

# False Assumptions Concerning Evolution: Part One

## Evolution is a Proven Fact of Science

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Most modern scientists are in general agreement that evolutionary theory is an established fact of science and cannot logically be questioned as a view of origins. However, what one concludes about human origins is one of the most crucial points for deciding a whole range of other issues, whether positively or negatively—from the nature of man and the purpose of life to the relevance of morality and religion to the future of humanity. Is man only the end product of the impersonal forces of matter, time and chance with all this implies—or the purposeful creation of a good and loving God with all this implies? Given the tremendous influence of evolutionary theory in the last 100 years, the answer has already been given to most people.

In the history of mankind, few theories have had the impact that evolution has. The famous evolutionary Zoologist Ernst Mayr of Harvard University observed in 1972 that evolution was coming to be regarded as “perhaps the most fundamental of all intellectual revolutions in the history of mankind.”<sup>1</sup>

The definitive modern biography by James Moore, *Darwin: The Life of a Tormented Evolutionist*, points out that Darwin, “More than any modern thinker—even Freud or Marx... has transformed the way we see ourselves on the planet.”<sup>2</sup>

Wendell R. Bird is a prominent Atlanta attorney and Yale Law School graduate who argued the major creationist case on the issue of creation/evolution before the U.S. Supreme Court. In his impressive criticism of evolutionary theory, *The Origin of Species Revisited: The Theories of Evolution and of Abrupt Appearance*, he observes of *The Origin of Species*, “That single volume has had a massive influence not only on the sciences, which increasingly are built on evolutionary assumptions, but on the humanities, theology, and government.”<sup>3</sup>

In his *Mankind Evolving*, eminent geneticist Theodosius Dobzhansky points out that the publication of Darwin’s book in 1859, “marked a turning point in the intellectual history of mankind...” and “ushered in a new understanding of man and his place in the universe.”<sup>4</sup> He reflects that even a hundred years after Darwin “...the idea of evolution is becoming an integral part of man’s image of himself. The idea has percolated to much wider circles than biologists or even scientists; understood or misunderstood, it is a part of mass culture.”<sup>5</sup>

Molecular biologist Michael Denton also points out the dramatic influence of this dominant theory, even in disciplines outside the natural sciences:

**The twentieth century would be incomprehensible without the Darwinian revolution. The social and political currents which have swept the world in the past eighty years would have been impossible without its intellectual sanction.... The influence of evolutionary theory on fields far removed from biology is one of the most spectacular examples in history of how a highly speculative idea for which there is no really hard scientific evidence can come to fashion the thinking of a whole society and dominate the outlook of an age.**

**Today it is perhaps the Darwinian view of nature more than any other that is responsible for the agnostic and skeptical outlook of the twentieth century.... [It is] a theory that literally changed the world....”<sup>6</sup>**

But if evolution has permeated practically the entire fabric of contemporary culture and provides the basis for modern man's world view and thus his subsequent actions, who can argue that this theory is unimportant? Indeed, it is how an individual views his origin, his ultimate beginning that, to a great extent, conditions his world view, the decisions he makes, and even his general lifestyle. As the philosopher Francis Schaeffer once noted, people usually live more consistently with their own presuppositions than even they themselves may realize.<sup>7</sup>

One only need examine the twentieth century and take note of the impact of evolutionary materialism to see that, "Evolutionary theory does indeed dominate modern thought in virtually every field—every discipline of study, every level of education, and every area of practice."<sup>8</sup>

However, if it turns out that evolution is wrong, then everything it has impacted may have been affected in a prejudicial or even harmful way. Since we have discussed this topic elsewhere, we will not elaborate on it here.<sup>9</sup> What we will do is show why none of the harmful, indeed, often tragic consequences of this theory were ever necessary in the first place.

In the material that follows, we will offer some of the reasons why evolution is widely accepted, why we believe evolutionary theory is wrong and why we believe it should no longer be accepted by thinking people, at least by those who do not allow their personal materialistic philosophies to color their interpretations of scientific data. Below we offer six false assumptions relating to belief in evolution.<sup>10</sup>

## **FALSE ASSUMPTION 1:**

**Scientists accept evolution because it is a proven fact of science that cannot logically be denied.**

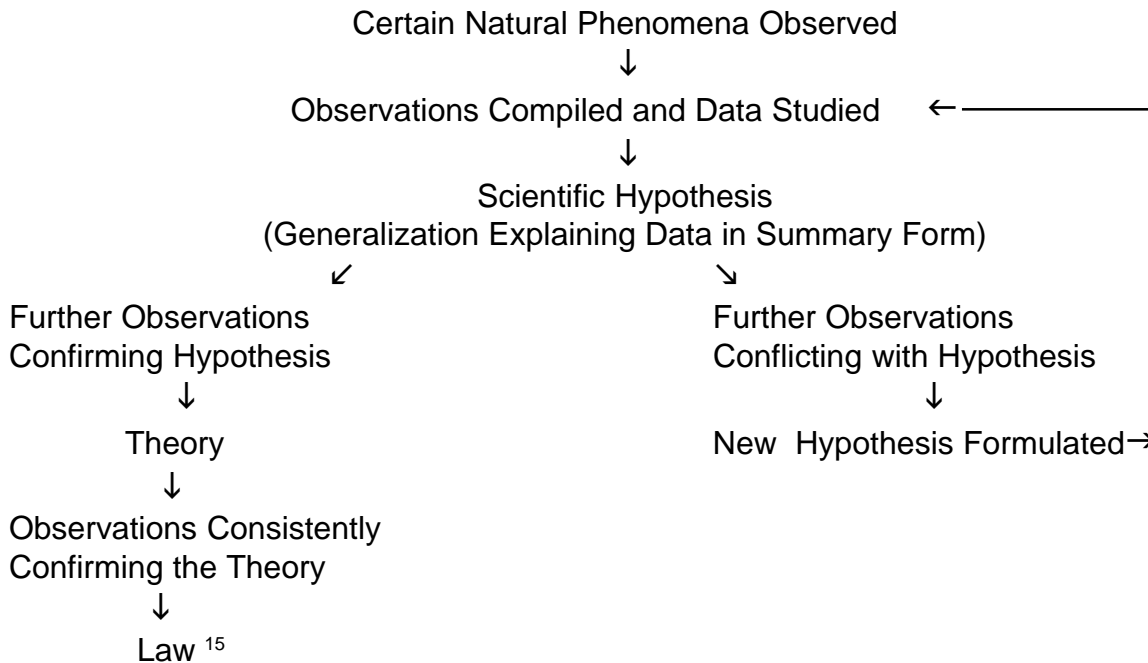
There exist many popular misunderstandings concerning the nature of science. Philosopher of science Dr. J. P. Moreland discusses some of these misconceptions and observes that even "scientists today, in contrast to their counterparts in earlier generations, are often ill equipped to define science, since such a project is philosophical in nature."<sup>11</sup> In fact, Moreland cites several standard definitions of science given in such texts as *College Physics*, *Biological Science*, *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary*, as well as judge William R. Overton's definition of science in the decision against creationism in the famous creation science trial in Little Rock, Arkansas, December 1981. He observes that none of these definitions of science is adequate.<sup>12</sup>

It is not our purpose here to discuss the problems involved in the definition of science.<sup>13</sup> We do need to know that the interaction of science and philosophy is a complex one and that there is no universally accepted clear-cut definition of what science is. We are on safer ground if we define science in a general way, noting its methodology, i.e., the scientific method. For our purposes, the *Oxford American Dictionary* (1982) definition of science is adequate: "A branch of study which is considered either with a connected body of *demonstrated truths* or with *observed facts* systematically classified and more or less colligated and brought under *general laws*, and which includes *trustworthy methods* for the discovery of *new truth* within its own domain." (Emphasis added) Scientific work involves things like observation, formulating a hypothesis, experimental testing to repeat observations, predictability, control, etc.:

**One applies the scientific method by first of all observing and recording**

certain natural phenomena. He then formulates a generalization (scientific hypothesis) based upon his observations. In turn, this generalization allows him to make predictions. He then tests his hypothesis by conducting experiments to determine if the predicted result will obtain. If his predictions prove true, then he will consider his hypothesis verified. Through continual confirmation of the predictions [e.g., by himself and other parties] the hypothesis will become a theory, and the theory, with time and tests, will graduate to the status of a [scientific] law.<sup>14</sup>

The scientific method may be diagrammed as follows:



What the above definition of science and description of the scientific method will indicate is that, while scientists who study nature utilize the scientific method, evolutionary theory *itself* is not ultimately scientific because evolution has few, if any, “demonstrated truths” or “observed facts.” Microevolution or strictly limited change within species can be demonstrated but this has nothing to do with evolution as commonly understood. After citing evolutionists who confess that evolution is not scientifically provable, Dr. Randy L. Wysong observes, “...evolution is not a formulation of the true scientific method. They [these scientists] realize [that, in effect] evolution means the initial formation of unknown organisms from unknown chemicals produced in an atmosphere or ocean of unknown composition under unknown conditions, which organisms have then climbed an unknown evolutionary ladder by an unknown process leaving unknown evidence.”<sup>16</sup>

In other words, to the extent that the findings of science *hinge* upon demonstrated truths and observed facts, evolutionary theory has little to do with the findings of science. Evolution is more properly considered a naturalistic philosophy or world view that seeks to explain the origin of life materialistically. As the late A. E. Wilder-Smith, who held three earned doctorates in science, observed, “As Kerkut has shown [in his *The Implications of Evolution*], Neodarwinian thought teaches seven main postulates. Not one of these seven theses can be proved or even tested experimentally. If they are not supported by experimental evidence, the whole theory can scarcely be considered to be a *scientific* one. If the seven main postulates of Neodarwinism are experimentally untestable, then Neodarwinism

must be considered to be a philosophy rather than a science, for science is concerned solely with experimentally testable evidence.<sup>17</sup>

Dr. Willem J. Ouweneel, Research Associate in Developmental Genetics, Utrecht, Netherlands, with the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, points out in his article "The Scientific Character of the Evolution Doctrine," "It is becoming increasingly apparent that evolutionism is not even a good scientific theory."<sup>18</sup> He documents why evolution should not be considered a scientific fact, theory, hypothesis, or postulate. For example, concerning the latter, evolutionary theory is not properly designated a *scientific* postulate because this must: (a) be in accordance with the principal laws of mathematics and natural science; (b) not be more complicated than necessary for the explanation of observed phenomena; (c) give rise to conclusions which can be controlled by further experimental observations and testing; (d) conform to the general data of science; (e) alternate hypotheses must be shown to be wrong or less acceptable; and (f) finally, the reliability of a scientific conception is inversely proportional to the number of unproven postulates on which it is founded. Evolution fails all three criteria for categorization as a scientific postulate.

This is why Dr. Ouweneel concludes that evolution is actually a *materialistic* postulate rather than a credible scientific theory.<sup>19</sup> But one would never know this from reading the scientific literature, literature which constantly assures the world that evolution is a scientific fact.

(Continued in the next article)

#### Footnotes:

1. Ernst Mayr, "The Nature of the Darwinian Revolution," *Science*, Vol. 176 (June 2, 1972), p. 981.
2. James More, *Darwin: The Life of a Tormented Evolutionist* (NY: Warner, 1991), p. xxi.
3. W. R. Bird, *The Origin of Species Revisited: The Theories of Evolution and of Abrupt Appearance*, Vol. 1 (NY: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1989), p. 1.
4. Theodosius Dobzhansky, *Mankind Evolving: The Evolution of the Human Species* (NY: Bantam, 1970), p. 1.
5. *Ibid.*, p. xi.
6. Michael Denton, *Evolution: A Theory in Crisis* (Bethesda, MD: Adler and Adler, 1986), p. 358.
7. Francis A. Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live: The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture* (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1976), p. 19.
8. Henry Morris, *The Long War Against God: The History and Impact of the Creation/Evolution Conflict* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1989), p. 18.
9. John Ankerberg, John Weldon, *The Facts On Creation vs. Evolution*, (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1992) pp. 35-44 and our forthcoming book to be published by Harvest House.
10. The term *evolution* is used in reference to the general theory that all life on earth has evolved from nonliving matter and has progressed to more complex forms with time; hence, "macroevolution" and not "microevolution" or minor changes within species illustrated in crossbreeding (e.g., varieties of dogs).
11. J. P. Moreland, *Christianity and the Nature of Science: A Philosophical Investigation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1989), p. 21.
12. *Ibid.*, 21-42.
13. *Ibid.*, 17-138.
14. R. L. Wysong, *The Creation/Evolution Controversy* (East Lansing, MI: Inquiry Press, 1976), pp. 40-41.
15. *Ibid.*, 41.
16. *Ibid.*, 44.
17. A. E. Wilder-Smith, *The Natural Sciences Know Nothing of Evolution* (San Diego, Calif: Master Books, 1981), p. 133.
18. Willem J. Ouweneel, "The Scientific Character of the Evolution Doctrine," *Creation Research Society Quarterly*, September 1971, pp. 109.
19. *Ibid.*, 109-115.