

A Summary of Theistic Evolution

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What does theistic evolution mean and why do Catholic creationists oppose it?

The atheistic formula for evolution is:

Evolution = inert matter + random chance + positive mutation + natural selection + death + eons of time.

In the theistic evolutionary view, God is integrated into materialistic philosophy, not as omnipotent Lord of all things, but as an enabler of evolution:

Theistic evolution = Evolution + God as a single symbolic concatenation, *thevolution*.

Evolution is the mechanism for all life on earth, but God set evolution in progress and guided the process of development, leading eventually to man. Genesis is styled as an allegory, in the genre of figurative language and fairy tales. Being more socially and politically acceptable than creation, theistic evolution tries to accommodate evolution and creation at the same time, as a shot-gun marriage of contraries. We are still responsible to our Creator, yet somehow the Darwinist is also seen to be credible.

Allied to theistic evolution is progressive creation, proposing that God intervened at various points in natural development, periodically creating new kinds. It allows a considerable degree of change after that, an evolutionary envelope within which further limited variation is possible. The progressive creationist would support multiple descent – a model of multiple progenitors as a forest, where kinds created in different periods would not share the same genealogical tree.

Thevolution is an ideology masquerading as both naturalism and theology. Creation and evolution are so strongly divergent that reconciliation is logically impossible. Theistic evolution's attempted conflation reduces the message of the *Bible* to insignificance. By lacking Scriptural support, theistic evolution loses meaning through its own reductionism.

The theistic evolutionist generally believes in:

- an old Earth, billions of years old
- wholly natural processes being responsible for life, once initial matter was created by God
- a figurative and non-literal interpretation of the Genesis creation account (Biblical illiteracy?)
- a God who uses evolution as a secondary and indirect means of creating life
- a *Bible* containing no usable or relevant ideas which can be applied in present-day origins science
- evolutionistic pronouncements that have priority over biblical statements
- reinterpreting Scripture when and wherever it contradicts the present evolutionary world view

Theistic Evolution: Conflicts with Theology, Revelation and the Magisterium

1) Magisterial teaching is that Scripture interpretation begins with a literal and holistic exegesis, which always considers literary styles and genres in context. *Thevolution* specifically violates this teaching by:

Denial of the supernatural – Having days be megayears and miracles a natural process refutes Scripture in order to believe evolution’s story of origins.

Denial of Adam’s maturity – Adam was fully developed when created, able to tend the garden, hear and understand divine law, name the animals, speak and make moral decisions. Adam is not evolution’s ape-man, *Homo erectus* or *Homo habilis*, a hominid that lacked these faculties.

Denial that Eve came directly from Adam, but by some sort of simultaneous sexual evolution. The two sexes just happened to evolve in the same part of the planet, mate and human natural history started. The myth of Eve is refuted by:

Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female? - *Matthew 19:4*

But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ - *2 Corinthians 11:3*

For Adam was formed first, then Eve - *1 Timothy 2:13*

Denial of a six day creation – Apes learned to walk upright and became men, it is said, by using the *Genesis* “day” figuratively as a long time. Yet in *Genesis 1* the days are numbered. Nowhere in scripture is that done if it doesn’t mean a twenty-four hour period. The exposition in *Genesis* is very clear that all the world was made in six days, while evolution demands more time. The details of Adam’s creation contrasts strongly with the origin of the other creatures created *ex nihilo*, implying that God acted in a special way when he brought the first man into being. These two different views of origins cannot ever be reconciled.

Denial of core Biblical integrity – The *Bible* is regarded as a myth, a parable, or an allegory, not as a historical report of biological, astronomical and anthropological facts given in didactic [teaching] form. Scriptural events are reduced to mythical imagery, and an understanding of the message of the *Bible* as being true in word and meaning is lost. Yet nowhere are there any indications that the creation account should be understood in any other way than as a factual report.

The work of salvation is undercut – Adam’s fall into sin was a real event, the direct cause of sin in the world:

Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned - *Romans 5:12*

Theistic evolution does not recognize Adam as the first man, created directly from the dust of the ground by God:

Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. - *Gen 2:7*

However, the sinner Adam and the Saviour Jesus are linked together in the *Bible*

by *Romans 5:17-19*:

If because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous.

Any Biblical view which deconstructs Adam's role undermines Jesus' work of redemption.

2) Original sin brought death into the world for all living things. Death before the fall of man must have occurred over the eons of evolution.

The nature of God as good is falsely represented because death and suffering are ascribed to the Creator as principles of creation.

Death due to Adam's sin is a serious challenge to theistic evolution, as many creatures already would have died in the theistic evolution process.

Evolution portrays fossils (which imply death, disease and bloodshed) as formed before people appeared on earth. Yet Scripture says that everything is in "bondage to decay" because of Adam's sin:

For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. - *Romans 8:20-21*

3) Theistic evolution is a compromise based on a contradiction. The *Bible* doesn't teach evolution, and evolutionists cannot believe the *Bible*. Sin is made meaningless, a harmless evolutionary factor, in opposition to the declaration of the Holy Spirit that sin means breaking our relation to God. This isn't resolved by adding "God" to the evolutionary scenario.

4) The Church teaches the impossibility that the first man could have been the son of an animal, generated by a beast in the proper natural sense of the term. "Only from a man can another man descend, whom he can call father and progenitor."

5) Theistic evolution transgresses the liberty of discussion allowed by the Magisterium regarding evolution. It assumes the origin of the human body from preexisting and living matter were already fully demonstrated by the scientific facts discovered up to now. Then, by reasoning on them, it ignores the sources of Revelation which demand the greatest reserve and caution in this controversy.

6) It is a consensus of modern theologians, not a Magisterial declaration, that transformism, the evolution of the first man's body from a lower species, is compatible with the faith. Two conditions are added to this concession:

The soul was immediately created by God out of nothing. Somehow God exercised a special providence over whatever process preceded the origin of man's body, so that the first man was not literally generated by a brute beast.

7) The only niche allotted to God is whatever evolution cannot explain with current scientific theory. God is reduced to filling in the unknown gaps of knowledge. Far from being immutable God Himself is changing and evolving – a God of the gaps!

8) The *Bible* provides a time-scale for history:

Both beginning and end are defined –

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. - *Genesis 1:1*

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, as a testimony to all nations; and then the end will come. - *Matthew 24:14*

The duration of creation was six days –

...for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. - *Exodus 20:11*

The age of the universe may be estimated, but not computed exactly, in terms of the Patriarchal genealogies, as more than six thousand years, not billions. But *thevolution* favors time-scales involving gigayears, for which there is no convincing and undisputed physical basis. This undermines the credibility of Scripture in other places.

9) Theistic evolution worships the false idol of Darwinism as its god, as the Hebrews worshipped the golden calf at Mt. Sinai. Scientifically it differs not from atheistic evolution, accepting purposeless, naturalistic and material processes for the origin and development of life.

10) Human presence in evolution is accidental and unplanned, a vagary of random natural selection, likely never to occur again. This view destroys the basic message of Scripture, God's love for us.

Theistic Evolution Conflicts with Science

All scientific arguments against evolution hold as well for theistic evolution. A few of these are:

- 1) The *2nd Law of Thermodynamics* and overall increase of entropy would have caused the heat death of the universe over billions of years.
- 2) The increase of genetic information complexity required for evolution has never been observed.
- 3) Even cultural anthropology does not confirm that the bridge between man and animal has been crossed by any credible facts. To read man's nature, detecting thought and volitional powers, distinguishing purely animal instincts, all from the incomplete earliest known archaeological remains – all this is raw speculation, not science.

Theistic Evolution: Conflicts with Philosophy

- 1) Intelligence and the capacity for free choice involve self-reference and self-causation. This presupposes the personal self, which only human beings possess. Nor can these capacities be rooted in matter as modifications of organically based functions, as matter has never demonstrated such capacities.
- 2) Fossil remains and primitive tools do not necessarily show the presence of morally responsible persons. Subhuman primates today evidence some tool-making ability which can be explained through imitation or instinct.
- 3) It is philosophically inconsistent to conflate God (theism) with evolution (naturalism). God's use of evolution would make Him unnecessary. Evolution has no purpose or teleology, contrary to the

God of Scriptures. Theistic evolution is inherently paradoxical, promoting a "providential randomness" where God disguises His goals with evolution as though without purpose – a purposeless purpose.

Theistic Evolution: Some Questions and Puzzles

If man's creation took millions of years through successive transformations of life-forms, why does Scripture tell us that God made man from dust?

If truly an apelike pre-human, Adam would die; so why the warning –

...but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die. - Genesis 2:17

If Adam was the end of the evolutionary line and thousands of evolving men had already died, then how could death come by Adam?

If Adam was surrounded by his ape brothers, why was he lonely? The *Bible* recounts that there was not found among the animals a suitable mate or helper for Adam.

Did God erase from Adam's mind what he used to be?

Did God also remove from his hominid relatives all recognition of Adam?

Why couldn't God have started from dirt to make man, as in the literal reading, not just re-soul an existing creature?

Did Adam evolve but not Eve? The *Bible* says she was made from Adam's side.

In what language or myth does "human evolution" mean "create from dust"(Adam) or "create from Adam's side"(Eve)? Certainly not Hebrew.

When Cain wed and bred with a woman from Nod, was she human or simian?

If Cain's wife was neither, had God made a hybrid variant of human and beast, one that wasn't sterile?

When did Adam lose his ape hair?

After the first man was ensouled and then sinned, didn't his ape brothers become potential food?

How do you understand the goodness of God if He used evolution, "nature red in tooth and claw", to create everything?

If death and suffering did not arise with Adam's sin and the resulting curse, how can Jesus' suffering and physical death pay the penalty for sin and give us eternal life? The Word of God clearly says –

For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all shall he made alive. - 1 Cor 15:22.

If the first 11 chapters of *Genesis* are allegorical, though written as plain narrative and understood by Jesus to be so, what other Biblical facts are figurative?

It is written -

But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist have been stored up for

fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men... But the day of the Lord will come like a thief and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and the works that are upon it will be burned up. - 2 Peter 3:7,10

and

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. - Rev 21 :1

Why then should God want to destroy creation and build a new heaven and earth, if the world now is just as it was when created, and He called all creation “good”?

Conclusion

Theistic evolution is rejected by both sides of its attempted dualistic embrace.

William of Ockham’s razor calls for science to “cut cleanly”, by eliminating extraneous contributions to its knowledge base and choose the simplest option. To today’s materialist that choice would be evolution. But at least the Darwinists recognize this principle of contradiction between evolution and religion by dispensing with any reference to religion, God or special creation. Theistic evolution desperately seeks the secular approval of the scientific establishment, but attempts to somehow cling desperately to spiritual values. As they are unable to face the ultimate nihilism that evolution implies, their equivocation is also found contemptible by Darwin’s followers. Ockham’s principle, applied to theistic evolution, requires a choice that the *thevolutionist* is unwilling to make.

The objective spiritual side of Catholic tradition realizes that this unholy alliance in *thevolution* is not a merger of equals. In the face of many conflicts, it is the immutable Word of God which must yield to the fickle words of Darwin or Dawkins. This cannot stand. Of all the Scripture cited above against *thevolutionary* ideas, perhaps these two verses best summarize the case:

No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. - Luke 16:13

I know your works; I know that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. - Rev 3:15,16

What we witness today is an attempt at delayed compensation, a reparation by modern theologians for the perceived error and inherited guilt of the Galilean controversy. There is no comparison between that 17th century misunderstood event and the heresy of accepting both evolution and special creation as an individual world view compatible with salvation. In some future Church council, hopefully in our lifetime, *thevolution* will be recognized and declared *anathema*. Until then, we pray that the evolutionists within the Church may come to believe the Word of God as written, and return to the faith in special creation handed down to us by the Church fathers.

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