

THE MIRACLE OF LOVE OR EVOLUTION?

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A small, conservative Christian denomination is wrestling with the problem large mainline ones have succumbed to evolution. Our Third World adherents want to hold firmly to the Bible's literal six days of Creation and worldwide Flood of Noah. Our membership in North America, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand has a significant segment who can no longer believe the literal Bible account; the earth has to be billions of years old. A "short" earth history is scientifically impossible, or at best scientifically doubtful, they say.

These scientists are employed to teach in the church's educational institutions. The Genesis account must be literally naïve, intellectual honesty implies. Academic freedom secures their tenure.

Is the Bible story of the virgin birth of Christ any more scientifically believable? Is the Exodus of Israel from Egypt historically validated? Can the miracle stories of the repeated deliverances of God's people be defended rationally? Can we hold to the resurrection of Lazarus after he had been dead four days? Does the literal, visible, personal return of Jesus make sense today?

The same conservative denomination is also riven with theological controversy over the very gospel itself. Some declare it would have been impossible for the incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ, to take upon Himself the fallen, sinful nature of humanity and live therein a life of totally overcoming or

condemning sin. Short of becoming a sinner Himself, He had to sidestep the genetic sinful inheritance of "all men." The "scientific," preponderant facts of life prove the universal nature of sin; for us ever to live a sinless life would be as impossible as a six-days Creation week. So it is said. The two ideas are parallel.

As the mainline denominations long ago gave in to evolution, so must this little conservative church also give in to the popular doctrine of continued sinning in human nature? The two ideas are deeply related.

Can we sinful humans overcome sin? Are we hopelessly entangled in continued sin? It's nice to say that Jesus is our Savior, He overcame, so we can overcome, too; but what did He actually accomplish?

If He came to fight our battle against sin with equipment that we don't have, the "victory" He claims is irrelevant to us. The only conclusion has to be that He saves us in our sins; and that is exactly the basic thesis of "Babylon's" false gospel. You can't avoid continued sinning is the idea. You are still a slave in "Egypt's" darkness.

But "the everlasting gospel" is better Good News than that; Jesus came to fight our battle with the same equipment that He has given to us, not merely offered us (if we do the right thing first, which we don't have the strength to do!). He was the Son of God but the Father has adopted us "as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, . . . to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:5, 6). It's not a

“maybe,” “perhaps,” “IF you do the impossible first.” He tells us, “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt [past tense], out of the house of bondage” (Ex. 20:2).

There is a small Protestant church that has always officially taken a firm stand that the six days of creation in Genesis 1 are true and literal. But it is now having a heart-wrenching conference as the leaders are wrestling with the creation/evolution issue. The scientists (at least the vocal ones) in the church insist that intellectual honesty requires that the church abandon its naïve belief in a literal 6-day creation 6000 years ago. They insist that the geologists and paleontologists et al. tell us that the evidence is irrefutable for man being here at least 100,000 years and the planet itself millions.

Would a dozen doctoral degrees in all the scientific branches of evolutionary study clear my mind? As a Christian who believes in Jesus as the Son of God and Savior of the world, can I believe Genesis 1 as being literally true? He did! Do scientists have a good track record of infallibility? Now I don't want to be a naïve simpleton; I must respect the intellectual level of these genius-like people. But belief in Jesus Christ grips the very vitals of my soul; if I believe in Him and in His John 3:16, can I also safely believe what He says?

“Good morning, your majesty, King Solomon!” Suppose God were to address you that way? You'd say, “But I don't have his wisdom!” But we are coming to the time when you'll need it. We face very perplexing problems: shall we believe Genesis 1-3 that God created the earth in six literal days, or

be crushed under the scientists who declare that evolution alone is the answer and ridicule us who believe in the First Great Miracle of the Bible? Shall women be ordained or is that wrong? Is salvation by faith alone or by faith-plus-works? Are the Daniel/Revelation time prophecies a day-for-a-year, or meaningless jargon? Is there a manifestation of God's “spirit of prophecy” today as clearly inspired as were the prophets of old? How can we judge between truth and subtly disguised error?

Two woman confronted King Solomon: each claimed a certain baby was hers. #1 loudly pressed her claim; #2 was more quiet. The king couldn't run any DNA tests. It seemed impossible to know who was telling the truth. Ah, he has a bright idea! He will employ the test of love. “Sorry, ladies, I can't judge which of you two is telling the truth. So, let's be fair. Bring me a knife, I'll cut the baby in two and give each of you half.” #1 simply folded her arms and awaited the result; #2 shrieked loud enough to be heard down at the Temple. “No, your majesty! Give # 1 the baby. I can't bear to see you kill it!” Love had shown the king who was the true mother.

In every theological puzzle that confronts you, where the evidence seems balanced between opposite views, don't throw up your hands in despair, and decide to sit on the fence. You can't! At the end of the road, you're going to have to decide frankly and openly between the “mark of the beast” and “the seal of God” (Rev. 13:16, 17; 7:1-4).

Look to see where is agape, the true biblical love. Don't be fooled by the foolish, shallow sentimental “love” that is the counterfeit of agape. Keeping the

commandments of God will be the final test in the great controversy between Christ and Satan; but let's remember that only "agape is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 10:10). Outward conformity to the letter of the ten commandments may mask a heart that is bitterly devoid of agape.

The "love" that is in John 3:16 is itself a very highly sophisticated truth profound enough to challenge all those dozen doctorals. Jesus is the Son of God who came from heaven, became human, took our humanity into Himself, redeemed us, brought us to His Father's "house" who adopted us forthwith as His children. That "love" is something phenomenally extra-human, itself as much a miracle beyond our grasp as God creating this earth in six days. Learn to recognize ONE miracle, and then you can believe TWO. They're both on the same footing; one we can see, and the other none of us has been able to "see" with natural eyesight, as yet.

History as the Bible tells it covers approximately 6000 years only. Thoughtful Bible students have long understood that the second coming of Christ and the close of the great controversy with Satan would occur within that period (since God created life on this planet).

But evolutionary science says that rational minds must believe the earth is millions of years old. The conflict between belief in the Bible and this long-age philosophy is intense. All the Bible prophets in general and Jesus Christ Himself accepted the Genesis account of our beginnings in six literal days—the miracle of God's creation. If that never happened, how can we be sure of other miracles

the Bible describes—the virgin birth and resurrection of Christ, for example? And if that never happened, says the apostle Paul, "[we] are yet in [our] sins," lost forever (1 Cor. 15:16-19).

Throughout the great controversy with Satan, time and again those who believe the word of God have been ridiculed; but time and again God has vindicated them. But it seems necessary that first they stand alone. "I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves," says Jesus. "But he that endureth . . . shall be saved" (Matt. 10:16-22). He asks us not to "be ashamed of Me and of My words" (Luke 9:26). Apparent conflicts in science or theology call for deep heart-searching. We don't want to be fanatics, nor do we want to be unbelieving of God's precious truth. His promise to those who exercise an intelligent faith in His word is, "Ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end" (Isa. 45:17).

Had the Sabbath been kept faithfully, it would have been an effective barrier against error and false worship.

There can be no house without a builder. Every house stands as proof that there is a builder. The Bible appeals to the existence of the world as proof that there is a Creator-God (Romans 1:20).

This Creator-God is the only true God, since all other so-called gods are devoid of creative power (Psalm 96:5; Jeremiah 10:10-12). This Creator is therefore to be worshipped supremely and exclusively.

God the Father gave the creating of all to His Son, Christ. He made the world in six days, and rested

on the seventh. Since the Sabbath thus points to the Creator as the only true God, the keeping of the seventh day is connected with the true worship of the Father and the Son. There is a distinction between the Creator and His creatures. The Sabbath keeps this distinction continually before us. Thus the keeping of the Sabbath as the Lord directs, is a distinguishing mark of the true worshippers of the only true God.

A widespread error holds that each of the six days of creation in Genesis 1 was not a twenty-four hour day but a long period of time, perhaps millions of years.

The Bible shows that they were literal twenty-four-hour days, measured from one evening to the next (Genesis 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). The twenty-four hour day is determined by the length of time the earth takes to rotate once on its axis (“the evening and the morning” of Genesis 1). The three-hundred-sixty-five day year is determined by the number of rotations the earth makes in each orbit around the sun. The month is determined by the approximate length of time the moon takes to orbit once around the earth.

How old is the earth? And how long will it be until Jesus keeps His promise, “I will come again” (Jn. 14:3)? These people are digging into the Bible record of the history of the world. What the Bible says is squarely against the theory of macro-evolution: by adding up the life-spans of the antediluvian patriarchs (from Adam to Noah), and the subsequent Bible history so there is a total picture from Creation to the first coming of Christ,

the sum comes to 4000 years—plus or minus a little according to interpretations of minor details by various scholars. This has been the view of most Bible students for several hundred years.

Adding the years since Anno Domini, the birth of Christ the Savior of the world, the total is about 2000, in fact, a bit more, making roughly a grand total of 6000 since the Bible story of Creation. Yes, scientists laugh; but there are the stark realities—either you believe the Bible or you believe the theory of evolution (that’s all it is!). There are competent scientists in all the fields of natural science who do believe the Bible record of God’s creation in a literal six days and its subsequent history; add to this the fact that Jesus believed it as well as His apostles; add the fact that millions of kind-hearted, unselfish, loving people believe the Bible and cherish “the blessed hope” of Jesus’ second coming just like the Bible says, add all this together means you have plenty of evidence on which to base a reasonable faith. The alternative: a despairing world view.

One highly respected Christian writer, Ellen G. White has written 40 or more times that the second coming of Christ will come within this period of 6000 years, implying that the “millennium” of Revelation 20 will be a “sabbath” of “rest” for a weary and worn-out planet before the joyous re-creation of a “new heavens and new earth” of Revelation 21, 22. But the 6000 years are already up!

Obviously, no. The best answer to such questions is: (1) God’s word predicts a trial of faith known as a “tarrying time” (Hab. 2:3; Mt. 25:5; Heb. 10:37). Be

patient! (2) Remember that whenever Jesus comes and “the door [for saving more people] is shut,” you and I will wish we had done more to give people the Good News (Mt. 25:10). (3) Be thankful you have one more day in which to prepare, and to share with somebody somewhere a morsel of the Bread of Life. May this tid-bit be a blessing to someone!

From what comes the seven day week? Nothing in nature accounts for it. It owes its origin to the creation of the world in six days and the Creator’s rest on the seventh. Thousands of years after creation the seven day week shows that creation week was 168 hours long, as every week since then has been.

Exodus 20:8-11 confirms this. The Lord asks us to work six days and rest the seventh, because He made the earth in six days and rested on the seventh. This commandment indicates that the six creation days were the same kind of days He allocates for our affairs each week.

No one can keep the seventh day as Christ directs and at the same time believe that it took millions of years for man to evolve from the lower forms of life. The keeping of Christ’s Sabbath commits a person to the creation of the world in six literal, twenty-four hour days. The evolutionary theory is one of Satan’s attempts to destroy the God-appointed basis for keeping the true Sabbath, his scheme for leading people away from the truth as it is in Christ.

The man-appointed substitute, Sunday, deprived the world of the Lord’s barrier against the error of evolution. The widespread acceptance of this substitute made it easy for many to be deceived.

“Faith without works is dead” James 2:20. Christ’s Sabbath commandment certifies that the keeping of the seventh day is a divinely appointed way to reveal faith in the creation of this world in six literal, twenty-four-hour days.

All who believe in creation in six twenty-four hour days should reveal their faith by keeping Christ’s seventh-day Sabbath. Among the multitudes who keep Sunday, many do not accept the evolutionary theory. They maintain their faith in the creation of the world in six twenty-four hour days. As the light shines brighter from the Word of God, many of them will see that the keeping of the seventh day is Christ’s appointed way to show their faith in His six-day creation of the world.

Which is easier: (a) to endure ridicule, or (b) be burned at the stake? (a) is not easy! Evolutionary scientists ridicule students who believe in Creation in six literal days. They represent their theories as coercive factual evidence. “You are: Stupid! Ignorant! Naïve! Superstitious!” And Creationists are embarrassed: you simply have to believe in a miracle, and “science” says miracles are impossible.

Well, if you can believe in one miracle, then you can believe in two miracles. #1 is what the Bible says about the end of the world—Jesus will return personally, visibly, and soon, and all of Revelation will be fulfilled. #2 is what the Bible says about the beginning of the world, the creation in six literal days. You can’t believe one without the other, and if you believe one you will believe the other. But believing one or both requires something called

“faith,” believing something you can’t see physically, at least not now. And there is the problem.

There is a miracle #3 that solves the problem, but it is often neglected in these creation/evolutionary debates. It is the miracle of the cross of Christ. Not that a man was crucified—thousands were; but the miracle is the kind of love that led Him to go there to His cross voluntarily. In the Bible, it is agape, a different kind of love than humans can know except by divine revelation. Agape has a “length and breadth and depth and height” that is totally unworldly, directly contrary to human nature in every respect (Eph. 3:14-21). It is a love that involved the total pouring out of oneself, emptying oneself, even to the ultimate point of relinquishing one’s eternal life (see Phil. 2:5-8).

The “death of the cross” involved enduring “the curse of the law,” what Moses called being “cursed of God” (Gal. 3:13; Dt. 21:22, 23). The sacrifice of Christ involved infinitely more than most Christian people, Catholic or Protestant, have even begun to comprehend. The agape revealed there is the miracle of miracles, the most amazing demonstration that the world and the universe have ever seen. And it's not set before you cafeteria style where you can pick and choose: either you believe it or you dis-believe it. Believing it is salvation; disbelieving it is bringing upon yourself a condemnation in a final judgment (Jn. 3:16-19). The one who dis-believes this miracle indeed deserves all the epithets that evolutionists hurl at Creationist students, but God doesn't hurl them at him. God

loves him, and weeps when he chooses to dis-believe.

Let grace-saved people accept creation and the Sabbath. The keeping of Christ’s seventh-day Sabbath is a mighty cleaver between those who accept the six-day creation of Genesis 1 and those who keep Sunday and accept evolution. The Sabbath and the six days of creation in Genesis 1 are inseparable.

On the other hand, setting aside of the Sabbath in favor of keeping Sunday is setting aside the six days of creation in Genesis 1. So the only Scriptural alternative for every one who keeps Sunday and still believes in creation is to keep the seventh day as Christ commands.

If the Sabbath loses its intended effect, all the rest of the Ten Commandments are also void, because Christ’s Sabbath commandment “seals” His law. It represents the authority of God.

Why does Satan hate the Sabbath? If Christ the Creator is ruled out in a rejection of Genesis 1, the foundation is removed from Christ as only Saviour. If the Creator is not also the Redeemer, then the plan of salvation would be a failure. Who but the Creator can re-create and restore man? Through the prophet Ezekiel Christ says, “Hallow My Sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between Me and you . . . that I am the Lord” Ezekiel 20:20.

Tens of thousands laud Christ as the best man and the greatest teacher. But they do not regard Him as being truly God. This departure from the truth never would have come if they had continued to keep Christ’s true Sabbath. Everyone who keeps

the seventh day as Christ directs is thereby committed to the Deity of Christ as God the Son, the Creator of all.

No need to believe evolution! Incidentally, we must note the fact that evolution is not a proved truth. It is only a theory, which rests on geological data which can be more satisfactorily explained by the Bible record of creation and the Flood of Noah.

Yes, through the Sabbath, we surrender ourselves totally to the Lord and place ourselves at His disposal, as His servants.

The Sabbath is God's great equalizer of men. The uneven divisions of society level out as the Sabbath comes each week. Poor men, rich men, educated and ignorant, great and small, all gather as one family to worship the Lord on His holy day.