unnatural condition. (Romans 5:15-21)	Evolution is built upon millions and millions of years of death and disease of animals, so that new and better species can take their place. So death brought about man. Death is entirely natural.
All was created supernaturally over six days. Then God ceased from that type of creative work. (Genesis 2:2)	Natural processes operating today are what created everything.
Due to God's curse, nothing today is as it was created. Things do change but the change is in the direction of deterioration rather than higher complexity (Romans 8:20-23)	Creatures are still evolving today, though it is too slow to observe it.
A universal flood accounts for many fossil finds the world over. (Genesis 7:6)	Millions of years of competition, death, and disease account for most fossils.
Plants were created before the sun. (Genesis 1)	Plants evolved billions of years after the sun.
Birds were created before the reptiles. (Genesis 1)	Reptiles evolved before the birds.
All people are afflicted with original sin. This accounts for bad behavior. (Psalm 51:5)	All people are the result of millions of years of the survival of the fittest. This accounts for bad behavior.
Everything was created for a reason. The overall purpose is God's glory.	Everything is the result of a great cosmic accident. Life, including yours, has no purpose or meaning.
Jesus was the second Adam sent by God to rescue us from the results of the first Adam. (Romans 5:17)	There was no real Adam. Therefore, there is no need for any savior from original sin.

Ultimately, Biblical Revelation and Evolutionary Theory ... *Disagree concerning Jesus!*

- Evolutionary theory impacts more than just the doctrine of creation.
- If there was no real Adam who plunged the world into sin, then there is no need for a Savior to rescue us from original sin.
- Yet, our need for a Savior is obvious. (All we have to do is look at the behavior of people like ourselves.)
- Thankfully, **the Bible identifies Jesus of Nazareth as the "Second Adam,"** whose perfect life, innocent death, and glorious resurrection accomplish our salvation.