

# 10 Misconceptions of the Christian Faith

## #2 Evolution Discredits Christianity

Christianity is not at odds with science. The most discussed controversy that secularists point to in order to advance the supposed contradiction is evolution, yet thinking Christians through the centuries have had different views about the origin of the universe and the human race. It may come as a surprise to you that not all Christians believe in a six-day creation. Before Darwin ever entered the scene, Christians (and Jews) have disagreed about the nature of the universe's origin. On the one hand, all Christians agree that the Bible's message is clear – the God of the Bible is the one and only sovereign, who created and controls all things. On the other hand, beyond this fundamental basis, Christians have differed for over 1000 years about the details of creation and the best interpretation of Genesis 1 – 2. This essay will outline a spectrum of four basic viewpoints on origins, three of which are commonly held by Christians. Christians hold different positions on this matter, without inhibiting their faith in Jesus Christ.

**1. Young Earth Creationism.** Supporters of this perspective read Genesis 1 as God creating everything out of nothing in 144 hours, and judging from genealogies in the Old Testament, creation happened about 10,000 years ago. Even though the universe looks much older than 10,000 years, it only has the appearance of age. Just as Adam and Eve were formed as fully matured adults, so the universe was created with age. Also, the fossil record can be explained by Noah's flood. Many Christians throughout history have held this position.

**2. Old Earth (Progressive) Creationism.** Old earth creationists also believe that God created the universe *ex nihilo*, but not necessarily in six, 24-hour days. Advocates of this viewpoint, also called progressive creationism, emphasize that God's creation extended over a much longer period of time. Therefore, for instance, the word "day" in Genesis 1 does not refer to a 24-hour period. "Day" stands for an indeterminate span of time. It should be noted that proponents of progressive creationism have been around before the advent of modern science. This position was not conjured up by post-Enlightenment Christians as a way to deal with the theory of evolution. Rather, it was originally a result of Christians sincerely seeking to understand what the Bible says about the beginning of history. Several well-known Christians have held this position, including Origen, Augustine, and Charles Hodge of Princeton Seminary. In his *City of God*, Augustine stated, "The world was in fact made with time, if at the time of its creation change and motion came into existence. This is clearly the situation in the order of the first six or seven days, in which morning and evening are named, until God's creation was finished on the sixth day, and on the seventh day God's rest is emphasized as something conveying a mystic meaning. What kind of days these are is difficult or even impossible for us to imagine, to say nothing of describing them." There are several variations that fall within this interpretive category, but all agree that God is the creator, just not in a week's time. Over the years, many Christians have promoted progressive creationism.

**3. Theistic Evolution.** Theistic evolution, or evolutionary creation, represents the idea that God chose to use an evolutionary process to bring about all matter and life. In this system God remains the author of creation, but instead of creating through "miraculous" means, he used "natural" ones. Theistic evolution is a more recent position among Christians for obvious reasons. Still it has attracted the support of many, including notable Christians like famed Princeton Seminary theologian B.B. Warfield, C. S. Lewis, and former head of the Human Genome Project and author of *The Language of God*, Francis Collins.

**4. Atheistic Evolution.** For the purpose of this essay, the term “atheistic evolution” is used to distinguish it from the foregoing category, theistic evolution. The essential difference, and an obvious one, between these two systems lies in whether one believes that God is involved in the process of evolution. Equally plain, Christians do not espouse this point of view.

Devout secularists are constantly putting forth the falsehood that science and Christianity are at odds (and especially that evolution discredits Christianity). Yet, throughout the centuries, thinking Christians have interpreted Genesis 1 in a variety of ways as they have tried to understand the intent of the Bible and looked to the creation around them. Moreover, many of the most famous scientists in history believed in the existence of a personal God including Galileo, Newton, and Faraday.

If you choose to ignore or reject Christianity, that is your choice, but don't do it on the false presumption that science supposedly contradicts it.

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