

“Mark Rooker and Ken Keathley have produced an incredibly useful resource for seminary students and lay people, alike. Science-faith discussions can be quite complex and confusing for the uninitiated. Rooker and Keathley bring much needed clarity to the conversation. *40 Questions about Creation and Evolution* provides the reader with an excellent introduction to the key issues in the science-faith dialogue and helps the reader appreciate the varying perspectives held by Christians. The question and answer format allows the reader to engage the topic in manageable, “bit-sized chunks.” I whole-heartedly recommend *40 Questions about Creation and Evolution*. In fact, I plan to keep a copy on my bookshelf”

—Fazale (Fuz) R. Rana
Vice President of Research and Apologetics, Reasons To Believe

“No one interested in exploring this issue can ignore this book. It is superb in its breadth and the depth explored in each question is surprising substantial. This work will serve a valuable purpose for many years to come. My two colleagues have rendered an extremely valuable service to the Body of Christ!”

—Daniel L. Akin
President, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

“Rooker and Keathley have produced a book that is accessible and brief enough for use in Bible and doctrinal studies in the local church, but dense and comprehensive enough to serve as a textbook in a seminary classroom. It will surely become an invaluable resource on the doctrine of creation and related topics for seminarians, pastors, and scholars alike, and deserves a spot on the office bookshelves of each.”

—John D. Laing
Associate Professor of Systematic Theology & Philosophy, J. Dalton Havard
School for Theological Studies, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

“*40 Questions about Creation and Evolution* is the best one-stop introduction to questions about creation and evolution. Ken Keathley is an accomplished theologian and Mark Rooker is an accomplished Old Testament scholar, and together they have produced a fine book”

—Bruce Riley Ashford
Provost and Associate Professor of Theology & Culture, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

“The Bible is God’s book—true and trustworthy—from Genesis to Revelation. Though many question the historicity of Genesis and the creation account, God’s story from the earliest verses of Scripture is without error. But an accurate creation account matters more than to fulfill man’s curiosities about human origins. It is germane to the full narrative of Scripture and essential to the gospel message itself. In *40 Questions About Creation and Evolution*, Mark F. Rooker and Kenneth D. Keathley helpfully set forth key issues pertaining to creationism, the Genesis account, and how these issues intersect throughout God’s written revelation of himself. I am grateful to God for this fine work by Rooker and Keathley, and I wish I could place a copy of it in the hand of every church member.”

—Dr. Jason Allen
President, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary & College

“*40 Questions About Creation and Evolution* is the most helpful reference volume available for the student attempting to distill the essence of the debate into critical questions and cogent answers. While I do not agree with all the conclusions, I recognize commendable fairness and succinct and thorough coverage of the subject on the part of two of my favorite authors. I guarantee the reader of this book a fabulous experience.”

—Paige Patterson
President, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

“As a pastor, I am always scouting for books for our people—especially on difficult and controversial subjects. The relationship between the doctrine of creation and the science of evolution is one of those subjects. So, in this case, I need a book I can be comfortable handing to a PhD in microbiology, a homeschool mom, and my own 17-year-old son. This is that book. It is scholarly, compelling, and accessible. The thing I appreciate most is that its authors trust the Word of God more than a particular doctrinal expression. Christian scholarship should always be open to the most accurate and refined expressions of truth.”

—Pete Schemm
Pastor, Cave Spring Baptist Church, Roanoke, VA

“We discover in the book, *40 Questions About Creation and Evolution*, a well-researched doctrinal treatise engaging a topic of on-going interest and critical importance: the origins of our world. Ken Keathley and Mark Rooker offer us an in-depth, Christian exploration of the most pertinent matters on this much discussed yet often misunderstood doctrine. Given that the authors disclose their personal perspectives early in the book, Keathley and Rooker still represent all the major sides of this issue fairly and accurately. Each position is examined regarding its faithfulness to the teachings of Scripture and how each interprets the evidences of science. The presentation and structure of the book is itself a model for proper theological method: sound biblical exegesis that is historically informed, development of coherent doctrinal beliefs, and relevant, apologetic engagement. Keathley and Rooker have interjected into the contemporary debate a significant work that must surely be considered by all who desire to participate seriously in the discussion of Christian perspectives on this doctrine. These two authors have provided the evangelical world, if not all of Christendom, a convictional and charitable treatment on creation and evolution that for years to come will most certainly be a classical text on this central tenet of the Christian faith.”

—R. Stanton Norman
Provost and Executive Vice President for Campus Life,
Professor of Theology, Oklahoma Baptist University

“Mark Rooker and Ken Keathley are nationally known scholars who bring together their respective areas of expertise (Old Testament and Theology) to provide cogent evangelical Christian responses to the most interesting questions about creation and evolution. Pastors, well-informed laypersons, and college and seminary students will find this book immensely helpful in framing the key issues on this crucial topic.”

—Steve Lemke
Provost and Professor of Philosophy and Ethics, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

“The Bible ends where it begins—with the making of a people to share God’s life and show his glory. It starts in Genesis with the creation of heaven and earth, and the creation of mankind into God’s image. It concludes in Revelation with the re-creation of a new heaven and a new earth, and with the re-creation of people into their originally intended purpose—the image of Jesus Christ. This canonical inclusio makes a right understanding of creation absolutely indispensable for grasping God’s cosmic agenda of redemption. Rooker and Keathley have provided an invaluable resource to that end. *40 Questions about Creation and Evolution* is a biblical theology of this critical topic, as well as a balanced and fair treatment of a hotly debated cultural issue. Read it straight through to gain a thorough knowledge of the key issues relevant to the discussion. Then refer to often as an encyclopedia on the subject. In both pursuits let its content inspire you to engage the goal of creation—the worship of Jesus Christ!”

—Jim Shaddix
Professor of Preaching, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

“Having a solid understanding of creation has become a battleground within evangelicalism. Ken Keathley and Mark Rooker affirm different positions (young earth and old earth); yet they model a respectful, irenic spirit as they discuss biblical, historic, theological, and worldview questions. Keathley and Rooker communicate clearly and passionately with impeccable scholarship. In my opinion, the questions on evolution (32-38) serve as the highlight of the book. Regardless of your personal perspective on the issue, *40 Questions on Creation and Evolution* will help you evaluate the issues.”

—Mark Rathel
Professor of Theology, Baptist College of Florida

“An incredibly timely book that gets right at the heart of the debates for faith. Answering the question of “where we came from” has the potential to be the Achilles’ heel for both Christians and agnostics alike. Anyone concerned to contend for the faith in our generation must be read up on this question, and Ken Keathley and Mark Rooker do an incredible job sorting through the arguments with clarity, fairness, and biblical faithfulness. This will be a real help to believers wanting to make compelling arguments in the public square.”

—J.D. Greear
Pastor, The Summit Church, Raleigh-Durham, NC

“This well-crafted, carefully-researched, and thoughtfully-written volume represents serious wrestling with the issues involved in the creation and evolution debate. Bringing insights from the fields of theology, biblical studies, philosophy, and science, Kenneth Keathley and Mark Rooker have provided a valuable service to church leaders and students who wish to better understand the ongoing challenges in this intricate conversation. The interaction represented in the authors’ responses to the “40 Questions” offers a healthy model for how Christians can engage the academy and the culture with civility, while simultaneously seeking to serve the church with faithfulness.”

David S. Dockery
President, Trinity International University

“Kenneth Keathley and Mark Rooker have written one of those books that belongs on every Christian’s bookshelf. It treats a very controversial topic in a very fair, irenic yet bold fashion that gives light and not heat in every chapter. The chapter dealing with belief in theistic evolution is a case in point. After reading this chapter, one comes away with a clear understanding of the various shades and nuances of this perspective and its inherent strengths and weaknesses. Scientists, theologians, pastors, and lay people would all be wise to get this book, read it, and keep it for future reference.”

—James Merritt
Pastor, Cross Pointe Church, Duluth, GA

“Ken Keathley and Mark Rooker provide a map through the tangled ‘creation and evolution’ forest. More than that, they offer the reader skills to read the map intelligently. You will not encounter partisan rancor in this volume, which is one of its great strengths. You will discover solid, reflective, Christian thought on crucial questions related to this contentious topic. This is a helpful and needed resource for the church and the classroom.”

—Heath A. Thomas
Director of Ph.D. Studies and Associate Professor of Old Testament & Hebrew,
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

“Kenneth Keathley and Mark Rooker have given careful attention to the issues surrounding man and his origins. This book deals with the biblical witness, the scientific questions, and the apologetic application. Christians disagree on many points regarding these issues, but this book is a valuable tool regardless of where one comes down on the age of the earth or the finer questions of the relationship between science and exegesis.”

—Russell D. Moore
President, Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission

“There are many fine features in this valuable contribution to the ongoing debate on this profoundly important topic. First is the breadth of views presented. They give calm and judicious consideration of views that often produce attacks that give off more heat than light. They acknowledge that all views have some difficulties and themselves model that on some questions, different interpretations may be viable for evangelicals. At the same time, they recognize and identify essential elements in any evangelical view of creation. A second notable feature is the breadth of topics. A host of biblical, theological, scientific, and philosophical topics related to creation and evolution are addressed. The flood, the image of God in humans, the fall, and Darwinism as an ideology are just some of the forty questions the authors include in their study. Another aspect that deserves mention is the 40 questions format. While reading the entire book is valuable, readers may easily locate the topics of most pressing interest to them in the table of contents. I congratulate my colleagues on this fine piece of work.”

—John S. Hammett
John L. Dagg Senior Professor of Systematic Theology and Associate Dean for Theological Studies,
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

40 QUESTIONS ABOUT
Creation and Evolution

Kenneth D. Keathley and Mark F. Rooker

Benjamin L. Merkle, Series Editor

 **Kregel**
Academic

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*Dedicated to Ava Dell Rooker,
my second granddaughter,
whose very life has caused me to reflect
on the beauty and wonder of God's creation.*
—Mark F. Rooker

*For my grandchildren—Elliott,
Grant, and those yet to come.
I pray that you will grow up
confident that the God who created
the heavens and the earth has revealed
himself and redeemed us through
his Son, Jesus Christ.*
—Kenneth K. Keathley

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York, 1992
ANET	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Text Related to the Old Testament</i> . Edited by J. B. Pritchard. 3 rd ed. Princeton, 1969
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
BDB	Brown, F., S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs. <i>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Oxford, 1907
BT	<i>The Bible Translator</i>
BJRL	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
BSac	<i>Bibliotheca Sacra</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CJ	<i>Concordia Journal</i>
CTJ	<i>Calvin Theological Seminary</i>
DNTB	<i>Dictionary of New Testament Background</i> . Edited by C. A. Evans and S. E. Porter. Downers Grove, IL, 2000
DOTP	<i>Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch</i> . Edited by T. D. Alexander and D. W. Baker. Downers Grove, IL, 2003
EBC	Expositor's Bible Commentary
EDBT	<i>Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology</i> . Edited by Walter A. Elwell. Grand Rapids, 1996
EDT	<i>Evangelical Dictionary of Theology</i>
EvQ	<i>Evangelical Quarterly</i>
ExAud	<i>Ex Audito</i>
GKC	<i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> . Edited by E. Kautzsch. Translated by A. E. Cowley. 2nd ed. Oxford, 1910
HALOT	Koehler, L., Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm. <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Translated and edited under the supervision of M. E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden, 1994–1999
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
IBHS	<i>An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax</i> . B. K. Waltke and M. O'Connor. Winona Lake, IN, 1990
ICC	International Critical Commentary

<i>IDBSup</i>	<i>Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible: Supplementary Volume.</i> Edited by K. Crim. Nashville, 1976
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>JPSTC</i>	Jewish Publication Society Torah Commentary
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>JSOTSupp</i>	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i> <i>Journal</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
<i>MSJ</i>	<i>The Master's Seminary Journal</i>
<i>NAC</i>	New American Commentary
<i>NACSBT</i>	NAC Studies in Bible and Theology
<i>NICOT</i>	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
<i>NIDOTTE</i>	<i>New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis.</i> Edited by W. A. VanGemeren. 5 vols. Grand Rapids, 1997
<i>NIGTC</i>	New International Greek Testament Commentary
<i>NIVAC</i>	NIV Application Commentary
<i>NSBT</i>	New Studies in Biblical Theology
<i>OTL</i>	Old Testament Library
<i>PAAJR</i>	<i>Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research</i>
<i>PRSt</i>	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
<i>Presb</i>	<i>Presbyterion</i>
<i>SBJT</i>	<i>Southern Baptist Journal of Theology</i>
<i>SBLDS</i>	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
<i>TDOT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament.</i> Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren. Translated by J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromily, and D. E. Green. 8 vols. Grand Rapids, 1974–
<i>TLOT</i>	<i>Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament.</i> Edited by E. Jenni, with assistance from C. Westermann. Translated by M. E. Biddle. 3 vols. Peabody, MA, 1997
<i>TrinJ</i>	<i>Trinity Journal</i>
<i>TynBul</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>WBC</i>	Word Biblical Commentary
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

PART 1

**QUESTIONS ABOUT THE
DOCTRINE OF CREATION**

QUESTION 1

What Are the Major Issues and Concepts Concerning Creation and Evolution?

Type the word “evolution” in the Amazon.com search line, and it will offer over 61,000 books. A similar search for books on “creation” will yield over 31,000 results. The creation/evolution controversy is an overwhelmingly large subject, and the debate shows no signs of diminishing. This book attempts to distill the conversation to the 40 most significant questions and, in so doing, provide the reader with an adequate overview of the main issues.

The creation/evolution controversy has been ongoing for over 200 years (the debate actually predates Darwin’s publication of *On the Origin of Species*, 1859). Certain issues, concepts, and views are recurring while other significant notions have recently come to the forefront, and anyone hoping to have a grasp of the debate must be familiar with them. This chapter briefly discusses the four major approaches to creationism, the distinction between creation and evolution, the role that presuppositions play in evaluating scientific data, and the various concordist and nonconcordist interpretations of Genesis 1–3.

The Major Approaches to Creationism

Young-Earth Creationism (YEC)

YEC proponents argue for a literal, six-day creation that occurred approximately 6,000 years ago. They contend that the proper interpretation of Genesis 1–3 requires this position. Death, disease, and predation (i.e., the predator/prey relationship) entered the world through the fall of Adam. For the most part, geological evidences of an ancient earth are attributed to the flood of Noah. YEC advocates find the astronomical evidences of an ancient universe (such as light from distant stars) much more difficult to explain. A variety of theories are offered, but the predominant one is still the mature

creation view, otherwise known as the “appearance of age” hypothesis. We address questions about the age of the earth in Questions 17 through 22. The leading representative group today for the YEC position is the organization Answers in Genesis, headquartered in Petersburg, Kentucky.¹

Old-Earth Creationism (OEC)

Old earth creationism is sometimes called progressive creationism. OEC proponents argue that God created in successive stages over a period of millions or billions of years. In other words, OEC advocates accept the scientific evidence for an ancient universe (and the big bang theory), but they do not accept the predominant biological theory of origins, which of course is Darwinian evolution. OEC theorizes that God miraculously created Adam and Eve about 60 to 100 thousand years ago. The strongest objection YEC proponents have to OEC is its acceptance of animal death and disease prior to Adam’s fall. We address questions about death and the fall in Questions 25–27. The leading representative group today for the OEC position is the organization Reasons to Believe, based in Glendora, California.²

Evolutionary Creationism (EC)

Proponents of evolutionary creationism (also called “theistic evolution”) accept the current scientific theories both of the origin of the universe and of the human race. That is, EC accepts the Darwinian hypothesis that all life, including humans, descended from a common ancestor (generally understood to be a single-cell life form). EC advocates believe that God endowed creation with the principles and laws that caused the essential components of life to self-organize. Random mutation provided the immense variety we observe in the fossil record and in living things today, and natural selection determined which species survived and which went extinct. Some EC proponents do not understand Adam and Eve to be literal persons (though, as we will see, there are significant exceptions to this point). We address questions pertaining to this model in Question 24 and Question 38. The leading representative group today for the EC position is the BioLogos Foundation, located in Grand Rapids, Michigan.³

Intelligent Design (ID)

The Intelligent Design movement began as a group of scholars and scientists who were unconvinced by the Darwinian hypothesis and were disturbed by the philosophical naturalism that seems to underlie it. ID proponents argue that an objective examination of the scientific evidence alone (without appealing to the Genesis account) will lead an unbiased inquirer to the

1. <http://www.answersingenesis.org>.

2. <http://www.reasons.org>.

3. <http://www.biologos.org>.

conclusion that design by an Intelligent Being (i.e., God) makes an inference to the best explanation. ID contends that arguing over the age of the earth distracts from the bigger adversary—Darwinism and the philosophical atheism underlying it. As a result, one can find both YEC and OEC proponents within the ID movement, and in fact a handful of ID advocates hold to certain non-Darwinian versions of evolution (Michael Behe, author of *Darwin's Black Box*, is a prime example). We address questions pertaining specifically to ID in Questions 39 through 40. The leading representative group today for the ID position is the Discovery Institute, headquartered in Seattle, Washington.⁴

The Distinction between Creation and Creationism

We often forget to make the distinction between creation and creationism. One is a doctrine while the other is an apologetic approach. On the one hand, creation is a foundational doctrine of the Christian faith. The essential features of the doctrine of creation are unchangeable tenets. The Bible teaches that those features include the truths that God, without compulsion or necessity, freely created the universe out of nothing according to his own will and for his own good purposes. Though marred by the arrival of evil and sin, creation reflects the nature of its Creator. So creation is both great and good.

On the other hand, creationism is an apologetic approach which attempts to integrate the doctrine of creation with the current understandings of the natural sciences. In particular, creationism seeks to relate the first 11 chapters of Genesis to the latest findings of science. For example, how does the biblical account of God creating the sun, moon, and stars square with what we understand through astronomy? Or the creation of plants and animals with research in biology and genetics? Or the account of Noah's flood with geology? Or the account of the dispersing of nations after the Tower of Babel with anthropology? Creationism deals with issues such as the age of the universe, the origin of the first humans, and the nature of the world prior to the fall of the original couple.

So creation is an unchanging and unchangeable doctrine while creationism, by its very nature, must constantly change and be amended. The doctrine of creation is derived from Scripture and is as old as the biblical witness itself. Creationism is relatively new, because it arose alongside the scientific revolution in the seventeenth century. As science developed, so did creationism, especially after Darwin published *On the Origin of Species* in 1859. We must keep the distinction between creation and creationism in mind as we explore the important issues highlighted by this book. We must know what to hold firmly and what must be open to revision. Our commitment to doctrine must be strong, but we hold to any particular apologetic approach much more loosely. We address the essential features of the doctrine

4. <http://www.discovery.org>.

of creation in the next three questions. The remainder of the book focuses primarily (but not exclusively) on issues relating to creationism.

The Role of Presuppositions when Interpreting Empirical Data

Everyone approaches the empirical evidence with presuppositions. It is generally recognized that facts are not self-interpreting. No facts “just speak for themselves.” *Presuppositionalism* recognizes that all approaches to truth begin with certain presuppositions, assumptions, or postulates, and these assumptions are taken on faith.⁵ This is true of all human studies, whether the field of study is mathematics, geology, or theology. A study of the universe must start with one of two presuppositions: *supernaturalism* or *naturalism*.⁶ Christian theists start with the presupposition of supernaturalism. Supernaturalism is the view that reality is greater than nature. God transcends the universe and is its Creator. Atheists start with the presupposition of naturalism (or more precisely, philosophical naturalism). The astrophysicist Carl Sagan famously began his discussion of the universe by declaring, “The Cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be.”⁷ Sagan is not making an empirical observation; he is giving his presuppositional starting point.

The question is how, when, and how much the empirical evidence should cause us to adjust or change our presuppositions. What should we do when the scientific data seems to clash strongly with our presuppositions? If that happens, should we consider completely jettisoning our presuppositions? In this book we will examine the views of Darwinian evolutionists and theistic evolutionists, old-earth creationists and young-earth creationists. Perhaps it should not be surprising, but the positions at the ends of the spectrum—Darwinian evolutionists and young-earth creationists—are the positions that hold the most adamantly to their respective presuppositions. Both refuse to let the empirical data cause them to step away from their original philosophical commitments. Theistic evolutionists and old-earth creationists, by contrast, more readily allow the scientific data to affect their respective interpretative models.

In the writings of Darwinists and young-earth creationists, the controlling influence of presuppositions is striking. As noted previously, the two positions are at opposite ends of the spectrum of positions. Yet, they have some features in common. Significantly, both recognize two things about the universe: first, the universe appears to be ancient and, second, it appears to be

5. See R. C. Sproul, John Gerstner, and Arthur Lindsley, *Classical Apologetics: A Rational Defense of the Christian Faith and a Critique of Presuppositional Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 304–9; John Frame, *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R, 1987), 348–54.

6. See Phillip Johnson, *Reason in the Balance: The Case against Naturalism in Science, Law, and Education* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1995).

7. Carl Sagan, *Cosmos* (New York: Random House, 1980), 1.

very well designed. But they both believe these appearances are an illusion. What they disagree on is what part is the illusion. Darwinists believe the earth is old and the inference of design is a misconception. Young earth creationists argue that the truth is the other way around: the world is designed but its origin is very recent.

What is going on here? Controlling presuppositions are at work. Atheists presuppose naturalism while theists presuppose supernaturalism. A pre-commitment to naturalism can be seen in the writings of the well-known atheist Richard Dawkins. He admits that the world certainly appears designed and that, at first blush, the Darwinian explanation seems absurd.⁸ However, Dawkins believes that Darwinism allows him to dismiss the evidences of design. In a well-known passage, Dawkins declares,

An atheist before Darwin could have said, following Hume: ‘I have no explanation for complex biological design. All I know is that God isn’t a good explanation, so we must wait and hope that somebody comes up with a better one.’ I can’t help feeling that such a position, though logically sound, would have left one feeling pretty unsatisfied, and that although atheism might have been *logically* tenable before Darwin, Darwin made it possible to be an intellectually fulfilled atheist.⁹

A presupposition to philosophical naturalism (i.e., materialism or atheism) predisposes Dawkins to embrace Darwinism over the evidences of design. Evolutionary biologist Richard Lewontin is even more explicit:

Our willingness to accept scientific claims that are against common sense is the key to an understanding of the real struggle between science and the supernatural. We take the side of science *in spite* of its failure to fulfill many of its extravagant promises of health and life, *in spite* of the tolerance of the scientific community of unsubstantiated just-so-stories, because we have a prior commitment to materialism. It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us to accept a material explanation of the phenomenal world, but on the contrary, that we are forced by our *a priori* adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanations, no matter how counterintuitive, no matter how mystifying to

8. Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe without Design* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), 3.

9. *Ibid.*, 6.

the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door. The eminent Kant scholar Lewis Beck used to say that anyone who could believe in God could believe in anything. To appeal to an omnipotent deity is to allow that at any moment the regularities of nature may be ruptured, that miracles may happen.¹⁰

In the above quote, Lewontin admits two things. First, the scientific enterprise itself does not require an acceptance of materialism. And second, his absolute allegiance to materialism causes him to reject the inference of design, no matter how compelling the evidence. With these words Lewontin reveals that he is not operating as a dispassionate scientist, but as a devotee to his presuppositions.

Presuppositionalism or Fideism?

There are a number of approaches to the relationship between faith and reason, and at this point it is helpful to note the distinction between presuppositionalism and *fideism*.¹¹ As we noted before, presuppositionalism recognizes that all approaches to truth begin with certain assumptions that are taken on faith. However, there is one important caveat at this point. The presuppositionalist believes that the validity of one's presuppositions must eventually be tested by using the laws of logic and be demonstrated by a consistency with the evidential findings. Fideism, by contrast, does not believe one's presuppositions can be tested. Like the presuppositionalist, the fideist believes that one starts with certain presuppositions. But unlike the presuppositionalist, the fideist does not subject his starting assumptions to any type of feedback or check. The fideist operates by "blind faith."

Most YEC proponents identify themselves as presuppositionalists.¹² They start with the presupposition of the Bible's inspiration and authority (as do all conservative evangelicals). YEC advocates, however, add another crucial presupposition. Namely, they seem to hold that the YEC reading of Genesis 1–11 is the only interpretation available to the Bible-believing Christian.¹³ The approach of many YEC adherents seems to veer perilously

10. Richard Lewontin, "Billions and Billions of Demons," *New York Review of Books* 44, no. 1 (January 9, 1997): 28–31 (emphasis original).

11. See Norman Geisler, *Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976), 47–65.

12. Ronald Numbers, *The Creationists: The Evolution of Scientific Creationism* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1992), 207.

13. "Since the Bible undisputedly teaches a young earth, when someone claims that scientific evidence proves otherwise, we can be certain that they are mistaken" (Tim Chaffey and Jason Lisle, *Old-Earth Creationism on Trial: The Verdict Is In* [Green Forest, Ark.: Master, 2008], 153). See also John MacArthur, "Creation Believe It or Not," *MSJ* 13, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 17.

close to fideism. Consider the testimony of Kurt Wise about his attitude toward empirical evidence:

As I shared with my professors years ago when I was in college, if all the evidence in the universe turned against creationism, I would be the first to admit it, but I would still be a creationist because that is what the Word of God seems to indicate. Here I must stand.¹⁴

As the context makes clear, when Wise spoke of creationism, he meant the young-earth position. His courage, candor, and fidelity to the Scriptures must be commended. But if one's presuppositions are unassailable, then his approach has shifted from presuppositionalism to fideism.

In contrast, old-earth creationists and evolutionary creationists concede that they allow the finding of science to influence the way they approach the creation account in Genesis. Philosophically, they follow more closely in the tradition known as *empiricism*. Empiricism allows experience and evidence to have a significant role in the formation of one's position. Young-earth creationists are strongly critical of this feature and often characterize OEC and EC in very harsh terms.¹⁵

Integrating the Bible and Science: Concordist and Non-concordist Approaches

So how should Christians go about the task of reconciling what they understand the Bible to teach about origins with the consensus understandings within the scientific community? Or is such an attempt misguided from the start? Interpretive models that attempt to harmonize Scripture and science are called *concordist* approaches (*concord* means “harmony” or “agreement”). Other models understand the Bible and science to be speaking in such different ways that they are non-overlapping. Not surprisingly, these models are called *non-concordist* approaches.

Concordists contend that God has revealed himself through two books—the book of nature and the Bible.¹⁶ They argue that creation gives us general revelation about the Creator (Ps. 19:1–6) while Scripture gives

14. Kurt Wise, *In Six Days: Why Fifty Scientists Chose to Believe in Creation*, ed. John F. Ashton (Green Forest, Ark.: Master, 2001), 355.

15. See, e.g., Jonathan Sarfarti, *Refuting Compromise: A Biblical and Scientific Refutation of “Progressive Creationism” (Billions of Years), as Popularized by Astronomer Hugh Ross* (Green Forest, Ark.: Master, 2004).

16. Hugh Ross, *A Matter of Days: Resolving a Creation Controversy* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 2004), 87–90. Some attempt to narrowly define concordism to include only progressive creationism. In this book we define concordism as any attempt to legitimately integrate the findings of science with Scripture.

us special revelation that reveals who the God of creation is (Ps. 19:7–11). Therefore, Christians have the ability and responsibility to adopt an interpretive model that constructively integrates Genesis 1–3 with modern science. Often this is accomplished by a significant reinterpretation of either the natural or biblical data.

Concordist Approaches

Concordists interpret the creation account of Genesis 1–2 with a number of different theories. The major concordist theories are these:

- *The 24-hour theory:* This theory holds that the days of Genesis 1 are literal 24-hour days, and that the universe was created in six days.
- *The gap theory:* Proponents of this view posit that an indeterminate period of time—a gap—exists between the first two verses of the Genesis account. This view allows for the earth to be ancient while still interpreting the six days of creation as literal 24-hour days.
- *The day-age theory:* Day-age theorists argue that each day of creation in Genesis one is an era of time. This view understands the six days to extend over millions or billions of years.
- *The promised land theory:* This theory holds that the Hebrew expression for “In the beginning” denotes an unspecified length of time—perhaps billions of years. The six days of Genesis 1 speak of the preparation of the promised land and do not refer to the creation of the earth or universe as a whole.

Each of these theories has a chapter devoted to it in Part 3 of this book.

Non-concordist Approaches

Proponents of non-concordism view concordism as misguided. They believe that attempts to harmonize the Bible and science fail to take Scripture on its own terms. Therefore, concordism is doomed to failure and, as an apologetic endeavor, does more damage than good. The major non-concordist approaches are as follows:

- *Genesis as myth:* Many neo-Orthodox and liberal theologians view Genesis in mythical terms. They believe that the author of Genesis borrowed many of the details of the creation account from prior Canaanite and Mesopotamian myths.
- *Genesis as allegory:* Some evangelicals consider Genesis 1–3 to be a non-literal description of the general human condition. Rather than providing actual history, Genesis presents the theological truths that God is the sovereign Creator and that humanity is estranged from him due to our sinfulness.

- *Genesis as literary device:* This position views Genesis 1–3 as a polemic against the polytheistic idolatry of the surrounding culture. The six days of creation are understood to be a literary structure rather than literal 24-hour days. The first three days describe the forming of creation, while the second three days describe the filling of creation. The framework theory and the temple inauguration theory are examples of evangelical versions of non-concordist interpretations. Though they view the six days of creation as a literary device, they reject the low view of Scripture as expressed by the myth and allegory positions.

Separate chapters are devoted to the framework theory and the temple inauguration theory in Part 3. We address the question of whether or not the mythological and allegorical approaches to Genesis are viable options to evangelicals in Questions 24 (“Were Adam and Eve Historical Persons?”) and 38 (“Can a Christian Hold to Theistic Evolution?”).

A Word as We Move Forward

No issue has less unanimity among evangelicals than the matter of discerning the best way to relate the doctrine of creation to the scientific theory of evolution. Therefore, we devote much of the book simply to surveying the options proposed by various camps. The arena for the debate is rapidly changing, and the number of scientific discoveries, especially in the field of genetics, is accelerating. By necessity some of the positions set forth in these pages are done so tentatively.

None of the four views—young-earth creationism, old-earth creationism, evolutionary creationism, and intelligent design—are without serious problems. We, the authors, have differing opinions with one leaning to young-earth creationism (Rooker) and the other to old-earth creationism (Keathley). At times our differences show up in the answers we provide to the upcoming questions. But our fellowship in Christ is strong. We both affirm the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture, and we both believe that the God Who gave us the Bible is the God Who created heaven and earth.

These are exciting days to be involved in the task of developing a theology of science. Evangelicals are a missional people. As such we cannot shy away from the difficult issues presented by origins science. We must engage the natural sciences with confidence and integrity. We must endeavor that the Lord Jesus Christ will have worshippers in every vocation, and we must advance the kingdom of God into every arena of life—including the natural sciences.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What are the differences between creation and creationism?
2. What is the primary disagreement that young-earth creationists have with the old-earth creationist position?
3. What role do presuppositions play in our interpretation of the evidences?
4. What are the distinguishing characteristics between concordist and non-concordist approaches?
5. Why have young-earth creationists, old-earth creationists, and some evolutionary creationists joined together in the intelligent design movement?