

Doesn't Evolution Contradict Genesis?



In answering the above question, we must ask these two questions: (1) What is "evolution?" and (2) What does Genesis say with respect to evolution?

What is Evolution?

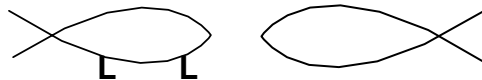
One source says evolution is "an unsupervised, impersonal, unpredictable, and natural process of temporal descent with genetic modification that is affected by natural selection, change, historical contingencies, and changing environments" (1995 *National Association of Biology Teachers*). "Macroevolution" holds to the idea that all varieties of life forms evolved from a single cell or "common ancestor." "Microevolution" refers to the comparatively minor genetic variations in order to adapt to and survive the stresses caused by environmental changes.¹

What Does Genesis Say with Respect to Evolution?

What does Genesis (chapters 1-2 in particular) say with respect to evolution? Christians differ in their interpretation of Genesis 1-2. Some believe that God created the earth and all life forms in six sequential 24-hour days (the "young earth view"). This view conflicts with the modern, mainstream scientific views concerning the age of the earth. Others believe that God created all life forms in six sequential ages of unspecified duration (the "day-age view"). In this view, the "days" in Genesis 1 are interpreted as long periods of time (a possible meaning of the Hebrew word *yom*, translated "day"). The day-age view accords with the modern scientific views concerning the earth's age, but like the young earth view, rejects macroevolution as an explanation for life's diversity. Still others believe the "days" of Genesis 1 should be interpreted figuratively, as part of a literary framework, or as "analogical days."²

Where is the Conflict?

So the question "Doesn't Evolution Contradict Genesis?" needs qualification. In any case, whatever interpretation of Genesis we accept, the underlying assumptions of evolutionary theory (as typically expressed) DO conflict with Genesis. Evolution is typically expressed as a blind, purposeless, undirected process (which it must be if there is no God). Genesis says that God is the creator of the universe, including all of the various life forms, and God's creation is orderly and purposeful. Thus aside from any scientific weaknesses in evolutionary theory, the underlying philosophical presuppositions of evolution are in conflict with the Bible.



¹ Naturalistic evolutionists tend to deny the distinction between macro and micro, but the distinction is valid.

² It is not the purpose of this paper to argue for a particular interpretation of Genesis 1-2. For an introduction and debate of the first three views, see the book *The Genesis Debate*, edited by David G. Hagopian. For a defense of the "analogical day" view, see *Science & Faith; Friends or Foes?*, by C. John Collins. Also, it should be noted that some theists accept "theistic evolution." Theistic evolution accommodates macroevolution by attributing the evolutionary mechanism to God's design. Acceptance of this view requires a symbolic or allegorical interpretation of Genesis. However, this view is more an accommodation of modern scientific theory than a result of biblical interpretation.

Is Evolution Fact?

The problem that many Christians have with macroevolution is the perceived lack of basis for the theory. Christians accept microevolution based on the evidence from scientific observation. However, the extrapolation to macroevolution appears unfounded. Where is the evidence for macroevolution? For example, evolutionists should be able to find evidence in the fossil record, but they cannot find the "missing links" (those elusive transitional fossils). Instead they find the "Cambrian explosion," which provides more evidence for the creation views. There are other reasons to question the validity of macroevolution. See the books listed in the bibliography below. These books, and many others, are not written to defend Genesis, but to challenge others in the scientific community (and its followers) in regard to their devotion to Darwinian (or neo-Darwinian) evolutionary theory.

Is Evolution Pure Science?

Many Christians would say that devotion to naturalistic (blind, purposeless) evolution reveals a commitment to a particular philosophical presupposition which automatically rules out any evidence of intelligent input or design. When evidence (or lack of evidence) begins to refute evolution theory, speculative explanations (for example, "punctuated equilibria") are offered to keep the theory afloat. With such metaphysical commitments, is this really any more "scientific" than belief in creation by God?



Select Bibliography

The following notable books question the scientific basis of macroevolution and/or present a case for intelligent design theory:

- *God's Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?*, by John C. Lennox (PhD, DPhil, DSc, Oxford Fellow in Mathematics and Philosophy, Green College). Oxford: Lion Hudson, 2007. Lennox's re-evaluation of the relation of science and religion makes the case that theism sits more comfortably with the scientific data than naturalism.
- *Darwin's Black Box*, by Michael Behe (Ph.D. Biochemistry, Professor of Biology, Lehigh Univ.). New York: Free Press, 1996. Behe seizes on Charles Darwin's quote, "If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down." Behe argues that the "irreducible complexity" of particular molecular systems is evidence for the breakdown of Darwin's theory.
- *Darwin on Trial*, by Philip Johnson (J.D., Professor of Law, University of California at Berkeley). Downers Gove: InterVarsity Press, 1993. Johnson argues that the theory of evolution is based more on faith in philosophical naturalism than empirical evidence.
- *The Design Inference*, by William Dembski (Ph.D. Mathematics, Ph.D. Philosophy of Science, Research Professor, Baylor University). Cambridge: Cambridge Press, 1998. Dembski has developed criteria for detecting design on the basis of contingency, complexity, and specification.
- *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis*, by Michael Denton (PhD Biochemistry). Bethesda, MD.: Adler and Adler, 1986. Denton, a microbiologist and medical doctor, is a self-described agnostic. He argues that Darwinian microevolution is quite plausible, but that the macroevolutionary thesis has weak empirical support (particularly with regard to selection of random mutations and biological continuity/unbroken linkages of descent). The "crisis" Denton sees relates to the need for a new scientific paradigm.