

Scripture and Biological Evolution'

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Introduction

The most significant uses of Scripture against biological evolution are indirect, focusing on the assertion that Scripture demands a young Earth and a young cosmos, about 10,000 years or so in age. The evidence from Scripture for a young Earth involves the 6-day creation interpreted literally, along with genealogies of the sequence from Adam to Christ. A young Earth would rule out biological evolution because evolution requires long periods of time. The issue of Scripture and Earth age has been considered elsewhere.

A direct use of Scripture against biological evolution is to assert that animals did not die before the Fall, only dying after the Fall because man sinned, and hence there could have been no evolution before the Fall. A few verses in Scripture are used in this type of argument against evolution. They are printed below in Section 1 along with brief discussion. A detailed examination of the issue of Scripture and animal death has been published by Munday.²

The claim of a young Earth and no animal death before the Fall leads young-Earth creationists to conclude by inference that Noah's Flood deposited the majority of the Earth's geological sedimentary layers (which layers are termed the Geologic Column), and hence all of the Earth's fossils, between 10,000 and 2,000 years ago. This claim if true would rule out biological evolution, because the fossil record is the main evidence for biological evolution. Noah's Flood and the Geologic Column will be discussed separately.

A third use of Scripture is against the biological evolution of mankind. This use is to assert that mankind was created directly as Adam and Eve, not by progeneration from earlier beings that had been evolving. The verses used in this type of argument are printed below in Section 2, along with brief discussion.

1. Scripture and Animal Evolution

Verses used directly to argue against animal evolution are not as favorable to the argument as the protagonists commonly believe.

Romans 5:12

To provide context, other verses that follow verse 12 are provided:

¹ Generally, Scripture quotations are from the American Standard Version, 1901 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.), 1994.

² John C. Munday Jr., "Creature Mortality: From Creation or the Fall?," *J. Evangelical Theological Society* 35/1 (March 1992) 51-68.

¹²**Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned:**—¹³for until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. ¹⁴Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam’s transgression, who is a figure of him that was to come. ¹⁵But not as the trespass, so also *is* the free gift. For if by the trespass of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto the many.

It is common in anti-evolution creationist literature to quote only the first part of verse 12, ending with the words “death through sin.” The argument is that animals came to die only because of human sin. Omitting the rest of verse 12 and ignoring the following verses permits the impression that “death” here mentioned refers to death of all creatures. However, the full verse in context makes clear that the passage refers to the death of individuals of humankind as a result of sin, and does not refer to animals. According to Genesis 2 and 3, Adam and Eve were told that they would die if they sinned by eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. There was no mention at that point of the death of other creatures, which do not have the capacity to sin, and death is only “through sin.”

After the first sins, God provided animal coverings for Adam and Eve, and commentators presume that this involved animal slaughter. However, Genesis 3:21 does not say God slew animals to provide coverings; it says only that “And Jehovah God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skins, and clothed them.” One commentator has noted that “While it may be premature to read into this the introduction of animal sacrifice, it certainly illustrated to Adam and Eve, who may even have witnessed the death of these innocent animals, the high cost of their guilt” (Davis, p. 95).³

It is also important to point out that Adam and Eve were not the first beings to sin. Satan was in the Garden enticing Eve, and thus had already rebelled against God. When his rebellion occurred is not stated in Scripture. But Scripture indicates that he fell from heaven, taking a third of the heavenly host along. If rebellion as sin is the cause of death, then the cosmos was already contaminated by sin before Adam sinned, and so death of animals if due to sin was caused by Satan, not Adam. Therefore animals were already subject to death before Adam sinned.

Romans 8:18-22

To provide context, other verses that surround 18-22 are provided:

8 There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. ²For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death. ... ¹⁰And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness. ... ¹⁶The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: ¹⁷and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified with *him*. ¹⁸**For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward.** ¹⁹**For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God.** ²⁰**For the creation was subjected to**

³ Quoted in Jerry Falwell, executive editor; Edward E. Hinson and Michael Kroll Woodrow, general editors, KJV Bible commentary [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System (Nashville: Thomas Nelson), 1997, c1994.

vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. ²²For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. ²³And not only so, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for *our* adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.

Anti-evolutionists argue here that because of human sin, nature was corrupted by the introduction of death for both man and animals. However, as these verses make clear, Romans 8 as a whole is centered on living as children of God and by His Spirit, freed from the penalties imposed because of sin. Creation “groans” but creatures and creature deaths are not mentioned specifically. The “bondage of corruption” affecting the “creation” can refer to the distorting effects of human sin and does not have to refer, as many believe, to the natural death of animals and to thermodynamic decay throughout the cosmos.⁴

1 Corinthians 15:21-22

To provide context, other verses that surround 21-22 are provided:

²⁰But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep. ²¹**For since by man *came* death, by man *came* also the resurrection of the dead.** ²²**For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.** ²³But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; then they that are Christ’s, at his coming.

Anti-evolutionists argue here that man’s sin introduced death to animals. However, in verse 21, Paul states that “For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being.”⁵ If “death” had meant animal as well as human death, then the logic of the statement would fail, because it mentions resurrection of the dead, and nowhere in Scripture is the animal world connected to resurrection. Only man is resurrected, hence, only man dies the death being referred to here.

1 Corinthians 15:38-39

To provide context, other verses that surround 38-39 are provided:

³⁵But some one will say, How are the dead raised? and with what manner of body do they come? ³⁶Thou foolish one, that which thou thyself sowest is not quickened except it die: ³⁷and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but a bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other kind; ³⁸**but God giveth it a body even as it pleased him, and to each seed a body of its own.** ³⁹**All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one *flesh* of men, and another *flesh* of beasts, and another *flesh* of birds, and another of fishes.** ⁴⁰There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the *glory* of the terrestrial is another. ⁴¹There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. ⁴²So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption.

⁴ A full discussion of these and associated issues is found in Munday, *op cit*.

⁵ The New Revised Standard Version (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers), 1989.

Arguments against evolution refer to verses 38-39 and assert that the bodies of types of animals are distinct and remain so, which would preclude evolutionary change. However, while Paul here points to distinctions in flesh, which are obvious, there is nothing said about long-term changes. Even in Paul's day, animal breeding was understood, and is recorded in Scripture at Genesis 30:31-43 when Jacob managed Laban's sheep. Further, we must remember not to press the question of different kinds of flesh too far, because humans and predatory animals all eat each other's flesh and live on it as food. Thus the molecules of one flesh can become the flesh of another.

Use in Genesis 1 of "After Their Kind"

Genesis 1 includes several instances of "after their kind," taken by anti-evolutionists to refer to reproduction without the possibility of evolutionary change. The phrase in its various uses in Scripture in Genesis 1 and elsewhere has been analyzed in the document "Fixity of Kinds.doc," and the conclusion is that the focus is not on reproduction, rather the focus is on visible categories. Therefore, the phrase is non-committal on the subject of evolution.

Differences between Genesis 1 and 2

Some commentators explore apparent differences in the ordering of creation events as depicted in Genesis 1 and Genesis 2. Depending on the commentator's viewpoint, the apparent differences are seen as either (1) buttressing a young-Earth creationist paradigm, or (2) an old-Earth creationist paradigm, or (3) even an evolutionary paradigm (because it is alleged that Genesis 1 and 2 conflict, and therefore Scripture is untrustworthy). Discussion of the issues is left to a later time.

2. Scripture and Human Evolution

Man in God's Image

Genesis 1:26-27

²⁶And God said, Let us make man **in our image**, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. ²⁷And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Animals, according to these and other Scripture verses, do not have the image of God, unlike man. This is confirmed by scientific study, in which animal self-consciousness is shown to be limited, especially concerning conception of time future and time past. Furthermore, archaeology and anthropology show that mankind's uniquely advanced levels of written language and manipulation of tools appeared recently, within the past 6,000 to 10,000 years, although tool-making and cave art are found from far earlier times. Evidence shows that spiritual insight is relatively sudden and recent. Thus, creation of man as uniquely having the image of God is a disruption from the prior existence of animals.

Also, Scripture describes man's creation in a different way than animal creation. The declaration in Genesis 1 indicates that man's creation was a deliberate act by God.

Creation of the First Female Human

Genesis 2:21-23

²¹And Jehovah God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof: ²²and the rib, which Jehovah God had taken from the man, **made he a woman**, and brought her unto the man. ²³And the man said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because **she was taken out of Man**.
and

1 Corinthians 11:8-9

⁸For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man: ⁹for neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.
and

1 Corinthians 11:12

¹²For as the woman is of the man, so is the man also by the woman; but all things are of God.
and

1 Timothy 2:13

¹³For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

Creation of woman is thus via some miraculous process from the first male. Some churches teach that the story is literal, others teach that the story is metaphorical, to show the creation's order of human relationships in God's kingdom.

Man Has Soul and Spirit

In either case, a non-evolutionary origin to mankind is indicated, because in the larger context, man is not merely a physical being. All Scripture verses speaking to the nature of male and female humankind reveal that man consists of **body and soul/spirit**, or body and soul and spirit, with the soul and spirit having the potential for spiritual fellowship with God. Various Scripture verses in this regard are considered below.

The believer's life includes miracles, and spiritual experiences, including giftings of the Holy Spirit. These confirm the Scriptural testimony that man is not merely physical in nature. Evolutionary thinking, in contrast, must maintain that the human soul and spirit are instead only emergent properties of matter, that is, a so-called *epiphenomenon* of matter. Evolutionary thinking must deny the validity of claimed miracles, and also deny what many believers and non-believers alike recognize as confirmed psychic phenomena such as telepathy and clairvoyance.

Verses concerning the nature of man as consisting of body and soul/spirit, or body and soul and spirit, are as follows:

Genesis 2:7

⁷And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

1 Thessalonians 5:23

²³And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Distinction of Man and Animal

Many other verses in Scripture point to the features of the human soul and its distinction from the animal soul. Scripture is clear, however, that animals have souls and a quality termed spirit.

Genesis 1:20

²⁰And God said, Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures [*nephesh*]

Genesis 9:8-10

⁸And God spake unto Noah, and to his sons with him, saying, ⁹And I, behold, I establish my covenant with you, and with your seed after you; ¹⁰and with every living creature [*nephesh*] that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you... .

Nephesh is the same Hebrew word that is used for the human soul:

Psalm 6:4

⁴Return, O Jehovah, deliver my soul [*nephesh*]....

Both Animals and Man Have Spirit:

Genesis 7:21-22

²¹And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both birds, and cattle, and beasts, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: ²²all in whose nostrils was the breath [*neshemah*] of the spirit [*ruach*] of life, of all that was on the dry land, died.

Psalm 31:5

⁵Into thy hand I commend my spirit [*ruach*]: Thou hast redeemed me, O Jehovah, thou God of truth.

However, the human soul goes to Sheol at death; whether animal souls also do is uncertain:

Ecclesiastes 9:10

¹⁰Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do *it* with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in Sheol, whither thou goest.

Ecclesiastes 3:21

²¹Who knoweth the spirit of man, whether it goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast, whether it goeth downward to the earth?

Old Earth Creationist Paradigms and Evolution

Based on the uniqueness of man, some old-Earth creationists hold that man is a recent and original (*de novo*) creation, while the Earth is old. Hominids (beings that evolutionists consider are the precursors of mankind over the past few millions of years) are then perceived as creatures with similar body plans to man's, with or without an evolutionary connection.

Other old-Earth creationists hold that man is not recent but is nevertheless unique and distinct from animals. The story of Adam and Eve concerns the point in time when true man appeared, having God-consciousness.

Broadly speaking, old-Earth creationists fall into two camps. Theistic evolutionists, who are categorized in the old-Earth creationist camp, believe that man's physical body emerged in an evolutionary manner, but was graced by God with a unique human spirit at an appropriate time. Scientific evidence that is advanced by evolutionists to justify the evolutionary paradigm is in general accepted, but evolutionary claims that man is only a physical being are rejected.

Progressive creationists, also in the old-Earth creationist camp, believe that God intruded miraculously and creatively at certain times in ongoing Earth history. The usual pattern of belief is that God intruded to create the first life, to create animals in general, and to create the first human beings. As these intrusive creative acts were pivotal in bringing about the progression of life from its simplest form to complex higher animals and man, the term "progressive creationist" has become the customary nomenclature.

The above categories are not altogether distinct. Individual old-Earth creationists display a variety of beliefs concerning the appearance of man and concerning the extent to which evolutionary development of biota occurred.

Websites of Interest –

<http://reasons.org/> – old Earth Christian; “Reasons to Believe,” headed by Dr. Hugh Ross.

<http://www.answersingenesis.org/> – young Earth Christian.

<http://www.answersingenesis.org/TJ/v11/i2/speciation.asp> – in this article it is claimed that “the creation model depends heavily on speciation” (proliferation of species since Noah’s Flood) which is shocking to many creationists who claim all species were created during Creation Week.

<http://www.answersincreation.org/> – old Earth Christian.

<http://www.talkorigins.org/> – evolutionist responses to young-Earth anti-evolution views.

<http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/faq-speciation.html> – instances of speciation claimed by evolutionists.

<http://www.grisda.org/origins/14033.htm> – young Earth Christian.

This website article tells the story of “man-tracks” alleged to lie alongside dinosaur tracks in the Paluxy River at Glen Rose, TX, and how the Institute for Creation Research ultimately retracted its claim that the “man-tracks” are human footprints, deciding that the alleged man-tracks are actually partially-filled-in dinosaur tracks. In contrast, Carl Baugh continues to assert that man and dinosaur walked together, and has opened the nearby Creation Evidences Museum.

The journal *Origins* given as the source for the article on this website is one of the most scientifically credible young-Earth journals.

Of the individuals mentioned in the article, Glen Kuban, John Morris, and Carl Baugh were personally encountered by the author of the present document (jcm) at creationist conferences. John Morris visited and presented a talk to School of Government faculty at Regent University in the 1980s. Glen Kuban is a credible researcher. Photographs he took of the “colored haloes” in man-tracks mentioned in the article, and which showed their dinosaurian origin, were shown at a creationist conference attended by the present author. Because Kuban’s conclusions were not admissible to conference organizers, he was snubbed and not permitted to speak as part of the formal program; he was only allowed to use the auditorium after a day-long session of the conference had formally ended.

In late July of 2009, the present author participated in a field trip led by Glen Kuban to the Paluxy River site. At the site, alleged man-tracks were clearly seen to be indistinct, or as mistaken portions of dinosaur tracks.

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