

Basic Issues between Science and Scripture: Theological Implications of Alternative Models and the Necessary Basis for the Sabbath in Genesis 1–2

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This paper divides into four sections: (1) Some problems facing evolutionists and biblical creationists. (2) Alternate models for creation held by Bible believing scholars, including views held by some Seventh-day Adventist scholars. (3) The biblical record of creation with a literal week as a necessary basis for Sabbath-keeping. (4) The biblical meaning of the Sabbath as unfolded in biblical history, with its solid basis in the creation account.

I. Some Problems Facing Evolutionists and Biblical Creationists

Why is there disagreement between science and Scripture concerning the process of human creation? The gap between evolutionary and biblical study has a number of levels. One fundamental problem is a misunderstanding of science by biblical scholars and a misunderstanding of biblical study by scientific scholars. Admission of this basic fact is necessary before any advance can be made in real communication between them. Rather than communicating with each other, sometimes adherents talk past each other, and no gains are made by either side. In fact, a deepening of the divide takes place.

What follows is an irenic attempt to suggest some of the things that both sides need to do in order to communicate with each other more successfully.

1. **Hermeneutics.** This has to do with interpretation. Much of the debate between science and religion is philosophical, where neither side is true to either science or Scripture, but transcends their appropriate basis in science and Scripture. Natural science must be demonstrable now, in the lab, to be true science. Any extrapolation of theories over vast time periods is beyond the scope of science. Many biblical scholars also go beyond their basis in Scripture. While attempting to reconcile biblical data with evolutionary data, many biblical scholars accept the “geological time-frame” for the creation. In this accommodation,

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theistic evolutionists believe God started the long process, and *progressive evolutionists* add that God continues to contribute to the process from time to time. The theory of the survival of the fittest and the death of animals for millions of years and the eventual evolution of humans is opposed to the biblical view of God as love. Why would God inflict so much pain and death on animals in order to create humans? Biblical scholars who attempt to accommodate Scripture to evolutionary thinking in order to protect the trustworthiness of Scripture unwittingly end up questioning its trustworthiness in teaching the love of God.

2. **Sola Scriptura.** *Sola Scriptura* is the biblical doctrine that Scripture interprets Scripture. A large number of scholars overlook the importance of this doctrine. These scholars go to the creation record (Gen 1–2) but come up with different interpretations. They range from those who say God created *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) to those who say He created through the evolutionary process, launching it and guiding it each step of the way. As we will see below, these Bible-believing Christians come up with various models of creation, yet each one claims to be true to Scripture. This obviously involves whether or not one is using a hermeneutic where Genesis 1–2 is carefully interpreted in its immediate and canonical contexts. What the rest of Scripture says about creation is important to a proper understanding of Genesis 1–2.

Creation study limited to Genesis 1–2 confines the objectivity of the research and unwittingly ignores the Bible's own criteria for biblical study. The rest of Scripture provides the biblical worldview for Genesis 1–2. The *sola scriptura* principle illustrates that rightly understood, biblical-theology is a science. It allows revelation given in Scripture to inform, rather than looking within human thinking to non-biblical ideas.

T. F. Torrance, my major professor at the University of Edinburgh, has made a significant contribution in demonstrating that theology is a science. Although basically in the Barthian tradition, subsuming all revelation under the revelation of Jesus Christ as the Word of God, he has some keen insights into the right that theology has to function as an authentic science. Some of his books on this topic include *Theological Science* (1969), *Christian Theology and Scientific Culture* (1980), *Belief in Science and in Christian Life* (1980), *Reality and Scientific Theology* (1985), and *Transformation and Convergence in the Frame of Knowledge: Explorations in the Interrelations of Scientific and Theological Enterprise* (1984).¹

¹ T. F. Torrance, *Theological Science* (London: Oxford UP, 1969); *Christian Theology and Scientific Culture* (Eugene OR: Wipf & Stock, 1998, 1980); *Belief in Science and in Christian Life* (Edinburgh: Handsel, 1980); *Transformation and Convergence in the Frame of Knowledge: Explorations in the Interrelations of Scientific and Theological Enterprise*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984). Other texts include, *Reality and Evangelical Theology: The Realism of Christian Revelation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1999) and *Divine Meaning, Studies in Patristic Hermeneutics* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1995).

3. The Challenge of Subjectivity in Both Science and Biblical-Theology.

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) posited the idea that reality is in the mind of the observer, a position common in the dualistic thinking of the Greeks, who separated the *noetic* (mind) from the *ontic* (real) world, or the *intelligible* from the *sensible* realms. For the Greeks, reality in nature was but a projection of the reality in the mind.

Kant continued this dualism by stating that God could never be known as He is in Himself, for all knowledge involves some projection of the mind upon the reality.² Torrance rightly calls this objectifying rather than being objective.³ For Kant the world and God do not exist independent of the human mind. Process theology apparently builds on this principle, for God, who is in process of development, is dependent upon the universe as His body.⁴ For Kant, one does not draw the laws of nature out of nature, but reads them into nature. So “scientific theories have no bearing upon being or reality independent of ourselves.”⁵

This view is called in question in the modern (and now postmodern) world, culminating in the great contribution made by Albert Einstein. Scientific method has progressed through three major periods: (1) The early classical period from Pythagorean (6th–4th centuries BC) and Ptolemaic (4th century BC–16th century AD) times up to Newton (1642–1727), with its emphasis on deduction; (2) the Newtonian era, with emphasis on causality; and (3) the modern and postmodern period, with its emphasis on field theory, which rejected the dualistic basis of the other two periods.⁶ Biblical-theological⁷ science means that one rejects the existential theological method in which concepts are projected from religious self-understanding. It recognizes that there is a given in Scripture as there is in nature, and that one must come to study the given for its own sake and allow its own inner-rationality to reveal itself. It begins with Genesis 1–2 as literal history and refrains from reading into it a subjective interpretation of long periods of evolutionary theory.

² Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (Cambridge, UK: University Press, 1998), 169, 605–623. Kant said, “all our knowledge begins with experience.” *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman K. Smith (London: Macmillan, 1929), 41. Kant called such knowledge empirical philosophy, whereas “doctrines from *a priori* principles alone we may call *pure* philosophy.” Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason and Other Works on the Theory of Ethics*, trans. Thomas K. Abbott (London: Longmans, Green, 1948), 2. T. F. Torrance, *Christian Theology and Scientific Culture* (Belfast: Christian Journals, 1980), 20. Richard Grigg, *Theology and a Way of Thinking* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1990), 26.

³ Torrance, *Christian Theology and Scientific Culture*, 20.

⁴ For an evaluation of Process thought, see Norman R. Gulley, *Christ is Coming!* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 1998), 47–61.

⁵ Torrance, *Christian Theology and Scientific Culture*, 20.

⁶ Torrance, *Reality and Scientific Theology*, 80.

⁷ By this I mean theology based on Scripture, rather than on philosophy (systematic theology) or theology in Scripture (biblical theology in the technical sense).

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4. **Defining Science:** There are many sciences. “Science” is a word that is appropriately used for natural science and biblical-theological science. As long as natural or biblical-theological study is done in a way that is true to itself, it is a science. All sciences have their own rationality and logical consistency. It is not right to force one upon another. In order for biblical-theology to be a science, it must be true to its own reality, thinking faithfully in accordance with the revelation of its own subject. It has a right to its own independent presentation of the data to answer the questions that seem to overlap with philosophy and natural science. The same can be said for true science, whatever the discipline.

(a) **Worldviews.** So-called scientific facts have changed with changing worldviews, as Thomas Kuhn observed.⁸ Changes in scientific worldviews include the Copernican cosmology (sun as center of the universe) replacing the Ptolemaic cosmology (world as center of the universe) and the Einsteinian cosmology (all the universe is in a relational movement, without a center) replacing the Copernican.

Newton and Einstein studied the same universe, yet Newton thought it was mechanistic, while Einstein thought it was characterized by relativity. The reason for their different conclusions was the worldview, or framework, within which they observed. The science of these two scholars was impacted by the different worldviews they espoused.

In a similar way, natural science and biblical-theological science is thought out within two mutually exclusive worldviews. That is, either God had nothing to do with evolution or He created through the evolutionary process. This is the basic difference between them. Even though there are numerous theories on both sides, the discussion of these theories is without final resolution due to the worldview in which they are found. The evolutionary theories are confined to the natural worldview (methodological naturalism). The biblical theories are thought out within the supernaturalistic worldview. John Montgomery is right when he writes, “What nature is to the scientific theorizer, the Bible is to the theologian.”⁹ Biblical-theological studies are becoming more precise and true to their own worldview. D.A. Carson reminds us, “Science no longer holds the epistemological advantage it once had.”¹⁰

Biblical-theological science must not be intimidated by other sciences. It must be remembered, as Max Wilders mentions, that “Concerning reality as a whole . . . we are almost completely ignorant.”¹¹ There is no natural science that can cover the totality of reality. Einstein’s theories of relativity and the scientific

⁸ Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: U of Chicago, 1962).

⁹ John W. Montgomery, *The Suicide of Christian Theology* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1970), 283.

¹⁰ D. A. Carson, *The Gagging of God: Christianity Confronts Pluralism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 86.

¹¹ N. Max Wilders, *The Theologian and His Universe: Theology and Cosmology From the Middle Ages* (New York: Seabury, 1982), 166.

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probes into outer space give concrete evidence that there are vast universes out there, far beyond the imagination of those who launched the Enlightenment. There is no human worldview that does justice to the vastness of reality. Nor can it tell where the race came from, why it is here, and where it is going, the three basic questions probed by philosophy.

Biblical-theological science has a biblical worldview that is as expansive as the God who created the “heavens and the earth” (Gen 1:1, 2:1). This does not mean humans are left to their own unaided reason to discover or comprehend this vastness. However, biblical-theological science presents this larger worldview because it is given by God in His revelation in Scripture.

(b) **Presuppositions.** Exponents of either worldview (naturalism or supernaturalism), whatever their various theories within their worldview, come with that worldview as their fundamental presupposition. It is this presupposition that interprets the data.

Science is considered an objective search for truth, and scientific method holds a powerful influence over many disciplines. Often, by contrast, biblical-theological study is considered obscurantist, lacking objectivity, merely an expression of subjective feelings based upon assumptions that cannot be proven. Biblical-theology should not be pressed into a corner by such a charge. It is best to look at this claim over against the context of science itself. David Hume, in his books *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* and *Treatise of Human Nature*, questions basic assumptions of science that he believes cannot be demonstrated. For example, uniformitarianism, that the future will be the same as the past, and that every event has a cause.¹² This is important to our topic because uniformitarianism is foundational to the theories of evolution and geology. Scripture even predicted uniformitarianism in the end-time (2 Pet 3:3–6).

Science has basic presuppositions that are foundational to its systems. These basic beliefs must be accepted as a given in order for any system building to be done. Furthermore, with changing paradigms in science, who is to say that the present one will last? With Max Wilders, we agree in principle, “It is not inconceivable that contemporary science will in ages to come be looked down upon just as we look down upon the science of the Greeks or of the Middle Ages.”¹³

It should be remembered, as Carl F. H. Henry points out, that “The decisive role of presuppositions is increasingly apparent to 20th-century scientific scholarship. The great advances in recent modern scientific theory have arisen through creative postulation rather than inductive observation.”¹⁴

¹² David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed., Eric Steinberg, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993), 15–25 (IV), 39–53 (VII); and *Treatise of Human Nature*, eds., L. A. Selby-Bigge and H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 69–179 (1.111).

¹³ Wilders, 168.

¹⁴ Carl F. H. Henry, *Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1990), 74.

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“Only by careful attention to the role of presuppositions will the disaster of suspending Christian truth upon empirical consideration be avoided.” For as Henry rightly points out, “Empirical method deals with phenomenal, not with noumenal reality; it cannot adjudicate the existence and nature of the supernatural. Worse yet, it yields only tentative and revisable conclusions; it cannot provide an irreversible verdict on anything. To rest the case for Christianity on an empirical appeal is not only methodologically unpromising but also theologically hazardous.”¹⁵

(c) **Limitations of Science.** Not only does biblical-theological science have a breadth that transcends the visible domain of other sciences, but science has limitations even within its own empirical realm. Science is limited to the *how* questions. Thus, an article may be analyzed into how many atoms comprise it, how the basic particles interact, but there is no room for the *why* question. “Suppose for example, the object were a violin. Does a mere description of the layout of the atoms constituting the violin provide one with all that one might want to know about what a violin is and why such objects are made?”¹⁶ The answer is obviously no. There is much more to a violin than a description of its physical components. In the same way, there is much more to the universe than what one can observe. Biblical study is a science because it offers the broadest worldview to cover the major questions that remain unanswered in philosophy and the natural sciences.

In *The Case for Christianity*, C. S. Lewis speaks about the limitations of science, and therefore the need of the broader Christian perspective about God. “Science works by experiments. It watches how things behave. Every scientific statement in the long run, however complicated it looks, really means ‘I pointed the telescope to such and such a part of the sky at 2:20 a.m. on 15th January and saw so-and-so,’ or ‘I put some of this stuff in a pot and heated it to such-and-such a temperature and it did so-and-so.’ Don’t think I’m saying anything against science: I’m only saying what its job is. And the more scientific a man is, the more (I believe) he’d agree with me that this is the job of science—and a very useful and necessary job it is, too. But why anything comes to be there at all, and whether there’s anything behind the things science observes—something of a different kind—this is not a scientific question.”¹⁷ But it is very much within the purview of theological science, because theological science has to do with God, the Creator of everything.

Carl F. H. Henry notes that,

Empirical science must routinely take for granted what it cannot prove, including such principles as the comprehensive unity, harmony, and intelligibility of the universe, the prevalence of some kind

¹⁵ Henry, 50.

¹⁶ Russell Stannard, *Grounds for Reasonable Belief* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic, 1989), 11.

¹⁷ C. S. Lewis, *The Case for Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1989), 19.

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of causal continuity in nature, and the necessity of honesty in experimentation and in scientific research. Without antecedently assuming such postulates, empirical science cannot even get under way.¹⁸

Science is not without other limitations. For example, it is well known by scientists that “facts” are theory-laden. As W. S. Vorster notes, “there is no such thing as pure observation or observation without theory. Each observation is based on some kind of theory or theoretical assumption.”¹⁹ Evolutionary theories are often accepted as fact, without adequately questioning how those facts were derived and whether the process was objectively valid.

Millard Erickson rightly focuses on the uniqueness of theological science.

Theology surpasses other speculative sciences by its greater certitude, being based upon the light of divine knowledge, which cannot be misled, while other sciences derive from the natural light of human reason, which can err. Its subject matter, being those things which transcend human reason, is superior to that of other speculative sciences, which deal with things within human grasp. It is also superior to the practical sciences, since it is ordained to eternal bliss, which is the ultimate end to which science can be directed.²⁰

While affirming the above-stated advantages of biblical-theological science over other sciences, it is also necessary to state that facts are theory-laden for biblical-theological science, too. Theologians too come to their data with presuppositions. This is why it is necessary that Christian scholars allow themselves to be placed under the divine guidance of the Holy Spirit illuminating Scripture, for “spiritual things are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor 2:14). A Spirit-led understanding of Scripture judges human presuppositions and corrects them by God’s revelation.

(d) **Different Scientific Methods.** Different sciences are like different games. Stephen Toulmin asks what is the purpose of sport? If a person answers that it is to score more goals and beat one’s opponent, this fits soccer, baseball, and tennis. But it does not fit solitaire, or many other games. Toulmin’s book, *Foresight and Understanding: An Enquiry Into the Aims of Science*, reminds us that there is no single “scientific method.”²¹ We can only speak of scientific methods.

¹⁸ Henry, 43.

¹⁹ *Paradigms and Progress in Theology*, eds., J. Mouton, A. G. van Aarde, and W. S. Vorster (South Africa: Human Sciences Research Council, 1988), 36.

²⁰ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986), 34.

²¹ Stephen Toulmin, *Foresight and Understanding: An Inquiry Into the Aims of Science* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 17.

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Hans-Georg Gadamer, in his book *Truth and Method*, notes that different games are played differently, according to their own rules²² (the same is pointed out by the philosopher Wittgenstein in his later contributions).²³ The rules of the game fit the game, and not some other game. Each is played according to its own rules. Rugby rules don't apply to tennis, nor golf rules to basketball. So it is with biblical-theology as a science. It has its own rules (e.g., the biblical cosmic controversy worldview and *sola scriptura*) that form the scientific orderly reasoning that is characteristic of biblical-theological science. Just as a game must be played according to its own rules, so biblical-theology must be articulated according to its own rules. It is not necessary for biblical-theology to be beholden to the rules of philosophy or science because it is a different game. Christian scholars who accommodate biblical truth to the rules of evolutionary theory overlook this. Nor is it relevant for evolutionary scientists to reject creation by God, as this belongs to a game that has different rules.

Biblical-theological method involves more than scientific method.²⁴ This seems to be overlooked by David Tracy when he claims, "Most Christians now recognize that much of the traditional Christian manner of understanding the cognitive claims made in the Christian Scriptures should be rejected by the findings of history and of the natural and human sciences."²⁵ Practical science studies the observable in nature. Theology studies the unseen God through the medium of Scripture. As Nigel Cameron reminds us, "The methods of the two are distinct, in that one involves the reception of God's self-revelation and the other active observation of the natural order."²⁶ Kelly Clark rightly distinguishes between belief in God and belief in a scientific hypothesis. "It is more fitting to construe belief in God as analogous to belief in other minds or persons."²⁷

Scientific method is confined to the demonstrable and cannot reach back beyond to the origin (metaphysics) of the observable.²⁸ Biblical-theological method is broader than the scientific method because it begins with God as the Creator of all that is. Theological method begins with the self-revelation of God

²² Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Crossroad, 1990, 2nd rev. ed., Germ. 1960), 96.

²³ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: Macmillan, 1958, 3rd ed.), 19, 23, 241, 8–9, 11–12, 88.

²⁴ However, "some of the most noteworthy experiments in modern experimental physics have been engendered by imaginative metaphysical theories." Carl F. H. Henry; *God, Revelation, and Authority* (Waco, TX.: Word, 1976), 1:171.

²⁵ David Tracy, *Blessed Rage for Order: The New Pluralism in Theology*, (New York: Seabury, 1978), 5.

²⁶ Nigel M. de S. Cameron, "Talking Points—Science Versus Religion," *Themelios*, 8/1, (1982): 23–27.

²⁷ Kelly J. Clark, *Return to Reason: A Critique of Enlightenment Evidentialism and a Defense of Reason and Belief in God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 122.

²⁸ The metaphysical dimensions of evolutionary theory (origins) are just that—theory, and not a part of scientific method.

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in the totality of Scripture. Any confining of biblical-theology to a closed universe (Bultmann), or to a theory of correlation (Tillich), or to a feeling of absolute dependence (Schleiermacher) is a reductionist move toward the more limited worldview of science.

(f) **The Importance of Belief in Science and Biblical-theology.** Evolutionary scholars need to evaluate their claim that their determinations are based upon proof, whereas biblical-theology is based upon beliefs. Facts are not the sole province of science and beliefs the sole province of biblical-theological study. “How did this world get here?” is the question before both evolutionary naturalism and biblical creationism. Both answer this question from their beliefs in evolutionary theories or in biblical inspiration.

It is essential to biblical-theological science that the theologian believe in God as portrayed in Scripture. To relegate God to the “ground of all Being” (Tillich), to a “Wholly Other” (early Barth), or to immanence (Schleiermacher) is to fail to do justice to the God of Scripture. As biblical-theology is the science of God in His relationship to His universe, it fails to do its work if it speaks about any other god. The God of Scripture is the only God who is the subject of biblical-theological science.

There is a dualism between mind and matter evidenced in Greek and Kantian thought. T. F. Torrance speaks of “the damaging split between subject and object, mind and matter, or thought and experience.”²⁹ Michael Polanyi, considered “one of the greatest scientist-philosophers of our age,”³⁰ worked to restore “personal knowledge” to scientific activity. “According to Polanyi, any scientific research pursued in a detached, impersonal, materialist way isolates itself from man’s higher faculties and thereby restricts its range and power of discernment and understanding.”³¹

In other words, faith can be a source of knowledge as well as observation. This differs from the Greek and Kantian projection of thought upon reality. Rather, it is a bringing of faith to reality with an openness to understanding it in an appropriate and worthy manner. Biblical-theological science necessitates that exponents come with a basic presupposition of faith in Scripture, just as a scientist comes with a basic presupposition of belief in nature.

Biblical-theology is a science in the truest sense of the term. Einstein, in his articles about the relationship between the two disciplines,

discounted the one-sided contrast between knowledge and belief and the claim that belief should be replaced increasingly by knowledge, for that would undermine the enterprise of science itself as well as the conduct of our daily life. The aim of natural science is limited, to determine how facts are related to, and conditioned by, each other, and

²⁹ Torrance, *Belief in Science and in Christian Life: The Relevance of Michael Polanyi’s Thought for Christian Faith and Life* (Edinburgh: Handsel, 1980), xv.

³⁰ Torrance, *Belief in Science and in Christian Life*, xiii.

³¹ Torrance, *Belief in Science and in Christian Life*, xv.

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in that way to attempt what he called ‘the posterior reconstruction of existence by the process of conceptualization.’ Science is quite unable through demonstration of this kind to provide the basic belief in the objective rationality of the universe or the aspiration toward truth and understanding that it clearly requires. Without profound faith of this kind, which comes from religion and revelation, science would be inconceivable.³²

In simple language, the basic belief in the objective rationality of the universe does not come from the universe itself, for the universe, compared to Scripture, is a non-verbal revelation. It does not say anything.

Some great scientists, through the centuries, were indebted to the biblical worldview.³³ Scripture says the universe was created by the pre-incarnate Christ (Heb 1:1–3). This gives it inherent intelligibility, for as a contingent universe it reflects to some degree the rationality of its Maker. To this extent these scientists’ belief in Scripture, or in God as the Creator of the universe, was fundamental to their science.

5. The Challenge of Science to Evolution. Science has challenged evolutionary assumptions. In his book *Darwin’s Black Box*, Michael J. Behe, Professor of Biochemistry, observes that since the 1950s biochemistry has been examining the workings of life at the molecular level, something Darwin didn’t know.

It was once expected that the basis of life would be exceedingly simple. That expectation has been smashed. Vision, motion, and other biological functions have proven to be no less sophisticated than television cameras and automobiles. Science has made enormous progress in understanding how the chemistry of life works, but the elegance and complexity of biological systems at the molecular level have paralyzed science’s attempt to explain their origins.³⁴

How do you get from a single nut to a complex computer? It takes a lot of information to create a sophisticated computer. Likewise, how can mutations or natural selection create new genetic information? Phillip E. Johnson, in his book *The Wedge of Truth: Splitting the Foundations of Naturalism*, notes that random mutations in genes are inactive and hence not subject to natural selection, so how can they possibly be causing massive increases in genetic information to

³² Torrance, *Christian Theology and Scientific Culture*, 7; parenthesis supplied.

³³ The following are Christian founders of key scientific disciplines: Isaac Newton (Dynamics), John Kepler (Astronomy), Robert Boyle (Chemistry), Lord Kelvin (Thermo-dynamics), Louis Pasteur (Bacteriology), Matthew Maury (Oceanography), Michael Faraday (Electro-magnetics), Clerk Maxwell (Electro-dynamics), John Ray (Biology), and Carolus Linnaeus (Taxonomy). Henry M Morris, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990, 8th printing), 30.

³⁴ Michael J. Behe, *Darwin’s Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), x.

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make evolutionary development work?³⁵ He refers to the book *Not By Chance! Shattering the Modern Theory of Evolution*, by Lee Spetner, who says the adaptive mutations that Darwinists cite as information-creating actually can lead to a loss of information. For example, this occurs when a mutation makes a bacterium resistant to antibiotics, doing so by disabling its capacity to metabolize a certain chemical. Johnson likens this to hitting the case of a sputtering radio to cause a loose wire to reconnect. “But no one would expect to build a better radio, much less a television set, by accumulating such changes.”³⁶ Nor would this help a nut become a computer.

6. **The Soul Argument.** The place of the soul in evolution or creation is misunderstood by both sides. Evolution denies any dualism of body and soul, claiming both as material. Most Christians accept dualism of body and soul, claiming souls as non-material. Henry M. Morris is an example of a creationist who uses dualism of soul and body to question materialistic evolution.³⁷ These conclusions are not based on science or Scripture, but are unproved assumptions.

7. **Beyond Concordism.** Some scholars try to harmonize the various creation views. They are known as Concordists. They believe Scripture and nature are really speaking about the same events, but from different perspectives. They tend to look to nature for objective evidence and to Scripture for a primitive, less sophisticated, non-scientific account. This assumes what it seeks to prove, that evolution is a fact and that humans are still evolving, and so contemporary scientists are more advanced than the writer (or writers, JEDP) of Genesis.

II. Alternate Models of Biblical Creation

1. **Impact of Evolution on Churches.** We do not consider liberal theology, which capitulated to evolutionary theories long ago. The fact is, conservative churches are also vulnerable. Evolution has made remarkable inroads into Evangelical theology by calling into question the historicity of the Genesis account of creation. How far have evolutionary theories invaded Christianity? Some consider that George McCready Price made an important contribution. J. P. Moreland and John Mark Reynolds report, on the other hand, that

By the middle of the twentieth century, opposition to Darwinism was limited to the more fundamentalist religious communities. Groups like the Seventh-day Adventists carried on an active assault against

³⁵ Phillip E. Johnson, *The Wedge of Truth: Splitting the Foundations of Naturalism* (Downers Grove, InterVarsity, 2000), 41–46.

³⁶ Johnson, 47.

³⁷ Henry M. Morris, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 405–413.

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evolutionary thinking, sometimes with more noise and vigor than scientific care or rigor.³⁸

Paul K. Jewett notes that “few who confess the Christian doctrine of creation would suppose that the world was fashioned in a week of time some six thousand to ten thousand years ago. Drafts of time of a vastly different magnitude are indicated by the findings of the natural sciences.”³⁹ Howard J. Van Till comments, “I would even be so bold as to add that the misunderstanding of the historic doctrine of creation may be as widespread within the Christian community as it is outside of it . . .”⁴⁰ Theology accommodates science by interpreting the Genesis record in the light of the current scientific worldview.⁴¹ Some evangelical theologians believe that death existed before the human race prior to the Fall,⁴² raising questions about whether death is sin’s wages and hence undermining the atonement. According to evolutionary theory, death is something natural and not a result of human sin. Karl Barth claims that death is a part of being finite, because God has no beginning or end, while by contrast humans have a beginning and an end. Therefore, death is a part of being human.⁴³

The Second Vatican Council (1963–1965) addressed the relation between Scripture and science. It speaks of “the rightful independence of science,”⁴⁴ and of “the legitimate autonomy of human culture and especially of the sciences.”⁴⁵ This is in keeping with the Catholic division between Scripture and tradition. In the Document on Revelation, “sacred tradition” is placed before “sacred revelation.”⁴⁶ In the same way it is expected that science take precedence over Scripture in the area of evolution. The current *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994) says, “The question about the origins of the world and of man has been the object of many scientific studies which have splendidly enriched knowledge

³⁸ J. Moreland and John Mark Reynolds, eds., *Three Views on Creation and Evolution* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 32–33.

³⁹ Paul K. Jewett, *God, Creation, and Revelation* (Grand Rapids; Eerdmans, 1991), 479–480.

⁴⁰ *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, 161.

⁴¹ Scholars who, in varying degrees, place evolutionary theory as the context in which to interpret the Genesis account include: Augustus Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Philadelphia: Judson, 1907), 465–466; Bernard Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), 76–79; Langdon Gilkey, *Maker of Heaven and Earth* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965); Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986), 381–382; Jewett, 378–484.

⁴² Marco T. Terreros, “Death Before the Sin of Adam: A Fundamental Concept in Theistic Evolution and Its Implications for Evangelical Theology” (Ph.D. dissertation, Andrews University Theological Seminary, 1994). See *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 32/1–2 (Spring-Summer 1994): 114.

⁴³ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1960), 3/2:511–640.

⁴⁴ *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott, S. J. trans. ed., Rev. Msgr. Joseph Gallagher (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1967), *The Church Today*, Par. 36, 234.

⁴⁵ *The Documents of Vatican II*, *The Church Today*, par. 59, 265.

⁴⁶ *The Documents of Vatican II*, 117.

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of the age and dimensions of the cosmos, the development of life-forms and the appearance of man.” The document gives thanks to God “for the understanding and wisdom he gives to scholars and researchers.”⁴⁷

All of the above is sad in light of Scripture’s own witness to the historicity of Genesis 1–11. Richard Davidson says, “In fact, *every* NT writer explicitly or implicitly affirms the historicity of Genesis 1–11 (see Matt 19:4, 5; 24:37–39; Mark 10:6; Luke 3:38; 17:26, 27; Rom 5:12; 1 Cor 6:16; 2 Cor 11:3; Eph 5:31; 1 Tim 2:13, 14; Heb 11:7; 1 Pet 3:20; 2 Pet 2:5; James 3:9; 1 John 3:12; Jude 11, 14; Rev 14:7).”⁴⁸

2. **Alternative Models.** We will consider (1) three major models that Christians espouse as presented in the book *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*. They follow methodological naturalism or theistic evolutionism. The first attributes what we see around us to natural selection and chance, while the second attributes it to divine causation in the launching of the process. It is alleged that evolution demonstrates that creation is the result of a natural process rather than the work of God. The three views below attempt to respond to this challenge. Then we will consider (2) an alternative view found within the Seventh-day Adventist church and some comments on creation by other Seventh-day Adventist scholars.

(a) **Young Earth Creationists** come to Genesis with a **Completely Literal View**. This is an instantaneous fiat creation out of nothing in six days about ten thousand years ago. Efforts to support this view are (1) one view of the *gap theory* between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, suggesting the world was first created a long time before creation week; (2) the *apparent-age theory*, making the world look older than ten thousand years; and (3) the *flood-geology theory* to explain the strata levels as a death of the old world rather than an evolution of the first world.⁴⁹

Most Seventh-day Adventists fit into this category (except #1) in believing that God directly created each of the basic types of organisms in six days, that the curse of Genesis 3:14–19 has “profoundly affected every aspect of the natural economy,” and that there was a global flood.⁵⁰ They reject the theory that God used evolution as His method to create humans.

(b) **Old Earth Creationists or Progressive Creationists** come to Genesis with an **Essentially Literal View**. Genesis 1–3 are essentially historical, but they are also non-literal descriptions. Proponents look for *harmonization* of the literal biblical text with scientific descriptions. For example, each day in creation is a *chronological* long period of natural evolution between times of fiat creation. Or the arrangements of creation days are *not chronological*. Human

⁴⁷ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 1994), 74.

⁴⁸ Richard M. Davidson, “Biblical Interpretation,” in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), *SDA Bible Commentary*, 12:70.

⁴⁹ *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, 251.

⁵⁰ *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, 42–44.

beings were not the result of natural evolution, but came by a creative act of God.⁵¹

Progressive creationists believe God created the heavens and earth aeons ago (Gen 1:1). Then the earth became formless and empty, possibly due to Satan's rebellion (Gen 1:2), and the recent restoration of the earth occupies the rest of the Genesis account. Some believe the flood was universal, others that it was local.⁵² For Robert C. Newman, God's creative works do not take place during the days of creation, but in the long periods inaugurated by those days. So the week is dismissed, along with the Sabbath.⁵³

(c) **Old Earth Creationists, Theistic Evolutionists, or Advocates of a Fully Gifted Creation** come to Genesis with an **Essentially Nonliteral View**. *Harmonization* between Scripture and science is rejected to the degree that Genesis was not written to inform humans of modern science. How God created is not given in Genesis but is largely given in science. Advocates are open to the fact that all creation, including humans, may have come into being through natural processes.⁵⁴ To the extent that theistic evolutionists believe God used the evolutionary process to create, they accept harmonization between science and Scripture.

Influence of Theistic Evolution. Theistic evolution attempts to accept evolutionary theory while holding onto the fact that God as Creator launched the process and perhaps even superintended it. Some contemporary theologians "deny any original act of creation, and equate creation with that universal, continuing activity which traditional theology called 'preservation' or 'providence.'"⁵⁵ Calling it "continuing creation," process theologians influenced by Alfred Whitehead especially espouse it,⁵⁶ and it appears in the theology of John Macquarrie.⁵⁷ Theistic evolutionists look at the Genesis account of creation as myth, saga, or poetry, in which the only factual information is that God had some part in the creative act. It is considered by many that the description of creation by Moses was influenced by the other creation stories in Eastern Mesopotamia, such as the *Enumah Elish* account. So the authority of the biblical record of creation is called into question and is laid aside to make room for evolutionary theory to explain the alleged mechanism of creation by random genetic mutation and natural selection.

The root problem of theistic evolution is that it overlooks the worldview of evolution. Darwin did not believe in miracles or in God's intervention, either at

⁵¹ *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, 251.

⁵² *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, 112.

⁵³ *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, 149–150.

⁵⁴ *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, 252.

⁵⁵ Thomas N. Finger, *Christian Theology: An Eschatological Approach* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald, 1989), 2:413.

⁵⁶ Alfred Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: Free, 1929), 25–26.

⁵⁷ John Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology* (New York: Scribner, 1966).

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the beginning or anywhere else along the evolutionary process (in spite of some mention of God in his first edition of *The Origin of Species* in order to help it be accepted). Darwin's worldview was a closed universe where God is removed from the natural laws of cause and effect. His theory is belief in natural selection, where nature left to itself, without God, has achieved the evolutionary development. Clearly anyone accepting biblical creationism believes in the supernatural act of God in creating. Theistic evolution is logically a misnomer. It is like saying God began the process and yet had no part in the process. Behind the term *theistic evolution* lies two opposing worldviews, and hence opposite paradigms—supernaturalism and naturalism. Either nature created (naturalism) or God created (supernaturalism). A marrying of the two worldviews doesn't explain anything, for one cancels the other.

As a footnote to this section, some biblical-theological scholars add human ideas to the creation record. Jesuit paleontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin⁵⁸ and Augustine of Hippo⁵⁹ are two Catholic examples. Neither does justice to the biblical account of creation, where creation was completed (Gen 2:2).

Howard J. Van Till's Thinking. We come now to the contribution of Howard J. Van Till, who sees no problem between creation and science. In fact, to him, such an "either/or" is "wholly inappropriate."⁶⁰ God simply uses evolution as His method to create. Many Christians accept this view, though it is merely a misguided attempt to save the biblical account from being considered naïve by science. This is a capitulation to science by biblical-theological science, forgetting that they function by different game rules which are fundamentally different because mutually exclusive, for creation by nature alone (science) is not the same as God creating by nature (the view of many Christians). The book *The Modern Creation Trilogy: Scripture and Creation* repeatedly reveals the folly of Christian scholars accommodating to evolutionary scientists, even though the latter do not respect this attempt.⁶¹ What they unwittingly ignore is the atheistic basis of evolutionary naturalism compared to divine supernaturalism.

Van Till thinks of his view as a "fully gifted creation perspective." He says, "I believe that God has so generously gifted the creation with the capabilities for

⁵⁸ His evolutionary thinking goes beyond the natural process to produce humans to the evolving of the human spirit (*The Future of Man*, trans. Norman Denny [London: William Collins, 1969], 13). Both humans and the cosmos are evolving. Humans move towards "superhumanization" 117, to the emergence of the "Ultra-Human" 273–274. We find exponents of evolution of humans to godhood in eastern religions, Theosophy, and the New Age Movement. For further data on these see Norman R. Gulley, *Christ is Coming!* 159–210.

⁵⁹ Augustine seems to posit the idea that God implanted seeds in the natural order for an ongoing creation; *On the Holy Spirit* (3:8), *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series (Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clark, 1988), 3:60–61.

⁶⁰ *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, 163.

⁶¹ Henry M. Morris, John D. Morris, *The Modern Creation Trilogy: Scripture and Creation* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 1996).

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self-organization and transformation that an unbroken line of evolutionary development from nonliving matter to the full array of existing life-forms is not only possible but has in fact taken place.”⁶² He says the Christian community “must recover the historic Christian doctrine of creation as a theological commitment that is essential to the Christian faith [that much is good], but distinct from any particular picture of the creation’s formational history.”⁶³ He calls on the Christian community to incorporate “this concept of creation’s formational history into our contemporary articulation of the historic Christian faith.”⁶⁴

Van Till asserts, “I am a firm believer in the biblically informed historic doctrine of creation. However, I am equally firm in my belief that the Scriptures in no way require me to favor or adopt the special creationist picture of the creation’s formational history”⁶⁵ (note the word “picture”). In other words, the findings of science must inform the meaning of the biblical record. He dismisses the biblical timetable (six days) for the conclusions of the “scientific community.” He rejects the fact that Christians “have access to privileged information” from the Scriptures.⁶⁶ Although he wouldn’t phrase it this way, this means human thinking must correct God’s Word—it places human philosophy above divine revelation.

Van Till opposes “an inordinate elevation of the status of a historic text, which could lead to the idolization of that text.”⁶⁷ Yet he elevates his idea of gifted creation to the same level. The trouble is he opts for a human idea of gifted creation instead of looking to gifted revelation in the biblical record. His positing of a “gifted creation,” left to itself to develop all the life-forms we have today, is no different from the distant God of Deism. This stands in direct contrast to the biblical creation record and the rest of Scripture.

Far from elevating Scripture, Van Till considers it as only “one of the many sources provided by God for our growth,” and wrongly thinks this is the same as the *sola Scriptura* of the Reformation.⁶⁸ So he abandons the belief that Scripture must interpret Scripture and replaces that with his own “gifted creation” interpretation of Genesis 1–2. He says, “In fact, I think Christian theology is now long overdue for a spurt of growth stimulated by our growing knowledge of the creation and its formational history . . . I would encourage the most intellectually gifted of Christian youth to consider the challenge of bringing our theological reflection up-to-date in its engagement of contemporary science.”⁶⁹ I believe the

⁶² *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, 171.

⁶³ *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, 181.

⁶⁴ *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, 182.

⁶⁵ *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, 192.

⁶⁶ *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, 194.

⁶⁷ *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, 207. He rejects so-called “humanly devised claims” about Scripture, but has his own humanly devised claims.

⁶⁸ *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, 207–212.

⁶⁹ *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, 213.

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words of Christian geologist Davis A. Young apply to Van Till. He said, “Theistic evolutionists . . . have views of Scripture that are not themselves derived from Scripture.”⁷⁰ Young should include himself, for his view of geological ages instead of six literal days does not come from Scripture.⁷¹

Van Till says that by accepting the six days creation timetable, “the judgment of both the old earth special creationists and practically the entire scientific community must be thrown out.”⁷² He ignores the fact that evolutionary theories like His own “gifted creation” theory belong to philosophy and not to science. Further, Van Till distances Bible-believing students from those who are trained scientists, as he is trained in physics. His thesis is that the untrained should look to the experts. J. Moreland rightly says, “Van Till fails to take his own advice. The vast majority of his article conveys his views about matters in philosophy, theology, and biblical exegesis. Since Van Till is trained in science and not in these other fields, his own advice would, I think, require him to refrain from speaking authoritatively on these topics and, instead, defer to the majority of experts trained in these other fields.”⁷³

Keith Ward’s Thinking. Keith Ward, Regius professor of Divinity at Oxford University, claims that the vastness of the universe was not understood when Genesis 1–2 was written. It took modern science to bring to view its amazing size. It involves a fifteen-billion year history of expanding at the speed of light. The scientific view posits the possibility of the end of planet-earth and humans through a cosmic catastrophe, but that would not be the end of the universe, which will exist for billions of years, perhaps evolving forms of life more advanced than humans. Ward speaks about the scientific finale as an “inevitable destruction of the universe,” which is like a Mozart Symphony. Although Mozart is dead, his symphony is appreciated by humans. Likewise, though humans will all be dead, the value of their existence will be appreciated by God.⁷⁴ On the other hand, he can speak of the biblical finale of evolution as humans united with Christ (Eph 1:10), which he calls “a partly self-shaped conscious union with the creator.”⁷⁵

He comes to Genesis considering it not a scientific cosmology, but “a spiritual interpretation of the universe’s origin, nature and destiny.”⁷⁶ Even though he sees Genesis 1–2 as two contrary creation stories (different order of

⁷⁰ Davis A. Young, *Creation and the Flood: An Alternative to Flood Geology and Theistic Evolution* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), 25. Young gives examples of other scholars who impose ideas onto Scripture instead of allowing it to be its own interpreter. This is a basic error in the debate between science and Scripture; see 25–41.

⁷¹ Young, 113.

⁷² *Three Views of Creation and Evolution*, 211.

⁷³ *Three Views of Creation and Evolution*, 233.

⁷⁴ Keith Ward, *God, Faith and The New Millennium* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1998), 19–26.

⁷⁵ Ward, 30.

⁷⁶ Ward, 43.

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events), it is surprising that he sees the first creation story ending with the seventh-day Sabbath,⁷⁷ which we will return to below. His book is a straining to find consonance between the scientific and biblical views. His problem is attempting to marry two mutually exclusive worldviews, for either nature created or God did. Saying that God did it through nature portrays God as incompetent, not all-powerful or loving. He says, "If God wants to create life-forms very like human beings, God will have to create a universe with all the properties this universe has. To put it bluntly, God could not create *us* in a better universe, or a universe with fewer possibilities of suffering in it."⁷⁸

Evaluation of Theistic and Progressive Evolution. Henry M. Morris and John D. Morris make the following criticisms against evolution.

Because God is omnipotent He can create instantly.

Why go through the long process when fellowship with humans (image of God) was the purpose of human creation?

If God is omniscient, why all the misfits, extinction, and poor planning? Why random mutation?

If God is a God of love, why the harsh world with violent death and extermination of the weak and unfit? God sees even a sparrow fall to the ground (Matt 10:29).

Why waste billions of years in aimless evolution when God commands, "Let everything be done decently and in order" (1 Cor 14:40)?

Why the survival of the fittest, which reflects a humanistic view of earning salvation, when God gives grace?⁷⁹

Clearly, in attempting to allegedly make biblical creation more acceptable to science, many Christian scholars end up with a god who is less than the God of Scripture.

An Adventist Alternate View: The Thinking of Frederick E. J. Harder

In a chapter titled "Theological Dimensions of the Doctrine of Creation," Harder presents creation in the light of the incarnation, arguing that the eternal purpose of creation was realized in the incarnation. He claims, "The incarnation was not an event necessitated by sin but a miracle essential to human beings'

⁷⁷ Ward, 48.

⁷⁸ Ward, 95. How can creation necessarily require a process of suffering and death to evolve human life? Is this what he means when he says, "When God creates, God expresses the divine nature in a way that would otherwise have remained only potential" (98). Looking to the cross as evidence of God's love (as Ward does, 99–100) leads one to ask why the God who died to do away with human death had to create humans through the death of animals? This god doesn't seem to be "the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb 13:8), but changing/evolving from causing death for humans before He chose death for humans, the first beyond His control, the other not. Yet Ward sees this god as "compatible with evolution" (112), but overlooks his incompatibility with the God of Scripture.

⁷⁹ Henry M. Morris, John D. Morris, *The Modern Creation Trilogy: Scripture and Creation*, 40.

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realization of a destiny intrinsic to their creation in God's image⁸⁰ He reminds me of Irenaeus in the 2nd century⁸¹ and Karl Barth in the 20th century.⁸² Both looked to the incarnation as the completion of God's eternal will for creating humans. The creation of Adam and Eve was merely the first step for Christ to become human and elevate the human race in His own humanity. So, fundamentally, Christ became human because of this two-staged creation plan and not because of their need for atonement. In other words, even if humans had not sinned, it was Christ's plan to become human.

So Harder can say,

The more I study the doctrine of creation, the more impressed I am that the incarnation was eternally intended as the final step in the perfection of humanity—the inscrutable act of God by which those who were created in the likeness of God would become one with God. Sin postponed it and required the atonement to make humankind fit for it. The incarnation, however, is an event belonging to creation—not merely a prelude to the atonement.⁸³

Thus, the initial creation of Genesis 1 is but a prelude to the incarnational creation of John 1. No wonder the Sabbath is linked to Christ as the “Lord of the Sabbath” rather than to a literal creation week. Harder says, “We belittle the majesty of this weekly memorial, diminish its diffusive purpose in Christian doctrine, and impair its comprehensive base of authority when we insist that its significance is dependent upon a dubious chronology or on a particular number of days the Creator devoted to creating. And we do not add one whit of support for a six-day creation week”⁸⁴

It follows for Harder that “the sanctity of the Sabbath derives from the Creator-Redeemer of our world” and not from Genesis 1, which he relegates to literary analysis to determine whether it is “verbatim-literal.” For Genesis 1 is to “be interpreted by our concepts of the processes of inspiration and revelation.”⁸⁵ Whether Harder realizes it or not, at least in the matter of creation, he apparently places greater weight on the revelation of Christ as “Lord of the Sabbath” than upon the revelation of the Sabbath in creation week. In so doing, at least for the Genesis creation account, he joins a large group of scholars who empty Scripture of revelation by placing it solely in Christ.⁸⁶

⁸⁰ Frederick E. J. Harder, “Theological Dimensions of the Doctrine of Creation,” in *Creation Reconsidered*, ed. James L. Hayward (Roseville, CA: Association of Adventist Forums, 2000), 283.

⁸¹ Irenaeus, *Against Heresies, The Anti-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 1:546–547 (5.18.3).

⁸² Barth, 3/1:55.

⁸³ Harder, 284.

⁸⁴ Harder, 285.

⁸⁵ Harder, 285.

⁸⁶ So many theologies reject Scripture as the Word of God, speaking of it merely as a witness to God, opting to place revelation solely in Jesus Christ. These include Karl Barth, Emil Brunner,

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In his *Spectrum* article “Beyond Arithmetic: The Truth of Creation,” Harder says why he keeps the Sabbath: it was blessed by God, it is a memorial of creation, it witnesses to God’s sanctifying activity, it foreshadows Sabbaths to come in eternity, it is in God’s law, because Christ is the “Lord of the Sabbath,” and because he looks forward to entering God’s rest described in Hebrews 4. These are all good. But nowhere in this article does he give God’s reason for keeping the day—He rested on the seventh day after His six days of creating, attested to in the creation record (Gen 1:31–2:2) and the fourth commandment (Exod 20:8–11).⁸⁷

Harder says he believes in a seven-day creation. “However,” he says, “if it were ever undeniably demonstrated to be untenable, I can’t conceive of any possible change that it would make in my theology or religious practices. Even if I admit that the world was not created in six days, I would still keep the seventh-day Sabbath”⁸⁸ His assurance that God created in six days depends more on so-called scientific research than divine revelation. He places human research above divine revelation. Though unwittingly, he really places humans above God. God’s own foundation for the Sabbath is a literal creation week, and it is just as important to believe God’s word in this respect as it was to believe He also said “eat the fruit and you will die.” With cunning craft Satan caused Eve to doubt God’s word, and she became separated from God, the first step in the fall of humankind. To doubt His word about the six-day creation is just as devastating, although Harder seems not to realize what he is saying in this respect. In essence, there is no difference between doubting God’s word about creation week and doubting His word about forbidden fruit.

If one appeals to the fact that Harder believes the other things God stated about the Sabbath, one can point to Eve believing Christ created her, gave her Eden, and everything she had. Partial belief is not enough. Total trust in God’s word is what was called for in Eden and is called for today.

What Harder Overlooked. God knew that evolution would become a problem in the end-time. This is why Scripture speaks of “last-day scoffers” denying the second advent, saying “everything goes on as it has since the beginning of the creation” (2 Pet 3:3), which is uniformitarianism, the basis of evolutionary theories. Scripture says they deliberately ignore creation by God’s word and a global flood (vs. 5–6). It’s in this context that the first angel’s message, which began in 1844, calls humans to “Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water” (Rev 14:7b). Here is an end-time call to

Thomas Torrance, Hans Frei, Paul Tillich, Georg Stroup, George Lindbeck, G. C. Berkouwer, Stanley Grenz, Avery Dulles, James Barr, David Tracy, David Kelsey, and Donald Bloesch. See Norman R. Gulley, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1, *Prolegomena* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews UP, 2003), chapter 6.

⁸⁷ F. E. J. Harder, “Beyond Arithmetic: The Truth of Creation,” *Spectrum*, 15/2 (August 1984): 54–59.

⁸⁸ Harder, “Beyond Arithmetic,” 56.

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remember God as Creator, and not the uniformitarianism of natural selection. This has no reference to the incarnation of Christ in the New Testament, but to the creation of humans in Genesis 1–2.

The first angel’s message also calls people to reverence God, “and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come” (Rev 14:7a). So the first angel announces the pre-advent judgment in heaven and makes a judgment against the pre-advent evolutionary theory on earth. Both judgments are a vital part of the end-time message. The judgment in heaven is against the system and those who replace the redemption of Christ by a human counterfeit of works. The judgment on earth is against those who replace the creation of Christ by a human counterfeit of evolution, whatever its form.

Roy Branson on the Sabbath. Branson rejects Price’s view that the Sabbath is a rejection of a scientific theory of origins. He selectively finds the meaning of the Sabbath in freedom—liberation at the Red Sea (Deut 5:15)—and salvation—liberation through Christ’s death (John 19:12–20:1). He ignores the meaning of the Sabbath in Christ’s finished work of creation in six days (Gen 2:2–3; Exod 20:8–11; Rev 14:7). He removes the foundational meaning of the Sabbath, assuming that the Sabbath can be kept without reference to Christ’s creation in six days.⁸⁹

In so doing he removes what Scripture first says about the Sabbath and goes to subsequent references, choosing the latter meaning and setting aside the initial meaning. He evidently fails to understand that the meaning of the Sabbath is foundational in the creation story, and that the celebration of Christ’s finished work of creation is added to in the celebration of His finished deliverance at the Red Sea and His finished salvation death at Calvary for anyone who will accept it and be saved. If one wants to know the full meaning of the Sabbath, one cannot choose a few examples and ignore the basic one, which is foundational to the rest.

Jack Provonsha on the Sabbath. Provonsha lists foundational convictions that a believer, to be a believer, must espouse: the personality of God, that He is the Creator, His goodness, the reality of evil, the personality of evil, what constitutes “good” and “evil,” the Fall of creation, and its restoration. He then adds “(Please note that I have omitted time and creative method as essential “givens.” They are more crucial to one type of scriptural hermeneutic, I think, than they are to the matter under consideration.)”⁹⁰

The matter under consideration is the great controversy. So he is saying that God creating in six days is not a given. God creating over vast spans of time through evolutionary means is just as viable an option. Yet Provonsha goes on to suggest that what is seen in the natural record, attributed to evolution, may be

⁸⁹ Roy Branson, “George McCready Price Was Made for the Sabbath, Not the Sabbath for George McCready Price,” in *Creation Reconsidered*, 313-321.

⁹⁰ Jack W. Provonsha, “The Creation/Evolution Debate in the Light of the Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan,” in *Creation Reconsidered*, 310.

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the result of Satan's working in nature, for "the idea of a totally random evolutionary process is utterly incredible on the face of it." It appears that the great controversy involves a Satan-guided evolutionary creative experimentation in genetic engineering.⁹¹

This is a creative idea. But if this is a corollary of his list of "givens," how about the biblical given of a six-day creation with a Sabbath? Isn't that more important than speculation?

Apparently Provonsha, like Harder and Branson, do not go to creation to find the foundational text on the Sabbath. Yet God did in the fourth commandment (Exod 20:8–11), and that was written with the finger of God, and you can't have a greater "given" in Scripture than that.

III. The Biblical Record of Creation

1. Debate over Length of Days in Creation. Are creation days literal twenty-four-hour days or long ages of geological time? We first look at the debate, and then at the biblical account. Many scholars observe that "the evening and the morning" designation for the six days (Gen 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31) is not present for the seventh-day (Gen 2:2). They conclude the seventh day is still in process. Vern S. Poythress assumes,

the seventh day, the day of God's rest (Gen. 2:2–3), goes on forever. Though God continues to act in providence and in salvation, his acts of *creating* are finished forever. But if the seventh day is God's eternal rest, the other six days are also *God's* days, not simply ours; we cannot naively deduce that they must be twenty-four hours long.⁹²

Robert C. Newman believes each new creation day begins "a new creative period." His six periods are: day 1, formation of atmosphere and ocean; day 2, formation of dry land and vegetation; day 3, oxygenation and cleaning of the atmosphere; day 4, the formation of air and sea animals; day 5, the formation of land animals and humans; day 6, the formation of redeemed humanity; and day 7 will be the eternal Sabbath.⁹³ Clearly the last three days are wrongly ascribed. Furthermore, he notes that Moses wrote Psalm 90, which speaks of a day being like a thousand years (v. 4), and he refers to John's "last hour" (1 John 2:18) as nearly 2,000 years ago.⁹⁴ He claims his method is to harmonize science and Scripture,⁹⁵ but Scripture is not only altered (final three days), but he says the philosophy of science informs his approach to the Bible and theology,⁹⁶ so he

⁹¹ Provonsha, 310.

⁹² *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, 92.

⁹³ *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, 104.

⁹⁴ *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, 110.

⁹⁵ *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, 127.

⁹⁶ *Three Views on Creation and Evolution*, 124.

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places philosophical speculation above inspired revelation. This is not a scientific approach for a Christian who accepts Scripture as God's Word.

Our focus is on evangelicals, where Seventh-day Adventist biblical-theological study finds an affinity, more than with liberalism on the left and fundamentalism on the right. Evangelicals are those who believe in Scripture as authoritative and trustworthy. Their forerunners, the reformers of the 16th and 17th centuries, opposed the papal tradition and magisterium being placed above Scripture. They believed Scripture interprets itself, the so-called *sola scriptura* hermeneutic. Martin Luther taught creation in six days, ending in the Sabbath. He concludes, "Therefore from the beginning of the world the Sabbath was intended for the worship of God."⁹⁷ John Calvin says "the creation of the world was distributed over six days,"⁹⁸ and "God claims for himself the meditations and employments of men on the seventh day."⁹⁹ Francis Turretin sees evidence for a six-day creation from the fourth commandment.¹⁰⁰

That has all changed. Today, leading evangelical scholars either reject or seem unwilling to accept creation days as literal twenty-four-hour periods. Millard Erickson says, "At present, the view which I find most satisfactory is a variation of the age-day theory."¹⁰¹ So the days are not literal to him, but long periods of time. Carl Henry says, "The Bible does not require belief in six literal twenty-four-hour creation days on the basis of Genesis 1–2."¹⁰² Wayne Grudem considers "the possibility must be left open that God has chosen not to give us enough information to come to a clear decision on this question."¹⁰³ Gordon Lewis and Bruce Demarest claim that "Only after God appointed the sun to mark days and nights could there have been literal days," and conclude, "Differences on the length of the creation 'days' should not become tests for dividing personal, church, or other Christian fellowships."¹⁰⁴ So the length of these days is not an issue. Grudem notes that the differences over whether creation days are literal or long periods "has led to a heated debate" among evangelicals, "which is far from being settled decisively one way or another."¹⁰⁵ Each one of these scholars believes in the inerrancy of Scripture. So why do they find it difficult to

⁹⁷ Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, ed. Jaroslav Pelican (St Louis: Concordia, 1958), 1:80; see 3–82.

⁹⁸ John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: Genesis*, trans. John King (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 1:92.

⁹⁹ Calvin, 105.

¹⁰⁰ Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, trans. George Musgrave Giger, ed., James T. Dennison Jr. (Phillipsburg, PA: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1992) 1:444–452.

¹⁰¹ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986), 382.

¹⁰² Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, 6:226.

¹⁰³ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 297.

¹⁰⁴ Gordon R. Lewis and Bruce A. Demarest, *Integrative Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 2:46.

¹⁰⁵ Grudem, 293.

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accept a literal six-day creation? Why do so many reject creation days as literal twenty-four-hour days. Does the word day (*yôm*) help decide which is right?

These scholars rightly claim that the word *yôm* in Scripture has several different meanings, which include twenty-four hours, or a longer period of time. Here are some examples:

Genesis 2:4 “This is the account of the heaven and the earth when they were created.” The word “when” in Hebrew is *yôm*. (In the day they were created, day = six days).

Job 20:28 “A flood will carry off his house, rushing waters on the day of God’s wrath.” (day = period of God’s wrath).

Prov 25:13 “Like the coolness of snow at harvest time” (time = *yôm* = period of time).

They claim there was so much to do on the sixth day of creation that it must have been more than a day (naming of all the animals).

They claim the seventh day is still continuing, hence is a long period of time (cf. John 5:17; Heb 4:4, 9–10), as it had no evening and morning designations (Gen 2:3), as the other six had (Gen 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31)

Here is the reasoning, as expressed by Grudem. Because *yôm* in Genesis 2:4 is longer than twenty-four hours, we should not make “dogmatic statements” about the length of the creation days. Further, “if convincing scientific data about the age of the earth, drawn from many different disciplines and giving similar answers, convinces us that the earth is billions of years old, then this possible interpretation of *day* as a long period of time may be the best interpretation to adopt.”¹⁰⁶ In this context Grudem gives a reinterpretation of the fourth commandment. Thus, just as God

followed a six-plus one pattern in creation (six periods of work followed by a period of rest), so they were to follow a six-plus-one pattern in their lives (six days of work followed by a day of rest; also six years of work followed by a sabbath year of rest, as in Ex. 23:10–11). In fact, in the very next sentence of the Ten Commandments, ‘day’ means ‘a period of time’: ‘Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you’ (Ex. 20:12). Certainly, here the promise is not for ‘long’ literal days (such as twenty-five- or twenty-six-hour days!), but rather that the period of one’s life may be lengthened upon the earth.¹⁰⁷

It seems to me that the different ways *yôm* is used is precisely that—different ways. This means that the context determines meaning. The same happens in English and is not peculiar to the word *yôm*. Thus we can speak of the Reformers introducing a new day in biblical interpretation, meaning period. We can say that each day the Reformers proclaimed the gospel, meaning

¹⁰⁶ Grudem, 294–295.

¹⁰⁷ Grudem, 296.

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each literal day. We can say that the elderly Luther finished out his days in gratitude to God for the discovery of the gospel, meaning his last years. Context determines meaning. So in creation week six days are designated by an evening and a morning (Gen 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31), and the seventh-day (Gen 2:2–3) is the Sabbath in the fourth commandment (Exod 20:8–11). The context calls for literal creation days followed by a literal seventh day of rest. It seems that these literal days, called for by the biblical context, are replaced by an external context in evolutionary theory.

2. **The Creation Story.** Biblical critics believe that a number of writers wrote the Book of Genesis, and hence the multiple source theory. Others interpret the creation record as a myth (Bultmann) or a saga (Barth) rather than as a historical document.¹⁰⁸ Opposed to both views, conservative students of the Bible find that the Genesis creation story is a carefully crafted account of how life came into being on planet earth and must be the work of one writer. It's important that Scripture opens with the words, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1). Here's the truth Satan wants to eradicate. If he can cause doubt in human minds that God created their first ancestors, then he's well on the way to breaking their dependent relationship upon God. He knows firsthand how powerful is this dependence. For a long time He depended on God, who gave Him everything he was and had.

Genesis 1–2: A Carefully Crafted Creation Account

As Gordon J. Wenham points out in the *Word Biblical Commentary*, "the material of chaps. 1–11 is markedly different from that in chap. 12 onward. The opening chapters have a universal perspective dealing with all mankind . . . Chaps. 12–50, on the other hand, deal almost exclusively with Israelite concerns."¹⁰⁹ That's important because it places the creation record at the beginning of the human race and the Sabbath as a universal holy day and not just a day for Israel, as so many claim because the Sabbath commandment was given to Israel on Mt. Sinai (Exod 20:1–17). In other words, as Christ affirmed, "The Sabbath was made for man" (Mark 2:27).

1. **Two Names for God.** There are two Hebrews words used for God in the creation record. The word *Elohim* is found thirty-one times in Gen 1 and eight times in Gen 2. *Yahweh* is found three times in Gen 2, and *Yahweh Elohim* is found five times. *Elohim* is the universal God, omnipresent, the transcendent

¹⁰⁸ Barth can speak of creation as historical, but it is always qualified by his definition of "saga" (a story beyond the historiographical account) with his basic presupposition that creation is merely the external basis of the covenant, and the covenant the internal basis of creation. One example is the dominion given to Adam (Gen 1:28), which he sees as fully realized in the man Jesus. Thus the historical reality of dominion given to Adam and Eve is called in question. Barth converts creation history into covenant prophecy. See *Church Dogmatics*, 3/1:206.

¹⁰⁹ Gordon J. Wenham, *Word Biblical Commentary: Genesis 1–15* (Waco, TX: Word, 1987), 1:xxii.

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God, by contrast with *Yahweh*, the God of the covenant, the imminent One, the God up-close. Genesis 1 presents the transcendent God who speaks everything into existence on each creation day: “And *Elohim* said” (vs. 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26). The narrative structure highlights the third and the sixth days of creation with a double announcement of the divine word, “And God said” (vs. 9, 11, 24, 26).

Genesis 2 presents the God up-close who stoops down and forms Adam and Eve. In Genesis 1 the word create is *bārā*, while in Genesis 2 the word “form” is *yašar*, the first done by speaking from the transcendent heights, the second done by a hands-on approach. There’s a distinction between creating everything for humans and creating humans themselves. God comes close to create humans, unlike the rest of creation. This distinction is one that evolution of humans from animals doesn’t provide.

2. A Correspondence Between the Two Creation Accounts. There’s a correspondence between Genesis 1 and 2, and the number seven dominates. The Hebrew words in both are multiples of seven. Thus 1:1 has seven words, 1:2 has fourteen words (2 x 7), 2:1–3 have thirty-five words (5 x 7). Could this set the stage for the seven days? There’s a correspondence between days one through three with days four through six, where the first three give the areas formed by *Elohim* and days four through six give the days when *Elohim* filled those areas with His creative works.¹¹⁰ Wenhem charts them as follows:

Day 1 Light	Day 4 Luminaries
Day 2 Sky	Day 5 Birds and Fish
Day 3 Land (Plants food)	Day 6 Animals and Man (Plants for food)
Day 7 Sabbath ¹¹¹	

So in days one through three *Elohim forms* the places to be *filled* in days four through six. And the remarkable fact in this carefully crafted structure is that this is not the climax. The climax is not the creation of humans on day

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1:6–7

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1:7. Derek Kidmer, in the *Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries: Genesis*, ed. D. J. Wiseman, (Downers Grove IL, InterVarsity, 1967), 46, arranges the six days as follows:

<i>Form</i>	<i>Fullness</i>
Day 1 Light and Dark	Day 4 Lights of Day and Night
Day 2 Sea and Sky	Day 5 Creatures of Water and Air
Day 3 Fertile Earth	Day 6 Creatures of Land

Wayne Grudem’s arrangement, in his *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 301, arranges the six days as follows:

<i>Days of Forming</i>	<i>Days of Filling</i>
Day 1 Light and darkness separated	Day 4 Sun, moon, and stars, lights in the heavens
Day 2 Sky and waters separated	Day 5 Fish and birds
Day 3 Dry land and seas separated; Plants and tress	Day 6 Animals and man

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six,¹¹² but the gift of the Sabbath on day seven, for the narrative ends with the Sabbath in 2:1 (chapter divisions came long after the time of writing).

3. The Sabbath as Climax of Creation. Clearly the Sabbath is not only a day of rest given to all humans by *Elohim*, but the climactic focus of the creation story in Genesis 1. Everything in the forming and filling leads to the Sabbath, God’s chosen memorial of creation. Just as Yahweh created Adam and Eve, so with the mention of the Sabbath the word for God is *Yahweh*, the God up-close. On the six days *Elohim* spoke things into existence in space; on the seventh day *Yahweh* comes to be with humans in time—up close. A work in time by a God up-close speaks volumes about the distinction of the Sabbath compared to the works of creation in space on the other days. Christ spoke everything into existence for humans. He gave them gifts in space. But on the Sabbath He gave them Himself in time, to be their Creator up-close, like His life on planet earth “to tabernacle” among them (John 1:14) and His coming in the earth made new when “God himself will be with them and be their God” (Rev 21:3). This is Immanuel, “God with us” (Matt 1:23). Sabbath keeping is spending time with Christ up close!

In Genesis 2:1–2 the seventh day is mentioned three times (vs. 1, 2 [twice]). Wenhem rightly notes that the “threefold mention of the seventh day, each time in a sentence of seven Hebrew words, draws attention to the special character of the Sabbath. In this way form and content emphasize the distinctiveness of the seventh day.”¹¹³

Because the worship of sun and moon was prevalent from early times, God guided Moses to use the words “greater light” and “lesser light” in place of the sun and moon respectively (Gen 1:16). Only the Creator-God is worthy of worship, not His creation. Not only does Satan want worship instead of God, but he inspires all worship that is not worship of God.

The word Sabbath is derived from the Hebrew word *šabat*, meaning to “cease” or “desist” from a previous activity—in this case, to desist from creating. God finished His work of creation during the six days. He didn’t cease because He was tired, but He ceased in order to celebrate with Adam and Eve what He had completed. So Sabbath is time to celebrate the finished work of Christ’s creation.

On day six, Christ judged creation as “very good” (Gen 1:31), and hence it was completed (Gen 2:3). For “in six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth, and on the seventh day he abstained from work and rested” (Exod 31:17). Therefore, His “works were finished from the foundation of the world” (Heb 4:3 NKJV). Clearly the work of creation was finished on the sixth day of creation

¹¹² Humans are “the crowning work of Creation” in SDA Fundamental Belief #6 (which compares humans with other created things). Young considers humans “the climax of creation” in space in this sense (89).

¹¹³ Wenhem, 1:7.

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week, and hence the view of a continuing creation through theistic evolution is contrary to this biblical record.

As Kenneth Strand rightly points out, the first reference to the Sabbath (Gen 2:2–3) is in a chiasmic structure that emphasizes the importance of the day.

- A. God finished his work (verse 2)
- B. And he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done (verse 2)
- C. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it (verse 3)
- B. Because on it God rested from all his work which he had done (verse 3)
- A. In creation (verse 3 cont.)¹¹⁴

In an A-B-C-B-A chiasmic structure, the middle statement is often the most important of the chiasm. So the emphasis is on the seventh day as the Sabbath, and the seventh day as the day He blessed. God’s blessing (Hebrew, *bārāk*) was only given to the seventh day. It was set apart from the other six, and in this way it was made holy. This setting apart is seen in Exod 16:23, the Sabbath commandment in Exod 20:8–11, and also in Exod 31:14–16, where it is to be kept forever, and in Exodus 35:2, where death is commanded for Sabbath breakers. These indicate the continuing importance of the creation seventh-day Sabbath as holy throughout human history. Karl Barth says the Sabbath “is in reality the coronation of His work,” for “not man but the divine rest on the seventh-day is the crown of creation.”¹¹⁵

IV. The Biblical Meaning of the Sabbath as Unfolded in Biblical History

The meaning of the Sabbath is unfolded throughout Scripture, but each addition is rooted in the creation record. In creation the Sabbath was blessed, or set aside as holy by Christ, and celebrated the finished work of Christ as Creator. “God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done” (Gen 2:3). It was the first full day of Adam and Eve’s existence, and it was spent in resting in Christ. One can imagine that on that day they reflected on creation as a gift to them. They had done nothing to earn or deserve creation. The Sabbath commandment is rooted in this creation gift. “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy . . . For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy” (Exod 20:8,11).

The next time the Ten Commandments are given, the fourth one adds another dimension, not in contradiction to, but in an unfolding of the Sabbath’s meaning. “Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God

¹¹⁴ “The Sabbath,” *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology: The SDA Bible Commentary*, 12:493–495.

¹¹⁵ Barth, 3/1:223 (German ed., 1945).

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brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day” (Deut 5:15). This is the only commandment given an added meaning, but the principle remains unchanged. In creation Christ gave Adam and Eve a gift. In the exodus across the Red Sea he gave the Israelites a gift. Both were gifts of life, one in its inception, the other in its continuance. Those who use this text to say God gave the Sabbath to Israel, and not to the world, overlook the word “remember” and the biblical fact that “the Sabbath was made for man” (Mark 2:27), for humankind, and not just for one nation.

There is a comparison of creation Friday and creation Sabbath with crucifixion Friday and crucifixion Sabbath. Christ is central in both. On creation Friday He gave life to Adam and Eve. On crucifixion Friday He gave life to everyone who accepts it. On creation Friday Christ gave the gift of life to two humans and their posterity. On crucifixion Friday Christ gave the gift of eternal life to whoever accepts it. How significant that the Sabbath following the two gifts was time for celebration of the completed work of Christ.

Thus the Sabbath is connected to a gift to two humans, to a nation, and to all humans who will accept it. The Sabbath is a sign to God’s people of any age. It is a set-apart day to set-apart people. “I gave them my Sabbaths as a sign between us, so that they would know that I the Lord made them holy [or set-apart]” (Ezek 20:12). The Sabbath is connected with giving life in creation, giving rescue at the Exodus, and giving eternal life at Calvary. But these gifts are to give us sanctification, holiness, setting us apart for heaven. All Gods’ gifts celebrated by the Sabbath throughout Scripture reveal Christ’s gift of Himself to prepare humans to be with Him forever. In the new creation “the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God” (Rev 21:3). This is the essence of the Sabbath, God up-close with His people in time, first manifested in the creation Sabbath. Hence, there is no distinction between the gift of the Sabbath in creation and the gift of the Sabbath to Israel.

Nor is there any difference between the gift of the Sabbath throughout human history and the gift of the Sabbath in creation. This is why the first angel’s message invites humans to “Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water” (Rev 14:7b). This is not only a call to remember the Creator when the masses look to evolution, but it is a call to remember the Sabbath of His creation, for it is a repetition of a part of the fourth commandment: “For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them . . .” (Exod 20:11), as pointed out by Jon Paulien¹¹⁶ and John T. Baldwin.¹¹⁷ Note that this linguistic reference to the Sabbath is in the context of

¹¹⁶ Jon Paulien, “Revisiting the Sabbath in the Book of Revelation,” unpublished paper presented at the Jerusalem Bible Conference, June 9–14, 1998.

¹¹⁷ John T. Baldwin, “Revelation 14:7: An Angel’s Worldview,” in John T. Baldwin, ed, *Creation, Catastrophe, and Calvary* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2000), 19–39.

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the historical reference to the “everlasting gospel” (Rev 14:6). The gospel goes all the way back to Genesis 3:15, just as the Sabbath goes all the way back to creation in six days (Gen 1:1–2:3). Neither merely go back to Israel.

Furthermore, this call to worship the Creator is a call to worship Christ the Creator. Scripture is replete with references to Christ as Creator. The Gospel of John (1:1–3) is a divine commentary on Genesis 1. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.” And verse 14 says, “The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and Truth.” Genesis 1 and John 1 take us back to the beginning of creation on planet earth, and we see that the *Elohim* of Genesis 1 is the Christ of John 1.

Other New Testament texts corroborate this connection. Christ “is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col 1:15–17). Christ not only created everything in heaven and on earth, but in His continued providence He keeps the world and appoints powers and authorities. God in the last days “has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven” (Heb 1:2–3).

The Importance of Revelation 14:7

John Baldwin’s chapter “Revelation 14:7: An Angel’s Worldview” is an important source for a deeper reflection on the significance of the first angel’s message in light of our topic.¹¹⁸ His major contribution is to demonstrate that Rev 14:7 alludes to the fourth commandment of Exod 20:11 and not to the fourth commandment of Deut 5:12–14. The words “For in six days the Lord *made* the *heavens* and the *earth*, the *seas*, and all that is in them” (Exod 20:11) is the root passage for “Worship him who (*in six days*) *made* the *heavens* and the *earth* and *sea* and springs of waters” (Rev 14:7). The allusion is clear with the four italicized words (one verb and three nouns) found in each. Deuteronomy does not include any of these five. Hence this direct allusion to the fourth commandment of Exod 20:11 implies “the six days” not found in Revelation 14:7. This implication is shown to be correct because it was the pre-incarnate Christ accompanying Israel (1 Cor 10:4) who gave the fourth commandment on Mount Sinai. The Revelation of Jesus Christ (Rev 1:1) would not contradict this.

¹¹⁸ Baldwin, 19–39.

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Baldwin rightly points out that although the Deuteronomy account mentions the Sabbath as the seventh day

it does not explicitly designate the time unit of which the Sabbath is the seventh day. It leaves the reader with the question whether the Sabbath is the seventh day of the lunar month, the seventh day of the year, or the seventh day of some other time unit. One needs to refer to Genesis 1 and 2 and to Exodus 20:11 in order to discover biblically that the Sabbath is the seventh day of the weekly time unit established at creation. In light of this consideration it is understandable why in Revelation 14:7 God intentionally focuses attention upon the wording of the fourth commandment of Exodus 20 rather than upon the Sabbath commandment of Deuteronomy 5.¹¹⁹

Although Deuteronomy 5:15 only mentions the Sabbath without reference to days, it must also be noted that three verses before (v. 12), there is a call to observe the Sabbath as God commanded, noting that it is the seventh day after six days of work. This seems to refer back to the fourth commandment of Exodus 20:11. It is clear that Revelation 14:7 calls for end-time people to worship the Creator God who also created the Sabbath, with the Greek words going back to Exodus 20:11. It is also instructive that the Greek translation in the Septuagint of Exodus 20:11 is identical to the Greek of Acts 14:15, where Paul and Barnabas tear their clothes when those in Iconium declare them to be gods. Paul and Barnabas point them to the living God who created “heaven and earth and sea and everything in them,” another clear allusion to the fourth commandment, with creation in six days followed by a Sabbath. So Acts 14:15 and Revelation 14:7 are two NT references with the same allusion to creation week with its six days of creation followed by the seventh-day Sabbath.

This is what Harder does not comprehend. The Sabbath is rooted in the historical six-day week of creation. Any question about the literal, historical, six-day week with a seventh-day Sabbath in the creation record jettisons the foundational biblical record for the Sabbath. This is why the evolutionary views that reject the historicity of Genesis 1–11 are so important for our church to understand. When Harder says he could keep the Sabbath even if Genesis 1–2 is shown not to be historical, he misses the fact that Deuteronomy does not specify a weekly seventh day.

The Challenge of Evolution to Seventh-day Adventists

It's significant that Darwin had his *Origin of Species* (1859) written (230 pages) by 1844, the date when God called out the Seventh-day Adventist church to take the first angel's message to the world, a call “to every nation, tribe, language and people” to “worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water” (Rev 14:6–7). God was ready to use a movement to

¹¹⁹ Baldwin, note 4, 35.

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call the world to remember the Creator Christ and to worship Him, and the phrase “who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water” is a repetition of part of the Sabbath commandment (Exod 20:11).

It’s vital that we sense our destiny in these last days. At a time when people have removed God from His world and His Word, we are commissioned to proclaim the truth as it is in Jesus, to point to Him as our Creator-Redeemer. That truth includes the historical, literal, twenty-four-hour, consecutive creation days followed by a seventh-day Sabbath given to all humans just as surely as they were given life and marriage in creation week. Any view of creation days as ages unwittingly calls in question a literal twenty-four-hour weekly Sabbath. Christ created all things (John 1:1-3, 14; Col 1:15–17; Heb 1:1–2), including the Sabbath. This is why “the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:28). He invites us all, “If you want to enter life, obey the commandments” (Matt 19:17). His invitation to come to Him to receive rest (Matt 11:28) includes the Sabbath rest. The seventh-day Sabbath gift is a gift from Christ. It is the only day of creation week that He blessed and made holy (Gen 2:3). Nowhere in Scripture does He annul this blessing and setting apart, or give it to another day. First day meetings are no more evidence of a change of the Sabbath than is the Thursday meeting for the Lord’s Supper (Matt 26:17–28:1). Descriptive passages cannot deny prescriptive passages. “The Sabbath was made for man” (Mark 2:27) long before there was a Jew. The seventh-day Sabbath is Christian because it is the day Christ set apart. God’s law, including the seventh-day Sabbath, was written by the finger of God (Exod 31:18; Deut 9:10). In the end-time Satan is against those who keep these commandments of God (Rev 12:17). No wonder the end-time call to worship the Creator includes an allusion to the seventh-day Sabbath (Rev 14:7) and refers to the saints as those “who obey God’s commandments and remain faithful to Jesus” (Rev 14:12). This is the Jesus who promised, “If you love me, you will obey what I command” (John 14:15). The seventh-day Sabbath command requires belief in a six day creation climaxed by Christ’s Sabbath gift to humanity.

Scripture presents Christ as the God up-close, “Immanuel,” God with us (Matt 1:23). The greatest evidence of creation was not in Eden, but Bethlehem. When Jesus was born of Mary through the Holy Spirit we have a creative act of God in history, born in Bethlehem in Judea during the time of King Herod (Matt 2:1). If God can create the second Adam, the God-man Jesus, then creation of the first Adam was much easier. Evolution has nothing comparable. Its process, allegedly over millions of years, takes place before human history. It merely leads up to the beginning of human history, and hence it doesn’t take place during human history, and so cannot be historically checked, as can the birth of Jesus. Evolution can only demonstrate micro-evolution (very small changes) and extrapolate from this to imaginary larger changes (macro-evolution). Science can only help in the micro documentation; the macro is philosophy, not science. By contrast, the incarnation of Jesus is a macro kind of creation compared to the

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creation of Adam and Eve. Macro-evolution is a theory that should be classified as philosophy, not science, a theory, not a fact. Macro creation is a historical fact, not theory. There is a difference.

Evolution is really a theodicy,¹²⁰ an attempt to explain natural evil by natural means rather than the cosmic controversy biblical worldview. Moral and natural evil is Satan's destructive work, the opposite to Christ's creative work. He pushes this counterfeit view of creation in order to distance Christ from His creative work, to distance humans from their Creator, and to do away with the fall. For if humans are the product of an evolutionary development, then they are the pinnacle of the process, and if they can be moral in their own power, apart from God, then the process is allegedly upward without any need of salvation. Then there's no need of Christ as Redeemer, no need of Calvary to save them, no need of Christ's re-creative work within human lives, and no need of a future resurrection, for so many believe that humans are immortal (e.g., Kant). By contrast God creates in history, as seen in the evidence of changed lives, for "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Cor 5:17). Christ's creative work in humanity climaxes at His second coming. "For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive" (1 Cor 15:21).

Judah forgot its Creator-God. Christ said to them,

"Behold, I will create new heaven and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind . . . The wolf and the lamb will feed together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox . . . they will neither harm nor destroy in all my holy mountain," says the Lord. This is what the Lord says: 'Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool. Where is the house you will build for me? Where will my resting place be? Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?' declares the Lord. 'This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word' (Isa 65:17, 25; 66:1-2).

I agree with Nigel M. de S. Cameron, in his *Themelios* article, where he said,

It is true that the closer and more adequately we study the Scripture, and the more we allow it to determine the form of our theology, the more nearly our thinking will conform to the truth about God himself. But, in order to study God, we look not at him (whom we cannot see, and may not), but at his image in Scripture. The paradox is that the more we revere and study the Book, the more we know its Author. This is other than the way in which we know the natural order.¹²¹

¹²⁰ See Cornelius G. Hunter, *Darwin's God: Evolution and the Problem of Evil* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2001).

¹²¹ Cameron, 26.

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Here is no mere bibliolatry or naïve fundamentalism. This is a reverence for God's cognitive revelation that comes out of a reverence for Him as God.

The Word presents Christ as the Creator who will re-create the heavens and the earth, and the lion and lamb will dwell together, and there will be no more predators, and natural evil will be gone forever. It's this same Creator who showed His love to human rebels, carried their sins to the cross, and died to rescue them, to re-create humans into His image, to resurrect and glorify them, and to recreate a new earth one day for them. This is the Christ of the Word. How tragic that human reason led Darwin and others to miss this glorious revelation! How sad that they distanced God from the world, the very One who has the answer to the moral and natural evil of the world by being the God up-close, the "Lord of the Sabbath."

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