

CREATION, SCIENCE, AND OUR APPROACH IN APOLOGETICS

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Historical introduction

From the time of the apostles until the eighteenth century, the Genesis account of the creation of the universe was accepted by almost everyone in the Christian church. There were, of course, always a few skeptics who doubted the LORD's revelation, but they were a small minority. On the other hand, some scholars wondered why an almighty God would take so long to do what he could have done in an instant.

With the onset of Rationalism in the latter part of the seventeenth century, scholars began to question everything that was said in the Holy Scriptures, including creation. As the scientific study of nature became more organized in the nineteenth century, more systematic challenges to the biblical creation account were raised. Finally, standards of scientific investigation were formalized through international gatherings of scholars in the various branches of the physical and biological studies. Scientists agreed to accept as their fundamental assumption that all observations could be explained in terms of the inherent properties of matter and energy. Later "time" and "space" were included in this list when it was realized that they too were integral to some investigations.

Scientists explain their observations by developing models (also called theories and laws).² As skepticism about the Scriptures grew, some scientists began developing models to explain how the universe and the earth could have reached their current state of existence through natural means. Humanists soon came to champion these

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²While there might seem to be an pecking order in which "laws" are regarded more highly than "models" which are regarded more highly than "theories," there is a great variation in the usage of these terms among scientific disciplines and between science and mathematics. Regardless of what it is called, every scientific effort to explain nature is at risk of being proven inadequate by the next observation. Scientific explanations are brittle. "Model" is the most neutral term, and it is therefore the best choice to use in discussions to eliminate any implied prejudice concerning the quality of a particular hypothesis.

models because they provided a way to argue that people had no moral responsibility to a supernatural being and were therefore free to develop their own morality. The discussion has always centered on "macroscopic evolution," involving large-scale changes which have not been observed but can only be postulated, not on common changes ("microscopic evolution"), which everyone acknowledges happen every day (e.g., water freezing, land eroding, plants growing). As scientific research has continued and the pace of the development of technology has accelerated, the models of evolution in the various fields of knowledge have been refined and have gained greater credibility among the general public. With the public school systems teaching macroscopic evolutionary models and the media publicizing them, evolution has become a growing challenge to the faith of many who otherwise accept the teachings of the Scriptures. This is particularly true because the evolutionary models are often overstated in their public presentation. They are usually presented without their underlying assumptions and without any indication of the amount of evidence that has actually been observed to support the models. Regardless of their degree of sophistication, however, such models violate the clear teachings of the Scriptures and must be rejected.

For more than a century Lutheran pastors, with good intentions but generally lacking sufficient scientific background, have been reacting to this threat to their flocks either by ridiculing the concept of macroscopic evolution or by using simplistic scientific arguments against it. This approach reassured the members of their congregations as long as the pastors were held in high respect and the members themselves had limited exposure to those who actually espoused evolution. Unfortunately, with more Lutherans encountering the evolutionary models throughout their educational process and with these models being streamed into almost every home through the media and the internet, this defense strategy has proven far too weak. Moreover, pastors have too often relied on pseudo-scientific arguments against evolution developed by others whose area of interest and expertise is theology, not the natural sciences, thereby creating a situation where the blind are leading the blind in this matter.

The mainline Protestant churches, and eventually the Roman Catholic Church, have responded to the challenge of evolution by gradually embracing it. In one way or another, they have accepted the idea that God guided the process of evolution to bring the universe to its current state. Because these churches long ago abandoned the position that the Scriptures were inerrant, the acceptance of "theistic evolution" has been an easy step for them.

The Evangelical movement, on the other hand, has launched a counteroffensive through their development of "creation science" to

“prove” creation scientifically. This is attractive to many Lutherans, who feel that they must attack evolutionists on their own turf. Because the LORD used his supernatural powers to create the universe, however, the fundamental assumption of science—that all observable phenomena can be explained in terms of the inherent properties of matter, energy, space, and time—has been rejected by creation scientists. Consequently, their studies no longer meet the generally accepted definition of “science,” and their scientific methodology is not valid. Creation science is therefore built on a logical fallacy and is not sound science, for one cannot disprove an error by using methods having no validity. Finally, since creation scientists seek to support the teachings of Scriptures by building human models that far exceed what is revealed in the Scriptures, the Scriptures cease to be the sole source and norm of their teachings. In the process, creation science blurs the line between divine revelation and human speculation, and this is not sound theology.

Confessional Lutherans are faced with a challenge on two fronts in their teaching of creation. This is similar to the situation that Martin Luther faced in defending scriptural teachings against the papists on one side and the enthusiasts on the other. *Sola Scriptura* is at stake here, and we must draw our battle lines accordingly. On the one side, we cannot yield any of the biblical account of creation to accommodate “scientific discoveries” or to avoid ridicule for being anti-intellectual. On the other side, we must not make common cause with those who are willing to use human reason and pseudo-science to support their ideas of how God might have carried out his creating work. Heeding the warning that Isaiah gave the kingdom of Judah not to abandon the strength of the LORD and seek human help from Egypt to defend itself against Assyria (Isa 30:1-5), we must be resolved to seek our help on this matter from the revelation given to us by the LORD, not from the feeble methods of man. With this in mind, let us look at what we can and cannot assert from the Scriptures, and let us build our apologetic response thereupon. We will do this through examining a series of topics.

The LORD, the creating and preserving God

We will start at the beginning. In Genesis 1 and 2 the Scriptures teach that the LORD God created the universe.³ Isaiah wrote, “This is what God the LORD says—the Creator of the heavens, who stretches them out, who spreads out the earth with all that springs from it, who

³Arthur A. Eggert, “Creation vs. Science—The Underlying Principles,” Southeast Pastor-Teacher Conference of the Michigan District, February 21-22, 2011. <http://wlsesays.net/node/2240>.

gives breath to its people, and life to those who walk on it" (Isa 42:5). Peter wrote "But they deliberately forget that long ago *by God's word* (τῷ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγῳ) the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water" (2 Pe 3:5). The writer to the Hebrews noted that the LORD also preserves the whole creation when he wrote "sustaining all things *by his powerful word* (φέρων τε τὰ πάντα τῷ ῥήματι τῆς δυνάμεως)" (Heb 1:3). St. Paul wrote that God through his Son created and preserves all things: "The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things *were created*: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things *have been created* through him and for him. He is before all things, and *in him all things hold together* (τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκεν)" (Col 1:15-17). In fact, there are numerous passages in the Scriptures referring to the LORD's creation and preservation of the universe, many of which will be studied subsequently. The Scriptures, therefore, undeniably declare that the supernatural power of the LORD God was used in the creation of the universe and continues to be used in its preservation, whether people believe this or not.

The supernatural actions of the LORD cannot be studied by human methods because we are limited in what we can observe to what is in the physical universe ("Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand marked off the heavens? Who has held the dust of the earth in a basket, or weighed the mountains on the scales and the hills in a balance? Who can fathom the Spirit of the Lord, or instruct the Lord as his counselor? Whom did the Lord consult to enlighten him, and who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge, or showed him the path of understanding? Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust" (Isa 40:12-15; also see Job 38 and 39). Therefore, only the Holy Scriptures given by the LORD can be the sure source of all our teachings on creation, and they must be the standard by which we judge all teachings about it. If the Scriptures are not true in their opening words, then which words contained in the Scriptures can we trust? St. Paul wrote, "All Scripture is God-breathed (πᾶσα γραφή θεόπνευστος)" (2 Ti 3:16). St. Peter noted that the writers of the Scriptures "spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἁγίου φερόμενοι)" (2 Pe 1:21). The importance of the Scriptures to our lives is indicated by a psalmist who wrote, "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path" (Ps 119:105). Jesus, himself the Son of God, showed the reverence which he held for the Scriptures when he said that "Scripture cannot be set aside (οὐ δύναται λυθῆναι ἡ γραφή)" (Jn 10:35).

St. Paul wrote that God “does not lie (ὁ ἀψευδῆς θεός)” (Tit 1:2). Even the false prophet Balaam, his tongue taken captive by the Holy Spirit, was forced to declare, “God is not human, that he should lie (לֹא אִישׁ אֵל וְכִיב), not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?” (Nu 23:19). The Scriptures do not tell us very much about the creation, but what they do say must be taken as the revelation of the LORD and therefore as true. We accept this as the writer to the Hebrews said, “By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible” (Heb 11:3). Surely, we dare say and confess no more or no less than what the Scriptures say about creation. This is the “sound logic” for which Luther called: we teach something as divine truth if the Scriptures teach it *and only if* the Scriptures teach it.

The LORD, eternal and independent of his creation

Next we must consider the nature of God and his relationship to his creation. The Bible in both the Old and New Testaments clearly states that the LORD God is eternal. Moses wrote “The eternal God (אֱלֹהֵי-יְהוָה) is your refuge” (Dt 33:27) and “Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God” (Ps 90:2). David used the same phrase to describe the eternalness of the LORD (1 Chr 16:36, Ps 41:13, Ps 103:17). St. Paul wrote “by the command of the eternal God (τοῦ αἰωνίου θεοῦ)” (Ro 16:26). He also used phrases such as “his eternal purpose (πρόθεσιν τῶν αἰώνων)” (Eph 3:11), “an eternal house in heaven (αἰώνιον ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς)” (2 Co 5:1), “from the Spirit will reap eternal life (ζῶην αἰώνιον)” (Gal 6:8), “to him be honor and might forever” (κράτος αἰώνιον) (1 Ti 6:16), and “eternal glory (δόξης αἰωνίου)” (2 Ti 2:10) to express the eternal nature of the LORD.

The various forms of pantheism claim that the universe is unified with the divine essence and the forces of nature are the workings of this divine essence, which is composed of one or more gods. This teaching is wholly incompatible with the eternal Being of the LORD God as he is described by his Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, and therefore we must reject any form of pantheism. The universe is physical, but the LORD is “spirit (πνεῦμα)” (Jn 4:24). The psalmist wrote, “In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. But you remain the same (אֲנִי-יְהוָה אֲנִי), and your years will never end” (Ps 102:25-27). If the LORD were one with the universe, then he too would grow old and pass away. However, the LORD himself denied this could happen when he said, “I the LORD do

not change (״אֲנִי יְהוָה לֹא שֶׁנִּיתִי״) (Mal 3:6). The Scriptures declare that the universe had a definite beginning and that it will have a definite end. Genesis 1:1 states that the LORD “created the heavens and the earth.” Jesus said that “heaven and earth will pass away” (Lk 21:33), and Peter wrote that the heavens and the earth will be destroyed and be replaced with “a new heaven and a new earth” (2 Pe 3:10-13). It is therefore clear from the Scriptures that the eternal LORD is not one with the universe.

The LORD God and his creation timeline

Let us now consider the timeline the Scriptures give for the creation. The first verse of Genesis clearly states that the LORD God created the universe out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) by using בְּרָא in conjunction with בְּרֵאשִׁית (“in the beginning”) (Ge. 1:1) and that he did so in six days, which are indicated in verses 5, 8, 13, 19, 23, and 31. He used the Hebrew וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד (“and it became evening and it became morning, day one”) in which an “evening” that began a period of darkness was followed by a “morning” that began a period of light, equaling one day.⁴ Moreover, the LORD made it clear that he was using his supernatural power to accomplish the creation by several actions which seem to be nonsensical to the human mind, a mind which so loves to reason. First, the LORD took six days to create everything when he could have completed the task within a nanosecond. He set up day and night before he created the sun to differentiate day from night. He created things in an order which is unnatural, bringing forth plants before he created the sun. He created mighty stars almost as if they were an afterthought.

Certainly what the LORD did was beyond the “laws of nature” and therefore not measurable by the methods of science. It is, of course, only natural that sinful man would question what the LORD said he did, challenge his timeline, and try to learn more about how he created the universe than he chose to reveal. Wanting to know more than the LORD thought good to reveal and rejecting what the LORD said are the same sins committed by Eve (Ge 3:1-6). Seeking to become wise, people have indeed become foolish (φάσκοντες εἶναι σοφοὶ ἐμωράνθησαν) (Ro 1:22), whether they desire to use science to attack creation or to defend it. The Scriptures are clear. The LORD had the power to create the universe in six days, for with him nothing is impossible (ὅτι οὐκ ἄδυνατήσκει παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ πᾶν ῥῆμα) (Lk 1:37). He described how he created it in six days (Ge 1). He claimed that he created it “in six

⁴Carl J. Lawrenz and John C. Jeske, *A Commentary on Genesis 1-11* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2004), 50-51.

days (כִּי יִשְׁתַּיִּמִּים עָשָׂה יְהוָה) before a large number of people at Mount Sinai (Ex 20:11). How can we refuse to believe that he created it in six days? And why would we want to blindly poke around with our feeble brains and limited instruments into deeds done by the LORD, “who lives in unapproachable light (φῶς οἰκῶν ἀπρόσιτον)” (1 Ti 6:16), to learn what he has chosen not to reveal to us?

The LORD God and man, his special creation

The creation of man is presented in the first two chapters of Genesis as the climax and most important event in the LORD's creation of the world. We are given a relatively small amount of detail about the creation of the physical world in general. The LORD called a large diversity of plants (Ge 1:11-12) and animals (Ge 1:20-22, 24-25) into existence with only a few words. His creation of the angels is not even mentioned until much later in the Scriptures (Job 38:4-7), although they were also created within the six-day period. When the LORD reached the point where he was about to create mankind, however, he had Moses record that he took counsel within the Godhead over his course of action (“Then God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image (בְּצַלְמֵנוּ),’” Ge 1:26). Throughout the rest of the Scriptures there are constant reminders that it was for the purpose of man that the universe was created and is preserved (e.g., “The highest heavens belong to the LORD, but the earth he has given to mankind,” Ps 115:16; “He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for people to cultivate—bringing forth food from the earth: wine that gladdens human hearts, oil to make their faces shine, and bread that sustains their hearts,” Ps 104:14-15; “For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed,” Ro 8:19).

While summarizing the creation of man in Genesis chapter 1 (“Then God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.’ Then God said, ‘I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food,’” Ge 1:26-29), the LORD revealed the critical link that he was establishing with man. Man was given the “*image of God*,” that is, God's own holiness and righteousness, so that he could serve the LORD in perfection and with joy. Genesis chapter 2 gives a more detailed account of how the LORD car-

ried out the creation process. "Adam," derived from the Hebrew word for soil (אָדָם), was taken from the soil. The LORD formed him from the soil and breathed life into him ("Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being," Ge 2:7). This united man with both his creator God and the planet on which he would reside.

The LORD established the human race from only one person. To create a mate for Adam, he took a rib, a part of Adam, and made it into a woman ("So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man," Ge 2:21-22). Neither man nor woman could therefore say that the other gender was somehow inferior because they had initially been one being. Subsequently, the whole human race came from this one human being who was created by the LORD. In creating Adam's mate, the LORD made the necessary changes to cause the woman to be genetically different. When he brought the woman, later called Eve ("Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living," Ge 3:20), to the man, he told them that although they were physically separate, a man and a woman should regard themselves as if they were one being after they married ("That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh," Ge 2:24). St. Paul later reiterated this when he wrote that a man should treat his wife as his own body ("In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church," Eph 5:28-29).

The truthfulness of the LORD's account of his creating man and woman as special creatures, made in his image, is critical to the rest of the Scriptures.⁵ If people had not been formed as a special creation, apart from the rest of the living creatures, and with a perfect knowledge of the LORD's will and the ability to keep it, then the LORD could not hold them morally responsible for failing to obey him as he has done ("Woe to those who quarrel with their Maker, those who are nothing but potsherds among the potsherds on the ground. Does the clay say to the potter, 'What are you making?' Does your work say, 'The potter has no hands'? Woe to the one who says to a father, 'What have you begotten?' or to a mother, 'What have you brought to birth?' This is

⁵Siegbert Becker, "Evolution and Genesis" in Lyle W. Lange, ed., *Our Great Heritage*, vol. II (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1991), 3-18.

what the LORD says—the Holy One of Israel, and its Maker: Concerning things to come, do you question me about my children, or give me orders about the work of my hands? It is I who made the earth and created mankind on it. My own hands stretched out the heavens; I marshaled their starry hosts,” Isa 45:9-12). Therefore, when people sinned, they would only be acting out the limitations of their evolutionary development. The LORD would have no more right to judge them concerning this than he would have to hold a dog responsible for not being able to learn Latin. He certainly would have had no reason to provide a Savior for them. Through evolution, people could hope to eventually be their own savior, which is a major tenet in the *Humanist Manifesto III*.⁶ The LORD, however, linked creation to redemption when he told how he would send his Servant to those whom he had created (Isa 42:1-9). We therefore reject all efforts to deny the account of the special creation of mankind or to treat it as merely representing how the LORD first introduced himself to man.

The LORD God’s response to man’s sin

Before Adam and Eve sinned, all the parts of creation were designed to work to make man’s life pleasant and enjoyable (Ge 2:8-17). Everything was working together to serve the LORD and to support his special creature, man (Ge 1:28-29). After Adam and Eve sinned, the LORD gave them a continual reminder of the horribleness of their sin by making their environment less supportive and often unpleasant for them (“To Adam he said, ‘Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, “You must not eat from it,” cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return,’” Ge 3:17-19).

We do not know all that was affected by the LORD’s curse. We know that thorns and thistles made raising crops much more difficult (Ge 3:18). Because everything was “good” when the LORD created it (Ge 1:31), it is consistent with the Scriptures to conclude that the curse made the trees no longer provide perfect fruit, that the curse produced bad weather and blight which cut the yields of the crops, and that the curse caused vermin and rot to destroy what was gathered. Likewise it is consistent with the Scriptures to conclude that because of the curse, bacteria, viruses, and radiation attacked men’s bodies, causing them to become ill and to decline until they died (Ge 3:19).

⁶*Secular Humanist Manifesto III* (American Humanist Association, 2000).

Eventually the LORD reiterated the curse (Ge 6:3) by shortening the lifespan of man by 90% (“Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures; yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away,” Ps 90:10, vs. “Altogether, Adam lived a total of 930 years, and then he died,” Ge 5:5). We do not know whether the LORD made further changes to the earth and heavens through this act of cursing the ground because he did not choose to reveal that information to us.

The LORD God and the flood

Compared with the rest of the early history of the universe and of man, the Scriptures give a much more detailed account of the great flood (Ge 6:13-8:20). It was the LORD’s greatest act of destruction upon the face of the earth that will occur before Judgment Day (“The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: ‘Never again will I curse the ground because of humans, even though every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done,’” Ge 8:21). The Scriptures tell why it was done (“The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. The LORD regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. So the LORD said, ‘I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them,’” Ge 6:5-7), and some of the key information of how the LORD caused it, its extensiveness, and how long it took for the waters to recede. Almost nothing in this account seems to be natural. The amount of water which was needed to cover the earth, including “the mountains to a depth of more than fifteen cubits” (Ge 7:20), is far beyond what is known to exist. Where the water went and why it took so long to drain from even the highest land (Ge 8:3-13) are perplexing questions. What is clear from the Scriptures is that the LORD did bring a great flood upon the earth and that what the LORD did to bring it was supernatural, just as his work of creation was supernatural.

While some details about the flood itself are given in the Scriptures, any additional actions the LORD took at the same time as the flood, or through the waters of the flood, are not revealed. Did the LORD massively reshape the surface of the earth by raising mountains, lowering seabeds, and moving continents to drain the flood waters? There is no way of knowing, because the LORD did not tell us what he did. Moreover, if he did anything, he did not indicate how much was done using the cover of the “laws of nature” and how much was done outside these laws. Rain seems likely to have been a natu-

ral agent, for example, but opening the “springs of the great deep” and the “floodgates of the heavens” (Ge 7:11) imply supernatural actions. It is possible that the LORD used the flood to completely redesign the earth’s surface. If he did, however, he did not tell us what he did or how he did it. This leaves the Christian with no starting point to understand how the post-flood world arrived at its current state of being. With nearly no information about either what the starting point (i.e., *terminus a quo*) was or the extent to which supernatural actions were used, the methods of science cannot be employed to explain how the LORD brought the earth to its current state. We are therefore forced to reject as speculative all efforts to use the flood to explain the current geological state of the earth because they are not rooted in the Scriptures.

The LORD God and other supernatural interventions

When the people after the flood did not obey the LORD’s command to spread out over the whole surface of the earth, but instead committed themselves to stay and build in one place, the LORD intervened by altering the speech (וַיִּבְלֶה אֱלֹהִים שְׂפָתָם) of many of the people so that they could no longer understand each other (Ge 11:1-9). This caused the people to scatter. It was a supernatural action with a clear purpose. Whether the LORD used other supernatural actions, such as changing the physical characteristics of the people or creating and removing land bridges, at the same time or subsequently, to carry out the dispersion is not revealed in the Scriptures. Any such actions would further inhibit our ability to study how the earth came into its current state.

At Joshua’s request, God stopped the movement of the sun and the moon across the sky (“Sun, stand still over Gibeon, and you, moon, over the Valley of Aijalon.’ So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies,” Jos 10:12-13). Whether the LORD did this by stopping the earth’s rotation through reprogramming every particle of our planet, changing how time flowed in various parts of the earth, miraculously manipulating light, or using some even grander method is not revealed in the Scriptures. Because this was such an incredible example of supernatural power, it is certainly possible the LORD also made changes in the surface of the earth at the same time. In another time-related action, the LORD moved the shadow back at the time of Hezekiah (“Then the prophet Isaiah called on the LORD, and the LORD made the shadow go back the ten steps it had gone down on the stairway of Ahaz,” 2 Ki 20:11). No matter how the LORD accomplished this feat, it had to have been done in a supernatural manner. It could well have been accompanied by physical repercussions elsewhere on the earth. Any such collateral

supernatural changes would further inhibit human efforts to study the physical history of the earth.

The miracles that the LORD performed in the Old Testament are both numerous and diverse. They include parting the Red Sea (Ex 14:21-29) and the Jordan River (Jos 3:14-17), making a metal hammer head float (2 Ki 6:6), killing 185,000 Assyrian soldiers (2 Ki 19:35), and blinding a whole army (2 Ki 6:18). There were miracles that benefited individuals (e.g., the Shunammite woman's son, 2 Ki 4:18-37), and miracles that changed the course of history (e.g., the flight of Syrian army, 2 Ki 6:24-7:20). The LORD is not obligated to reveal all his miracles to the readers of the Scriptures ("The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law," Dt 29:29; "Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! 'Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?'" Ro 11:33-34). Therefore, we cannot exclude the possibility that the LORD made changes, few or many, to the earth that would alter the apparent age and history of the earth's surface and of the universe and thereby make of questionable validity any scientific studies of the Old Testament era. This doesn't mean that human investigations into, e.g., apparent changes to the soil or climate of the Levant are of no value; only that their results must be used with care so that they do not place an external constraint on our understanding of the Scriptures. We can use outside scholarly information to help us understand words and events in the Scriptures, but never to extend what the Scriptures reveal or to edit their content.

The New Testament records numerous miracles which Jesus did, and reference is made to many more which are not described in detail. Miracles include changing water into wine (Jn 2:6-11), healing those with skin disease (e.g., Lk 17:11-19), giving sight to the blind (e.g., Mk. 8:22-26), making the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak (e.g., Mk 7:31-37), making the crippled walk (e.g., Jn 5:1-9), driving out evil spirits (e.g., Mk 5:1-20), multiplying food (e.g., Mt 14:13-20), and raising the dead (e.g., Jn 11:38-44). All four Gospel writers record a variety of his miracles. These miracles demonstrate that the LORD has complete control over those things which we can observe.

Jesus' apostles also did miracles, particularly miracles of healing (e.g., Ac 3:1-10). This demonstrates that the LORD can delegate his power over nature to others.

The LORD God, possessor of all power

Let us now back up a little and consider the nature of God's power so that we can correctly understand his actions. We are all culturally

conditioned to underestimate the awesomeness of the LORD. The Scriptures record that Jesus said “with God all things are possible” (Mt 19:26). Nothing is therefore outside his power. Jesus went even further when He said, “All authority in heaven and on earth is given to me” (Ἐδόθη μοι πᾶσα ἐξουσία ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς) (Mt 28:18). He claimed that he had “all” power and authority, not just the “most” power and authority. If Christ’s divine nature could communicate all power and authority to his human nature, then the divine nature had to itself possess all power and authority. Because the divine essence of God is one, what the Son possesses, the Father and the Holy Spirit also possess. Therefore, nothing else has any power independent of God because Jesus’ assertion means that the Godhead possesses every bit of power that exists. Furthermore, the LORD did not give up any of it in creating the universe, because the universe existed at the time of Jesus’ earthly ministry, and he could still claim to have “all power,” that is, all authority to command and to require obedience.

Before the LORD created the universe, there was nothing, neither space nor time (“In the beginning you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment. Like clothing you will change them and they will be discarded. But you remain the same, and your years will never end,” Ps 102:25-27).^{7,8} When he spoke, it came into being (“By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea into jars; he puts the deep into storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the people of the world revere him. For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm,” Ps 33:6-9), and when he speaks sometime in the future, it will disappear (“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat,” 2 Pe 3:10-12). The ability for anything temporal to exist is therefore solely a result of the power of the LORD. Nor did the LORD leave his initial creation in a state of chaos (Ge 1:2). He spent the rest of Genesis 1 imposing form and structure on his creation and giving its components the power to act as he desired.

⁷Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God, Book XI*, Marcus Dods tr. in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol. 2*. Philip Schaff, ed. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994).

⁸Eggert, “Creation vs. Science.”

3 Since the creation, the LORD has committed himself to maintaining an orderly environment on the earth. In Genesis we read, "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease" (Ge 8:22). The LORD spoke to Job about his control of the heavens ("Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons or lead out the bear with its cubs?" Job 38:32). The psalmist wrote, "He made the moon to mark the seasons, and the sun knows when to go down. You bring darkness, it becomes night, and all the beasts of the forest prowl" (Ps 104:19-20). Jesus told the Pharisees that they could read the sky, for the LORD had made it predictable ("When evening comes, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,' and in the morning, 'Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times," Mt 16:2-3). Paul said, "Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy" (Ac 14:17). It is natural that man would recognize the LORD's regular and sophisticated operation of the universe and ascribe a term like the "laws of nature" to it.

On the other hand, the LORD can also act outside of the "laws of nature" anytime he pleases. Isaiah wrote, quoting the LORD, "By a mere rebuke I dry up the sea, I turn rivers into a desert; their fish rot for lack of water and die of thirst. I clothe the heavens with darkness and make sackcloth its covering" (Isa 50:2-3). Isaiah also wrote, "This is the plan determined for the whole world; this is the hand stretched out over all nations. For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?" (Isa 14:26-27). Daniel prayed, "He changes times and seasons; he deposes kings and raises up others. He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to the discerning. He reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what lies in darkness, and light dwells with him" (Da 2:21-22). Ezekiel wrote, "I will execute judgment on him with plague and bloodshed; I will pour down torrents of rain, hailstones and burning sulfur on him and on his troops and on the many nations with him. And so I will show my greatness and my holiness, and I will make myself known in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD" (Eze 38:22-23). In addition, Isaiah wrote, "All the stars in the sky will be dissolved and the heavens rolled up like a scroll; all the starry host will fall like withered leaves from the vine, like shriveled figs from the fig tree" (Isa 34:4). The many miracles given in the Scriptures confirm that the LORD cannot be limited by his own laws, but he can act supernaturally whenever he chooses.

As we have seen, everything exists solely through LORD's power. But does anything have power independently of the LORD? If anything else possessed power independently, then that "thing" could interfere with the LORD as he carried out his plans. Yet nothing can interfere because "Our God is in heaven; He does whatever pleases him" (Ps 115:3). Moreover, when the LORD decides to do something, who can stop Him? ("For the Lord Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?" Isa 14:27). Resistance to the LORD is futile, so nothing can have sufficient power to have the slightest impact in opposition to the LORD. Because "we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" (Ro 8:28), the LORD's will must extend to all activities in the universe; otherwise, some things might not work for the good of the elect. Therefore, we conclude that nothing has any power to accomplish its own will to the extent that that will opposes the LORD's, for the LORD Himself possess all power.⁹

Let us ask ourselves a question. Where would anything else initially have gotten any power it has? Genesis 1 states that everything received form and structure at the word of the LORD. Before he issued commands to create structure in the universe, all was chaos (Ge 1:2). The rocks on the earth, for example, have structure and are not merely collections of randomly moving subatomic particles because of the power of the LORD's command. Without the power inherent in the word of the LORD, there would be no forces binding the particles together and nothing to give them momentum or direction (Heb 1:3). Yet the LORD has not lost any of his power by creating the universe because he can still destroy it whenever he pleases (2 Pe 3:10), thereby reclaiming any power that he has even temporarily delegated. Because of this, we must conclude that nothing has power independent of the LORD.

The LORD God, active overseer of the universe

If created things do not possess power independently of the LORD, then they can only possess it to the extent that he temporarily delegates it to them. In addition, they cannot do anything with their delegated power without the express commands of the LORD. Examples of the "hands-on" involvement of the LORD appear throughout the Scriptures. Jesus said, "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. And even the

⁹*Ed. note:* It is God's attributes of omnipotence and independence that are under discussion here. No claim is being made that the Lord's saving love cannot be resisted, or that the Lord does not also will the salvation of those who do this.

very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows" (Mt 10:29-31). Isaiah wrote about the LORD, "Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing" (Isa 40:25). The LORD challenged Job with the greatness of his knowledge and control of nature (Job 38). The psalmist wrote about the living things of the world, "When you hide your face, they are terrified; when you take away their breath, they die and return to the dust. When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground" (Ps 104:29-30). The often-used phrase in the Scriptures כְּדִבְרֵי-יְהוָה ("according to the word of the Lord"), as in 2 Kings 7:16, often shows the LORD's absolute control over everything that happens because he can declare what will happen before it happens.

The LORD has delegated to many living things the power to make decisions based on their environment (e.g., "like a lion hungry for prey, like a fierce lion crouching in cover," Ps 17:12), and he has given to the angels and to mankind the ability to act in ways guided by reason (e.g., "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? (Lk 14:31). Yet even here the LORD is in control. No living creature can do anything unless the LORD enables all its component parts to respond to the creature's will, otherwise hands will wither ("When King Jeroboam heard what the man of God cried out against the altar at Bethel, he stretched out his hand from the altar and said, 'Seize him!' But the hand he stretched out toward the man shriveled up, so that he could not pull it back," 1 Ki 13:4) and eyes will go blind ("'You are going to be blind for a time, not even able to see the light of the sun.' Immediately mist and darkness came over him, and he groped about, seeking someone to lead him by the hand," Ac 13:11). Because the LORD does what he pleases concerning his creation ("The Lord does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths," Ps 135:6), he limits what people, including those who are hostile to him (e.g., Pharaoh, Ex 4:21-23), and even Satan (Job 1:9-10) can do. All their actions must work together for the good of the LORD's elect (Ro 8:28). While scientists believe that nothing is a miracle (i.e., everything can be scientifically modelled), we as Christians believe that everything is a miracle (i.e., everything is accomplished through the active use of the LORD's almighty power, directly or through delegation).

Although the LORD's miracles in both the Old and New Testaments were obvious to the people who saw them, the LORD's actions under the cover of the "laws of nature" are not obvious to us, yet they are

innumerable. For example, statistically a perfect die has only one chance in six of having a four on top when it is rolled, but the results of every roll of a die is determined by the LORD ("The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD," Pr 16:33). The LORD knows the hearts of men (Ge 6:5) and the location of everything in the universe (Ps 139:7-16). In fact, he knows everything ("Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God," Jn 16:30), so he knows what people and angels will do in particular situations, whether they are ever faced with those situations or not ("When David learned that Saul was plotting against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, 'Bring the ephod.' David said, 'Lord, God of Israel, your servant has heard definitely that Saul plans to come to Keilah and destroy the town on account of me. Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me to him? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? LORD, God of Israel, tell your servant.' And the LORD said, 'He will.' Again David asked, 'Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me and my men to Saul?' And the LORD said, 'They will.' So David and his men, about six hundred in number, left Keilah and kept moving from place to place. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he did not go there," 1 Sa 23:9-13). When the LORD wants something to happen, he can act supernaturally or, if he chooses, can merely establish a sequence of events so that people and even the demons will act in a manner that will accomplish his plan. Who of us could see a momentary and minute aberration in the "laws of nature" that produces a sequence of events precisely carrying out what the LORD has planned from eternity? Scientists can observe only an infinitesimally small fraction of the things which are happening in the universe, so they will never notice his interloping activities. This freedom of action of the LORD prevents us from ever establishing how anything really happens in the world unless he tells us through the Scriptures.

The LORD God, sustainer of his elect

Not only does the LORD preserve the world in general, but he actively manages it for the benefit of his elect. He has promised to give us what we need to support our daily lives ("So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well," Mt 6:31-33). All the promises of the LORD are sure (Lk 21:33), so we can count on him to always give us what we need to accomplish his purposes. To help us manage the resources which he gives to us so abundantly, he usually

works through methods that give the appearance of firm natural laws, which mankind can use science to study. Yet, the LORD can accomplish his goals in ways of his own choosing (Ps 115:3), and who can hold him accountable for his actions (Isa 14:27)? Why should we fret over how he actually carries out his management of the universe?

In fact, we recognize the LORD's almighty power by our very act of praying. It is folly to pray to a piece of stone, of wood, of pottery, or of metal. These objects can do nothing to help those who pray to them because they have no power over themselves, much less over any other part of the universe. The LORD frequently ridiculed idols because they had no power to help those who prayed to them ("Tell us, you idols, what is going to happen. Tell us what the former things were, so that we may consider them and know their final outcome. Or declare to us the things to come, tell us what the future holds, so we may know that you are gods. Do something, whether good or bad, so that we will be dismayed and filled with fear. But you are less than nothing and your works are utterly worthless; whoever chooses you is detestable," Isa 41:22-24). To pray to something or someone implies that one expects that thing or being can really do what is necessary to effect what is being prayed for. If nothing could happen outside the "laws of nature," however, then it would be impossible for any supernatural being to do anything to answer prayer. Therefore, to pray to the LORD means that we expect that he can do what is necessary to answer our prayer ("But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord," Jas 1:6-7); that is, we believe that he can control the universe, whether he hides his actions under the apparent "laws of nature" or does them as visible miracles.

The implications for our apologetics

Can there be any apologetic value to using science or using human models to explain the apparent astronomical, geological, and biological history of the universe? The answer is "no," because we cannot know to what extent the LORD God put these in place working outside the "laws of nature." We cannot construct models to explain or affirm what the Scriptures do not tell us because human models change and human thoughts shift, but the Word of the LORD alone remains true and unchanging. In medical schools future physicians are trained to ask themselves what they would do in a particular situation if a laboratory test came back positive and what they would do if it came back negative. If the answers are the same, they are taught *not* to order the test. Their decision has already been made, independent of the test.

We should apply the same principle to every scientific argument that we might consider using to defend the scriptural position on creation. If we would accept the argument if it supported the scriptural position but we would reject it if it didn't, then that argument is irrelevant to our acceptance or defense of the scriptural position on creation. The scientific method requires that one must accept the potential falsifiability of what one postulates, and we are not willing to do this because it would place our teachings about creation under human standards. Making scientific arguments, therefore, gives the false impression that we accept scientific proof for the things written in the Scriptures when we do not do so. That is deceptive and therefore sinful ("Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we distort the word of God. On the contrary, by setting forth the truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God," 2 Co 4:2). Moreover, to give any weight to scientific arguments would make scientific investigation our ultimate authority rather than the Scriptures. *Sola Scriptura* would be lost.

The implications—some antitheses, some limitations

Having explored what the Scriptures teach, and therefore what we believe, concerning the LORD and his creation, we now need to state what we reject and why. We also need to limit the implications of our teachings so that they do not extend beyond what is scripturally defensible. This means we will need to cover some ground a second time.

Value and limitations of science

We start by examining what science can and cannot do. It would be foolish to fail to acknowledge the contributions that science has made to the convenience and comfort of human life and to the management of the earth. Scientists can and do conduct meaningful studies and perform important experiments to create useful models of the universe as it exists and about how the LORD manages it through the "laws of nature." On the other hand, when scientists attempt to explain how the universe came into existence and how it reached its current state of being, we must reject such scientific models because they are based on the assumption that only natural laws operated in bringing about things which the Bible clearly states were accomplished by the LORD repeatedly operating outside these laws through supernatural means, as was discussed above.

No system of investigation is better than the assumptions on which it is based. In theology, everything can be established as scriptural, unscriptural, or adiaphora *only if* one makes the assumption that the Bible is the inerrant, verbally inspired Word of God. It is, in effect, the

fundamental assumption of Christianity. Every hypothesis in a mathematical system (e.g., the positive integers) can be established as true, false, or indeterminate *only if* one completely defines the system being studied. These are examples of *bounded* domains where everything necessary is known that relates to the issue being studied.

The physical and biological sciences are *unbounded* domains because the "laws of nature" have not been revealed *a priori* to scientists, and they must be deduced by experimentation. Moreover, the domain of each of these sciences stretches throughout the physical universe, which is so large that it can never fully be explored. This means that scientific models must always remain speculative, pending additional investigations which gather more evidence within the various domains. In order to bound their domains, scientists make numerous assumptions, including the fundamental assumption that all observations can be explained in terms of the inherent properties of matter, energy, time, and space. This fundamental assumption, essential to the scientific interpretation of data, excludes supernatural intervention in the happenings of the universe. The existence of the LORD, who can and does intervene in nature as he pleases, invalidates this fundamental assumption of science. Therefore, all the results of scientific investigation are invalid to the extent that there has been supernatural interference and, as a consequence, what is observed is not solely the result of the "laws of nature."

The LORD never promised that he would not interfere in nature by using supernatural means during any era in human history. Yet we recognize from experience and the assurance of the Scriptures (Ge 8:22) that he normally does work through the apparent laws of nature which scientists can systematically study. This is a great blessing because it allows mankind to use scientific models to build structures, manufacture goods, and develop medicines for the benefit of humanity. But as we noted above, we also recognize that all of this is under the active control of the LORD, as he acts for the benefit of his elect.

The past is not necessarily like the present, however. The Scriptures record eras when the Lord did act overtly and forcefully in supernatural ways or may have acted in supernatural ways as previously described. Scientific methods of investigation are *a priori* useless to study events in such periods of world history because the fundamental assumption on which they rest is invalidated by the LORD's supernatural actions. This applies to the whole period before the great flood and perhaps long after the time of the great flood. When assumptions are false, as the fundamental assumption of science is false in these eras, then the conclusions based on them are always of uncertain validity. We must therefore reject all efforts as useless and misleading that employ scientific methods to study the world and the

universe, whether in support of evolution or in support of creation, during eras when the Bible indicates LORD was overtly using supernatural powers to interact with the earth and the universe. Only when reliable written records that document observed phenomena exist can scientific investigation be legitimately employed. Understanding this is imperative to a sound apologetic position.

Rejection of macroscopic evolution

It is easy to get caught up emotionally in trying to defend the Scriptures against evolutionary models. Nevertheless, it is fruitless to argue the wrong issues. It is a general principle of scholarly study that no conclusion based on false assumptions is worthy of either discussing or refuting. Because a conclusion based on one or more false assumptions is speculative and not validatable, it is by the rules of mathematics and sound human logic no different than a fairy tale. Because the Scriptures teach that the LORD effected the creation and the early history of the universe and the earth through numerous supernatural actions, as discussed above, the fundamental assumption of science is false when applied to this time period. Its conclusions that the universe, the planet earth, and the living species on it came into being and developed to their current state through macroscopic evolution by natural processes must therefore be rejected by anyone who accepts the Bible as the inerrant, verbally inspired Word of God.

Those who try to argue against the models of evolution using scientific evidence quickly find themselves battling against a beast more challenging than the mythical Hydra, the nine-headed serpent which grew two new heads for each head cut off.¹⁰ When the weakness of one scientific model is exposed and dealt with, other models are immediately proposed which are even harder to challenge. The vulnerability of evolution is in the assumptions upon which it is based, not in its numerous individual models. It is on this basis that we must build our apologetics. A supernatural being, by definition, is neither restricted to act through natural laws nor confined to the properties of time and space as they are assumed in all scientific investigation.¹¹ When people are led to realize that the existence of the LORD invalidates the assumptions on which evolution is based, then evolutionary models, no matter how grand they may seem, will lose their aura of truth and can be placed next to Snow White on the fiction shelf.

¹⁰Killing the Lernaean Hydra was the second labor of Hercules in Greek mythology.

¹¹Sean Carroll, *Mysteries of Modern Physics: Time* (Chantilly, VA: The Great Courses, 2012).

Next we turn our attention to the critical issue of man. Whether man was created or evolved can never be treated as a silly philosophical disagreement.¹² If man has evolved from some other form of animal life which did not have the image of the LORD written in its heart, then man would always have been a self-centered brute (“Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you,” Ps 32:9). The fall into sin described in Genesis 3 would not have happened, and the LORD could never have called man to account for something that man could not have avoided doing, namely, sinning. Why would the LORD have cursed the ground because of man’s sin or have promised him a Savior? Man’s totally depraved state (Ge 6:5) would have been expected and could hardly have been used as an excuse for the LORD to destroy the population of the earth by a great flood (Ge 6:6-7). If the LORD had acted in the way described in Genesis 3 through 8 toward just another species of brute animal (to which moral categories like “right” and “wrong” do not apply), he might well be described as a cruel tyrant imposing his will upon the helpless and not as a loving father trying to raise man in the way of righteousness. Nothing in the Scriptures would make any sense, and man would be left to paw his way through them looking for any hint of what he could do to avoid God’s eternal wrath. If man never had the image of God, it could not be restored to him (“[you] have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator,” Col 3:10), and fear for their eternal futures would dominate people’s entire lifetimes.

Genesis chapters 1 and 2 state that the LORD created man as a special creation. Therefore we reject all models which claim that human life evolved from other life forms. If we cannot trust the LORD to tell us about how we came to be sinful, we also cannot trust him to tell us about how we have been declared righteous through his Son.

Rejection of theistic evolution and non-biblical restrictions on God’s power

The various church bodies have adopted different strategies toward evolutionary models. Faced both with science that challenged their teachings about creation and with their fear of losing Christianity if they completely abandoned the Bible, many church bodies began teaching some form of “theistic evolution.” They concluded that the LORD must have merely guided the processes of nature over a long period of time so that the universe and the earth appear to have evolved. Some church leaders, concerned with maintaining a more overt influence of God on the evolutionary process, introduced the term “intelligent

¹²Becker, “Evolution and Genesis.”

design” to account for the tremendous complexity of some aspects of nature, such as DNA structure or cellular mechanisms. The degree of involvement of the “intelligent agent” is, of course, speculative because it has neither scientific nor biblical footing.

Theistic evolution, with or without intelligent design, rejects the timeline given in the Scriptures for the creation of the universe and the earth. As an effort to reconcile scriptural teachings with scientific models, it fails miserably. By denying that the timeline given in the Bible is correct, those who teach theistic evolution deny the reliability of the Scriptures, and their models have the same problems with original sin in man as do the purely scientific models. Consequently, we reject this approach as being no different than godless evolution from the viewpoint of Scripture. The LORD does not do something and then lie about it (“which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time,” Tit 1:2). Because this approach injects a supernatural being into the evolutionary process, it violates the fundamental assumption of science, making it bad science as well as bad theology. It is therefore justly rejected by scientists.

While the Scriptures clearly state the LORD created the heavens and the earth through his word as previously demonstrated, this does not mean that the LORD could not have brought the universe and the earth into their current state of being through evolutionary means. If he were not able to do so, then he would not be omnipotent (“With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible,” Mt 19:26). Working through the apparent “laws of nature,” over time he could have caused things to develop from an initial state of chaos to their current state of development, leaving a trail that would suggest that they evolved without his guidance. The Scriptures do not say that the LORD could not have done this; they merely say that he didn’t.

Rejection of the redefinition of science

If one wants to enter an animal into a dog show, that animal must meet the requirements for being a “dog” as established by a national kennel club. An alligator or a cheetah would not be allowed to compete. If someone redefined a triangle as having five sides, mathematicians would scoff at whatever that person did. In the same way, what is “science” is defined by the national societies whose members practice science. It is that definition which the public accepts and expects to be employed when the word “science” is used in common speech. If one wants to “do scientific work,” then one must abide by that definition. The fundamental assumption of science that all observations are explainable in terms of the inherent properties of matter, energy, time, and space is central to the definition of the natural sciences. Publically held definitions are a common standard by which all things of a par-

ticular type must be judged, or society will collapse into chaos like that at Babel because people will not understand what other people mean when they speak (Ge 11:1-9).

The Scriptures state that it is dishonest to misrepresent the nature or amount of an entity. St. Paul rejected clever manipulations when teaching about the things of God (2 Co 4:2). The LORD also condemns the use of dishonest measures of weight or quantity (“Use honest scales and honest weights, an honest ephah and an honest hin,” Lev 19:36). To claim that one is practicing “science” when one is, in fact, using different methods and assumptions than those of the scientific societies is fraud. It is an attempt to deceive. We therefore reject any efforts to appeal to scientific methods and definitions which are any different from those in common usage. As the Scriptures are true (“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth,” Jn 17:17), so our teachings in all matters should be true.

Rejection of efforts to buttress biblical teachings with science

Since its fall into sin, mankind has become totally self-centered. Men and women judge themselves by their own behavior, and it is a low standard. To show them their unbelievable weakness and folly, the LORD often had the writers of the Scriptures call people’s attention to the realm of nature around them. For example, David wrote, “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands” (Ps 19:1). Ethan the Ezrahite wrote, “The heavens praise your wonders, Lord, your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones” (Ps 89:5). Isaiah wrote, “Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing” (Isa 40:26). Paul wrote that “what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse” (Ro 1:19-20). The scriptural message is that compared with the gigantic size and the incredible complexity of the universe, man is very little and has done very little. Therefore, people should seek and heed the One who is responsible for the universe. To the people of biblical times, who were universally primitive in technology, this contrast should have been very clear. The LORD was pointing to the “what” of the universe and not to the “how” of His bringing it into existence.

In recent history human civilization has rapidly become more technical, and man has continually elevated his opinion of himself and his abilities to sometimes god-like levels. Human inventions, such as the nuclear bomb, the ubiquitous computer-based devices, transplant

surgery, and space exploration, have turned people's attention away from the nature of the universe to their own accomplishments. Indeed, the amazing nighttime sky has been washed out by city lights, and man's dependence on favorable weather has been drastically reduced by indoor facilities for almost everything and by food shipped in from around the world. While the natural wonders which are pointed out by the Scriptures still direct those who take the time to look at the universe to the awesome God who made it, most people are looking instead to the next technical innovation of man to control it. It is easy for frustrated church workers to conclude that the Scriptures do not say enough to convince modern people of the creation and that the methods of science should be employed to bring our teachings up to the technical standards of today.

Sadly, this is not a new opinion. Efforts to use science to substantiate Christian teachings have a long history of making theologians look foolish. Some in the early church tried to link key doctrines of the Scriptures to the nearly universal belief that there were only four elements—fire, water, earth, and air.¹³ Later churchmen linked creation to the geocentric model of the universe and executed those who challenged it.¹⁴ Many arguments supporting creation have been based on some claim that “only God can do” thing *x* (e.g., create intelligence to play chess at the level of a grandmaster),¹⁵ only to see people develop devices to do thing *x*. Basing our defense of scriptural teachings on current scientific thinking is like building a house “on the ground without a foundation” (Lk 6:49) because the “unquestioned scientific law” of today is too often the “discarded theory” of tomorrow. Frequently “scientific” arguments against evolution by church teachers are aimed at methods and models long since modified or discarded by evolutionists.

Using reason and science to argue against evolution is greatly limited by the large amount of technical expertise that is required to discuss scientific matters today. While the common people of yesteryear could follow the arguments of the psalmists, Isaiah, Jesus, and Paul, even educated people today frequently have little understanding of fields of study outside their own. Probability, statistical distri-

¹³*Recognitions of Clement, Book VIII*, Thomas Smith tr. in *Anti-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 8, Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson, eds. (Peabody MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994).

¹⁴Michael Sharratt, *Galileo: Decisive Innovator* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1994), 127-131.

¹⁵Hubert L. Dreyfus, “Alchemy and Artificial Intelligence” (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corp., 1965), <http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/papers/2006/P3244.pdf>. Accessed 7/8/15.

butions, sampling bias, predicate calculus, boundary conditions, catalytic effects, fluid-flow models, closed-system requirements, and method validation are only some of the areas of knowledge that may have to be mastered to understand a particular scientific model. Almost no one in the general membership of our congregations understands these things well enough to use them to judge the validity of arguments against evolution, much less to reproduce them in actual discussions, even when those arguments are logically and scientifically correct. It is counterproductive for church teachers to advance arguments that they themselves do not fully understand. We should therefore reject the use of any line of reasoning that is not well-understood by the presenter and cannot be easily and accurately comprehended by the audience.

Because of our deep respect for the Scriptures, it is only natural for us to bristle over the illogicalness and the overstatement that often appears in the public presentation of evolutionary models. Yet, at such times we must consider the nature of our own teachings and their purpose. Because biblical Christianity is a religion which is illogical in human terms, we cannot seize the intellectual high ground by arguing that evolutionists are unreasonable in their claims. Humanly speaking, we too are unreasonable in what we believe. That is why we must attack the validity of *the assumptions* upon which the methods of evolutionary research are based, rather than *the results* of applying those methods. This is similar to how Luther attacked the papacy, not by dwelling on the moral failings caused by the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, but rather on the failure of the Roman church to base its teachings solely on the Scriptures. No matter how good the theological development of the Roman doctrines, they are inherently wrong because they are based on the wrong foundation, namely, the claim of papal infallibility rather than the Scriptures. We must approach evolution the same way, even when our hearts want to shout, "Liars!"

Finally, there is a grave risk to our mission if we are enticed to use less-than-rigorous arguments to attack the general "aura of science" that supports evolution. Although we might discuss these in small groups or in one-on-one conversations with those whose souls are troubled by evolution, public attempts to "scientifically debunk" evolution tend to leave an impression that we are anti-intellectual and part of the anti-science lobby. Such a public image puts a stumbling block in the path of many whom we are trying to reach with the gospel of Jesus Christ. In these last days we must always be aware of the difference between being "fools for Christ" and appearing to merely be crackpots.

Rejection of the view that any form of science can equal God's revelation

Some have asserted that if science were practiced correctly, then scientific observations of the created world would inevitably lead to a true and correct understanding of how the LORD made it, as is presented in the Scriptures. This assertion, however, flies in the face of what science is. All the physical and biological sciences are based on the assumption that all observations can be explained in terms of the inherent properties of matter, energy, time, and space. All sciences employ the scientific method, which involves the steps of making observations, developing a model to explain the observations, testing the predictive ability of the model on additional data sets, publishing the results to other experts for criticism, refining the model based on testing and feedback, and repeating the process until the model is generally accepted or is discarded in favor of a better explanation. The results of scientific investigations are therefore never the absolute truth, as we accept the contents of the Scriptures to be, but are only the best explanation that can be given based on the assumptions made and the data currently available. To claim this human process can produce the same conclusions as divine revelation is to claim that human methods can learn the hidden things of God. Because the LORD lives in "unapproachable light" (1 Ti 6:16), such an assertion must be regarded as unscriptural and rejected. Things done by supernatural actions of the LORD can only be learned through divine revelation (Dt 29:29). While we can see evidence of the LORD's supernatural actions in nature (Ps 19:1), the truth about the LORD and his supernatural actions can never be scientifically validated.

The writer to the Hebrews clearly stated that it is "by faith (πίστει)" that we accept that the LORD created the heavens and the earth (Heb 11:3). He defined faith as "confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see" (Heb 11:1). If we could validate the scriptural version of the creation account by scientific investigation, then we would no longer accept it *by faith*. We would instead believe it based on scientific work. Science would be our standard of belief and, as more scientific studies occurred, it might lead us away from the scriptural account. Our understanding of a major truth of God would be dependent on what could be observed through the work of sinful men, not solely on "God-breathed" Scripture (2 Ti 3:16). Trying to prove, interpret, or buttress biblical teachings through the use of scientific methodology will therefore inevitably lead us away from the principle of *sola Scriptura*.