


2026-7-5



A publication of  the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

Triangle Community Church aims to be a “transforming church”. We exist to be used by God as He transforms ordinary people into extraordinary followers of Jesus Christ. TCC believes not only that life-change is possible—but that it is to be expected. Growth is God's will for his people. But transformation does not happen by accident. It requires intentional, intelligent action. 1 Timothy 4:7 instructs you to “discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness.” Since “Talking Points, Walking Points” is intended both for individual reflection and for group discussion, questions vary in degree of vulnerability required. Generally it is best to begin group discussions with questions which involve less personal disclosure—but don't linger there. Be sure to “dive deep” too! The questions which require the greatest openness and honesty, as well as those in the section entitled “Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time”, are perfect for private reflection.

## Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- 1 The word “evolution” is used in four ways today.  
What are those four uses, and how do they differ from each other?
- 2 “Theistic Evolution” is the belief that God used macroevolution to produce the variety of life we observe today. Pastor Jim raised five objections against it. What are those objections—and do you find them compelling? Why or why not?
- 3 Distinguish between operational science and historical science. Why is this distinction important?
- 4 Although a Christian may believe in evolution, what difficulties does that belief present?
- 5 Why is the debate over evolution more than simply a conflict between science and religion?
- 6 Ten times Genesis 1 (v. 11, 12, 21, 24 & 25) insists that creatures reproduce only “according to their kinds”. Why is that significant?
- 7 Evolution teaches that death has existed for millions of years.  
Why does that create a theological problem?
- 8 What role should Scripture play when thinking about scientific questions?
- 9 How does one's view of human origins shape our understanding of human dignity and purpose?

① (1) Change over time, (2) microevolution, (3) macroevolution, and (4) the Theory of Evolution. Everything changes over time—you do, mountains do, languages do. Over multiple generations, small variations appear within the same species of animal—Clydesdales have been selectively bred from smaller horses. On the other hand, Macroevolution (change to a different type of animal) has never been observed and does not occur. The Theory of Evolution is a belief in the origin and development of all life through macroevolution.

② Theistic evolution is inconsistent with (1) Genesis, (2) God’s character, (3) the biblical teaching on death, (4) God’s plan of restoration, and (5) the available evidence.

Leader— be prepared with your own thoughts regarding whether or not you find them compelling, but let group members go first.

③ Operational science studies present processes through observation and experimentation, while historical science reconstructs past events from present evidence.

Leader— be prepared with your own thoughts regarding why this distinction is important, but let group members go first.

④ One’s view of origins influences how one understands every major Christian doctrine—God, humanity, morality, death, redemption, and the authority of Scripture.

⑤ Because the two competing worldviews—naturalism and theism—shape how evidence is interpreted.

⑥ It shows that God created distinct groups (“kinds”) rather than one universal common ancestor, which then evolved into all of the life forms we see today.

⑦ Because Scripture insists that death resulted from Adam’s sin. If humans are a late evolutionary development, it means that death existed long before humans, and that contradicts Scripture.

⑧ God’s Word is inerrant and unchanging; man’s understanding of the world—science—is neither of those. Furthermore, one’s worldview (naturalism vs. supernaturalism) constrains what one is able to see in the evidence.

⑨ If humans are intentionally created by God, then human life possesses inherent value, meaning, and accountability. If not, we are simply highly-evolved animals.



Make plans as a group to use this summer's conference as an outreach to neighbors and co-workers.

Jim Dieffenderfer speaks the first three Sundays:

- Sunday morning, July 5                      Entering into the Debate
- Sunday morning, July 12                     Evaluating Evolutionary Icons
- Sunday morning, July 19                    Evolution's Fatal Flaw

Then, Dr. Terry Mortenson of Answers in Genesis will speak the final Sunday morning, followed by evening sessions Sunday, Monday and Tuesday:

- Sunday morning, July 26                    Evolution v. Creation: Why Does it Matter?
- Sunday evening, July 26                    Ape-men, Adam and the Gospel
- Monday evening, July 27                    Millions of Years: Unscientific Origin, Catastrophic Consequences
- Tuesday evening, July 28                    Noah's Flood: Washing Away Millions of Years

Learn more about Dr. Mortenson's here:



## Sermon Summary

Contemporary culture, including many who identify as Christians, largely accepts some form of human evolution. Surveys indicate that most Americans believe either that God guided evolutionary processes or that evolution occurred without divine involvement. As a result, belief in the direct creation of human beings is often regarded as intellectually unsophisticated or opposed to science. The Christian doctrine of creation, however, affirms that human beings are the product of divine design. The complexity of life, particularly at the cellular level, is frequently cited as evidence of purposeful intelligence. Advances in biology continue to reveal intricate molecular systems and information-processing mechanisms within living cells. These observations are viewed as consistent with the biblical affirmation that humanity is intentionally designed by God (Psalm 139:13–14).

**Can a Christian Believe in Evolution?** A person is saved through faith in Jesus Christ, not through a particular view of origins. Therefore, it is possible for a genuine Christian to believe in evolution. Nevertheless, the question of origins remains important because it affects how one understands God, humanity, morality, death, and the authority of Scripture.

**Importance of the Topic of Origins** The argument from design has historically been one of the strongest arguments for the existence of God. If the apparent design of living systems is real, it points to an intelligent designer. Evolutionary theory challenges this conclusion by asserting that biological complexity arose through unguided natural processes. Competing origin narratives lead to different worldviews. A naturalistic worldview explains reality solely through matter, energy, natural laws, time, and chance. A theistic worldview includes those explanatory resources but also allows for intelligent agency and divine action. Consequently, conclusions about origins are shaped not only by evidence but also by underlying worldview commitments. For Christians, concerns about evolution extend beyond biology. Acceptance of evolutionary explanations may lead some to question the reliability of Scripture in other areas. The central conflict is therefore viewed as one between theism and naturalism rather than merely between science and religion.

**Evolution Defined** The term “evolution” can refer to several different concepts: [1] Change over time in a general sense. [2] Microevolution, involving observable changes within populations. [3] Macroevolution, involving the origin of new body plans, organs, and major biological innovations. [4] The Theory of Evolution, which proposes that all life arose from non-life and developed from simple to complex forms through mutation and natural selection. Microevolution is widely observed and generally undisputed. Examples include variations among Darwin’s finches and changes produced through selective breeding. Such changes arise through genetic recombination combined with natural or artificial selection. The central controversy concerns macroevolution. Evolutionary theory proposes that new biological structures arise through random mutations and are preserved through natural selection. The question is whether the accumulation of small changes can account for the origin of fundamentally new forms of life.

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**Could God Have Used Evolution?** Theistic evolution proposes that God used evolutionary processes to create the diversity of life. While God possesses the power to do so, five objections are presented against this view.

**1. Evolution Is Inconsistent with the Genesis Record** Genesis repeatedly states that living things were created “according to their kinds” (Genesis 1). The creation account presents distinct forms of life rather than universal common ancestry. Genesis 2:1–2 further describes creation as a completed work rather than an ongoing process that continues to generate new kinds of organisms.

**2. Evolution Is Inconsistent with God’s Character** Genesis 1 repeatedly describes creation as good, culminating in the declaration that it was very good. Evolutionary theory relies upon death, competition, suffering, and extinction as mechanisms for biological development. This is viewed as inconsistent with the character of a holy, righteous, and omnipotent Creator.

**3. Evolution Is Inconsistent with the Biblical Teaching on Death** Scripture teaches that death entered the world through human sin. If evolution is true, countless generations of death and suffering occurred before the fall of humanity. This conflicts with the biblical connection between sin, death, and redemption (1 Corinthians 15:21–22).

**4. Evolution Is Inconsistent with God’s Plan of Restoration** The Bible presents redemption as the restoration of creation to God’s intended design. Prophecies concerning the future kingdom describe harmony, peace, and the removal of destructive relationships within creation (Isaiah 11:6–9). If evolution is the means by which God created life, then the future restoration would represent a rejection rather than a restoration of the original order.

**5. Evolution Is a Theory Not Adequately Supported by the Facts** The claim is made that macroevolution exceeds what can be directly observed and often conflicts with empirical evidence. Many people accept evolution without being exposed to critiques of macroevolutionary theory or arguments for intelligent design. Origin questions are therefore seen as requiring careful evaluation rather than unquestioned acceptance.

**Historical and Operational Science** A distinction is made between two categories of science: “Operational Science” investigates present processes through observation, experimentation, measurement, and repeatability. It is responsible for technological and medical advances and primarily seeks to understand how nature operates. “Historical Science” seeks to reconstruct past events from present evidence. Because the past cannot be directly observed, conclusions are reached through inference. Origins research belongs to this category. Operational science typically relies on inductive reasoning, moving from specific observations to general conclusions. Historical science relies heavily on abductive reasoning, often called inference to the best explanation.

**The Inference to the Best Explanation** Historical investigations evaluate competing explanations according to four criteria:

- 1. Causal Adequacy** (Means) – Can the proposed cause produce the observed effect?
- 2. Opportunity** – Was the proposed cause present and capable of acting at the relevant time?
- 3. Explanatory Power and Scope** – How much of the evidence does the explanation account for?
- 4. Uniqueness** – Can competing explanations adequately account for the same evidence?

These criteria are applied to the competing explanations of intelligent design and unguided evolutionary processes. The question of origins is significant because it shapes one’s understanding of humanity, morality, meaning, purpose, and hope. The central question remains whether the evidence is better explained by unguided natural processes or by intelligent design.

## Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

**Throughout July we will be exploring "Origins Under Fire: Creation versus Evolution". Take time this week to familiarize yourself with the fundamental assumptions of each. (And, keep this chart handy for quick reference throughout the month!)**

Fundamental Assumptions of Creation	Fundamental Assumptions of Evolution
The Bible is the basic, irreplaceable source of information about origins. The question: "Which was first—the hen or the egg?" has a clear and unambiguous biblical answer.	Evolution is unquestioned.
The entire universe and all life on earth originated at creation (John 1:1–3).	Evolution explains everything.
The Creator exists. He is the God of the Bible.	No form of creator (designer, planning spirit, or "demiurge") should be imported into evolution. Everything that exists (including life) is based exclusively on matter and materialistic principles.
The matter of the entire universe has been created without the use of previously existing matter. (Hebrews 11:3)	Matter is assumed. There is no explanation for the origin of matter, and energy must have existed before the supposed big bang.
There is a fundamental difference between the creation of the world and all living organisms on the one hand, and the on-going processes ("laws of nature") we observe today.	Scientific laws explain both the origin of the earth and of all life, and their subsequent development (the principle of uniformity).
God's creative activities cannot be explained in terms of natural laws, neither are they subject to them.	Evolution assumes processes which allow increases in organization from the simple to the more complex, from non-life to life, from lower to higher life-forms.
Creation was... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• by the Word of God: Psalm 33:6; John 1:1–4</li> <li>• by the power of God: Jeremiah 10:12</li> <li>• by wisdom of God: Psalm 104:24; Colossians 2:3</li> <li>• according to the will of God: Revelation 4:11</li> <li>• through the Son of God: John 1; Colossians 1:15–17</li> <li>• out of nothing and instantaneous: Hebrews 11:3</li> </ul>	Mutation, selection, isolation, and mixing, chance, necessity, long time epochs, and death are undisputed essential factors in evolution.
The existence of design requires a Designer.	There is no plan in evolution, neither is there any purpose.
Time had a definite beginning point (Genesis 1:1).	There are no definite beginning and end points of time.
Past events (creation, sin and the Flood) are the key to understanding the present. All life was adversely affected by man's sin (Rom. 8:20, 22). Current geological structures cannot be explained apart from Noah's flood.	The present is the key to the past. This means that present-day observational data may be extrapolated as far back in time as one wishes.
There is a clear difference between living organisms and nonliving matter. One of the central characteristics of all living creatures is the inherent information required for all life processes and the genetic information required for procreation. On the other hand, even very complex organic compounds like proteins are not alive, because they do not contain encoded information.	There was a smooth transition from non-life to life.
The creation of living organisms (original kinds) is completed. All later changes are merely variations of the previously created original kinds.	Evolution will persist into the distant future.