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The Theology of Origins: An Analysis of the Theological Implications of Popular Christian Beliefs on Creation and a Proposal for a Better Solution.

A Thesis Submitted

To the Teacher and Students of Advanced Apologetics

By

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[1] The original copy of this thesis used the term "active theistic evolution," but has since been replaced by Evolutionary Creationism.

A Note to the Reader

This thesis strays from the usual academic paper in regards to its organization and linguistic style as I, the author, attempt to offer a theologically sound proposal of human origins. As one would realize by reading the title, this thesis deals with the varying beliefs of human origins and creation within the Christian community. Fiat Creationism, Progressive Creationism, Intelligent Design and Theistic Evolution are summarized in the following sections and are then followed by a small section that offers a brief explanation of their most obvious shortcomings. At the end, I will propose a solution that I have concluded is the most theologically sound and scientifically accurate.

One must understand that in each section of creation theories, I will attempt to embody the beliefs of each theory. For example, in the first section regarding Fiat Creation, I will do my best to propose a comprehensive summary of Fiat Creationism, while forming the argument and writing as a Young Earth Creationist would; I will then move on to Progressive Creation, Intelligent Design and Theistic Evolution in the same way. After stating their best arguments, I will provide a section in which I summarize their failures and attempt to deconstruct the arguments. A proposition for a new understanding of Evolution in the Christian community will be explained through Evolutionary Creation (EC). The thesis holds its purpose in arguing that the theory of Evolutionary Creation is a theologically sound theory of human origins. I am not interested in arguing the accuracy of science for Young Earth Creationism, Progressive Creationism or Evolution; but rather the focus is on the hermeneutical techniques and theological implications of these creation theories.

Introduction

Today, in the 21st century western world, the discussions regarding the relationship between science and faith have dominated many schools of thought. It is a popular misconception that as scientists become equipped with new evidence to explain natural phenomena, the need for a God becomes increasingly irrelevant. In the Christian community, understandably so, many believers have in turn become hostile to areas of scientific discovery and discussion, believing that there is a dichotomy between science and theism. However, these believers fail to realize that the continuing discoveries of the scientific community should be exciting, as they allow mankind to learn more and more about God Himself and the methods in which He designs and works in the world.

Many Christians become anxious that theologians who accept scientific explanations such as the Big Bang Theory and evolution are rejecting the need for a God and attempt to "baptize the science" and forcefully shove the ideas into the biblical text. However, this claim is a gross misrepresentation of how science is influencing faith and vice-versa. For example, the modern audience tends to read the Genesis narrative with a presupposition that the text speaks to material origins and as a result either twists the text into integrating science or forces science out of the text. However, both of these methods result in the reader gaining a misunderstanding of what the *Parashat Bereshit* was intended to say to the ancient audience in regards to creation and origins.[2] The ancient people viewed the world as functional, which resulted in the asking of distinctly different questions about the universe than what we ask today. Failing to read the

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[2] The *Parashat Bereshit* is the portion of the Torah that includes the Genesis creation narrative.

Genesis narrative as it was intended is a colossal hermeneutical mistake and causes one to fail in reading the text for all that it is worth.

One of the most recent discussions regarding science and faith has emerged in the last few decades regarding the theory of evolution. The history of the debate is difficult to track due to the sharply contrasted opinions of Christians today and in the time of Charles Darwin, the founder of modern evolutionary theory. Interestingly, when Darwin came out with his theory of evolution in "*The Theory of Origins*," the response of the church was more in line with "okay, so that is how God did it."[3] In contrast, today there is an ongoing tension and debate between believers who subscribe to the various tenets of creationism. The Christian community in America seems to have the most disagreement with those who accept an evolutionary model of biological origins. It is correct that a neo-Darwinistic perspective of origins is fiercely incompatible with faith, however, that is not what the theistic evolutionist would propose.[4] Rather, a Christian who believes in evolution recognizes the process of evolution as the means in which God has created and continues to create the Earth and its life forms.

Unlike the view held by Fundamentalists, Theistic Evolutionists believe that the study of the natural world and science gives humans a deeper understanding of Scriptures and their creator, YHWH. It is true that often times Theistic Evolution sounds much like an idea birthed from Epicureanism or a Deistic view of the Lord; however, when understood correctly, Evolutionary Creation is a theologically sound version of human origins.

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[3] Ted Davis, "Debating Darwin-How the Church Responded to the Evolution Bombshell," Biologos Foundation. www.biologos.org (accessed November 21, 2017).

[4] neo-Darwinism is a theory that states that all life, including intelligent human life, came about purely by naturalistic process.

Fiat Creationism

Fiat Creationism, or Young-Earth Creationism (YEC), is a world and human origins theory that states that the universe and all life in it was created by YHWH in a literal six-day period about 6,000 years ago.[5] Young Earth Creationists claim to abide by the most literal reading of the Biblical account of creation. Church fathers such as Ephraim, Basil of Caesarea, and Ambrose of Milan all denied the analogy of Genesis and held fast to a literal reading. Historically, YEC has been the most common Christian belief regarding the creation of the world and the origin of life. However, throughout the years, leaders in a variety of academic disciplines have developed the theory of human evolution, evidence for an old earth and other beliefs contradictory to YEC. Regardless, Fiat Creationists claim to remain the most theologically sound and divinely inspired belief regarding human origins.

Hermeneutics of Genesis 1-2

Fiat Creationists believe strongly in both the inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible. The fact the the Bible is both without error and always true should result in understanding the book of Genesis literally, just as the Old and New Testament authors did. As a faithful follower of Jesus, one must believe His divinely inspired Word; the inerrancy of Scripture claims that the canonized Bible is "God-breathed" and has no error.[6] In English, this idea has been termed as "divinely inspired Scripture;" however, this wording does not convey the full meaning of the relationship between Scripture and truth. The word used to describe this doctrine in the New

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[5]Ken Ham, "Creation," Answers in Genesis. www.answersingenesis.org (accessed September 5, 2017).

[6] For the purpose of this discussion, the canon refers to the 66 book Protestant Bible.

Testament is *theopneustos*; made up of *theos* (God) *and pneustos* (breath/wind).[7] The idea stated in the Greek conveys that the Scriptures were not inspired by God but were expired by God. In other words, the Lord did not breathe into Scripture in order to bless it, but rather breathed it out. The Word of God is not a collection of stories that the Lord approved, but rather, they are His truth provided to man. Fiat Christians also hold to the belief that the Holy Bible is infallible; the Bible is wholly true and useful, it will not fail to achieve its purpose. As a part of God's essence and character, He is completely trustworthy and perfect; likewise, the Scriptures breathed out by God are also wholly trustworthy and free from error. The Christian faith is not a stranger to those who believe that the biblical account of creation is solely a "myth" or "fable." It is dangerous to place Genesis on the same level as any other fictional document that came from that time period, including cosmology. When treating Genesis as a historical account, which the inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible imply, one must be careful to read the text just as it was written.

Much debate between the tenets of the Young and Old Earth Creation theories focus on one word- *yowm,* which is the Hebrew transliteration used in the creation account that is translated as "day."[8] Because this word has been used in various Hebrew texts to describe a "season" or "age" of time, Old Earth Creationists use that observation in order to reject a literal 24-hour period. *Yowm*, however, when used to describe a long period of time, is clearly distinguished from a literal day within its context. For example, Isaiah 30:8 states, "go now,

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[7] James Montgomery. Boice, *Genesis: an expositional commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982).

[8] Denis Oswald Lamoureux et al., *Four views on the historical Adam* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013).

write it on a tablet for them, inscribe it on a scroll, that for the time [*yowm*] to come it may be an everlasting witness."[9] In many cases, the Hebrew word *yowm* is translated as an unpredicted length of time; in these cases, as illustrated in Isaiah, the context of the word clarifies this so that the translator can confidently substitute the English word "time" as opposed to "day." Evolutionary and Old Earth Theorists fail to recognize that the only time *yowm* implies a long span of time is when the context clearly states it.

Every other instance of *yowm* in the Old Testament appears with "evening and morning," or a number in order to deliberately refer to a 24-hour day; this contextual specification is exactly what is observed in the Genesis narrative.[10] Throughout the second through sixth days of the creation account recorded in Genesis one, it is written that the Lord stated "and there was evening and there was morning, the [third] day."[11] The author's inclusion of this wording presents the idea that each day of creation was a literal day, with a sunrise and a sunset. One could ask the Old Earth Creationist: if the author wanted to portray a literal six-day creation, how much more obvious could he have been? Not only does the chosen language of the creation account show that the author meant to speak of a literal six-day creation, but the authors of both the Old and New Testaments also accepted YEC and the literal reading of Genesis.

Old Testament Writers and Creation

The writers of the Old Testament often refer to the creation narrative as historical fact, not a poem or parable to portray some spiritual truth. First, it is worth noting that Moses, the

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[9] Unless otherwise stated, Scripture will be in the English Standard Version.

[10] James Montgomery. Boice, *Genesis: an expositional commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982).

[11] Genesis 1:3-28

author of Genesis, is cited to be a unique kind of prophet. Numbers 12:6-8 clearly states that the Lord did not provide him with obscene language, but rather clear wording:

> Then He said, "Hear now My words: if there is a prophet among you, I, the Lord, make Myself known to him in a vision; I speak to him in a dream. Not so with My servant Moses; he is faithful in all My house. I speak with him face to face, even plainly, and not in dark sayings; and he sees the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against My servant Moses?

Because of the way that divine truth was revealed to Moses, readers of the Scriptures should take his words to be both literal and historical. Authors of the Torah, Historical Books, and Wisdom Books also recognized this distinction when they spoke of creation.

David, the author of the Psalms, often speaks of the creation with parallel language to Genesis. For example, in Psalm 33:6-9 David states, synonymous to the language used in Genesis, that when the Lord spoke, the creation came to be:

> By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host. He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap; He puts the deeps in storehouses. Let all the Earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him! For He spoke, and it came to be; He commanded, and it stood firm.

YHWH did not have to wait millions of years for His creation, but rather, His commands were supernatural, standing fast after they were spoken into existence. Similarly, the 136th Psalm speaks first of creation, then of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and goes on to describe the parting of the Red Sea along with other historical accounts of great miracles of God[12]. The Psalmist is using poetic language to praise God for His obvious historical actions. This pericope of Scripture begins with the recounting of creation as told by Genesis, proving that the events

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[12] James Montgomery. Boice, *Genesis: an expositional commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982).

spoken of were regarded as concrete historical accounts- not as text that happens to be a mythological story while the rest of the Torah remains factual.

New Testament Writers on Genesis

The New Testament is known to include extensive genealogies of the lineage of Jesus as observed in the gospels of Luke and Matthew. The lineages begin with Adam and Noah in which they share approximately the same distance in age, 1,000 years, as the next man in the lineage, Abraham, who is also roughly 1,000 years older than Noah.[13] Simply put, these genealogies represent a pattern that Adam could only fit into if a Fiat Creationist view is held. In the recorded genealogies of the New Testament, Adam is understood to live 1,000 years before Noah as the other men in the genealogy are-there are no gaps or holes within the pattern. Also, by even citing Adam as the root of the lineage of Christ, this elicits the idea that the New Testament writers attributed the origin of life to begin with Adam, as told by Genesis.

The Apostle Paul, author of many foundational gospels in the New Testament, spoke often in terms citing a literal Genesis. Much of Paul's theology deals with Jesus as the Second Adam and the historical Adam in general. The importance of a historical Adam will be discussed in the next section. Other than the affirmation of Adam as a literal figure in the historical account of Genesis, Paul also suggests that human beings were there in the beginning of creation. In Romans 1:20 Paul tells us, "For His [God's] invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made." This Scripture affirms that the nature of God has been perceived by humans ever since the world was created-not billions of years after. In his letters to the Colossians, Paul

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[13] Larry Pierce and Ken Ham, "Are There Gaps in the Genesis Genealogies?," Answers in Genesis. www.Answersingenesis.com (accessed September 5,2017).

warns the people "See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition."[14] This warning against the empty deceit of this World should be taken to heart by all believers who are being swayed by secular claims regarding creation and origins. Paul cited much of the Genesis account in his writing involving theology and understanding the nature of God, demonstrating that he took the Genesis account of creation as a factual account of divine action.

When writing, Peter also specifically warned against believers being swayed by Secularists to believe in the Word as *muthos* (myth). In his warning, Peter refers to the ancient Naturalists who believed that the physical world was the extent of creation: "They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."[15] As demonstrated by Peter, the apostles were very diligent to affirm that the things told in the Bible were in fact truth and not mythological. Many times, they warned the believer from being caught up in the distractions of those who reject the supernatural creation of Genesis. Peter's warning should be taken seriously by Christians today just as much as during the day in which he wrote it. With the influx of arguments challenging the authority of Scripture, it is crucial for the believer to hold fast to the Word of God and not be swayed by the agenda of Naturalism.

The most important figure of the New Testament for Christians is obviously the person of Jesus. Jesus Himself spoke of Genesis with reverence and historical merit; therefore, the Christian should follow His teaching on Genesis closely and accurately. For example, in Luke

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[14] Colossians 2:8.

[15] 2 Peter 3:4

24, Jesus is stressing the importance of "believing all the prophets have said." Jesus Christ calls those men foolish who choose to reject the truth of the prophets and Scriptures, such as Moses and the book of Genesis as it was not unusual for Jesus to rebuke His listeners for not trusting in the divine revelations recorded in the Word[16] Furthermore, when discussing marriage and divorce, Jesus alludes to Adam and Eve as the first married couple and speaks of them as two real people; "he who created them from the beginning made them male and female."[17] Jesus himself seems to stress the importance of understanding the text of the Bible and treating Adam and Eve, as well as the rest of Genesis, as factual.

The Gospels present the timing of the creation of Adam to be very close to that of creation itself, allotting for the traditional 24-hour days in creation. Verses such as Mark 10:6 ("But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female") and Luke 11:51 ("from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary") demonstrate that both Adam and Abel existed very close to the beginning of creation, not billions of years after as an evolutionary or old earth framework would suggest. The claim that Jesus was just speaking down to His audience so that they could understand Him is incorrect and seems to imply that Christ is a liar and/or incapable of knowing scientific origins of His own creation; rather, Christ Himself is Truth and never intentionally misled or deceived His audience. He taught on the basis of God's truth in the Bible, as opposed to the condemned Pharisees who taught according to the cultural tradition. Jesus was constantly stating things that were counter-cultural and resulted in persecution. He was not afraid to make a claim for something that was

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[16]Ken Ham, "Jesus and Genesis," Answers in Genesis. answersingenesis.org (accessed September 7, 2017).

[17] Matthew 19:4

not believed by the majority of people, the highest leaders of the church, or the authorities of the state.

An analysis on the treatment of Genesis by biblical writers provides that there is Scriptural support to read Genesis as historical. The claim that the creation account is mythological is not supported by biblical evidence; therefore, one must accept the supernatural account of creation proposed by Moses in Genesis. As scientists attempt to come to terms with how the Earth could possibly produce the diversity seen today, believers begin to try and reconcile the science with what the church largely believes about creation. This thought process is quite dangerous because Genesis is not just one isolated Bible story-it affects everything Christians know and believe about Christ, such as how the curse of sin and death came into the world. Correct hermeneutical techniques and properly interpreting the text of the Bible is a skill that Christians often bicker about. However, when it comes to the creation of the World and the origin of life, such a disagreement not only affects how the reader interprets the first book of the Bible, but also how the theology and metanarrative of the Bible are understood.

The Historical Adam

It is vital to accept Adam as the single, first historical man who is the head of all humankind. Not only is Adam essential for the understanding of human origins, but the actions and implications of Adam give rise to the basic Christian doctrines regarding sin, death, redemption, and the nature and character of God. The first point to make is that the Scripture refers to Adam as one man, not multiple men.[18] The text refers to Adam both with and without a personal pronoun in various instances. The first appearance of אָדָם, the Hebrew noun "Adam,"

[18] Evolutionary theory either rejects a historical Adam or claims that he represents all the members of the primitive species at the time.

in the first chapter of Genesis contains no definite pronoun because this is the word's first appearance in the text.[19] Immediately following, in verse 27, the author uses a pronoun to refer to "the previously mentioned man," Adam. The proper name, including the definite pronoun, once again occurs in the instance where Adam was commanded to name the animals-an appropriate time to use one's name since in in many instances the *Bereshit* (the Jewish reference to the creation narrative) presents Adam as a single person.[20] Though there are mentions of Adam lacking a personal pronoun, this does not negate the fact that the author of Genesis also uses the word to refer to a singular man's name-Adam. The Lord created one man from the dust, He breathed the breath of life into one man, God commands this individual of what he can and cannot do, He gives this man the responsibility to care for the Earth, and Adam is referred to as one living being- not hundreds. But perhaps the most compelling argument that Adam was alone is that it is directly stated in Scripture; Genesis 2:18 declares that the Lord saw that the man he created was alone, and without a woman he could not fulfill the mandate to be fruitful and multiply. If there were hundreds of creatures evolving just like him, how could he be alone? While naming the animals, Adam looks around at the creatures and sees none like him; clearly the individual Adam is the only human being at this time.

The creation of Eve from Adam's rib is an event that cannot be replicated by evolving species. God only created a woman from a man's flesh in one unique event during the original creation. Adam reveres Eve as a unique and new creation, not one that has been nonchalantly coming about through billions of years. The writer of Genesis made it clear: Adam and Eve are

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[19] James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: an expositional commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982).

[20] Ibid.

the one and only progenitors of the entire human race. They came about through intentional and prompt creation of God, not progressively coming about by natural processes.

Starting in Genesis and continuing through Revelation, Adam is linked to Noah and other biblical texts as demonstrated above. The Biblical authors spoke of Adam with the assumption that he was the physical and legal head of the human race. Even Jesus Christ Himself was referred to as the Second Adam in reference to the first human at the beginning of creation.[21] The entire Biblical narrative focuses on the solution to the problem of sin which was instigated by Adam and Eve, illustrating that the historicity of Adam is crucial to the Christian faith.

Theological Survey: The Ramifications of The Fall

In accordance with the proper hermeneutics of Genesis 1-3, the reader must not claim that the Fall is merely a fable or legend. There is no moral lesson attached as a fable would imply, and there is no heroic deed done by a courageous hero as a legend would read. If this is a myth or parable, what is the lesson to be learned?[22] Genesis appears simply as an unfolding of historical events. After dismantling the arguments to not read The Fall as factual due to its structure or wording, it is important to realize the importance of a literal Fall as it relates to the entirety of the Christian faith.

To understand the consequences of the Fall, one must realize the condition of creation before the disobedience of Adam. Saint Augustine developed the discussion on human nature and the implications of the Fall that most Christians abide by. The creation and human nature was first created *vitium,* or without fault; a perfect and blameless Creator would not have created

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[21] The implications of the Second Adam will be discussed in a later section

[22]James Montgomery Boice, *Genesis: an expositional commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982).

anything with intentional faults or imperfections. When the Lord finished each step of His initial creation, the text claims that He "saw that it was good."[23] Everything in creation was acknowledged as good, blessed by the Lord, affirms the nature of God and conveys His creation as inherently perfect. Furthermore, original sin was applied only by a deliberate and specific act of human free will, as seen in Genesis 3, not a side effect of being created. Obviously, in the world today there is death, evil, sin and suffering, which Augustine argues is a direct result of the disobedience of Adam and Eve. They were given responsibility over the Earth and commanded not to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil; by doing so the Lord was reminding them that although they have responsibility, while God has ultimate dominion. According to the account in Genesis, Satan began tempting the woman by attacking the validity of God's Word, claiming, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."[24] The prideful spirit of the man and woman caused them to act in disobedience to God's command and eat of the fruit. This initial event of turning away from the commands of Christ is known as the Fall. The theological implications of this event are enormous-it is the basis of the entire Christian faith.

Original Sin

In order for a Savior to be necessary, one must be imperfect, needing to be saved. The orthodox doctrine of original sin states that because of the disobedience of Adam, all human beings are born into a system of sinful nature passed down through the first man, Adam. In Romans 5:12, Paul states that "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." Because of

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[23] Genesis 1:31

[24] Genesis 3:4

the Fall, mankind is separated from right relationship with Christ and, unless they are transformed by His grace, will be trapped in the evilness of sin. As the legal head of humanity, Adam sinned, and this brought on a common condition and ramification for mankind. The once perfect relationship between God and man was severed, and sin now separated them.

Initially, the Lord's creation was perfect, man was made in the image of God with moral responsibility and free will, but it did not take long for man to abuse these privileges and, as a result, humankind entered into the sinful nature of God's (now corrupted) creation. The entire story of Christ unfolds from this very doctrine; the metanarrative of the Scripture is all about the fallen nature of man, his need for God, and the plan to bring His Kingdom and creation back to perfection. Without original sin, mankind would not need a savior, and the Orthodox Christian doctrine conserving the human condition would, in turn, be dissolved. When Evolutionary Creationists propose their theory of human origins, they fail to realize the importance of one man, Adam, the legal and physical headship of humanity, disobeying God and casting the curse of sin upon mankind. In the case of evolution, one would have to reinterpret the text in order to imply that hundreds of human beings were slowly being integrated into the plan of God and that it was not one event that instilled original sin as Genesis directly states. The author of Genesis intended for the reader to understand that the first individual's sin is what is responsible for the curse of sin entering into the world at all. Before this action against God, man had the ability to sin because of his moral responsibility; however, after the Fall, mankind now is unable not to sin-it is part of his nature. Without acknowledging the consequences and seriousness of rebellion against God, one would never understand the grace of God as displayed throughout the entirety of the Scriptures. If one action of mankind is responsible for sin, then a single origin must be

accepted; otherwise,, one must attribute the entrance of sin to God Himself. Rejecting this fundamental doctrine is only one of the unorthodox implications of contrasting theories of human origins.

Death as a Result of the Fall

Another consequence of Adam and Eve's sin and the Fall is the entrance of death into the perfect creation. Again, Paul describes in Romans 5:12 the base of this doctrine: "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned." The apostle Paul attributes the reality of death as a consequence of the Fall. The Lord is life-giving in nature, and therefore, if everything in His original creation resembles Him and is declared "very good" by Him, then it certainly did not include death. Even when warning Adam and Eve about eating the fruit of the tree, the Lord states that if they disobey "they will surely die." This implies that death was not something that was a part of the original creation, but rather, is solely a result of man's outright rebellion against God. After the Fall, while God is cursing the man and woman, He directs to Adam: "from dust you came and to dust you shall return."[25] The Lord is again stating that the reality of death is a direct cause of the disobedience and Fall of man.

In addition to Genesis, in multiple New Testament passages such as 1 Corinthians 15:22, death is attributed to Adam: "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." Old and New Testament authors often cite Adam as the sole cause of death. Throughout the Scriptures, death is always the enemy and was not a part of God's perfect creation but will be dissolved in the New Creation. Any Old Earth or Evolutionary theory of human origins must

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[25] Genesis 3:19

accept death before the sin of Adam and could not hold the truth that death enters post-Fall. The fossil record and the process of evolution itself shows animals eating other animals, natural selection, and an abundance of death even in the realm of plants. In order to hold an old earth view, one would have to claim the belief that death was not a result of sin, but it was a part of God's original and flawless creation.

The Second Adam and New Creation

The message of the Gospel of Christ Himself also revolves around the Genesis account of creation and the historicity of Adam. The Gospel centers around the fact that the first man did not uphold the commands of Christ in His creation, but rather brought sin and death into the nature of humankind. Jesus Christ, referred to in the New Testament as the Second Adam, must come to Earth in order to 'undo' the manipulation of God's commands. If the historicity of Adam is denied, then so is the need for Jesus' resurrection and the entire Gospel message. Paul recognized the parallels and contrasts between Jesus and Adam and often cites them as theological truths. For example, 1 Corinthians 15 portrays the significance of Christ's actions as undoing the disobedience of Adam: "For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive," here, the theology of the gospel is solidified. The creation, Kingdom, and human condition were offset by the creation itself through the rebellion of the first man against God. The Last Adam, Jesus, has come to Earth in order to pay the penalty for our sins, heal diseases, overcome death and tell everyone about the hope of a New Creation.

Though many passages compare the issue Adam created to how Jesus will reconcile the consequences of his disobedience, Jesus Christ and Adam are also contrasted later in the passage:

"The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual that is first but the natural, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven." Paul is stressing that all the mortal and faulty actions Adam committed will not be carried out by Christ, but in contrast will be undone and set right. Adam's death resulted in sin and death for all men, while Christ's death results in the promise of life for the believer. The citing of Jesus Christ Himself as the Second Adam elicits that the historicity of Adam and the infallibility of the Genesis account are essential for understanding why Christ came, died and rose again. Humanity has adopted the nature of Adam as a sinful and cursed person, but one day mankind will adopt the nature of The Last Adam and achieve God's divine plan.

Without the implication of a perfect creation that was perverted, the New Creation spoken of throughout the New Testament would be irrelevant. Many times throughout Scripture such as the books of Hosea, Isaiah, and Revelation, the hope of a New Creation is cited. The New Creation is described as one being free of sin, death, disease and other consequences derived from the Fall. In the beginning, the Lord made His creation perfect, therefore, a Christian's hope should be in grounded in the reconciliation and return to the original flawless creation. Old earth theorists, as previously discussed, accept death and diseases to be a part of creation even before the Fall. If they cannot hope in the reconciliation of God's creation before sin entered into the world, then what divine plan are they anticipating? The Lord will bring His creation back to Him and to the created order that was present before the rebellion of mankind.

A Fiat Creationist view is most compatible with Christian theology. There are no conflicts in the reading and interpretation of Genesis, the doctrine of original sin, the historical

Adam, the curse of death, Jesus' portrayal of the last Adam or with the hope of New Creation. Baptizing modern science in order to fit within the biblical narrative is dangerous because it undermines the authority of Scripture and challenges orthodox Christian doctrines.

Progressive Creationism

The Progressive Creation Theory (PCT) claims that YHWH began the formation of the world with a 'big-bang' millions of years ago while the creation of the world and its inhabitants develop progressively over periods of time lasting millions of years. Each "day" wrote about in the Old Testament book of Genesis represents an age of time in which a specific aspect of God's creation is uncovered. This tenant of Old Earth Creationism rejects the literal 24-hour day in the creation account and accepts a progressive, continuous creation that was initiated by God billions of years ago. In Christian theology, PCT has historically been rejected; however, a recent discussion has emerged from apologist and scientist Hugh Ross, who is at the forefront of the development of the modern theory of Progressive Creation.[26] The argument accepts popular cosmological beliefs concerning the big bang, geological ages, and the age of the Earth while holding fast to a theologically sound position of Adam, death, the New Creation, and the interpretation of the book of Genesis.

Hermeneutics of Genesis 1-2

The book of Genesis is not solely a mythological tale in order to convey spiritual truths, but rather a divinely inspired account of creation that has the miraculous characteristic of scientific predictability. Many proponents of the belief that the book of Genesis teaches scientific nonsense and must, therefore, be classified as a myth or allegory, fail to recognize the point of reference in which Genesis one is written. If one reads the creation account in Genesis from the popular perspective of God looking down from the Heavens and onto the Earth, then they would be correct, that in accordance with scientific findings, Genesis is nonsense.

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[26] Hugh Ross, *A Matter of Days: Solving a Creation Controversy (Covina, CA: RTB Press, 2015).*

However, within a PCT belief system, there is an obvious neglect to realize the ancient author's point of reference in the recalling of this creation account.

The first verse of Genesis does indeed make claims in which the point of reference is that of a God looking down upon the Earth, but in Genesis 1:2, this shifts. The verse reads as follows: "the Earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." The shift is observed when the author begins to describe creation from the perspective of a human standing on Earth and looking up to see "the Spirit of God hovering over the waters."[27] The shift is subtle and quite easy to miss, but nevertheless it is still there- the point of reference for the entire creation account now lies in the view of someone on the Earth looking up to the Heavens. This allows the reader to realize that the creation narrative is told by a person on Earth observing a progressive revealing of creation, not an account of God revealing what He is creating in chronological order of the days depicted in the Genesis creation week. By recognizing this shift of reference, the book of Genesis has actually predicted and affirmed every universally undisputed scientific fact about initial conditions of the Earth and progress of creation.[28] The order of creation in the book of Genesis is often claimed to be incompatible and incoherent in regards to scientific findings; however, when one accepts the shift of the frame of reference in the text, the order in which Genesis is displayed predicts and affirms modern scientific evidence.

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Hugh Ross, "The Science of Genesis and the Anthropic Principle" (lecture), October 24, 2016, accessed September 20, 2017.

Duel Revelation

Many Fiat Creationists would imply that the Bible is the one and only revelation of God which humans can experience in order to know more about Him and His Kingdom; however, Scripture often points to the truth that is found when one studies the physical creation of God- the Earth. One of many verses regarding God's relationship to nature is found in Romans 1:20 when Paul writes, "Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made." Other Scripture also affirms that the Lord's creation is one of the ways in which His people can study and learn more about Him. Job also speaks on the creation in regards to the Lord; "Ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or speak to the Earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish of the sea inform you. Which of these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this?" Job is claiming that as humanity learns and studies the Earth and God's creation, their findings will teach and enlighten believers on the ways in which Christ has made the world. The study of creation and science in nature does not rip one away from God, but rather draws one nearer to Him.

The creation of God affirms His power and His nature, it is not the enemy of God. It goes without explanation that the Progressive Creationist would agree that the Lord provided us with an inerrant, infallible revelation of our divine creator; but the PC theorist would claim that Earth is also a testament to the truth about God and His Kingdom. Studying science such as geology, astronomy and biology should not drive one away from Christ, but rather draw one toward Him as they uncover more about the creator.

Yowm

When analyzing and translating the Hebrew text, one must realize that the Hebrew language contains a very limited number of words, therefore, each word in the Hebrew can convey a multitude of meanings. An obvious example is found in the the Hebrew word *yowm,* which is used to indicate four different periods of time: (a) some portion of the daylight hours; (b) sunrise to sunset; (c) sunset to sunset; (d) segment of time without reference to solar days (weeks, years, ages or epochs). The Old Testament scholar William Wilson remarks that *yowm* is used often in the Hebrew to convey a period of time in which an extraordinary event happens, which would include the creation events.[29]

Many Young Earth Creationists cite the use of "evening" (*ereb)* and "morning" (*boqer)* as evidence that *yowm* is specifically referring to a literal 24-hour day in Genesis one; however, these Hebrew terms also have multiple meanings such as "sunset," "night," "between two evenings," "at the turn of evening," and for *boqer,* "dawn," "the end of darkness," and "dawn of prosperity." These terms, "evening" and "morning," only refer to the start and completion of some event in which *yowm* refers to- not necessarily a 24-hour day. The usage of *yowm* in the plural form in addition to an ordinal modifier describing divine action is phrasing that is unique to Genesis one; there is no Hebrew rule or biblical comparison in which to base a solid assumption off of. Therefore, it is difficult for scholars to agree on the way in which *yowm* should be interpreted in the creation narrative, so one must look to other biblical examples, outside texts and scientific consistency in order to determine the best interpretation.

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[29] Hugh Ross, *A Matter of Days: Solving a Creation Controversy (Covina, CA: RTB Press, 2015).*

There are a few similarly worded verses that can be compared to Genesis 1:5,which describes "day one" of creation (as opposed to "the second day"). Zechariah 14:7 reads "And it will be *day one* which shall be known to Jehovah;" in this context, "day one" refers to "day of our Lord," which scholars interpret as a time period longer than 24-hours.[30] Some Young Earth Creationists argue that if the author of Genesis wanted to indicate a long period of time, he would have chosen *olam* as opposed to *yowm.* The notion that the Hebrew word *olam* would have preferably been used to indicate a long period of time is easily debunked- o*lam* is only recognized as being used in post biblical Jewish texts, indicating it was not a word utilized in Jewish texts during the time in which Genesis was written. The times it is used, however, refer to "forever" as an unending, continuing period of time; *yowm* is the only biblical Hebrew word that could be used to convey a long period of time that has both a beginning and an ending.

An additional example of a day-age interpretation of *yowm* is found in Genesis 2:4 which reads, "these are the generations of heaven and earth when they were created in the day [*yowm*] of their making;" where "day" (*yowm*) is used to refer to the combined account of creation, obviously a period of time much longer than just 24-hours. The writer of Genesis, believed to be Moses, clearly used *yowm* in the second chapter of Genesis to refer to a time period longer than 24-hours, therefore it is plausible to believe that in chapter one he could have used the same word in order to also convey longer epochs of time. Not only does the exegesis of the Genesis account allow for and even allude to epochs of time, but there are scientific inconsistencies with a strict Young Earth reading of creation (one may read about these inconsistencies in detail in two of astronomer Hugh Ross's books, *Navigating Genesis* and *A Matter of Days*).

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[30] Ibid.

Progressive Creationists believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God and that it is both true and without error, not that only certain aspects are infallible and others, such as Genesis, are solely an allegory or myth. The Bible, including the creation account, should be taken literally and read with the proper hermeneutical techniques in order to best discern the author's intention of the literature. The PC theory abides by the more broad term of 'Day-Age Theory'- the idea that each day in Genesis does not refer to a literal 24-hour period, but rather a period of thousands or even millions of years. Without going into depth on the science of creation, it is valuable to briefly analyze the first two days of creation (the order of creation events is provided in full in a chart on page 31) and its implications within a Progressive Creation reading of Genesis according to Hugh Ross.

In the Beginning

> In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

Creation in Genesis does not begin with the first day, but with the initial creation of matter and space. PC theory interprets this initial creation to be in accordance with the scientific explanation of the beginning of the universe: the Big-Bang Theory, in which God initiated the definite beginning of the universe thought to have been 15 to 20 billion years ago. God, a supernatural being, exists and operates outside of space and time, and therefore is the cause of the universe that is constricted by space and time. Scientists believe that during this time in the Earth's development, water was being held in the atmosphere in which a large, opaque cloud would be covering the surface of the Earth. As the Earth began to cool, the water held in the

atmosphere would begin falling and condensing into oceans on the Earth's surface.[31] This universally accepted scientific state of being is clearly described in the opening verses of Genesis; "the Earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."

The First Day

> And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

When reading through the days of creation as a Progressive Creationist, one must keep in mind that the focal point of the Genesis narrative is now the Earth; the remaining acts of creation only explain the revealing and appearance of them from the perspective of Earth, not the actual material creation of the various aspects of the universe.

In PCT, the creation of light describes the event in which the opaque cloud of the atmosphere is thinned, and the light is revealed onto the surface of the Earth. To the PC theorist, when God declared, "let there be light," this initiated the long process of degrading the atmospheric cloud in order for the light to penetrate the surface of the Earth. Each period of time that corresponds to the creation "days" in Genesis refer not to a 24-hour day, but to an event that continues to condition and prepare the Earth for the remainder of the Lord's Kingdom. The command to "let there be light" is not an act of active creation, but of revealing the light that had already been created. The Lord was preparing His Earth for the rest of creation: plants, animals, and mankind.

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[31] Hugh Ross, "Big Bang- the Bible Taught it First!", accessed October 03, 2017, http:/ www.reasons.org/.

Day Two

> And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so. And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

First and foremost, it is necessary to recognize the word choice chosen in order to describe this creation- note that the English translation reads "let there be," (Hebrew: *'amar raqiya*) which implies a passive action as opposed to the Hebrew word *'bara* which is used to convey an act of active creation. This further illustrates the point that these events of creation are not speaking to material origins, but rather describe the revealing of the creation onto Earth.

Not only does the creation account in Genesis one provide us with a summary of the second day of creation, but Job 37 also records this event in a similar manner. Job is an Old Testament book that is thought by many scholars to have been written before the book of Genesis, and actually contains multiple accounts of the various aspects of the creation story.[32] Progressive Creationists view creation day two as an explanation of the formation of the water cycle that was implemented in order to prepare the Earth for plant, animal, and human life. Job 37 speaks about this very thing; "He loads the thick cloud with moisture; the clouds scatter his lightning." This text further drives the point which claims that the writer's narrative of day two is solely the explanation of the Lord farther preparing the Earth to support life through the water cycle rather than a literal crafting of the separation of the sky and the waters on Earth. This

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[32] Hugh Ross, *A Matter of Days: Solving a Creation Controversy (Covina, CA: RTB Press, 2015).*

thought process can be applied to all the creation events in Genesis played out in the figure below, but the interposition of day seven is unique.

Day Seven

The seventh day of creation is distinct from the rest, given that there is no creative element spoken about in this verse of the narrative. Rather, the seventh day is when the Lord rested; and uniquely it is without a distinctive end, implying that the world today still remains in the seventh day. Unlike creation days 1-6, the author of Genesis does not claim that day seven has ended. This explanation makes PC unique in that it holds to the belief that the seventh epoch of time described in Genesis is still being played out. The Lord's creation was initiated in days 1-6, but the Christian still hopes in the consummation of the Lord's Kingdom as described as the new Creation. God's kingdom is not finished; rather, the Kingdom of God and the seventh "day" of creation will be complete when Christ returns and the creation is consummated.

Figure 1: Order of Events in Genesis one[33]

1	God created, by fiat miracle, the entire physical universe (Earth is unfit for life. The atmospheric layer is full of planetary debris that prevent light from reaching Earth's surface. The Earth's surface is covered by water).
2	Most planetary debris has cleared and God has transformed the atmosphere so that some light can pass through from the heavenly bodies to penetrate Earth's surface.
3	God created the troposphere with perfect conditions in order to establish an adequately abundant and stable water cycle.
4	God formed ocean basins and continental landmasses.
5	God produced plants on the continental landmasses.
6	God transformed the atmosphere from translucent to (occasionally) transparent.
7	God produced swarms of small sea mammals.
8	God produced, by fiat miracle, larger sea mammals and birds.
9	God created land mammals that were capable of interacting with the human race.
10	God created the human species (Adam and Eve).

[33] This figure was adapted from information in Hugh Ross' *A Matter of Days.*

Church Fathers on Day-Age Creation

The Christian community has created a sense of feeling that their only hope is in the spiritual aspect of life while the physical world is evil, but this is certainly not the attitude of Church fathers such as Augustine and Clement. Most revered church fathers wrote about the relationship between science/the physical world and faith in Christ; these writings show that the attitude toward science was one of excitement in which the church fathers believed they could learn more about God and His word. Today, however, there seems to be the common misconception that science and faith are at odds with one another and that Christians must be quick to shut down scientific claims and explanations about the Earth and life.

Saint Augustine, an Early Church father, and Thomas Aquinas, a revered theologian, both wrote about the nature of Genesis in harmony with a day-age interpretation. Saint Augustine argued that YHWH inspired the writing of Genesis to be in line with wording that the ancient audience would understand. Both theologians were interested in how science related to faith and in turn wrote about how Genesis should be read. Specifically, Augustine believed that the Lord created the Earth with the capacity to grow and change, perhaps in line with Progressive Creation. Thomas Aquinas, a thirteenth century theologian, was greatly influenced by Augustine and wrote the following in regards to the Genesis narrative:

> On the day on which God created the heaven and the earth, He created also every plant of the field, not, indeed, actually, but "before it sprung up in the earth," that is, potentially. All things were not distinguished and adorned together, not from a want of power on God's part, as requiring time in which to work, but that due order might be observed in the instituting of the world.[34]

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[34] BioLogos, "How was the Genesis account of creation interpreted before Darwin?" BioLogos, , accessed October 25, 2017, https://biologos.org.

Aquinas seemed to be himself a Progressive Creationist, claiming that initially all things were potentially created and were then progressively revealed through time by God's power. There are many other renowned theologians of the Christian faith who did not believe that Genesis must be read as a Young Earth Creationist, but they understood that the account of creation was communicating more than a God who just snaps His fingers.

Human Origins

Because of the PCT stance on day-age creation, death before the Fall and initial creation, many people mistake this belief system to be equivalent to a Theistic Evolution viewpoint. In contrast to an evolutionary model of creation, PCT recognizes the unique creation of human beings (Adam and Eve) by God in a single creation act as stated in Genesis. Theistic Evolution holds that God put in place the natural process in order for humanity to evolve into a species that can relate to God. Evolution must, therefore, reject the fiat miracle of the creation of humans by God and also reject the historical Adam and Eve.

Progressive Creation, on the other hand, believes that the unique language used to describe the creation of humanity on day six shows that the Lord created humanity by fiat miracle, He did not simply allow for a human to come about or evolve, but He fashioned a being who had the capacity to relate to God, participate in philosophy and care for His creation. The Progressive Creationist argues that the biblical account of the creation of man found in Genesis 2 is obviously speaking of divine action. The Hebrew word used for create, *bara,* does not imply that humans were coming about slowing and evolving, but rather that God reached down and created this part of his Kingdom by divine action and fiat miracle.

Theological Survey

Many opponents of Progressive Creation believe that there are extreme theological issues with regards to the introduction of death before the Fall. It is true that a Old Earth view of the fossil record provides for death, bloodshed, and suffering before the Fall of mankind, and in turn poses the question of how this could be a part of a benevolent God's creation.

The overall position on sin and death for a Fiat Creationist is that the creation was perfect until Adam and Eve sinned, and then, as a result, God introduced all kinds of imperfection, such as death, suffering and illness into the world. This view implies that the disobedience of Adam is solely responsible for death of all kinds in the world, even the death of innocent plants and animals. If the Lord introduced death as a consequence for the sin of man, it calls into question either the power or character of God to imply that He did not protect the other aspects of His creation from this punishment.

According to Romans 5:12 which reads, "sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned," the YEC would argue that creation had to take place in periods of time short enough to prevent starvation or overpopulation, as provided in a 24-hour day reading of Genesis. However, even this view poses a serious scientific issue; many organisms can not survive longer than three hours without ingesting and metabolizing food. Hugh Ross explains this phenomenon clearly; "Genesis two implies that before Adam and Eve sinned, animals moved about and Adam and Eve also walked about and ate. Movement translates to metabolism, and metabolic processes require eating."[35]

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[35] Hugh Ross, *A Matter of Days: Solving a Creation Controversy (Covina, CA: RTB Press, 2015).*

Since movement was observed and recorded before the sin of Adam, it is necessary to realize that before the Fall, there was at least the death of plants or parts of plants in order to support these metabolic processes. In addition, since insects live on plants and crawl along the ground, it is almost a certainty that they too would have been eaten or killed by animals and natural occurrences, such as gusts of wind. Therefore, the notion that the occurrence of biological death itself only entered the world after the Fall of Adam and Eve is ignorant of basic scientific observations and leads the Progressive Creationist to a unique view of human death. The curse of death falls in the form of a consequence implemented as a result of human willingness to act in disobedience against God's commandment. Humanity is distinguished from plants and animals in that the human species has the ability to relate to one another and God, and therefore make moral decisions. Various New Testament Scriptures, such as Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15, cite death as the result of man's sin and disobedience, yet the writers only include human death, not plant or animal decay, which further provides for the likelihood that the death that came as a result of the Fall was merely referring to human death. There was evidently biological death in God's initiated world before the Fall of man, but man's disobedience then subjected humanity to this death as well.

The fact that human death was introduced as a consequence of man's sin is extremely important to the metanarrative of Scripture. A Christian's hope resides in the belief that one day those who have a relationship with the Lord will overcome the curse of death and have a physical resurrection. The biblical story is all about the disobedience of man and Jesus Christ's victory over death, which provides Christians the hope of a physical resurrection that stems from an atonement in Christ and the breaking of the curse provided unto man in the Fall of Genesis.

Intelligent Design

According to an Intelligent Design (ID) scholar Dr. William Dembski, the Intelligent Design movement is defined as serving in three ways: a scientific research program for investigating the effects of intelligent causes, an intellectual movement that challenges naturalistic evolutionary theories, and a way of understanding divine action.[36] In the last decade, ID theory has been accepted by thousands of people, and its influence and scope has reached every continent on the Earth. Intelligent Design rejects the idea of neo-Darwinistic and naturalistic processes as causes for the existence of the universe and the emergence of intelligent life. Rather, ID theorists are characterized by the belief that all that is seen in creation cannot be reduced down to purely naturalistic explanations; there must be an intelligent designer. ID theorists often use the term "irreducible complexity," which refers to the fact that some things observed, such as evolution leading to intelligent human life, cannot be explained through science but must be cited to an omniscient God.

There is a common misconception the the ID movement speaks to the origin of life by claiming creation by fiat miracle. However, ID theory is an apologetic movement, if anything and it does not speak directly to the evolution debate. As far as human origins go, according to professor Bruce Golden from Houston Baptist University,

> ID theory does not address the question of how Genesis should be interpreted, so there are many different views on the subject within the ID community. Some ID advocates are agnostics or deists or panpsychists and not much interested in biblical interpretation at all, some are advocates of an intelligently-directed evolutionary process that allows for common descent and sudden infusions of biological information leading to rapid evolution, others (perhaps the majority) are old earth progressive creationists, and a very small percentage are YEC.

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[36] William A. Dembski and Sean McDowell, Intelligent design (Torrance, CA: Rose Publishing, 2009).

Therefore, each Intelligent Design theorist must ascribe to his or her own belief on religion, scientific concordism in Genesis, and human origins. ID theory does not answer how humans came to be, only by whom or what we came to be. This will mark the end of the discussion on Intelligent Design due to the fact that the purpose of this thesis is in regards to theories of human origins.

Theistic Evolution (overview)

In order to preserve the large theological questions proposed by evolution for the section covering Active Theistic Evolution, this area will focus on a brief overview of Theistic Evolution.

In the Christian faith, Theistic Evolution is the belief that the way in which YHWH created life on Earth was by establishing the natural mechanism of evolution which lead to produce intelligent life (humans), and the diversity of all other life forms on Earth. Humanity cannot be solely explained by neo-Darwinian evolution that in essence claims that humans are nothing more than cosmic stardust that have randomly mutated into the functioning animals seen today. Theistic Evolution, rather, proposes that it was God who initiated this natural process giving way to unique human life, as well as animal and plant life. Proponents of Theistic Evolution can slightly differ in their interpretations of Genesis, but most would argue that it is a story that contains no scientific truth, but only theological and spiritual truths. As for the historical Adam, there are a variety of schools of thought; Adam may have no existence in history and just represent an idea about the human condition, Adam could be an archetypal figure, or a historical figure that was chosen from a group of homo sapiens that God deemed at some point as unique from animals. The doctrine of original sin has everything to do with one's belief concerning the historical Adam, in Theistic Evolution, the idea that Adam was the first human is rejected. Therefore, the traditional idea that sin acts like a gene which was passed to all humans beginning with Adam, is not adhered to. Obviously, TE believes that there was death of at least plantlife and animals before the fall and that creation will only be perfect and complete

on the New Earth. In summary, TE claims that it was God who created and ordained the evolutionary process to give rise to plants, animals, and even humans.

The Failures of Popular Origins Theories

Fiat Creation

The first section of this thesis was an attempt to provide a fair and comprehensive argument for the theory of human origins known as Fiat Creationism, or Young-Earth Creation. Though most people believe that this is the universal view of creation and origins throughout the Christian faith, research suggests that the belief in an old Earth or Theistic Evolution is rapidly increasing as a rising number of Christians reject YEC. There are many objections to YEC, but for the sake of this thesis, a couple of the general discrepancies will be sufficient explanation.

As science develops and continues to prove an old Earth with evolving species, the Christian community has largely become aware of the failures in regards to hermeneutics and theology in the YEC theory. The most obvious issue with Fiat Creation is the obvious neglect for modern science. This often stems from a Gnostic belief, whether realized or not, that the natural world is evil, while only spiritual reality is good and pleasing to God. However, nowhere in Scripture is this belief affirmed; on the contrary, Scripture often speaks of the marvelous creation of the universe and how it reveals the majesty and power of God. All truth is God's truth; He is not trying to lead His followers astray and deceive them through His creation, but rather to show humans more about the amazing, creative God that formed it all.

Besides the intellectually embarrassing rejection of scientific evidence, Fiat Creationists fail majorly in their reading of Genesis. Claiming to be the only group who reads the Bible

"literally," Young Earth Creationists fail to read the creation account for all that it is worth. By taking the story solely at face value, one misses out on the marvelous artistry and beauty of the Genesis narrative. When one understands how the ancient audience understood the text, he realizes the complexity, power, and revolutionary nature of the story. Genesis is to be read as a work of art that answers the question of who created and why He created. YEC fails to bring Christ into the narrative of creation at all; there is a rejection of the Christology of creation and the Kingdom of God when reading Genesis solely at face value; the YEC theorist misses out on much of the narrative of Genesis. It would be an amazing act of unity if Young-Earth theorists would realize that the Genesis text is not speaking to the scientific method in which God made the universe, but rather recognized the crafting of a narrative that provides the source for the cause of the creation.

Theologically, one could argue with many of the points in YEC; however, the assumption that the creation was at first perfect is the claim that should be most easily challenged. A perfect initial creation would result in a God who basically created humans as puppets pre-programmed to be perfect, a World that is perfectly in order, and no potential for harm. This is a claim that is quite easily refuted. The obvious inconsistency with the claim that creation was finished and perfect is that the creation possessed things that were dangerous, dying and evil in nature. According to their own literalistic reading of the text, the evil serpent was already a part of the created order that did not align with a complete, flawless creation. Another hint that the Earth was not perfect is found in God's first command to man, "fill the Earth and subdue it." If the creation of God was orderly and finished, He would not need mankind to fill it with other creatures or to subdue and rule over already orderly land. Even something as simple as the fact

that gravity existed, which serves as another element of life that has the potential for harm, elicits the fact that the original creation in Genesis one was not completed, but God's Kingdom had just begun to evolve.

Progressive Creation

Progressive Creation was laid out in section two of the thesis and seems to fit well within a narrative of modern science; however, it still shares a major failure with YEC- scientific concordism. Hugh Ross' argument is also marked by poor hermeneutics and some interesting theological implications.

Progressive Creationism also adheres to the belief that Genesis speaks of scientific and material origins rather than functional origins. The issue with this line of thinking is that it fails to recognize what the author intended to communicate with his ancient audience (more on this claim is outlined under the Evolutionary Creation section that follows). Much could be said on this topic, but there is one instance in which Ross fails in his interpretation. Progressive Creation is built around the idea that the creation story is told from the perspective of a human looking up toward God, rather than God looking down on His creation. Because of this belief, Hugh Ross engages in some very poor hermeneutical techniques as he attempts to shove modern science into the Genesis account of creation. Besides the fact that a literary perspective shift is not obviously present, Ross attempts to differentiate the wording of "create" and "let there be" as referring to active versus passive creation. The most evident issue within this claim is that the Hebrew text does not actually have a word for any passive creation. Even if this was a correct statement, the

author of Genesis is not attempting to provide a scientific account of material origins, but rather a poetic telling of the source of creation.

In an attempt to reconcile modern scientific claims regarding the fossil record, astrology, and microevolution, Progressive Creationists make very bold claims regarding the scientific concordism of Genesis and are inconsistent, as their claim of "Progressive Creation" does not apply to humankind.

Intelligent Design

The theory of Intelligent Design is not necessarily theologically incorrect or pose much of an issue to the Theistic Evolutionist. The basis of the theory of ID is that the Earth is so complex and wonderful that it can not be reduced to natural or scientific causes and therefore God must be the intelligent designer.

Though the point that God is the designer of the complex world is true for the Christian, the theory as a whole seems quite weak. Intelligent Design first seems to hold contempt for evolution from the perspective of neo-Darwinism. The Active Theistic Evolutionist would agree with the ID theorist that evolution cannot account for the intelligent life we see today. However, the ID theorist sometimes ends their argument here and concludes that therefore, evolution must not be true. On the other hand, the EC theorist looks at evolution as the brilliant mechanism in which God continues to direct the creation of humanity and the diversity of life.

ID is faulty as it is a seemingly "God of the gaps" argument, which is quite dangerous to the Christian. If one's apologetic rests on the belief that "there is no better answer than God," then once science explains the gap, and the ID theorists argument for God is dissolved. Intelligent Design seems to represent a broad array of beliefs regarding hermeneutical techniques

and human origins, so it is difficult to explain exactly their universal claims. On the issue of human origins, ID does not particularly ascribe to one singular belief, so it falls short in explaining life in contrast to the other theories explored in this thesis.

Theistic Evolution

The major issue facing the average Theistic Evolutionist is largely an issue of deism. The traditional view of Theistic Evolution is that God created the Earth by fiat miracle and then initiated the natural, Darwinian evolution model in order to create the diversity of life on the Earth today. However, a God who creates a world and lets it be, sounds much like the God of Deism rather than the God of Christianity. Traditional TE fails to understand the complexity and beauty of God's involvement in creation and the Christology of the progressive Kingdom that Christ came to promote. Usually a scientist who also claims to believe in Christianity will accept evolution due to his scientific research and then simply say, "God created the natural process observed as evolution," but it is so much more than that.

This view of traditional Theistic Evolution certainly seems to "baptize the science" and just attempt to shove the evolutionary science into Scripture, consequently promoting an uninvolved "God of the gaps" mentality. If evolution is true, God must have a purpose for it and, in addition, be in an involved position within its inner workings rather than relate to the natural world as a "hands-off" deity that Theistic Evolution seems to point to. When accepting an evolutionary model of human origins, Christians must be careful to not solely fit evolution somehow into the creation narrative, but to analyze the author's intention in writing Genesis and the way in which Jesus Christ acts in order to promote His Kingdom. A comprehensive view of

the Kingdom is essential in understanding how evolution fits perfectly within the metanarrative of the Kingdom of God.

Evolutionary Creation

Hermeneutics of Genesis 1-3

Similar to all works of historical literature, the Bible can not be fully understood without analyzing the context in which it was both written and understood. Furthermore, in order to fully grasp the story of Genesis, one must come to the realization that he must explore the time period and culture of both the audience and author of the text to fully comprehend the narrative. Anthropologists, theologians and historians alike have all provided information about the book of Genesis, its author, and its audience. Though debated by some, it is widely accepted that Genesis, at least the creation account, was written by Moses around 15th to 13th century B.C, it originates from the ancient Near East and it includes references to the cultures of Mesopotamia, Canaan and Egypt.[37] By reading other works of cosmology from the same cultures and era, one develops an understanding of the thoughts of the audience in regards to the creation of the world that might help explain some of the diction and organization included in the Genesis creation narrative. In regards to hermeneutical technique, it is important to analyze the text within the culture that Genesis was written in order to provide an insight into the way that the audience thought about and understood the creation story.

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[37] John C. Lennox, Seven days that divide the world: the beginning according to Genesis and science (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011).

The creation account found in Genesis one was written to an audience who possessed an ancient phenomenological perspective of the physical world. There are a number of important points one must understand about the way that both the audience and author thought about the world and humanity in order to read the text for all that it is worth. The overarching idea about matter in the minds of the ancients is that something did not exist due to its form or material origins as is conceived today, but rather, a thing existed in regards to its function in the world. The ancient peoples asked etiological questions which inquired about something's purpose, including: Why is this here? Who is responsible? As expected, the creation account answered these questions: God is the reason behind the universe and all life in it, and each created being has a function on Earth. Today, people look to Genesis to answer their questions on material origins such as *how* God created, rather than through the eyes of the ancients whose questions focused on *who* and *why* it was created. This provides for a major disjunction for both scientists and theologians alike as they try to decipher and read Genesis in order to answer questions that it does not and did not intend to answer. For the ancient peoples, conceptualizing origins in light of their modern science was not difficult; their observed life was static and unchanging, which led to a logical conclusion that God created a complete and quickly formed world. However, modern science has affirmed an adapting, evolving, and shifting creation, a view that would have never been reasonable to propose to the ancients during the time of Genesis.

The Holy Bible is not one single genre of literature, but rather the compilation of many, such as law, poetry, history, and letters; thus, to completely understand the creation account, one must analyze the genre of Genesis so that proper interpretation of the text can take place. The first two chapters of Genesis provide a shocking poetic contrast to the popular Babylonian myths

of cosmology at the time that, when used by the author, would be most effective in conveying the truths of creation and the origin of life with the ancient audience. Many Young Earth Creationists believe that in order to account for evolution, one must reject the literal meaning of the text and therefore compromise the authority of the Scriptures; however, this ideology of scientific concordism actually rejects the intended meaning of the Scripture and fails to do it justice.[38]

An important distinction is to be made between the methods of reading the text literally versus literalistically; reading a text literally is when one accounts for the historical and literary context in which the work was written in order to properly decipher the exhaustive meaning of the text, while a literalistic reading implies that the words are taken at face-value without analysis on the context or intended meaning of the wording. There are a few major things that lead many scholars to the conclusion that Genesis should be understood not literalistically, but rather as the audience would have understood it-metaphorical.

Scientific concordism in Genesis is challenged many times throughout the narrative, but for the sake of this thesis, one example will be cited. Throughout the creation story, the Hebrew text describes the ancient astrological belief in a three tier universe, with the top dome section known as a firmament. There are multiple uses of the word translated as firmament in creation, such as in the second day of creation: "Then God said, let there be a *raqiya`* (firmament) and let it separate…" As shown in the figure below, it is known that Earth does not contain a hard, dome-shaped firmament holding in the air and contents of Earth; therefore, the Genesis narrative

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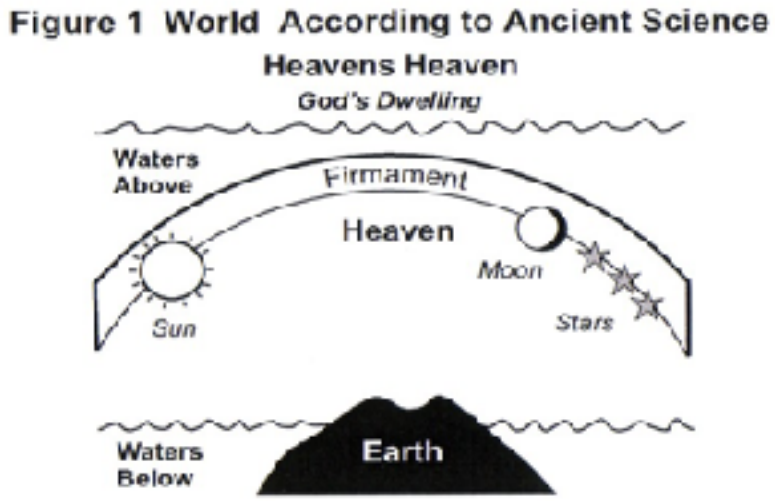
[38] Scientific concordism is the theological term for the belief that the Bible, specifically creation, contains text that is making scientifically accurate statements.

can not be deemed to communicate on the basis of scientific concordism since it evidently makes scientific claims popular in the ancient world that have, on the other hand, been disproven today.

Figure: Three-Tier universe[39]



Poetic elements, as well as obvious metaphorical texts, are found throughout the creation accounts that challenge the belief that Genesis one must be taken in a strict literalistic sense. There is an obvious high frequency of figurative language throughout the creation account, which provides for the likelihood that the account itself has a metaphorical, not literalistic, nature. Some of the most obvious examples of this are found in the description of human origins in Genesis two where Moses writes, "the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life." From the study of God's nature and how He has interacted within the world, it is known that God is a spirit, not a man who would literally form a

[39] Denis Oswald Lamoureux et al., Four views on the historical Adam (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013).

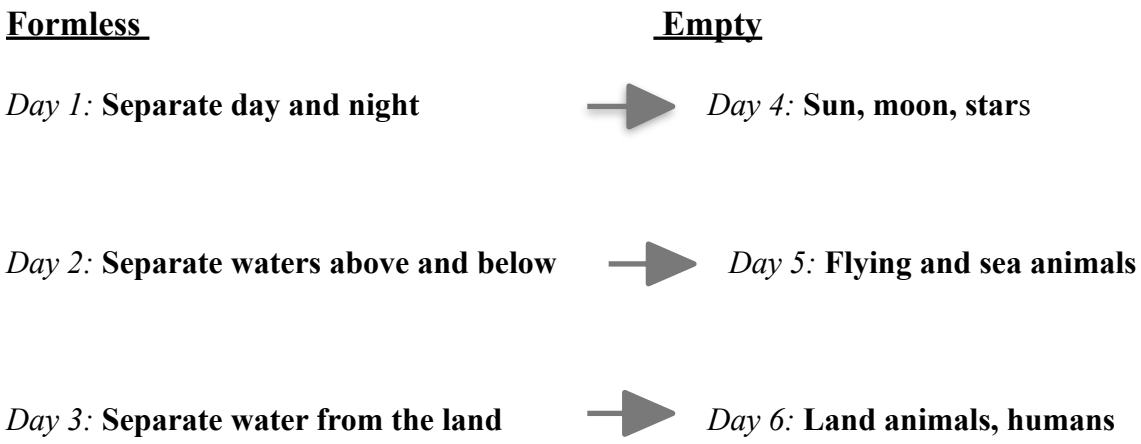
human being with His material hand from physical dust or breathe into him using lungs and a mouth; so it is universally understood that this description is obviously metaphorical and not intended to be read literalistically.

Another specific example of poetic intention is found within the order of the creation days themselves; it is not possible to have evening and morning, or even daylight, before the sun, moon, and stars are formed. Because the order of creation days in Genesis one are not plausible within science or logical organization, it can be inferred that this too is not intended to be read purely at face value. These are just a few examples of specific instances in which the wording of Genesis is obviously not intended to be literalistic, but rather metaphorical. Many parts of the creation story are clearly symbolic, therefore the nature of the narrative as a whole is plausibly symbolic as well; at least the claim that the whole book pleads scientific concordism is easily debunked.

The framework of Genesis one is obviously intended to portray a poetic literary organization to the audience. The entire structure of the narrative is based around two rhyming Hebrew words- *tohu* (formless) and *bohu* (empty). The ancient audience would have realized the rhyme scheme of the creation account, an obvious poetic intention. This poetic organization is further developed during the parallel panels of the creation days that provide an artistic and clever way to engage the ancient audience of Genesis. The figure below illustrates how each creation day is a fulfillment of its' parallel counterpart and therefore a piece of God's intention to rid the world of being formless and empty. At the beginning of the creation narrative, the Earth is stated to be "formless" and "empty," each act of creation is meant to refer back to that claim and in contrast, provide structure within the Earth and fill it. The first three days provide natural

formations such as days, oceans, and land, while the next three days fill the emptiness with the corresponding creatures such as sun, moon, stars, sea creatures, birds, land mammals, and humans. For example, the first day gives rise to the separation of day and night as observed in the sky, while the parallel creation day four is focused on the creation of the things that will fill that sky, such as the sun, moon and stars.

Figure 3



It is evident that the author's' intention for the text was not to describe the method of creation that God used in chronological order, but rather to display truths to the audience whose mindset was marked by ancient phenomenological perspectives. Not only does the text speak for itself in order to prove that a strictly literalistic interpretation was not intended, Hebrew poetry and Babylonian myth pose interesting contrasts to the creation narrative that further suggest the motive of the author of Genesis.

The narrative interacts with the ancient Near Eastern literature in a very unique, intriguing and intentional way in order to contrast the popular cosmological beliefs during the time. Though it is evident that Genesis is structured as poetic literature, it takes a deeper study of

ancient near-Eastern thought to realize the relationship between the Genesis creation account and popular Babylonian myths of creation and human origins such as *Enuma Elish.*[40] Scholars in all fields of theology study the ancient cosmological accounts and come away with various conclusions about how Genesis relates to it, but all can agree that there is a certain intention of the author to make his narrative sound like that of an ancient myth. The Hebrew wording found in Genesis is quite similar to that of *Enuma Elish* and other ancient accounts of creation (more about the linguistics of these two texts can be found in John Walton's book, *The Lost World of Genesis One*). A specifically striking example is that of the "origin of man" as described in both ancient cosmology and Genesis two. Ancient myths described man emerging from the dust of the Earth- the exact wording that is found in Genesis two regarding the origins of Adam. The parallel is impossible to ignore; the account of Genesis 1-2 is not meant to describe material origins, but rather to provide an explanation of functional origins as created by YHWH, not the Babylonian Gods.

Though many images and sentence structures are comparable with the ancient cosmology of the time, the overall message of the narrative is in extreme contrast to that of the ancient tradition; the Genesis text was claiming that there is one God responsible for His creation, in which He is involved and loving toward it. This idea of one, personal God was revolutionary for the ancients in their understanding of deities. The similarities between the ancient cosmology and Genesis provide evidence that the author intelligently used this contrast of common beliefs in order to get his message across that this story, synonymous to Babylonian myth, focused on

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[40] John H. Walton, Genesis 1 as ancient cosmology (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011).

the origins of life and the world, but that Genesis makes distinctly different claims about the causation and reason for the creation.

In addition, Genesis two also provides a second account of creation that is focused on the creation of humans which blatantly records differences in the sequence of creation, suggesting that the author of Genesis is more concerned with conveying an effective message than reciting the method and chronology of the creation account. The orders of creation are contrasted in the chart below:

Figure 4

Genesis 1	**Genesis 2**
Vegetation (3rd day)	Man (v.7)
Birds (5th day)	Vegetation (v.8)
Land mammals (6th day)	Land mammals and birds (v. 19)
Man & woman (6th day)	Woman (v.22)

When the creation accounts found in Genesis 1 and 2 are analyzed, their chronology is at an obvious contrast; this does not call into question the authority of the text, but rather its intention. The text is not intended to provide a scientific explanation on the method in which life came about; instead, the creation narrative is written to accurately convey to the ancient people, and those who have come after them, that God is the sole creator of the universe and its inhabitants.

The Historical Adam

For many, the implication of an evolving human race calls into question what is meant by the Adam found in Genesis two and later referred to by Paul in Romans five. An important realization one must make is that Paul's theology does not shake or fall apart based on his view of Adam as a historical being. Though it is likely that the Adam spoken of in Genesis two was a

real man, possibly a chosen hominid from the larger population and given the responsibility of God's divine purpose, the claim of his historicity is not theologically necessary. The important question that must be analyzed in regard to Adam is the question of how he functions in the Bible, more importantly, within the theology of Paul. The Adam in Genesis two is not claimed to be the first man and progenitor of all of humanity, but rather he stands for something much larger than his individual existence.[41]

Throughout the Scriptures there are very few mentions of Adam, but when he is mentioned, he is not functioning as the first man and head of the human race, but rather as an archetype of humanity. In order for something to be considered archetypal, it must function in order to say something that is true about everyone it is representing. For example, the Joker could act as an archetype for all villains since he is evil and malicious. The biblical authors are obviously not caught up in making Adam the progenitor of the human race, but rather as the archetype that provides a theological explanation of the human condition.

The first evidence of an archetypical relationship to humanity is found in the Genesis' author's use of his name; considering he was an actual man, "Adam" would not have spoken Hebrew, therefore it is known that whoever the historical Adam is, was not even called Adam. The name is specifically interested in representing humanity as a whole, for *Adam* is the Hebrew word for mankind, and, in addition, it is often not used as a personal noun in the text of Genesis.

Many other evidences are used to prove that the author of Genesis was not interested in the genetic, material role of Adam; for example, his creation from dust. In the rest of Scripture,

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[41] John H. Walton, The lost world of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2-3 and the human origins debate (Downers Grove, IL:
IVP Academic, an imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2015).

dust (*apar)* is used to describe the mortality of the spirit of man, not material composition.[42] In an archetypical fashion, the formation of Adam from dust is not to make any claims about a special creation or material origins, but to state that all of mankind is mortal- "from dust you came and dust you shall return." Later in the Old Testament, the Psalmist uses this wording- "the Lord remembers we are dust." The Psalmist is not speaking of our chemical makeup, but of our mortality. Therefore, the claim that Adam was made from dust has more interest to the biblical authors in stating that mankind is mortal and frail, distinct from God. Paul draws on this distinction when he speaks of Adam and Christ in 1 Corinthians 15:47; "The first man was from the Earth, a man of dust; the second man is from Heaven." This claim by Paul is obviously not a statement about material being, but about the distinction between mankind, who is mortal and subject to death, and Christ, who is heavenly and immortal.

Understanding the function of the Garden of Eden is important to fully grasp the cohesive story of an archetypical Adam and the theological significance of "the Fall." As previously stated, humanity was first created mortal in nature, but the Tree of Life in the Garden was provided as a mechanism by which people would discover eternal life with its source being in God. Genesis 2:8 reads, "And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed." The use of the Hebrew word *lqh* (*took*) provides that whoever Adam was, he was taken from somewhere else, perhaps the community of evolved Homo Sapiens, and placed in the Garden of Eden in which he gained human responsibility.

Interestingly, a comparable ancient cosmological text, the Epic of Gilgamesh, speaks to the nature of this wording as the ancient audience would have understood it. The hero, Uta-

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[42] Ibid.

napishiti, is described as "being like us gods. She shall then be taken to dwell far away, at the mouth of the river." This passage found in tablet XI, has striking parallels and insight for how the Garden of Eden shall be understood. The flood hero in the Epic of Gilgamesh was removed from the mortal land and taken into a fertile land in which she was like that of the gods, immortal. On the basis of this understanding of ancient thought, the archetypical Adam would be understood as being removed from the mortal community he was living in and placed in a divine area, the Garden of Eden. It is plausible that in an evolutionary context, Adam and Eve were selected to be taken (*lqh*) to the garden in order to play a key role in God's Kingdom.

Adam is given a priestly role by God in the Garden of Eden that is necessary to analyze in order to understand the immortality of the Garden. God commands Adam to assume the role by means of two Hebrew words, *abad and samar,* in which the former refers to "working the ground" as a laborer of the land of the Garden. However, the latter verb, *samar,* offers a different connotation that is used in Scripture to refer to the Levitical, priestly responsibility of guarding a sacred space.[43] In Numbers 3:8-9, both verbs are used together, as written in the Genesis narrative, to describe the duty of the priest in guarding and protecting a sacred area. This fact further develops the archetypal role of Adam and the divine nature of the Garden; Adam was chosen to serve the role of priest at this time as an archetypal figure with a unique responsibility to care for the sacred Garden of Eden. Old Testament theology is no stranger to election (Abram, David) and representative priesthood (Aaronic priests), a concept now attributed also to Adam. There are plenty of other examples of archetypal roles in near ancient literature, but the

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[43]Denis Oswald Lamoureux et al., Four views on the historical Adam (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013).

following paragraphs will deal with how Adam was textually significant in the New Testament, specifically by Paul.

Sin of Origins

The most frequently cited mention of Adam in the New Testament is found in Romans 5:12 which reads: "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned." This Scripture is often attributed to developing the theological belief in original sin which claims that sin is passed down to each human beginning with Adam as the first man and first sinner. This belief regards sin similarly to a genetic disease that is passed down from Adam to all humans. This doctrine is accepted by many denominations, but is rejected by Eastern Orthodoxy and, within an evolutionary framework, suggests reevaluation. This theological explanation by Paul does not suggest that humans were initially created as immortal beings, but it only claims that humans are subject to death *because* of sin. Old Testament scholar John Walton describes this idea simply:

> We were made mortal, subject to death. The opportunity for release from our natural mortality was provided by an antidote, the tree of life. Sin brought expulsion from the garden and loss of access to the tree of life. Therefore, sin doomed us to death- that is, with no antidote we would have to succumb to our mortality, which was already ours naturally. [44]

Humanity was not originally created as perfect and later ruined by the sin of one man, but rather sin exiled us from the elixir of life in the Garden. Paul's scripture does not state *how* sin came to be integrated into humanity, only that *because* of sin, humans are all doomed to physical death.

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[44] Ibid.

Adam continues to act as an archetype within the theology of Paul; his sin acts as a description of the human condition and states that all have sinned, a classic archetypal idea. Sin is not claimed, however, to somehow be genetically linked to Adam, and similarly Paul's theology does not necessitate that Adam be the first man in order so that sin can be passed to humanity by some kind of seminal transmission. This Scripture, rather, provides a view not of classic "original sin," but a sin of origins; that somehow, sin entered humanity and made men doomed to physical death. The idea that Adam must be the first man, is therefore theologically invalid and Paul makes no such claims to its necessity.

In the Genesis narrative, humanity, namely Adam, was given the priestly role of stewardship over the Earth in advancing the Kingdom of God. In Romans, Paul recognizes Jesus Christ obviously as a historical figure, but is interested in using Him as an archetype in relation to Adam. By referring to Jesus as "the Second Adam," Paul is explaining his theology of the entire Kingdom of God, that Jesus Christ represents true humanity; Christ is the perfect fulfillment of everything that Adam was supposed to be. New Testament scholar N.T. Wright has spent the majority of his career on studying Paul and states that, "Paul's whole point is to pick up from Genesis the notion of the *vocation of Adam* and to show that it is fulfilled in the Messiah, the true picture of humanity."[45] All throughout the Scriptures, the biblical authors realize that the issue in humanity is that man was given a vocation by God that he would care for and sum up the praises of His creation, however, humans messed up and sin blocked the purpose of creation, but God has not forsaken His creation narrative; in contrast, through His true image bearer of Jesus

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[45] John H. Walton, The lost world of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2-3 and the human origins debate (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, an imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2015).

Christ, He has rescued humanity from sin and death in order to reinscribe the initial purpose mankind had within creation.[46]

A distinct parallel that might help Christians read and understand Paul's Adam-theology is one between the Nation of Israel and Adam himself. Without going into extensive depth on the subject, Israel was the nation chosen by God to act as the means by which the human race shall be restored. Exodus cited Israel as "the royal priesthood," Isaiah calls the state "the light of all nations," and Genesis claims that "all nations will be blessed through Israel." In Scripture, Israel is chosen to consummate a divine purpose, they are called a holy land, and they are warned of exile if they fail to keep the contract with God. When reading the Genesis narrative, this storyline sounds quite familiar; Adam was chosen by God to fulfill a divine command, he is placed in a holy land known as the Garden of Eden, and he is warned of exile if he disobeys God's commands. Adam and Eve were chosen as the Lord's life and image bearers and if they failed at their divine vocation, the death that was already present in the world around them would engulf them as well. The pre-incarnation author of Genesis may not have meant it in this way, but certainly the ancient Jewish reader, including Paul, would have made the connection between the failed vocation of Israel and that of Adam; reinforcing humanity's need for a savior.

Death Before the Fall

As explored in the earlier section on Progressive Creation, there was obviously biological death regarding plants and animals before man sinned and in turn became doomed to a physical death as well. The Genesis text proclaims that the creation of God was "very good," but it never necessitates initial perfection. If God was complete with His Kingdom and creation, there would

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[46] Ibid.

be no need for Adam and Eve to "fill the Earth and subdue it." There would also be no possibility that humans, being created by God, could work above God in order to "ruin" the Kingdom project that was already fulfilled. Before the disobedience of mankind, there was disorder; the evil serpent existed as a part of the created order, plants died, animals died, gravity existed, etc.[47] The fall on the other hand, caused Adam and Eve to be exiled from their elixir of life in the Garden of Eden and resulted in mankind subject to death. If creation was inherently perfect, humans would not have been able to sin against God and "ruin" His plan; in addition, there would be no disorder within creation such as the serpent or even gravity that acts as a potential for harm.

The common argument many Christians have against the theological constancy of evolution is the claim the there was death that existed in God's creation before the Fall. To believe that the creation was flawless and complete is an obvious perversion of the biblical text and the metanarrative of the Kingdom as a whole. God's creation was in no way complete, but rather, it was initiated. Metabolic processes were taking place, which means that in turn, organisms were dying. Death of plants, animals, and hominids, as well as the fact that pain was present before the sin of man, are all claims according to the evolutionary model. Without pain, life would be much more dangerous for humans, for pain is an essential part of life. Nowhere in the biblical text does it deny the existence of pain in original creation, but rather in regards to the curse of the woman, actually affirms the prior existence of pain in childbirth. The Lord says

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[47] A more extensive discussion of this is found under "progressive creation"

"your pain shall be greatly multiplied in childbirth;" evidently Eve was aware and familiar with pain, it was solely increased, not introduced.[48]

The story of evolution fits into orthodox theology by affirming the four major implications of the text of Genesis and the words of Paul. (1.) Humans are unique from the other beings of creation; (2.) the Lord made us in His image (imago dei) as mankind has the unique ability to enter into a relationship with our creator, to possess a moral awareness and to reason, (3.) EC affirms that the created order was indeed distorted in some way due to the Fall, as humans were now doomed to death and a sinful nature, and finally, (4.) that in relation to God, our fallen nature has caused us to be alienated from one another. This is the story of the Kingdom of God and that Jesus Christ, the perfect and true human, was sent by God as the Messiah to progress the Kingdom of God. Yes, the Lord was pleased with His creation, but He was in no way finished with it; if that were the case, Adam and Eve would be no more than puppets for the entertainment of God, and His Kingdom would be nothing like the progressive, evolving Kingdom depicted in the Scriptures.

The Evolving Kingdom

Beginning with what can be known about the Kingdom bringing Jesus, one must use this narrative and dedicate that knowledge as the lens in which one views the creation as a whole. The first chapter of the gospel of John uses language synonymous to the diction used in the first verse of Genesis, "in the beginning." John proceeds to explain that within the context of creation Christ, the Word in the flesh, is the mechanism through "which all things are made." The obvious creation wording in this passage reestablishes the truth that because Jesus is fully God,

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[48] Ronald E. Osborn, Death before the fall: biblical literalism and the problem of animal suffering (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, an imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2014).

creation was in, through, and for Jesus Christ the Messiah. Rather than beginning with the great act of creation and attempting to fit Jesus somewhere into the narrative, if creation is in Christ, one can deduce what creation must be like by analyzing how Christ works within and describes His Kingdom.

The Kingdom which Jesus Christ describes is not that of brute force as the Fiat Creationist would claim, but rather as a seed growing secretly. The incarnation of Christ Himself show that God's intent in His Kingdom was always to have humanity as a part of His divine plan in bringing about the future. The parables of Christ in regards to the Kingdom describe a divine purpose that looks much more like the narrative of evolution. One might expect that creation be like the way in which Jesus Christ views the Kingdom- as a seed in which much of the potential seems to go to waste while others produce a great crop, a Kingdom that is slowly progressing and then suddenly reaches some sort of harvest, and a Kingdom that inevitably overcomes some forms of chaos; evolution provides a picture of origins that looks much like the parables of Jesus.[49]

Creation describes the initiation of God's Kingdom, which is described by Jesus Christ during his time on Earth. The Messiah provides Christians with a framework in which to view the Kingdom and its future goal of a New Creation that will be the completion and perfection of creation. With regard to the Kingdom, or any divine action, Christ never describes the Kingdom as or acts in brute force, but rather seems to delight in a process of self-giving love. The destiny of humanity is not just a story of a paradise lost, paradise restored, but it is much greater than that. The future end found in the New Creation that Christians remain waiting in hope is much

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[49]N.T Wright , "Christ and Creation " (lecture, Biologos Conference, Houston).

greater than the beginning. In the words of professor N.T. Wright, “if creation is through Christ, evolution is exactly what one would expect.”[50]

[50]Ibid.

Conclusion

As this thesis attempted to provide a summary of the arguments for and against popular theories of human origins within Christianity, it also proved that Evolutionary Creation is a theologically sound theory of human origins. Fiat Creation, Progressive Creation, Intelligent Design and Theistic Evolution were explored and shown not to provide a comprehensive view of the biblical text, theology or modern science.

Fiat Creation, commonly known as Young Earth Creation, is the Christian belief that the Genesis account should be read as an explanation of scientific origins, and therefore claims that the Earth and all life in it was created in a literal, 24-hour period, each by fiat miracle. YEC theorists often believe that scientific discoveries do not reveal the work of God, but are used by secularists to stray believers away from God. Fiat Creation also fails to take into account the contextual evidence that Genesis was not written as a claim of scientific origins and, as a result loses much of the books intended meaning. Young Earth Creationists falsely believe that the created order was complete and perfect at the beginning, disregarding basic scientific knowledge about life and the biblical text itself. The fundamentalist Fiat Creation view of origins seems to claim no biblical foundation besides in the basic, face-value, English translation of the Genesis narrative.

Progressive Creation does affirm that the scientific findings regarding the Earth can enlighten and inform our knowledge of God and the faith. Regardless, like Young Earth Creationism, Progressive Creation still claims scientific concordance within the biblical text. As proved in the section on failures, scientific concordism is obviously false due to the audience and author's ancient phenomenological perspective on cosmology and science. In addition, Hugh

Ross seems to make many hermeneutical mistakes in an attempt to fit his narrative of science within Scripture.

Intelligent Design is difficult to summarize, but theologically has no real discrepancy. Intelligent Design does, however, seem to provide a weak "God of the gaps" apologetic that could easily result in the ID theorists argument for God to be dissolved. Furthermore, ID does not explicitly hold to a belief on human origins, the topic of this thesis.

Traditional Theistic Evolution was briefly summarized and concluded to sound much more like a Deistic belief than that of a Christian. Though specific theology and hermeneutical techniques remain similar to the Evolutionary Creationist, Theistic Evolution fails to embrace the nature of the Kingdom of God.

Evolutionary Creation remains the best option for the Christian explanation of human origins and creation. Not only is an evolutionary model the most evidently proven model of origins, EC is the only theory of origins that provides for a God who is constantly tinkering with genetics and causing new species to emerge from the divinely guided process of evolution. Evolution is not a natural process that God set up and set free, but instead, God has had His hand in every single genetic shift in the evolution of plants, animals and mankind. The Genesis narrative was revolutionary at the time in regards to its claims of a monotheistic, involved and loving God. EC theorists analyze how the historical Adam acted within the framework of Scripture as an archetypal figure whose mention was about much more than just his individual existence. An Evolutionary Creation model provides for proper hermeneutical techniques, a God who acts in involved, self-giving ways, and an orthodox view of a historical, archetypical Adam whose actions doomed humanity to physical death. In addition, EC allows for the Christology of

the creation to be integrated into the creation account, specifically in regards to the exploration of the progressive Kingdom of God and the hope of the New Creation that is, indeed, better than the original creation. The Kingdom of God as described by Jesus Christ resembles an evolving world; a mustard seed slowly and secretly growing, which somehow comes to a magnificent harvest.

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