

Biblical Creation Vs. Evolution

Definitions:

Empirical Evidence: Evidence that is based on observation, experiments and experience rather than pure theory.

Biblical Creation: The account given in Genesis 1 & 2 describing God's calling into existence the universe & its contents including living creatures in a specific order.

Intelligent Design: This is an attempt to throw out godless science without specifically embracing the literal 6 day creation account in Genesis. It claims a higher being exists that started things but after this point there is massive diversion into various theories including 6 day creation, long earth, 'God supervised evolution' and deism.

Micro-Evolution: The concept of small adaptations for a species of animals that does *not* lead to new species but a variation on a species of animals. For example, dogs have been bred by humans for various purposes without turning into cats or polar bears.

Macro-Evolution: This is large scale evolution that most people are referring to when they say 'evolution.' This concept is that one species developed into another species wherein we start from tiny unicellular organisms over and a period of time they develop into multi-cellular organisms that turn into plants and animals that turn into humans that will turn into higher life forms at some point in time since it is clear that we've got a long way to go given corruption in government and society.

Flying Spaghetti Monster Theory: This is a faux theory that someone introduced by a man named Bobby Henderson. Because he viewed faith as being intellectually inferior, he created a satirical web site that promoted this theory of origins since all faith is equal in his view.

Various 'Christian' Views

Long Earth Approach: This is the theory that the earth is billions of years old, but that the billions of years took place between Genesis 1 verse 1 and verse 5.

Pros: This theory compensates for projected age issues for the universe that exist between modern science and the Scriptures.

Cons: Because this theory requires many years to transpire before the first day of creation it brings into question the literal interpretation of what a day is or how a day is measured.

Age-Day Approach: This is the theory that attempts to place millions or billions of years in the place of each day as recorded in Genesis chapter 1.

Pros: This theory attempts to compensate for the projected age issues for the universe that exist between modern science and the Scriptures.

Cons: This theory cannot take Genesis literally. Modern science's description of the order of evolution does not match the order of the creation sequence in Scripture.

6 Day Creation Theory: This is a literal interpretation of Genesis chapter 1. This is the only literal interpretation of Genesis' creation account.

Pros: Interprets the Scriptures literally, days are a known 24 hour period time.

Cons: Requires the believer to seriously question modern projections for the age of the universe. This may cause weird looks, your credibility to be questioned or possible getting you accused of wearing a foil hat when you're at home.

Holly Hills' official position is a literal 6 day creation. This view seems to be the most intellectually honest when it comes to literal interpretation of Scripture. One of the largest issues with an allegorical position is knowing when to stop being allegorical and start being literal when we interpret. Did Christ really die on the cross? If you don't take parts of Scripture literally that by all contexts appear to be literal then how do you know where to draw the line? Allegorical interpretation to fit popular ideas is a slippery slope that leads to discord within the church rather than unity in Christ (Philippians 2:2).

It is also important to note that a literal interpretation rests in God's authority and power rather than man's limited knowledge and attempted interpretation of some of the data, but not all data from all times. God as described in the Bible is, has been and will continue to be outside of the constraints of the time-space continuum [which is a separate discussion that will come up in the Polemics class]. This gives God the authority to speak absolute truth about the universe because He knows it down to the smallest bits that he sustains. It seems counter intuitive to attempt to take literally the secular interpretation of the data and blend it with a non-literal interpretation of the data

Problems with Some Arguments for a Young Earth Age

Growing up I have heard various arguments from science that attempt to disprove an old earth age. These arguments brought to question formulas & theories that secular scientists delivered to explain the current known data. The problem with these arguments is that they attempted to undermine science with science. While this sounds like a good approach some of these arguments did not take into account that science adapts and adjusts commonly held theories as data is accumulated and new information is gathered.

Example arguments are:

1. *The moon has only 10,000 years worth of dust on it instead of 44 feet that would be built up if the universe was older.*

The problem with this approach is that scientists, once learning that only 2 inches of dust had accumulated developed alternative theories that explained away the massive difference. As the data was accumulated the scientists' formula shifted to match the data.

2. *If the solar system was millions of years old the sun (which is shrinking at 5 feet an hour) would have engulfed the earth only 20,000,000 years ago. The scientific paper that proposed this hypothesis was never submitted because flaws were found in it. The authors retracted the paper but somehow the idea was put into circulation in the creationist circles and was falsely used for some time to 'prove' that the earth was at least 20,000,000 years old (see the excellent "Answers in Genesis" article: <http://www.answersingenesis.org/creation/v11/i4/skeptics.asp>)*

Other arguments exist that bring into question some of the assumptions but in the end new arguments over ‘natural’ data will continue to push the scientist who rejects a God based origin to re-adjust theories and laws until the model fits the data.

Mutually Exclusive Frameworks

Since the two views have access to the same data how can that same data be reconciled? This comes back to the idea that there are two systems or frameworks in place that take the data and attempt to explain it in a way that fits with the assumptions (faith) of the practitioners of those systems. Christians have also had to take data that is discovered and attempt to reconcile the data with what is in Scripture. This reconciliation is not dishonest or bad, but certainly requires a person holding each view to admit to the dynamics and limitations of modern knowledge.

Faith Versus Reason?

There is a common assumption that there is a higher level of thinking when it comes to the origins debate. A belief that faith is not as accurate as reason and that reason wins out over faith every time. This is a flawed view. Everyone lives by faith and in fact faith is the critical issue here, reason starts in faith and moves forward.

One problem that comes up constantly within the Creation/Evolution debate is that often Creationists attempt to argue with Evolutionists at the wrong level. They attempt to argue someone over to a creationistic viewpoint based on the assumption that between the viewpoints is a narrow path that the evolutionist just needs to walk to get from one view to the other [the evolutionist often holds the same perspective]. A level playing field does not exist and there is a chasm between the two views that is so substantial that it is not recommended for people to attempt this approach because it ignores the admonishment of Scripture that carnal man has traded life for death and therefore will not embrace life of his own accord [Romans 1]. Salvation comes from the wooing of the Holy Spirit, and then the Bible is respected as an authority for the origin of the universe.

Steps that are useful for pointing out that we all walk by faith:

1. Ask the person if they believe in unicorns. Whether yes or no, ask them to prove it empirically and universally. Ask them if they can absolutely, with 100% certainty, say that there are no unicorns in the universe at present.
2. Ask them if they can prove that there were no unicorns in the past or if there will certainly not be unicorns in the future.

If for some reason a person answers with some sort of absolute answer of the affirmative or negative you have found someone who is walking by faith. If they answer with uncertainty they are demonstrating a faith in the empirical and are still not all knowing. It would take an all knowing being (presumably God) to be able to state with certainty the answer to either of these questions. At the point of realizing that we all walk by faith a person is more likely to discuss things on a real level because they’re not going to have the upper hand in the conversation. Don’t waste your time on endless debates that don’t get at the root of the problem!

False or Unsubstantiated Arguments against Creationism to Watch Out For:

1. *Everyone has an opinion.* This is an attempted scapegoat. It invariably removes facts or experience from the equation.
2. *You can't prove God exists.* This statement begs the question of faith. The agnostic or atheist can't prove huge volumes of things based on empirical evidence.
3. *Your view is unscientific and goes against volumes of information collected.* This is a very intellectually dishonest statement. First the believer has access to the exact same data but will be able to interpret it from within a framework that is based upon Scripture's outline of time and events rather than a secular framework. The problem is *not* the information; it is with the synthesis of the information into theories and hypothesis. It is interesting to note that the cartoonist Scott Adams [creator of Dilbert], a secular artist, points out that there is still a lack of credible evidence to prove without a shadow of a doubt that the Intelligent Design argument is completely false¹.

¹ http://dilbertblog.typepad.com/the_dilbert_blog/2005/11/intelligent_des.html. Adams' argument is that neither side is credible and has absolute proof, thus each side is walking in faith. He has come under heavy fire from both sides of the argument for this.