

Here We Go Again

Ten Of The Most Annoying Arguments Used Against Biblical Creation

There are certain tasks I do not enjoy having to do on a regular basis. One that immediately comes to mind is garbage night. Every Tuesday night, the garbage cans and recyclables go out to the curb. Rain or shine, hot or cold, it still must be done. Even though I just did it seven days ago, they sit on the driveway waiting to be taken on their weekly walk. I stress this point in the hopes that you, the reader, will sympathize with me as you read my verse of lament and will join with me in singing the chorus of gripe: “O garbage night, o garbage night, I loathe you deeply garbage night!”

There are also, in the debate concerning evolution and the age of the earth, certain arguments I grow tired of hearing. When these arguments are given, I confess that I find myself mentally checking out of the conversation because I see that the person is often simply parroting from others what he or she has heard and has not really thought through the issues at hand. I think the debate is worth having and I think many of the arguments against Young Earth Creationism (hereafter YEC) are good and need to be carefully analyzed and answered. But some of the arguments are just plain stupid. To be sure, many creationists have used very poor arguments in this debate that should not be used. I include in the footnotes a link to an article that includes a list of such arguments that creationists should not use.¹

The problem with these kinds of arguments is that they do not help the debate to move forward. We spend so much time dealing with silly ideas that we cannot move on to the real meat of the issues.

In this article, I have included ten such arguments that I hope, after reading this paper, my evolutionary friends will stop making and the debate can move forward. These arguments are often used by both atheists and, at times, theistic evolutionists and old earth creationists.

1. Creationism Is Opposed To The Progress Of Science.

Why It Sounds Good: Frankly, anytime you can demonize the opposition, it will sound good. Further, evolution is often equated with science and so anything opposed to evolution will be considered unscientific.

Why It Is Annoying: This is quite a strange charge, considering the fact that many classic scientists like

Frances Bacon, Johann Kepller, Isacc Newton, and modern scientists like Raymond Damadian, David Boylan, or Kurt Wise, who have all contributed in great ways to science exploration, were or are YECs!² In fact, all of them would claim that it is precisely because they believe God has created the world in a rational and understandable way that we ought to pursue knowing it and understanding it because doing so helps us better worship and serve Him! Creationism does not oppose science, it promotes it! It was professor Peter Harrison, former professor of history and philosophy, who aptly wrote, “Strange as it may seem, the Bible played a positive role in the development of science...Had it not been for the rise of the literal interpretation of the Bible and the subsequent appropriation of biblical narratives by early modern scientists, modern science may not have arisen at all.”³

Further, there is a distinction between the type of science that is observable, testable, and repeatable and builds cell-phones and airplanes, creates vaccines, and demonstrates that the world is not flat, and science that is not. We often call these hard and soft sciences. Beliefs about the past fall into that second category. This does not mean that such beliefs are wrong, but that a charge that creationists deny science because they reject evolutionary ideas is demonstrably false. Rather, creationists reject the evolutionary claims of scientists on the basis that the evidence has been, of yet, unconvincing.

I formally challenge my evolutionary friends to name one piece of technology that has been developed dependent upon the belief in the common descent of all living organisms. It was Marc Kirschner, the founding chair of the Department of Systems Biology at Harvard Medical School, who stated, “In fact, over the last 100 years, almost all of biology has proceeded independent of evolution, except evolutionary biology itself. Molecular biology, biochemistry, physiology, have not taken evolution into account at all.”⁴

2. Evolution Is Based On Evidence, Whereas Creationism Is Based On Faith.

Why It Sounds Good: If this is true, then only evolution should be taught in science classes because only it meets the criteria of science.

¹ *Arguments We Think Creationists Should Not Use.* <http://creation.com/arguments-we-think-creationists-should-not-use>.

² *Creation Scientists And Other Biographies Of Interest.* <http://www.answersingenesis.org/home/area/bios/>.

³ Harrison, Peter. *The Bible And The Rise Of Modern Science.* Australian Science, 23, 2002. Pgs. 14-15

⁴ Quoted in the *Boston Globe*, 23, 2005.

Why It Is Annoying: This is based upon two faulty assumptions. First, that evolution is based purely on fact and is not a type of secular religion. But the honest evolutionists recognize that this is simply not the case. Richard Lewontin, a geneticist and Marxist, has written, “We take the side of science in spite of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, *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 for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have a prior commitment, a 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 counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated. Moreover, that materialism is an absolute, for we cannot allow a Divine Foot in the door.”⁵ Scott Todd, an immunologist at Kansas State University, has also written, “Even if all the data point to an intelligent designer, such an hypothesis is excluded from science because it is not naturalistic.”⁶

Further, Michael Ruse, a philosopher of science and one of the most well-known defenders of Neo-Darwinism, who also testified on trial against creationism in the Arkansas Vs. McLean case, has written, “Evolution is promoted by its practitioners as more than mere science. Evolution is promulgated as an ideology, a secular religion—a full-fledged alternative to Christianity, with meaning and morality. I am an ardent evolutionist and an ex-Christian, but I must admit that in this one complaint—and Mr [sic] Gish is but one of many to make it—the literalists are absolutely right. Evolution is a religion. This was true of evolution in the beginning, and it is true of evolution still today... Evolution therefore came into being as a kind of secular ideology, an explicit substitute for Christianity.”⁷ In light of these admissions, evolution can be shown to be a reflection of an a priori religious commitment to naturalism, rather than an unbiased examination of evidence.

The second faulty assumption is that religion is not evidence based. However, this misunderstands what is meant by faith. Contrary to the thought of

popular evolutionist Richard Dawkins, who writes that, “Faith is the great cop-out, the great excuse to evade the need to think and evaluate evidence,”⁸ faith does not mean believing without evidence. Rather, faith is acting on what you know to be true. Faith does not mean believing there is a chair in the room, faith is what happens when the observer sits on the chair. Creationists look at the evidence in a comprehensive manner. We look at history, science, archaeology, philosophy, and textual criticism. We then draw the conclusion that the resurrection of Jesus, the reliability of the Bible, the sufficiency of Genesis, and the nature of God over the nature of evil are best able to interpret the world around us. We then apply this worldview to the evidence that we thereafter encounter. This does not mean that evidence should be ignored, but that the ultimate issue is philosophical worldviews, not simply evidence.

3. Equivocating Microevolution And Macroevolution.

Why It Sounds Good: In evolutionary theory, small scale changes lead to big changes, just like enough rain drops will form a lake. It is thus reasoned that evidence for small changes is evidence for big ones. So finch beaks changing size, bacterial adaptation, and other observable events are seen as evidence that evolution on a grand scale, in terms of molecules to man, has viability. If enough of these small scale changes take place over a long enough period of time, big changes will occur. It is often charged that only creationists use this pseudo-distinction.

Why It Is Annoying: The fact is that there is a difference and this micro/macro distinction is present within the writings of evolutionists themselves. John Rennie, an ardent evolutionist, describes the issue well when he writes, “Microevolution looks at changes within species over time. . . Macroevolution studies how taxonomic groups above the level of species change.”⁹ Further, writing about this distinction, Thomas Fowler and Daniel Kuebler, writing in favor of Neo-Darwinism, write, “This, indeed, is why many proponents of evolution cite the cases of industrial melanism and Darwin’s finches as examples of evolution in action, even though they are strictly speaking only microevolution at work.”¹⁰ Still further, the secular college text book, *Biology*, uses

⁵ Richard Lewontin, *Billions and billions of demons* (review of *The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark* by Carl Sagan, 1997), *The New York Review*, p. 31, 9 January 1997.

⁶ Todd, S.C., correspondence to *Nature* 401(6752):423, 30 Sept. 1999.

⁷ Ruse, Michael. *How Evolution Became A Religion: Creationists Correct?* *National Post*, pp. B1,B3,B7 May 13, 2000.

⁸ Dawkins, Richard. *Richard Dawkins Quotes*. http://thinkexist.com/quotation/faith_is_the_great_cop-out-the_great_excuse_to/224384.html

⁹ Rennie, John. *15 Answers To Creationist Nonsense*. Scientific American 287, 2000, Pgs. 78-85.

¹⁰ Fowler, Thomas B.; Kuebler, Daniel. *The Evolution Controversy: A Survey Of Competing Theories*. Baker Academic, 2007. Pg. 121.

this distinction as well under its attempt to support Neo-Darwinism.¹¹ No informed creationist denies that evolution, defined as natural selection acting on random mutation takes place in the microscope, though they may object to the terminology.¹²

Further, creationists recognize that such evolution has made some significant changes to organisms. But while there are big changes that take place, creationists deny that these big changes are a result of new information or that they are significant enough to account for changes on the level surrounding “families” in taxonomy.

4. Arguing That Since Scientists Do Not Yet Understand A Natural Phenomenon, God Must Have Done It Is A “God Of The Gaps” Argument.

Why It Sounds Good: This type of argument actually is a “God of the Gaps” argument and sadly, in church history, many have used this approach.

Why It Is Annoying: There are two significant problems. First, creationists, as a whole, rarely argue this way any longer. Rather, creationists have increasingly been arguing for creation from what we do know about the universe. For example, in philosopher William Lane Craig’s¹³ version of the Kalam Cosmological argument,¹⁴ he states

1. “Whatever begins to exist has a cause.” This certainly matches our experience and observations. There are no gaps here.
2. “The universe began to exist.” Craig uses the impossibility of an actual infinite, not simply a mathematical one, and the second law of thermodynamics, which demonstrates that the amount of useable energy in the universe is running down, to illustrate this. Again, this is arguing from what we do know. There are no gaps here either.
3. “Therefore, the universe has a cause.” If both of the previous premises are true, the conclusion follows. There is no gap here. Further, he argues that this cause, in keeping with this formulation, must be “uncaused, eternal, changeless, timeless, and immaterial” a direct attack on the “Well then who created God?” question. If the cause created

time, matter, and energy, then it is by definition timeless, immaterial, and powerful.

Another example is the idea that information, such as is found in the DNA code of life, only comes from intelligence. Philosophers and apologists Norman Geisler and Frank Turek have written, “When we conclude that intelligence created the first cell of the human brain, it’s not simply because we *lack* evidence of a natural explanation; it’s also because we have positive, empirically detectable evidence *for* an intelligent cause.”¹⁵ The issue at hand is that DNA is not just information, but it is usable information. It is not simply like pulling out B, A, T from a hat at random. It is doing so in a way that is usable and spells BAT to the person drawing the letters. DNA is coded information and that only comes from intelligence. Even if one can argue against these assertions, the fact remains that there is no “God of the gaps” thinking present.

Second, this type of argumentation is actually a two-edged sword that cuts both ways. In other words, evolutionists use the same strategy at times, only instead of saying, “We don’t know, so God did it,” they say, “We don’t know, so evolution did it.” For instance, when approaching the issue of how life can arise from non-life, there is no observable evidence to confirm evolutionary theory. But these scientists simply argue that they should be given more time. After all, even if we do not yet know how it happened, we are still here, so it must have. Evolutionists sometimes justify this practice under the heading of “making predictions,” but the fact remains that they are employing the same “gap” mentality they attack creationists for.

Why would evolutionists respond in this manner? Because the issue really is not evidence, it is the beliefs brought to the table. If a person is convinced a system is true, he or she will use it to interpret evidence that seems out of place, employing a “rescuing device” to justify the belief. The bottom line is discovering what worldview can rationally account for the ability to think logically about a uniform universe and to report findings ethically.

5. The Majority Of Scientists Hold To Evolution.

Why It Sounds Good: It is, frankly, true. The majority of professional scientists do hold to evolutionary theory, or at least a theistic view of evolution. In a 2009 Pew Research Poll, 95% of scientists polled held to either unguided or guided

¹¹ Raven, Peter H.; Johnson, George B. *Biology*. 3rd Ed. Mosby Year Book, 1992. Pgs. 386-390.

¹² Purdom, Georgia. *Is Natural Selection The Same Thing As Evolution?* <https://answersingenesis.org/natural-selection/is-natural-selection-the-same-thing-as-evolution/>

¹³ To be sure, William Lane Craig is not a Young Earth Creationist, but this argument used by him has been used by Young Earth Creationists as well.

¹⁴ Craig, William Lane. *The Existence Of God And The Beginning Of The Universe*. <http://www.reasonablefaith.org/the-existence-of-god-and-the-beginning-of-the-universe>

¹⁵ Geisler, Norman L.; Turek, Frank. *I Don’t Have Enough Faith To Be An Atheist*. Crossway Books, 2004. Pg. 157.

evolution while only 2% of scientists polled held to YEC.¹⁶

Why It Is Annoying: There is a reason that an appeal to the majority is labeled as a logical fallacy. The fact is that before the Darwinian era, the majority of scientists held to creation. Was Darwin then wrong for challenging it? The majority is often wrong. The point of science is to continually examine one's thinking to align it with evidence and reality.

6. Intelligent Design Isn't Science. It Is Simply Veiled Creationism.

Why It Sounds So Good: There is no denying that Intelligent Design (hereafter ID) holds implications for creation theory. If it is true that intelligence is required for building life as is seen around us, that means something for the realms of philosophy and theology.

Why It Is Annoying. This characterization misses the difference between implications and evidence. As Stephen Meyer, leading ID proponent, has pointed out, this mistake is made by those who "confuse the evidence for a theory with the implications of a theory."¹⁷

Now, ID has its own problems to be sure, being that it moves from science to the Bible, it can be guilty of reinterpreting the Bible according to what modern science can prove. Thus, many ID proponents hold to an old earth and to common descent. So the case could really be made that ID isn't theology at all, but is only science! Many creationists would disavow themselves of the methodology of such work,¹⁸ even if some of the arguments are of value.¹⁹

A second important issue is that one of the reasons evolutionists label ID as pseudoscience is that they claim it is not falsifiable. For something to be scientific, it needs to be shown that if x is true then y will be true. This is called making predictions. But by the opposite, if y is not true, x is not either. This is falsifiability. This principle is very useful because the claim that cannot be proven wrong has no way to prove its validity. It is claimed that ID does not make claims that can be tested as to their accuracy. But at

¹⁶ *Evolution, Climate Change and Other Issues*. PewResearch. 2009-07-09.

¹⁷ Meyer, Steven. *Intelligent Design Is Not Creationism*. http://www.stephenmeyer.org/news/2012/06/this_article_was_originally_pu.html.

¹⁸ For example, see Purdom, Georgia. *Is The Intelligent Design Movement Christian?* <http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/nab2/intelligent-design-movement-christian>

¹⁹ For instance, the work of Michael Behe in describing the concept known as Irreducible Complexity.

the same time, others claim they have proved ID claims wrong. Either it isn't falsifiable or it has been proven wrong. You cannot have it both ways.

7. God Could Have Used Evolution.

Why It Sounds Good: This type of argument seems very committed to the power of God. After all, if God is so powerful, He could do anything He wishes. This argument is often used to demonstrate that YEC's limit God's potential.

Why It Is Annoying: Imagine that you are on the stand for murder. When it is time to question you, the prosecuting attorney asks if you own a gun. When you respond in the affirmative, the attorney notes that the victim was killed with a gun and so he pleads with the jury to find you guilty because you could have done it. That would be a grave injustice. The issue is not whether or not you could have killed the individual, the issue is whether or not you did kill the individual. Of course creationists understand that God could have used evolution. But the issue is whether or not God did do so. Did God use a process to create man that was built on billions of years of suffering, the strive to survive, and death in stark contrast to the claim He makes in His Word that death came by sin and sin came by Adam (Romans 5)? Creationists argue that He did not.

8. The Days In Genesis Do Not Have To Be 24 Hour Days.

Why It Sounds Good: In passages like Zechariah 14:20, which talks of the day of the Lord, and 2 Peter 3:8, the word "day" is used for more than a twenty-four hour time and 2 Peter 3:8 teaches that, for God, a "day is like a thousand years." Therefore, the Bible student is not tied to interpreting the Genesis account of "day" in a twenty-four hour fashion.

Why It Is Annoying: It is true that the Bible uses the word "day" in many different ways. It speaks of day as twenty four hours, as signifying a time period, as describing the difference between day and night. So, how would one know which use is being used? Context, always context. When Genesis 1 and 2 are examined, it can readily be seen that even it uses the word day in different fashions. But this is actually an argument against playing fast and loose with the word. For if the context itself indicates that it is using day in different sense, then it will determine its own meaning. So how is day used in the passage?

Genesis 1:5- Day describes the period of light, as opposed to dark.

Genesis 1:5- Day is used for both morning and evening.

Genesis 1:8- Day is used for both morning and evening.

Genesis 1:13- Day is used for both morning and evening.

Genesis 1:14- Day is used for the light time.

Genesis 1:16- Day is used for the light time.

Genesis 1:18- Day is used for the light time.

Genesis 1:19- Day is used for both morning and evening.

Genesis 1:23- Day is used for both morning and evening.

Genesis 1:31- Day is used for both morning and evening.

Genesis 2:2- Day is used in conjunction with the other morning and evening days, indicating a parallel.

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Genesis 2:3- Day is used in conjunction with the other morning and evening days, indicating a parallel.

Genesis 2:4- Day is used as a description of a period of time.

Genesis 2:17- Day is used as a description of a period of time.

When the context is considered, the text itself indicates a distinction in how the word “day” should be understood. Some times “day” is used as the period of light as opposed to dark. Sometimes “day” is used as a period of time. But are those the only ways “day” is used? There is clearly, in this passage, a third use of day that is distinguished from these other uses. This idea of a twenty four hour day most fits the context. This also fits the passage in Exodus 20:11, which clearly teaches that the days are literal days. Further, every time the word “day” is used with evening and morning or with a specific number, in any other passage in the Bible, it always means a twenty-four hour day.

Taking this idea even farther, it is often pointed out that the seventh day does not include morning and evening and so it cannot be a literal day. But this argument backfires. Tim Chaffey and Jason Lisle point out “If the exclusion of ‘evening and morning’ allows the seventh day to be longer, then this is really unintentional admission that the first six days were

literal twenty-four hour days.”²⁰ This argument used against YEC, while claiming freedom of usage, ignores the contextual evidence.

9. The Bible Isn’t Meant To Be A Scientific Textbook.

Why It Sounds Good: It has been said by many, “The Bible tells us the way to go to heaven, not how the heavens go.” The ultimate purpose of the Bible is not to make scientific pronouncements, but to show man the nature of God, salvation, and the restoration of creation. If the Bible is relegated to a religious book, then we can do science however we see fit and it will never conflict with theological truth.

Why It Is Annoying: Praise God the Bible isn’t a science textbook because science textbooks need to be updated, and often! The Bible may not be intended as a science textbook, but it does make scientific, historical, philosophical claims that are either true or false. The Christian worldview is a dangerous one because it rests its authenticity upon history. According to Paul in 1 Corinthians 15, if Jesus did not rise from the dead, the Christian faith is foolish. Likewise, if Adam did not exist, sin did not happen. Unlike Eastern or New Age religions, belief systems like Christianity, Judaism, and Islam make falsifiable declarations. The writers of scripture, over and over, indicated that they believed the doctrines they held were a direct result of God’s work in creation in the first eleven chapters of Genesis.

10. The Issue Doesn’t Matter And We Should Just Preach The Gospel.

Why It Sounds Good: John 3:16 teaches that salvation depends, not upon one’s view of origins, but upon faith in the work of Jesus. Rather than focus on issues of origins, Christians might be more productive to simply focus upon the work of Jesus.

Why It Is Annoying: This argument ignores the issues involved. While no creationist believes that YEC must be believed in order to be saved, we do believe that YEC must be true in order for salvation to be true. While evolution, in the terms of common descent and evolution as an all encompassing theory, is not necessarily incompatible with belief in God, it is very much at odds with belief in the Christian God. This is true for at least five reasons.

First, theistic evolution attacks theology proper. If this view is correct, then God is a God who values death as a means of creation.

Second, theistic evolution attacks inerrancy. If all of life came through evolutionary change over

²⁰ Chaffey, Tim; Lisle, Jason. *Old Earth Creationism On Trial*. Master Books, 2008. Pg. 52

billions of years, Genesis is wrong, for a straightforward reading of it claims that God created the world in six days. That these days were literal days is evidenced by the fact that each day is given a number and is accompanied by the phrase “morning and evening.” Further, Exodus 20:11 states that these days were literal.

Third, theistic evolution attacks anthropology. If mankind is an evolved primate, then he is not made in the image of God and there is nothing marking him as special or unique from any other life form.

Fourth, theistic evolution attacks Christology. In passages like Matthew 24:21 Mark 10:6, and Mark 13:9, Jesus indicated that He believed Genesis was an accurate and literal account of creation. If YEC is wrong, He was wrong and not infallible.

Fifth, theistic evolution attacks soteriology. If this view is true, death, suffering, and sin are not due to a literal fall, but to the process of natural selection, then Christ’s death was not only unnecessary, but ineffective, for He died for no reason.

Richard Dawkins, the atheist biologist, writes, “Oh, but of course the story of Adam and Eve was only ever symbolic, wasn’t it? Symbolic?! So Jesus had himself tortured and executed for a symbolic sin by a non-existent individual? Nobody not brought up in the faith could reach any verdict other than “barking mad.”²¹

Echoing this idea, Frank Zindler, an American atheist, has written, “The most devastating thing though that biology did to Christianity was the discovery of biological evolution. Now that we know that Adam and Eve never were real people the central myth of Christianity is destroyed.”²²

To be sure, even if all of these arguments are avoided, this does not mean YEC is correct. But, if these are the arguments upon which a person is basing his or her evolutionary beliefs, that person should not quit their day job! I encourage all those involved in the debate to dig deeper into the issues and not settle for pseudo-arguments that do not hold water. To quote the cliché but pithy citation of Aristotle, we must “follow the argument where ever it leads!”

²¹ Dawkins, Richard. *The Root Of All Evil: The Virus Of Faith*. 2006.

²² Zindler, Frank; Craig, William. *Atheism vs. Christianity*. Video, Zondervan. 1996.