

## **Outline “Bio-Genesis: Evolution and Creation” January 21, 2006**

*“And God said...”*

*“God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.” Genesis 1:20-31*

### **Introduction: The Conflict Over Human Origins**

#### **I. Understanding the Theory of Evolution**

Evolution =

The Theory of Evolution by Natural Selection =

Complex forms of life evolved from simpler forms of life

Mechanism: mutation, variation, natural selection

#### **II. Why Christians Have Struggled with Evolution**

A. Literal interpretation of the Genesis account of creation

B. A perceived diminishing of the role of God in creation

C. A perceived diminishing of the place of humankind in creation

D. Evolution as an “unsupervised, impersonal, unpredictable and natural process”

#### **III. When evolution becomes a philosophy**

A. “Unsupervised & Impersonal”

- *For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. Psalm 139:13*

B. What some scientists say about purpose & the lack of purpose

#### **IV. Three Christian Views of Evolution**

A. Creation Science

B. Intelligent Design

C. Theistic Evolution

Two different theistic evolutionary positions:

### **Conclusion: Where Science and Religion Meet**

- *The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. Genesis 2:7*
- Evolution without religion, science standards, and God’s purpose in your life.

## **Study Guide “Bio-Genesis: Evolution and Creation” January 21, 2006**

**Monday, January 24** – There is an interesting passage in the book of Jeremiah, when God calls Jeremiah to preach. Read *Jeremiah 1:4-5*. What might we infer from this passage about God’s plans for our lives, and God’s foreknowledge of us? What does it say about God’s involvement in the world? What would it mean to you that God knew you before you were formed in your mother’s womb? Evolution conflicts with this view only when the entire process is seen as unplanned, impersonal, and completely naturalistic.

**Tuesday, January 25** – Which of the three Christian views of evolution most closely aligns with your view? Why do you hold this view? Why don’t you hold the others? Today we’ll read the entire account from Genesis 1. Read *Genesis 1:1-2:3*. What questions, if any, does this raise for you if it is to be taken as a literal and historic account of how the universe was created? How does your understanding of this account change when you see it as a way for God to communicate theological truth as opposed to scientific truth? What are the theological claims in this passage? What does it teach us about God? About creation? About humankind?

**Wednesday, January 26** – Today we’ll look at what is sometimes called the second creation account. Some scholars believe that Genesis 1 comes from one ancient tradition within Israel and that Genesis 2 comes from another. They use two different names for God (Genesis 1 – 2:3 uses the name Elohim exclusively, whereas Genesis 2:4 and following adds the name Yahweh to Elohim). They offer a different order of creation (vegetation is brought forth on the third day, and animals on the fifth and sixth days, before humankind was created in Genesis 1, but in Genesis 2 humans are created before vegetation and the animals). In Genesis 1 God speaks and the various aspects of creation appear, but Genesis 2 gives us a bit more detail, telling us that God formed Adam, and other living things, from the dust of the ground. These are not irreconcilable accounts, especially if the creation story is not seen as science, but theology – they actually complement one another. Read *Genesis 2:4-25*. What does this passage teach us about God? About humanity? About marriage? How does its teaching of humanity being created from the dust of the earth line up with what mainstream science tells us about the origins of life?

**Thursday, January 27** – Today we turn to one of the most beautiful of Psalms, which speaks of the Psalmist’s marvel at God’s presence with us, and at God’s role in forming us. Read *Psalms 139:1-24*. What does the Psalmist teach about God? The psalm takes an interesting turn in verses 19-22 – a section which seems to lack the lofty ideas of the rest of the Psalm. How does Jesus bring about a change in how we see our enemies in the New Testament? Can you relate to how the Psalmist felt about those who were his adversaries, who also spoke evil of God? Use verses 23-24 as the basis for your own time of prayer.

**Friday, January 28** – What would life look like if human beings simply took evolution theory – particularly the survival of the fittest – as a philosophy of life? We’ve learned that Christians through the ages have understood that there are two books of knowledge – two sources of understanding truth and ultimate reality – the book of nature which science reveals to us – it offers ideas as to the mechanics of creation – how things happen. But this knowledge is incomplete apart from the knowledge we have from the second book – the autobiography of God – God’s word – this is both what we experience directly of God, but primarily through the Bible and through the person of Jesus. If evolution were all we knew about life, what would we conclude about the meaning and purpose of our lives? About being human? Let’s read John’s account of creation – it, along with Genesis and the rest of the scriptures, offers us the rest of the story of creation - the why of creation – its meaning, purpose and architect. Read *John 1:1-13*.