

How To Handle Evolution

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You are sitting in your morning history class. You gulped a hasty breakfast, ran all the way to beat the bell, and now you are trying to settle your insides down.

History. Oh, yes. You heard the teacher saying something about the textbook. The "*plonk, clunk*" of a roomful of students opening books brings your mind around.

You take your slick, official-looking textbook and open the first few pages. The first thing that greets you is a strange parade of monkey-like, man-like creatures. The one on the extreme left is stooped over and looks like an ordinary zoo inmate, but by the time he gets across the page he is walking straight and has a business suit on.

You begin to read, "Billions of years ago..." "Then about a hundred million years ago..." "Almost all scientists agree..." "Carbon 14 tests have demonstrated..."

Your mind starts to whirl. You stop reading and stare across the room, thinking, wondering. All of those zeroes. Billions of years. Strange animals, like creatures from another world. It all sounds so different from what you have read in the first few chapters of the Bible. As you stare at the back of the head of a student across the aisle, suddenly it seems to match the shape of one of those guys in the book. In fact, he appears much like a Neanderthal! Looking at him, you can almost believe evolution.

Could this stuff be right? It all sounds so scientific, absolute, authoritative.

But you *know* that the Bible is true. The evidence for it is overwhelming. Jesus Christ is real. His resurrection is a fact. What He said is true and He talked about Adam and Eve as real people. Your mind begins to settle down and a sense of relief flows through you. You know what is true.

But you are going to have to do something about this evolution thing. You meet it in history. You face it again in biology. You bump into it in other studies. How do you handle it?

Good question. Fortunately, there are some good answers. Lets look at a few principles and guidelines that should help you.

To begin with, do not be intimidated by the theory of evolution or by the massiveness of its promotions. Science does not have all the answers. It cannot. It is limited by its own ground rules. Remember, true science deals with facts--observable, testable, reproducible under controlled conditions. The origin of things is not observable, not testable, not reproducible. *This places the question of origins outside of science.*

What, then, does science have? It has some facts, called data. These belong to all of us. We have a considerable amount of data and more is being accumulated right along. We certainly do not have all the facts, only a part of the facts. Evolution is one way of looking at the facts that science does have, of explaining them. Creation is another way of looking at them, of explaining them.

Because the origin of things is an unobservable, untestable, non reproducible event in the past, the only way that we can know about it for sure is by revelation. Here is where creationists have the deciding advantage. We have inside information from the Creator. This places the fact of creation *above* science (above, but not against science).

The Bible sheds light on the facts of science, enabling us to understand them properly. We understand that God created the world full-grown, with the result that it had the appearance of age from the beginning. For example, Adam was created a full-grown man. When he was 20 minutes old he appeared to be perhaps 20 years old. The same applies to other things in nature, things that appear to be extremely old. A brand-new, grown-up creation would naturally appear to be much older than it actually is. So then, the person who gives serious regard to what the Creator has said about His own creation is in a much better position to understand that creation.

This does not make the issue one of "science" versus "religion." Evolutionism is just as much a "faith" as creationism. And data that tends to support creation are just as truly science as data that tend to support evolution. When we consider evolutionism and creationism, it is religion versus religion. When we consider the data, it is science versus science, with the creationist having a perspective that gives meaning to the facts. That is, the creationist has a frame of reference in which the facts make sense.

It is no secret that evolutionism has dominated the scientific world (and therefore education). Its basic assumptions and presuppositions have been simply taken for granted. For that reason it has been generally exempted from truly objective scrutiny. But now it is being questioned, even challenged, by some knowledgeable and reputable scientists. As a result, it is being flushed out of its privileged sanctuary and forced to defend itself in the open arena of objective scientific inquiry. In the process its vulnerability is being exposed.

Evolution is on the defensive. A mass of scientific data is mounting against it.

A full discussion of this data is not possible here, of course. When you discuss the subject, though, you should know what you are talking about. The facts are on your side and you should

familiarize yourself with at least some of them, remembering that what you learn--what anybody has learned--is only a fragment.

Perhaps your pastor can direct you to materials produced by reputable scientists who are creationists. You can secure valuable information from such scientific organizations as the Institute For Creation Research, 2716 Madison Avenue, San Diego, California 92116.

You might suggest to your instructor that you be permitted to do your term paper or a group project on the subject. Remember to document all facts with proper foot-note references and a complete bibliography. If persons knowledgeable on the subject are available, perhaps it could be arranged to have them speak to the class. Perhaps the church youth group would like to hear them. Study the theory of evolution along with the rest of the students. Do not be afraid of it. The Bible is not on trial. Your faith is not being threatened. Your class participation and test answers should demonstrate that you know the subject. If an evolutionary response is called for, you might say something like this: "The textbook says... or, "According to the theory of evolution... Stay with your class subject. In history discuss history. In science, discuss science.

Unless you intend to major in a related field, avoid dwelling on the subject over a long period of time. Give it necessary and appropriate consideration, but do not make it a personal hobby-horse. Keep balanced. When the issue comes up, take your stand. Don't hide. Don't say, "My church believes...." That's a cop-out. State what you believe, confidently and without embarrassment or apology. Some well-established scientific facts, such as the laws of thermodynamics, support creation and present insurmountable obstacles to evolution. Still, avoid saying that such-and-such a scientific fact proves the Bible. The Bible does not need proving or defending. It stands on its own merit, not on some "discovery." After all, the "facts" of science are always changing. Today's "fact" can become tomorrow's fallacy. So don't lock yourself into current scientific positions. If your faith in the Bible is based on some scientific evidence, it might fall if the evidence proves to be invalid. (Likewise, the person who rejects the Bible on the basis of some scientific evidence will find himself desperate for an excuse for his unbelief when his evidence proves to be invalid.) Base your faith in the Bible on its God-given integrity, and then you can watch the passing parade of science without being shaken. In your discussions, stay with the facts, the evidence. Avoid "stacking" so many scientists. Truth is not decided by a majority vote of scholars. The facts are far greater than anyone's knowledge of them. Guard your attitude. Be Christlike, kind. Speak in love. Avoid contentiousness, anger, sarcasm, verbal abuse. You do not have to "win," or prove your intellectual superiority. An argument usually proves nothing, accomplishes nothing. Avoid alienating or hurting others. Keep your attitude such that inquiring students (and even teachers) can talk with you seriously and intelligently. Be open and approachable. You might have an opportunity to win someone to Christ. Also, avoid a "martyr" or persecution complex. If you feel that you are being discriminated against in grading or other treatment because of your creationist position, talk to your teacher about it. Things might change for the better and they might not. Whatever happens, be patient and long-suffering. Leave it in God's hands. He will see to it that everything works out for good. Most important of all, be sure that you know your Creator. That takes care of a lot of problems and answers a lot of questions. If you have not accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, do so now. Then you will know not only where you came from, but also where you are going. And that's what really counts.

If you would like additional help and information on this subject, refer to Thomas F. Heinze's book, *Creation Vs. Evolution*. Mr. Heinze provides a scholarly, yet readable, collection of the major components of the creation-evolution debate, critically examining those facts often used to prove or refute the organic evolution theory.

Another excellent book is *Who Says?*, edited by Fritz Ridenour. This book also examines the evidence in the creation-evolution debate, including other basic questions such as the existence of God, the trustworthiness of the Bible, the "conflict" between science and Scripture, etc.