

In the Beginning: God!

One day a child asked her mother
A fundamentalist Christian, the question,
“How were people made?”

The mother responded, “Adam and Eve made babies
Then their babies became adults and made babies
And so on and so forth.”

The child then went to her father
A progressive Christian
And asked the same question:
“How were people made?”

And he answered her,
“We were first monkeys, then we evolved
To become like we are now.”

She went back to her mother
Saying she had lied to her!

But her mother replied, “No, I did not!”
“You father was speaking of his side of the family!”

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Cosmic accident?
Intelligent Design?
Evolution?
The Big Bang Theory?

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There is a lot of creative thinking going on
As to how the universe began.

The Bible simply puts it this way . . .

**In the beginning,
God created the heavens and the earth.**

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Our faith is rooted in these first ten words of the Bible.

We may argue about how God created

Whether a day in the Creation story is a 24 hour period,
Or whether it is an eon or a geological age,

Whether we believe in evolution or creationism
Or some combination of the two

But I'd be surprised we'd have any trouble,
Agreeing it was God who created.

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The Bible is an account,
That begins with God,
Moves with God,
And ends with God.

It is a record of God's mighty works of creation,
And God's mighty works of salvation
Throughout history.

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The Bible expresses, as its beginning and as its end,
The very purposes of God.

The foundation of Christian thought and belief begins,
In the awareness that God was God before creation.

And that creation didn't just "happen,"
But was intentionally created by God.

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Having said that
I do not believe the creation account is a science lesson.

I believe science and Christian faith can be compatible.

I do not believe we have to choose one over the other.

In fact, I know science has helped shed new light
On ancient Scriptures.

For instance, we read

***Psalm 104:5 "the Lord set the earth on its
foundations; it can never be moved."***

Due to science, we no longer believe in geocentrism
The understanding that the earth
Is the center of the universe
And the sun revolves around it.

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Copernicus proved in 1543

The sun is center to our solar system.
The earth revolves around it.

So that now when we passages like this,

Ecclesiastes 1:5 "And the sun rises and sets and returns to its place."

We read it knowing our understandings have changed.

St Augustine as early as 400 AD

Understood the possibility
That creation is not fixed
That things change.

Quoting from Alister McGrath

In an article from Christianity Today
Concerning St Augustine's view on creation:

Augustine draws out the following core themes: God brought everything into existence in a single moment of creation. Yet the created order is not static. God endowed it with the capacity to develop.

Good summation on the big bang theory and evolution.

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But some churches say

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If you believe in God
You cannot believe in evolution.

While the secular world says
If you believe in evolution
You cannot believe in God.

Tim Keller, retired pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian
Wrote an article entitled
Creation, Evolution, and Christian Laypeople.

In it, he argues we do not have to choose
*Between an anti-science religion
Or an anti-religious science.*

I agree.

Keller, is an evangelical Christian
Who believes Genesis 1 is not to be taken literally.

He quotes from Edward J. Young, a Hebrew scholar,
That the account of creation in Genesis 1
Is written in *exalted, semi-poetical language.*

It has a certain Hebrew cadence to it
With repetitions and refrains.

Keller seeks to draw new believers into faith
Without having to compromise their scientific worldview.

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Keller believes there are too many people
Rejecting the Christian faith

Because of the demand
To believe the creation account as historical.

Tim Keller's conclusion?

Christians who are seeking to correlate Scripture and science must have a "bigger tent" than either the anti-scientific religionists or the anti-religious scientists.

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So then, what do we do with the story of creation?

Write it off as antiquated?

Since we can't depend on it
As the actual historical account of creation
Discard it as a piece of nonsense?

No!

It's a wonderful story that conveys essential truths
In a beautiful literary fashion.

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The first essential truth found in Genesis 1 is
That in the beginning there was God.

The second essential truth is

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That it was God who created the heavens and earth.

The third essential truth is

That what God created God called good.

The fourth essential truth is

That the climax of God creation was humankind.

God made them, male and female, in God's image!

The fifth essential truth is

That God created so God would be revealed.

Psalm 19:1 ESV The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

Theologically we call this general revelation

The idea that God is discovered in creation.

An example of general revelation

From the writings of the Apostle Paul:

Romans 1:20 (NIV)

20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

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Another example of general revelation
And by far my favorite description
Is found in the Book of Job

Job 12:7-10 NIV 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? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.

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Our faith believes God designed and created
With the expressed purpose of being known.

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And so, between creationism and evolution
Do we have to make a choice?

Francis S. Collins, director of the National Institute of Health
And head of the Human Genome Project
Born and raised in Staunton, VA

Reconciles his Christian faith with scientific theory
In a book called *The Language of God: A Scientist
Presents Evidence for Belief* (Free Press, 2006).

In an article from CT entitled
Creation or Evolution? Yes!

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The author interviews Collins.

Here are some worthy excerpts.

How does evolution fit into your Christian faith?

...for us who have been given the gift of intelligence and the ability to appreciate the wonders of the natural world that [God] created, to have now learned about this evolutionary creative process is a source of awe and wonder. I find these discoveries are completely compatible with everything I know about God through the Scriptures.

If evolution is true, don't atheists have a point?

No. To simply rule out of order any questions that go beyond the natural world is a circular argument. This leaves out profoundly important spiritual questions, such as why we are here, if there is a God, and what happens after we die. Those are questions that science is not really designed to answer. You have to look in another place, using another kind of approach. And for me that's faith.

Why did you write this book?

I encounter many young people who have been raised in homes where faith was practiced and who have encountered the evidence from science about the age of the earth and about evolution and who are in crisis. They are

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led to believe by what they are hearing from atheistic scientists on the one hand and fundamentalist believers on the other that they have to make a choice. This is a terrible thing to ask of a young person.

Some of them simply walk away from both, convinced that science is godless and that faith is not to be trusted, because it asks them to disbelieve facts that now seem absolutely incontrovertible. This is an unnecessary choice. I don't think our future will be well served by having either science or faith win this battle.

God is the author of all truth. You can find him in the laboratory as well as in the cathedral. He's the God of the Bible; he's the God of the genome. He did it all.

If evolution and the Christian faith go together, then what's all the fuss about?

*One of the main reasons I wrote *The Language of God* was to try to put forward a comfortable synthesis of what science teaches us about the natural world and what faith teaches us about God. Yet it seems to be a pretty well kept secret these days that the scientific approach and the spiritual approach are compatible. I think we've allowed for too long extreme voices to dominate the stage in a way that has led many people to assume that's all there is. The thesis of my book is that there is no need for this battle. In fact, it's a destructive battle. And we as a society would be well*

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*served to recover that happy middle ground where people
have been for most of human history.*

In the beginning, there was God.

And God created the heavens and the earth.

And God saw all that he created and he called it good.

God created humankind

Male and female

In God's image

Just ask the animals

They will tell you

The hand of the Lord has done this!

In God's hand is the life of every creature

And the breath of all humankind.