



A BIBLICAL CASE AGAINST
**THEISTIC
EVOLUTION**



GENERAL EDITOR

Wayne Grudem

CONTRIBUTORS

*Wayne Grudem, John D. Currid,
Guy Prentiss Waters, Gregg R. Allison,
and Fred G. Zaspel*



“Wayne Grudem has assembled an impressive group of biblical and theological scholars to address one of the most important issues of our time. The book is especially valuable for its careful characterization of theistic evolution and the following case that theistic evolution is simply not consistent with the teachings of the Bible. I highly recommend this important book.”

J. P. Moreland, Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, Talbot School of Theology, Biola University; author, *The God Question*

“In this new streamlined volume critiquing the concept of theistic evolution, Professor Grudem and several other distinguished theologians highlight the many theological problems that arise from trying to synthesize mainstream neo-Darwinian evolutionary theory with any theologically meaningful notion of design or creation. They show that facile claims about how ‘God used the evolutionary process to create’ conceal a host of incoherencies, ambiguities, and theological problems. This is a detailed, dispassionate and scholarly volume.”

Stephen C. Meyer, Director, Center for Science and Culture, Discovery Institute; author, *Return of the God Hypothesis*

“An increasing number of evangelicals are advocating theistic evolution as the best explanation of human origins, thereby denying the special creation of a historical Adam. Without taking any specific view as to the age of the earth, this important book demonstrates that theistic evolution fails to take proper account of Genesis 1–3 as a historical narrative. Leading scholars argue that theistic evolution is exegetically ill-founded and theologically damaging. Written with an irenic tone toward those it critiques, this book will help guard against false teaching in the church that undermines the gospel.”

John Stevens, National Director, Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches, United Kingdom

“The chapters are clear, detailed, and of a tone in keeping with 1 Peter 3:15: ‘with gentleness and respect.’ I consider this a valuable book for any Christian who wants to be able to give compelling answers to others who believe that theistic evolution is compatible with the Bible.”

Richard A. Carhart, Professor Emeritus of Physics, University of Illinois at Chicago

“The theistic evolution solution to the creation-evolution controversy herein encounters a substantial critique from the teachings of Scripture. This is important reading for those who wrestle with the great questions surrounding the origins of life.”

Peter A. Lillback, President, Westminster Theological Seminary

“As the debate over the origins of the universe, earth, and humans continues, and Christians grapple to understand the relationship between science and Scripture, evolution and creation, the voices in this book need to be heard. The big questions about life are simply beyond the reach of ‘objective’ analysis. This volume critiques theologically the flaws of positions that marginalize God from the process.”

James Hoffmeier, Professor Emeritus of Old Testament and Ancient Near Eastern History and Archaeology, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

“This book offers a much-needed critique of evolutionary creationism (theistic evolution), focusing on its biblical deficiencies.”

Vern S. Poythress, Professor of New Testament Interpretation, Westminster Theological Seminary

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Introduction: What Is Theistic Evolution?

Wayne Grudem

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, the contributors to this book were among the twenty-five authors of a much larger work offering a comprehensive scientific, philosophical, and theological critique of the idea known as theistic evolution.¹ Our contributions to that work focused on the Bible and theology. As we have observed the continued interest in theistic evolution among Christians, we determined that we should publish our chapters in a separate volume focusing on the incompatibility of theistic evolution with several of the most significant teachings of the Bible itself.

The ongoing debate about theistic evolution is not merely a debate about whether Adam and Eve really existed (though it is about that); nor is it merely a debate about some specific details such as whether Eve was formed from one of Adam's ribs; nor is it a debate about some minor doctrinal issues over which Christians have differed for centuries.

¹ J. P. Moreland, Stephen C. Meyer, Christopher Shaw, Ann K. Gauger, and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017).

The debate is about much more than that. From the standpoint of theology, the debate is primarily about the proper interpretation of the first three chapters of the Bible, and particularly whether those chapters should be understood as truthful historical narrative, reporting events that actually happened. This is a question of much significance because those chapters provide the historical foundation for the rest of the Bible and for the entirety of the Christian faith.

That means the debate is also about the validity of several major Christian doctrines for which those three chapters are foundational. In Genesis 1–3, Scripture teaches essential truths about the activity of God in creation, the origin of the universe, the creation of plants and animals on the earth, the origin and unity of the human race, the creation of manhood and womanhood, the origin of marriage, the origin of human sin and human death, and man’s need for redemption from sin.

Without the foundation laid down in those three chapters, the rest of the Bible would make no sense, and many of those doctrines would be undermined or lost. It is no exaggeration to say that those three chapters are essential to the rest of the Bible.

A. What This Book Is Not About

This book is not about the age of the earth. Many Christians hold a “young earth” position (the earth is no more than ten thousand years old), and many others hold an “old earth” position (the earth is about 4.5 billion years old). This book does not take a position on that issue, nor do we discuss it at any point in the book.

Furthermore, we did not think it wise to frame the discussion of this book in terms of whether the Bible’s teachings about creation should be interpreted “literally.” That is because, in biblical studies, the phrase “literal interpretation” is often a slippery expression that can mean a variety of different things.² For example, some interpreters take it to refer

² See the discussion of various senses of “literal” interpretation in Vern Poythress, *Understanding Dispensationalists* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987), 78–96. Poythress concludes, “What is literal interpretation? It is a confusing term, capable of being used to beg many of the questions at stake in the interpretation of the Bible. We had best not use the phrase” (96). See also his helpful discussion of the terms “literal” and “figurative” in “Correlations with Providence in Genesis 2,”

to a mistaken kind of wooden *literalism* that would rule out metaphors and other kinds of figurative speech, but that kind of literalism fails to allow for the wide diversity of literature found in the Bible.

In addition, any argument about a literal interpretation of Genesis 1 would run the risk of suggesting that we think each “day” in Genesis 1 must be a *literal* twenty-four-hour day. But we are aware of careful interpreters who argue that a “literal” interpretation of the Hebrew word for “day” still allows the “days” in Genesis 1 to be long periods of time, millions of years each. Yet other interpreters argue that the days could be normal (twenty-four-hour) days but with millions of years separating each creative day. Others understand the six creation days in Genesis to be a literary “framework” that portrays “days of forming” and “days of filling.” Still others view the six days of creation in terms of an analogy with the work-week of a Hebrew laborer.³ This book is not concerned with deciding which of these understandings of Genesis 1 is correct, or which ones are properly “literal.”

Instead, the question is whether Genesis 1–3 should be understood as a *historical narrative* in the sense of *reporting events that the author wants readers to believe actually happened*.⁴ In the following chapters, our argument will be that Genesis 1–3 should not be understood as

WTJ 78, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 44–48; also his insightful article, “Dealing with the Genre of Genesis and Its Opening Chapters,” WTJ 78, no. 2 (Fall 2016): 217–30.

3 See John C. Lennox, *Seven Days That Divide the World: The Beginning according to Genesis and Science* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 39–66, for a clear and perceptive explanation of these various understandings of the days of creation. Lennox favors the view (which I find quite plausible) that Genesis 1 speaks of “a sequence of six *creation* days; that is, days of normal length (with evenings and mornings as the text says) in which God acted to create something new, but days that might well have been separated by long periods of time” (54, emphasis original). He also favors the view that the original creation of the heavens and earth in Genesis 1:1–2 may have occurred long before the first “creation day” in Genesis 1:3–5, which would allow for a very old earth and universe (53).

4 In arguing for the historicity of the early chapters of Genesis, C. John Collins rightly says, “In ordinary English a story is ‘historical’ if the author wants his audience to believe the events really happened” (C. John Collins, “A Historical Adam: Old-Earth Creation View,” in *Four Views on the Historical Adam*, ed. Matthew Barrett and Ardel B. Caneday [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013], 147). Collins has a helpful discussion of what is meant by “history” on pages 146–48.

Craig Blomberg says, “a historical narrative recounts that which actually happened; it is the opposite of fiction” (*The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987], xviii, n2).

primarily figurative or allegorical literature, but should rather be understood as historical narrative, though it is historical narrative with certain unique characteristics.

Finally, this book is not about whether people who support theistic evolution are genuine Christians or are sincere in their beliefs. We do not claim in this book that anyone has carelessly or lightly questioned the truthfulness of Genesis 1–3. On the contrary, the supporters of theistic evolution with whom we interact give clear indications of being genuine, deeply committed Christians. Their writings show a sincere desire to understand the Bible in such a way that it does not contradict the findings of modern science regarding the origin of living creatures.

But we *are* concerned that they believe that the theory of evolution is so firmly established that they must accept it as true and must use it as their guiding framework for the interpretation of Genesis 1–3.

For example, Karl Giberson and Francis Collins write,

The evidence for macroevolution that has emerged in the past few years is now overwhelming. Virtually all geneticists consider that the evidence proves common ancestry with a level of certainty comparable to the evidence that the Earth goes around the sun.⁵

Our goal in this book is to say to our friends who support theistic evolution, and to many others who have not made up their minds about this issue, that the Bible repeatedly presents as actual historical events many specific aspects of the origin of human beings and other

See also the discussion by V. Phillips Long, *The Art of Biblical History* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 58–87. Long prefers the term “historiography” (that is, the verbal report of events in the past) for what I am calling “historical narrative,” but he recognizes that authors can define “history” and “historical narrative” in different ways. His conclusion is helpful: “We conclude then that historiography involves a creative, though constrained, attempt to depict and interpret significant events or sequences of events from the past” (87).

5 Karl Giberson and Francis Collins, *The Language of Science and Faith* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 49.

living creatures that cannot be reconciled with theistic evolution, and that a denial of those historical specifics seriously undermines several crucial Christian doctrines.

B. A Definition of Theistic Evolution

In brief summary form, then, the theistic evolution that we are respectfully taking issue with is this belief:

God created matter and after that did not guide or intervene or act directly to cause any empirically detectable change in the natural behavior of matter until all living things had evolved by purely natural processes.⁶

This definition is consistent with the explanation of prominent theistic evolution advocates Karl Giberson and Francis Collins:

The model for divinely guided evolution that we are proposing here thus requires no “intrusions from outside” for its account of God’s creative process, except for the origins of the natural laws guiding the process.⁷

More detail is provided in an earlier book by Francis Collins, eminent geneticist and founder of the BioLogos Foundation.⁸ He explains theistic evolution in this way:

1. The universe came into being out of nothingness, approximately 14 billion years ago.

⁶ This definition of theistic evolution was first published in *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique* (67), as a concise summary of the view we were opposing. In the paragraphs that follow, I have provided several quotations from authors who support theistic evolution in this sense, and these quotations give more detailed explanations of what the viewpoint involves.

⁷ Giberson and Collins, *Language of Science and Faith*, 115.

⁸ The website of the BioLogos Foundation (biologos.org) is the primary source for thoughtful material relating to theistic evolution.

2. Despite massive improbabilities, the properties of the universe appear to have been precisely tuned for life.
3. *While the precise mechanism of the origin of life on earth remains unknown, once life arose, the process of evolution and natural selection permitted the development of biological diversity and complexity over very long periods of time.*
4. *Once evolution got underway, no special supernatural intervention was required.*
5. Humans are part of this process, sharing a common ancestor with the great apes.
6. But humans are also unique in ways that defy evolutionary explanation and point to our spiritual nature. This includes the existence of the Moral Law (the knowledge of right and wrong) and the search for God that characterizes all human cultures throughout history.⁹

C. Objections to This Definition of Theistic Evolution

After *Theistic Evolution* was published with this definition in 2017, some reviews on the BioLogos website objected that our definition of theistic evolution misrepresented their position. The primary response was in a thoughtful and gracious review by Deborah Haarsma, president of BioLogos.¹⁰ She proposes an alternative definition of theistic evolution (though she prefers to call it “evolutionary creation”¹¹):

9 Francis S. Collins, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 200, emphasis added.

10 See Deborah Haarsma, “A Flawed Mirror: A Response to the Book ‘Theistic Evolution,’” BioLogos, April 18, 2018, <https://biologos.org/articles/a-flawed-mirror-a-response-to-the-book-theistic-evolution>.

11 The authors of material on the BioLogos website usually prefer the term evolutionary creation to the term theistic evolution, but both terms are found in their literature. We have kept the term theistic evolution in this book because it has been the standard phrase used to describe this position for a century or more in theological discussion. See, e.g., Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1941), 162: “Theistic evolution is not tenable in the light of Scripture.” Berkhof also refers to the earlier critique of theistic evolution in the book by Alfred Fairhurst, *Theistic Evolution* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing, 1919).

In addition, the term evolutionary creation seems to us to be misleading, because people who support theistic evolution do not believe in “creation” in the ordinary sense that Christians use the term, to refer to God’s direct activity in creating specific plants and animals and in creating

God creates all living things through Christ, including humans in his image, making use of intentionally designed, actively-sustained, natural processes that scientists today study as evolution.

Haarsma adds, “God guided evolution just as much as God guides the formation of a baby from an embryo” (in the previous sentence she had cited Psalm 139:13, which says, “You formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb”). She also says, “Although God in his sovereignty could have chosen to use supernatural action to create new species, evolutionary creationists are convinced by the evidence in the created order that God chose to use natural mechanisms.”¹²

But it seems to me that Haarsma’s objections only serve to confirm the accuracy of my definition given above.¹³ We could modify the definition to add more things that Haarsma advocates, but the substance of the definition would remain, as in this example:

God created matter [with regular properties governed by “natural law”] and after that [God continued to sustain matter and preserve its natural properties but he] did not guide or intervene or act directly to cause any empirically detectable change in the natural behavior of matter until all living things had evolved by purely natural processes [which God actively sustained but did not change].

In this modified definition, I have explicitly added the BioLogos belief that God actively upholds and sustains the activity of the entire natural world (as affirmed in Col. 1:17 and Heb. 1:3). I agree with

human beings; they mean only the initial creation of matter with properties that would lead to the evolution of living things. Francis Collins himself had earlier argued against using the word “creation” in connection with theistic evolution “for fear of confusion” (Collins, *Language of God* [New York: Free Press, 2006], 203).

¹² Haarsma, “Flawed Mirror.”

¹³ The definition that I am using is also consistent with the previously noted explanation of prominent theistic evolution advocates Karl Giberson and Francis Collins: “The model for divinely guided evolution that we are proposing here thus requires no ‘intrusions from outside’ for its account of God’s creative process, except for the origins of the natural laws guiding the process” (*Language of Science and Faith*, 115).

that belief (see chapter 6), so there is no disagreement at that point, and it is consistent with historical Christian doctrine. But the key point in our definition, and the point on which I strongly differ with supporters of theistic evolution, is their claim that God did not “cause any empirically detectable change in the natural behavior of matter” until all living things “had evolved by purely natural processes.” (This wording is from my definition, to which they objected.)

Haarsma does not object to this part of our definition, and in fact her proposed definition affirms the same thing: “God creates all living things . . . making use of intentionally designed, actively-sustained natural processes.”¹⁴

D. Theistic Evolution Confuses Creation with Providence

The problem with this understanding of creation is that it confuses the Bible’s teaching about God’s action in initially creating the world with the Bible’s teaching about God’s ongoing action of providentially sustaining the world. (Note the present tense verb in their definition of theistic evolution: not “God created” but “God creates.”) In another BioLogos review, Jim Stump writes, “Yes, we believe that God guides evolution, the same as we believe God guides photosynthesis.”¹⁵

But this is a misleading use of the word “guide.” People ordinarily use the word guide to refer to an action that influences the course of an object so that it moves in a particular direction or toward a particular destination.¹⁶ To influence the direction of something implies causing a change in the direction in which it was going. But the BioLogos explanation shows that they use the word guide to mean “does not influence the direction of an object but sustains it so that it continues in the direction in which it otherwise was going.” So ordinary English speakers understand

14 See a similar viewpoint in Denis Alexander, *Creation or Evolution: Do We Have to Choose?*, 2nd ed., rev. and updated (Oxford and Grand Rapids, MI: Monarch, 2014), 436.

15 Jim Stump, “Does God Guide Evolution?,” BioLogos, April 18, 2018, <https://biologos.org/articles/does-god-guide-evolution>.

16 Merriam-Webster’s online dictionary defines “guide” as “direct in a way or course” or “direct, supervise, or influence usually to a particular end” (Merriam-Webster, s.v. “guide,” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/guide>).

guide to mean “influence the direction of something,” but the BioLogos Foundation uses the word guide to mean “*not* influence the direction of something,” which is just the opposite. They are using the word guide to mean the opposite of what people ordinarily mean by guide, and in this way their statement is misleading to ordinary readers.

Regarding the distinction between creation and providence, the narrative of God’s creative activity in Genesis 1–2 gives overwhelming evidence that God’s work of creation was fundamentally different from his providential work of preserving creation and maintaining its properties today. This is the reason that theistic evolution cannot be reconciled with any acceptable interpretation of Genesis 1–2, as we will attempt to demonstrate below. In Genesis, after God created man on day 6, “God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (Gen. 1:31), and then God’s initial work of creating things was done:

Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. (Gen. 2:1–2)

E. Theistic Evolution Understands Genesis 1–3 as Figurative or Allegorical Literature, Not Factual History

At the heart of theistic evolution is the claim that the first three chapters of the Bible should not be understood as a historical narrative in the sense of claiming that the events it records actually happened. That is, these chapters should rather be understood as primarily or entirely figurative, allegorical, or metaphorical literature.

As mentioned in note 8, above, the BioLogos Foundation hosts the primary website for thoughtful material relating to theistic evolution. Some of its writers are quite forthright in their claims, such as Denis Lamoureux, who says bluntly, “Adam never existed,”¹⁷ and, “Holy Scripture makes statements about how God created living organisms that in

¹⁷ Denis Lamoureux, “No Historical Adam: Evolutionary Creation View,” in Barrett and Caneday, *Four Views on the Historical Adam*, 58. The same statement by Lamoureux is found in his article

fact never happened,” and, “Real history in the Bible begins roughly around Genesis 12 with Abraham.”¹⁸ Elsewhere on the Bio-Logos website, Peter Enns argues that the story about Adam in Genesis is not really a story about early human history but rather is a sort of parable about the history of the nation of Israel. He writes, “Maybe Israel’s history happened first, and the Adam story was written to reflect that history. In other words, the Adam story is really an Israel story placed in primeval time. It is not a story of human origins but of Israel’s origins.”¹⁹

Others are less specific about these details but still claim that Genesis 1–3 is not historical narrative. Francis Collins says these chapters should be understood as “poetry and allegory,”²⁰ and Denis Alexander views Genesis 1–3 as “figurative and theological” literature.²¹

Yet another approach comes from John H. Walton. He says the accounts of the forming of Adam and Eve in Genesis 1–2 should not be understood as “accounts of how those two individuals were uniquely formed,” but rather should be understood as stories about “archetypes,” that is, stories that use an individual person as sort of an allegory for Everyman, someone who “embodies all others in the group” (in this case, the human race).²² Therefore Walton says that the Bible makes “no claims” regarding “biological human origins,” for Genesis 2 “talks about the *nature of all* people, not the unique *material origins* of Adam and Eve.”²³ In fact, he says that “the Bible does not really offer any information about material human origins.”²⁴

In all of these approaches, the result is the same: Genesis 1–3 (or at least Genesis 1–2) should not be understood as claiming to be a report

on the BioLogos website at Denis Lamoureux, “Was Adam a Real Person? Part 2,” *BioLogos*, September 11, 2010, <http://biologos.org/blogs/archive/was-adam-a-real-person-part-2>.

18 Lamoureux, “No Historical Adam,” 56, 44.

19 Peter Enns, “Adam Is Israel,” *BioLogos*, March 2, 2010, <http://biologos.org/blogs/archive/adam-is-israel>. In the next paragraph, Enns says that he himself holds this view. Giberson and Collins mention Enns’s view as another possible interpretation of the Adam and Eve story (*Language of Science and Faith*, 211).

20 Collins, *Language of God*, 206; see similar statements on 150, 151, 175, 207.

21 Alexander, *Creation or Evolution: Do We Have to Choose?*, 185; see also 189, 197, 230, 320.

22 John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2–3 and the Human Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 74.

23 *Ibid.*, 181, emphasis original; see also 33–34, 35–45, 81.

24 *Ibid.*, 192.

of actual historical events. John Currid responds at length to this claim in chapter 2 below.

F. Theistic Evolution Claims That God Was the Creator of Matter, But Not Directly of Living Creatures

What, then, do theistic evolutionists mean when they say that “God created all things, including human beings in his own image,” as in this statement:

“Evolutionary Creation (EC) is a Christian position on origins. It takes the Bible seriously as the inspired and authoritative word of God, and it takes science seriously as a way of understanding the world God has made. EC includes two basic ideas. First, that God created all things, including human beings in his own image. Second, that evolution is the best scientific explanation we currently have for the diversity and similarities of all life on Earth.”²⁵

They frequently mean that *God created matter* in the beginning with certain physical properties and then *the properties of matter* were enough to bring about all living things without any further direct activity by God.²⁶ This eliminates the problem of any conflict with science, because modern evolutionary theory also holds that *matter by itself* evolved over a long period of time into all living things.

²⁵ <https://biologos.org/common-questions/christianity-and-science/biologos-id-creationism>, accessed 3-2-21.

²⁶ See, e.g., Alexander, *Creation or Evolution*, 436. Since the question of the origin of life is different from the question of the evolution of simple living organisms into complex organisms, some proponents of theistic evolution seem to allow for the possibility of a direct intervention of God at the point of the first creation of life. E.g., note the unspecified possibilities suggested in the words of Francis Collins: “*While the precise mechanism of the origin of life on earth remains unknown*, once life arose, the process of evolution and natural selection permitted the development of biological diversity and complexity over very long periods of time. . . . Once evolution got underway, no special supernatural intervention was required” (Francis Collins, *Language of God*, 200, emphasis added).

However, in a subsequent book Karl Giberson and Francis Collins seem to expect that eventually a materialistic hypothesis will explain how life could have originated from nonliving matter: see *Language of Science and Faith*, 169–75.

G. Theistic Evolution Claims That There Were Not Merely Two, but as Many as Ten Thousand Ancestors for the Human Race

Regarding the origin of the human race, Christians who support theistic evolution differ over whether Adam and Eve actually existed as historical persons. Some (such as Denis Lamoureux, cited above) do not believe that Adam and Eve ever existed, while others believe in a historical Adam and Eve. But even this “historical Adam and Eve” are still not the Adam and Eve of the Bible, because these theistic evolution proponents do not believe that their Adam and Eve were the first human beings or that the whole human race descended from them. They claim that current genetic studies indicate that the human race today is so diverse that we could not have descended from just two individuals such as an original Adam and Eve.

Francis Collins writes, “Population geneticists . . . conclude that . . . our species . . . descended from a common set of founders, approximately 10,000 in number, who lived about 100,000 to 150,000 years ago.”²⁷ Similarly, Denis Alexander says, “The founder population that was the ancestor of all modern humans . . . was only 9,000-12,500 reproductively active individuals.”²⁸

Therefore, those Christians who support theistic evolution and also want to retain belief in a historical Adam and Eve propose that God chose one man and one woman from among the thousands of human beings who were living on the earth and designated the man as “Adam” and the woman as “Eve.” He then began to relate to them personally, and made them to be representatives of the entire human race.

But on this view, where did this early population of 10,000 human beings come from? We should not think that they came from just one “first human being” in the process of evolution; there never was just one “first” human being from which everyone else descended. Rather, the evolutionary mutations in earlier life forms that led to the human race occurred bit by bit among thousands of different nearly human

27 Francis Collins, *Language of God*, 126; see also 207. Giberson and Collins claim that humans have descended from “several thousand people . . . not just two” (*Language of Science and Faith*, 209).

28 Alexander, *Creation or Evolution*, 265.

creatures. Some developed greater balance and the ability to walk upright. Others developed physical changes in their vocal organs that would enable complex human speech. Still others developed larger brains and the capacity for abstract human reasoning. And there were many other such changes. Over time, the creatures with *some* of these beneficial mutations had an adaptive advantage, and more of their offspring survived. Eventually they began to mate with other creatures who had *other* human-like mutations, and eventually many thousands of human beings emerged from this evolutionary process, all of them descended from earlier, more primitive organisms.²⁹

H. Theistic Evolution Requires a Reinterpretation of the Identities of Adam and Eve

What happens, then, to the biblical narratives about Adam and Eve? Denis Alexander describes several possible models (which he labels A, B, C, D, E; see note 30) by which to understand both the biblical story of Adam and Eve and modern evolutionary theory.³⁰ He favors “model C,”³¹ which he explains as follows:

According to model C, God in his grace chose a couple of Neolithic farmers in the Near East, perhaps around 8,000 years ago (the precise date is of little importance for this model), or maybe a community of farmers, to whom he chose to reveal himself in a special way, calling

29 Alexander writes, “It should not be imagined that this [modern human] population somehow emerged ‘all at once’ with the distinctive features of anatomically modern humans. The . . . population . . . which eventually evolved into anatomically modern humans, must have done so over a period of tens of thousands of years. . . . Evolution, remember, is a gradual process” (*Creation or Evolution*, 298).

30 In model A, the narrative of Adam and Eve “is a myth” that teaches eternal truths without being constrained by historical particularity (*Creation or Evolution*, 288). In model B, Adam and Eve are either a mythical couple whose story represents something of the origin of the human race, or they are part of the earliest human population living in Africa perhaps 200,000 years ago (288–89). Model C is the one Alexander favors (see main text). Model D represents an old earth creationist view, with Adam and Eve created directly by God, and model E represents a young earth creationist view (294). Alexander thinks that models D and E are scientifically indefensible (282–304).

31 Alexander, *Creation or Evolution*, 303.

them into fellowship with himself—so that they might know him as a personal God. . . . This first couple, or community, have been termed *Homo divinus*, the divine humans, those who know the one true God, corresponding to the Adam and Eve of the Genesis account. . . . Certainly religious beliefs existed before this time, as people sought after God or gods in different parts of the world, offering their own explanations for the meaning of their lives, but *Homo divinus* marked the time at which God chose to reveal himself and his purposes for humankind for the first time. . . . [Adam] is . . . viewed as the federal head of the whole of humanity alive at that time. . . . The world population in Neolithic times is estimated to lie in the range of 1-10 million, genetically just like Adam and Eve, but in model C it was these two farmers out of all those millions to whom God chose to reveal himself.³²

N. T. Wright proposes a similar explanation:

Perhaps what Genesis is telling us is that God chose one pair from the rest of the early hominids for a special, strange, demanding vocation. This pair (call them Adam and Eve if you like) were to be the representatives of the whole human race.³³

Giberson and Collins propose a similar view:

A common synthetic view integrating the biblical and scientific accounts sees human-like creatures evolving as the scientific evidence indicates, steadily becoming more capable of relating to God. At a certain point in history, God entered into a special relationship with those who had developed the necessary characteristics, endowing

³² *Ibid.*, 290–91.

³³ N. T. Wright, “Excursus on Paul’s Use of Adam,” in Walton, *Lost World of Adam and Eve*, 177. John Walton himself proposes that Adam and Eve can be seen as “elect individuals drawn out of the human population and given a particular representative role in sacred space” (Walton, “A Historical Adam: Archetypal Creation View,” in Barrett and Caneday, *Four Views on the Historical Adam*, 109).

them with the gift of his image. . . . this view can fit whether the humans in question constituted a group—symbolized by Adam and Eve—or a specific male-female pair.³⁴

As the following chapters will argue, the difficulty with all of these theistic evolution explanations of “Adam and Eve” arises because they differ significantly from the biblical account in Genesis 1–3. They all propose that many thousands of human beings were on the earth prior to Adam and Eve, and so Adam and Eve were not the first human beings, nor has the entire human race descended from them. In addition, there was human death and human sin (such as violence, instinctive aggression, and worship of false gods)³⁵ long before Adam and Eve.

I. Twelve Differences between Events Recounted in the Bible and Theistic Evolution

We can now enumerate twelve points at which theistic evolution (as currently promoted by the prominent supporters cited) differs from the biblical creation account taken as a historical narrative. According to theistic evolution:

1. Adam and Eve were not the first human beings (and perhaps they never even existed).
2. Adam and Eve were born of human parents.
3. God did not act directly or specially to create Adam out of dust³⁶ from the ground.
4. God did not directly create Eve from a rib³⁷ taken from Adam’s side.

³⁴ Giberson and Collins, *Language of Science and Faith*, 212.

³⁵ See, for example, the statement from Denis Alexander on page 23 above.

³⁶ It is possible that “dust” in Genesis 2:7 refers to a collection of different kinds of nonliving materials from the earth. My argument in a later chapter does not depend on that interpretative detail. See the further discussion of the Hebrew word for “dust” by John Currid (“Theistic Evolution Is Incompatible with the Teachings of the Old Testament”) on pages 61–62.

³⁷ It is possible that the “rib” was accompanied by other material substances taken from Adam’s body, for Adam himself says, “This at last is bone of my bones *and flesh of my flesh*” (Gen. 2:23). My overall argument in a later chapter is not affected by that difference. See the further discussion of the Hebrew word for “rib” on pages 51–52 and 198–199.

5. Adam and Eve were never sinless human beings.
6. Adam and Eve did not commit the first human sins, for human beings were doing morally evil things³⁸ long before Adam and Eve.
7. Human death did not begin as a result of Adam's sin, for human beings existed long before Adam and Eve and they were always subject to death.
8. Not all human beings have descended from Adam and Eve, for there were thousands of other human beings on Earth at the time that God chose two of them as Adam and Eve.
9. God did not directly act in the natural world to create different "kinds" of fish, birds, and land animals.
10. God did not "rest" from his work of creation or stop any special creative activity after plants, animals, and human beings appeared on the earth.
11. God never created an originally "very good" natural world in the sense of a safe environment that was free of thorns and thistles and similar harmful things.
12. After Adam and Eve sinned, God did not place any curse on the world that changed the workings of the natural world and made it more hostile to mankind.

Clearly, these statements denying what the Genesis text at least appears to teach about God's active role (or supernatural acts) in creation, about the existence of an original man and woman from whom the rest of the human race is descended, and about the moral fall of human beings as the result of the sin of Adam, presuppose the truth of contemporary evolutionary theory. They also presuppose the truth of the evolutionary narrative about the origin of man by way of undirected material processes from lower primates—as the proponents of theistic evolution openly acknowledge.

38 Some advocates of theistic evolution may claim that human beings prior to Adam and Eve did not have a human moral conscience, but they would still admit that these human beings were doing selfish and violent things, and worshipping various deities, things that from a biblical view of morality would be considered morally evil.

In fact, each of these twelve claims contradicts one or more parts of the text in Genesis 1–3, if it is understood as historical narrative (as we will argue that it must be understood).

The following chapters will attempt to demonstrate specific ways in which theistic evolution is incompatible with belief in the historical truthfulness of the Bible and with historical Christian doctrine.

In chapter 2, John Currid analyzes in further detail specific Old Testament passages that are incompatible with theistic evolution.

In chapter 3, Guy Waters similarly analyzes specific New Testament passages that are incompatible with theistic evolution.

In chapter 4, Gregg Allison argues that, throughout the history of the church, those who were recognized as leaders and teachers in the church were required to affirm the belief that God is the “Maker of heaven and earth, and of *all things visible* and invisible” (Nicene Creed), an affirmation incompatible with theistic evolution.

In chapter 5, Fred Zaspel concludes that the eminent nineteenth-century Princeton theologian B. B. Warfield, though often cited as a supporter of theistic evolution, would not have agreed with theistic evolution as it is understood today.

In chapter 6, I attempt to show that the aforementioned twelve details of the Genesis narrative that are denied by theistic evolution supporters are affirmed as historical fact by several New Testament writers. In addition, I will argue in chapter 6 that to deny all historical import to what the biblical text claims (as opposed to what an evolutionary reading of the text might impose on it) would undermine a number of core Christian doctrines.