



Creation & Evolution Workshop

Session 1: **Unity among Believers**

September 2017 Rutgers

3 Sessions

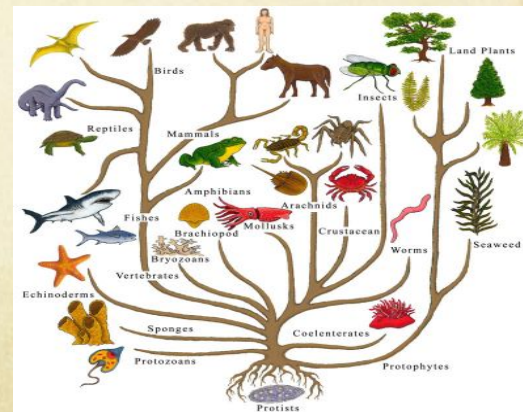
- 1. Unity among Believers
- 2. Soft Answer
- 3. Historical Adam

Session 1: Unity among Believers

- 1. Introduction: Theory of Evolution
- 2. B. B. Warfield & Biblical Exegesis
- 3. OEC Perspective
- 4. Recommendation

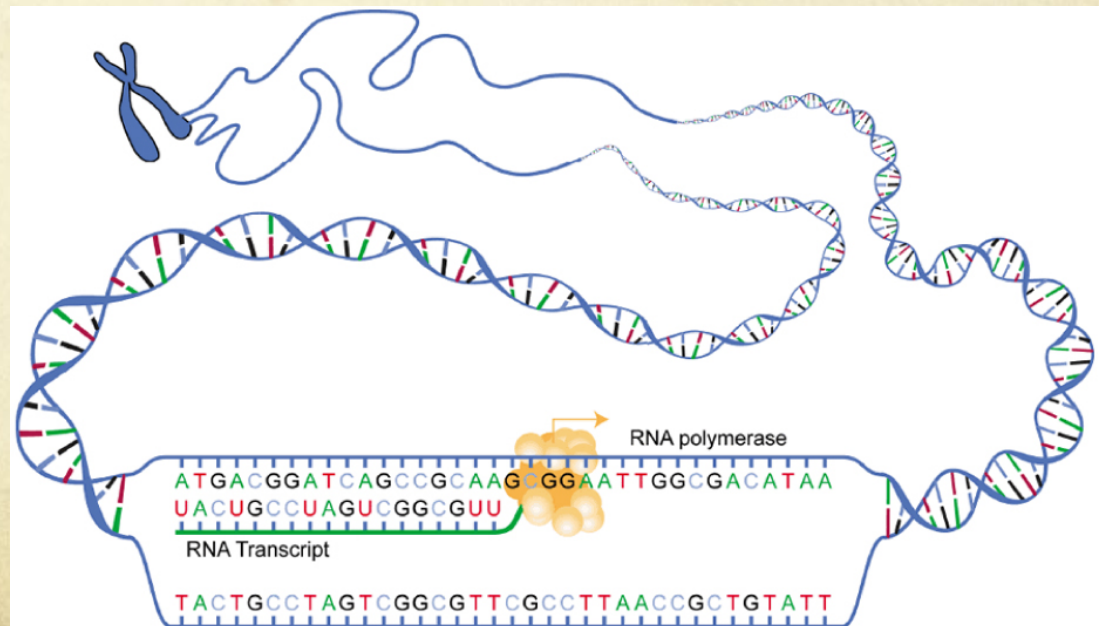
1. Introduction: Theory of Evolution

- Charles Darwin, *Origin of Species* (1856)
 - Different species evolved from common ancestor (macro-evolution) - tree of life
 - Species = the largest group of organisms in which two individuals can produce fertile offspring (an approx. definition)
 - Natural selection: survival of the fit



Neo-Darwinism

- Combination of modern genetics with idea of natural selection
- Mechanism of evolution: natural selection over random variations (mutations in DNA code)



Basic Conflict between Creation & Evolution

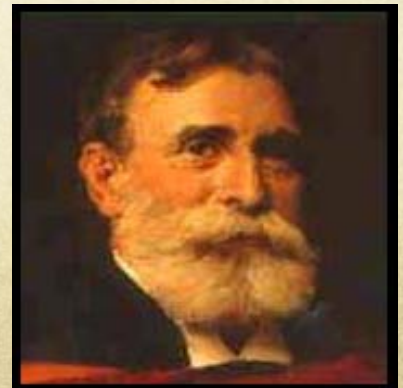
- Creation and **Naturalistic** Evolution are two different world views
 - Naturalistic world view: no Creator; all phenomena must be understood in terms of natural laws
 - Christian world view: **Creation**, Fall & Redemption. God created the universe. All phenomena, both **regularities & miracles**, are under the rule of God.

Well-publicized Secondary Conflict

- Young Earth Creationism (YEC, aka Scientific Creationism) claims that the earth is at most ten thousand years old.
- Main tenets of YEC: 1. Consistent literal interpretation of Bible. 2. Concept of creation with age (mature creation). 3. Flood Geology.
- Main challenge: establish creation with age scientifically.

2. B. B. Warfield & Biblical Exegesis

- **B. B. Warfield (1851-1921): Professor of Theology, Princeton Seminary, proponent & defender of **biblical inerrancy****
- **Recommend B. B. Warfield's point of view for Christian unity.**



Warfield & Theistic Evolution

“... if we condition the theory [of evolution] by allowing the constant oversight of God in the whole process, and his occasional supernatural interference for the production of new beginnings by an actual output of creative force, producing something new ... we **may hold to the modified theory of evolution and be Christians in the ordinary orthodox sense.”**

Warfield & Theistic Evolution

“I say we **may do this. Whether we **ought** to accept evolution, even in this modified sense, is another matter, and I leave it purposely an open question.”**

B. B. Warfield, *Evolution, Science, and Scripture: Selected Writings*, eds. Mark A. Noll and David N. Livingstone (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2000), pp. 130-131.

- 1. Both Young Earth and Old earth Creationism are acceptable biblically.**
- 2. Draw the line at “historical Adam.”**

Biblical Interpretation & Genesis 1

- Various interpretations of “day”
 - 24-hour day
 - Gap theory
 - Day-age
 - Pictorial-revelatory day
 - Framework Hypothesis
 - **Analogical day**

Some Considerations re Interpretation

- God is truthful, and does not deceive.
 - E.g.1, God did not put fossils in the ground to test our faith.
 - E.g.2, When Adam was created, he did not have memory of childhood (= **no history**).
 - Astronomers, looking into the sky, see a “**history**” of the universe. This history needs to be taken seriously.
- A basic principle of interpretation: Scripture interprets Scripture.

References

- Vern S. Poythress, “Christian Interpretations of Genesis 1,” *Christian Answers to Hard Questions*
- Vern S. Poythress, *Redeeming Science* (Crossway, 2006), <Frame-Poythress.org>

Interpretation of Two Words

- The Hebrew word day (yom) can mean a long period of time in the Hebrew Bible (e.g., Gen 2:4; Ps 90:4; Is 49:8; cf. 2 Cor 6:2).
- In “each according to its own kind,” (Gen 1:12, 21, 24, 25) the word “kind” (min) needs not be “species.” (It could be Phylum, Class, Order, Family, Genus.) Most probably, it would be what Israelites in Moses’ day observed regarding fixity of “kinds” of living things.

Analogical Day Interpretation

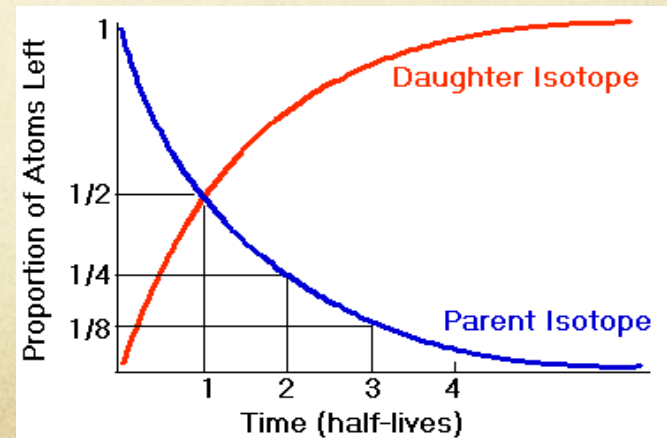
- God's workday in Genesis 1:1-2:3 is **analogical** to, but not equal to, our normal human day.
- Scripture interprets Scripture: The seventh day never ended (Genesis 2:1-3) -- God is still inviting us to enter His seventh day rest (Hebrews 4:1, 4-7, 11).
- How to interpret "evening & morning"? God's "work day" (Ps. 104:23) – ancient near east perspective.

3. OEC Perspective

- OEC = Old Earth Creationism
 - Biblical creationism & appreciation of science
- Presupposition: **nature and Scripture should cohere** (Col 1:15-17; ... in Him all things hold together.”)
 - If a scientific theory is well supported by data and is fruitfully predictive, we should try to see how it can cohere with what the Bible teaches. E.g., heliocentric solar system.
 - Modest realism: scientific theory changes over time; Biblical interpretation can also improve.

OEC Perspective

- No need to be antagonistic against astronomy, geology, radiometric dating, paleontology, and micro-evolution.
 - Micro-evolution examples: resistance of bacteria to anti-biotics, human cross-breeding of farm animals
- God can use and guide evolutionary process to create (theistic evolution, progressive creation) – miraculous deeds
- Avoid Deistic evolution



4. Recommendation

For local church:

- Accept both Young Earth Creationism (YEC) & Old Earth Creationism (OEC), but draw the line at historical Adam.
- Choice of YEC or OEC is not essential to salvation.
- Adam is linked with biblical themes of Creation, Fall and Redemption (session 3).