

## Are All Men Created Equal?

by John D. Morris\*

It is good to remind ourselves, from time to time, that the foundational charter of America, the Declaration of Independence, is a creationist document. Our founding fathers separated from England by citing the Biblical truth that all men are created equal. This status recognized inalienable human rights granted by the Creator and not by men or governments. The world has benefited by the successful separation, as America has been a source of freedom and hope to many. Most importantly, America has been a nation from which the Gospel has emanated.

But what of the idea that all individual men are created equal? Certainly the circumstances of their birth have not been equal. All have different levels of ability and opportunity. Even access to Gospel truth has not been equal. In what way are we created equal?


Historically, we all come from the same ancestral source. From Noah and his sons *"was the whole earth overspread"* (Genesis 9:19). Before that all came from Adam *"the first man"* (I Corinthians 15:45–46) and Eve, *"the mother of all living"* (Genesis 3:20). There are no others, for God *"hath made of one blood all nations of men"* (Acts 17:26). The modern distinction of "race" is not the Biblical concept in which differences stem from the separation at Babel based solely on *"every one*

*after his tongue, after their families, in their nations"* (Genesis 10:5).

Genetically, we are "equal" as well. Now that the human genome has been deciphered, we know every human is so similar to everyone else that we are all essentially "clones" of each other. The various expressions we recognize are best understood as designed adaptations.

Personally, we are equal too. The Bible tells us that *"all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23). Thankfully, Christ *"is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world"* (I John 2:2).

Eternally, we will be evaluated equally; based on our creed, not rank of birth. The unbelieving *"peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues"* (Revelation 17:15) are consigned to judgment, while the redeemed believers gather around His throne singing His praises from *"every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation"* (5:9). The unequal rewards or consequences will be due to our choices and conduct after having an equal standing.

Equal rights called for in the Declaration were an extension based on a higher Charter, the Holy Scriptures. If we would fully embrace the Declaration, we must cling to its underlying Document. 

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# Creation and the Bird Flu



by Frank Sherwin, M.A.\*

We are all familiar with the unpleasant viral condition called influenza, or the flu. Adam and Eve were not created with viral diseases. Such pathogens were the result of the Fall (Genesis 3). Since then, history has shown tragic influenza outbreaks worldwide, including the epidemic of 1918 where 20 million Americans perished. What made the 1918 strain so deadly has been a longstanding medical mystery. Many flu subtypes in the past possibly appeared in China. Their heritage finds significant domestic exposure to animals such as pigs and ducks. Random mixing of livestock seed in a confined area has no doubt led to devastating pandemic strains, the result of something called antigenic shift (part of antigenic variation). Briefly described, this occurs by a recombination or reassortment of the genes encoding the major surface antigen of the virus. Such antigen-shifting involves swine (swine flu virus), people (human influenza virus), and birds (avian flu virus), that produce a hypervirulent flu strain. But is this real vertical evolution as claimed by some? No. The virus remains a flu virus variant that has corrupted and recombined genes, nothing more.

Presently, health authorities are concerned about a strain of avian flu approaching North America. At least 150 million domesticated birds have either died of the virus or been killed as a control measure to stem the spread. The first human case of this current strain of bird flu, H5N1, occurred in Hong Kong in 1997 with the death of six people. As of June 6, this virus has infected at least 225 people in ten countries. All cases were

transmitted via contact with an infected animal (e.g., bird). Researchers fear the virus will now transmit between people as a full-blown epidemic.

One cannot help but read the apocalyptic tone of news stories as they address a possible bird flu epidemic in America. Could it happen again? Creation scientist Alan Gillen says that in a sense it already has, though not in quite a devastating form. The “Asian flu” of 1957–1958 killed 70,000 Americans. The 1968–1969 “Hong Kong flu” killed 34,000. The new subtype that appeared that year, called Influenza A (H3N2), was milder, perhaps because only the hemagglutinin protein (H3—the viral surface) changed and the neuraminidase (N2—a critical enzyme) stayed the same, therefore people may have had some residual resistance to it. Still, Influenza A (H3N2) has caused 400,000 deaths in the US since its emergence in 1968, ninety percent of them people older than 65.

Let’s remember that medical technology has progressed significantly in the past half-century. According to Gillen, we have a flu reporting system; we know how to make vaccines against the flu; we have antibiotics to treat the bacterial infections that killed so many in the pandemic of 1918; we even have several antiviral medicines that are helpful. In the meantime, creation scientists should conduct more investigation into the origin of infectious diseases and the genesis of germs. Whether the bird flu will be as bad as some say or just a “normal” cyclic sweep, let’s be anxious for nothing (Philippians 4:6). God has everything under control (I Peter 5:7). 📖

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# The Fossil Record: Commending the Gnostics

by William A. Hoesch, M.S.\*

What a man does with the fossil record tells a lot about his worldview. Is it the result of a world-covering deluge? Or did this sorry chronicle of pain, suffering, and death precede humans (and the reign of death) by millions of years? A lot hangs on this question. Defending the goodness of God in a world full of suffering is a difficult job. The job is made nigh unto impossible if we place at God's feet the carnage of the fossil record.

Try to imagine God standing on His newly created Earth and calling it "very good" when under his feet lay the ruined remains of former life forms buried in various positions of agony and stages of decay. Yet all Christians who believe in an old Earth must embrace this picture. Some defend it by claiming we Americans get too sentimental over animals; only human suffering matters. Others say human suffering is, in itself, a "good" thing. Most ignore it. With the growing rise of Gnosticism, however, the question will surely not be going away soon.

Gnostics, like most religious people, have well-developed ideas on creation, "fall," and redemption. Creation to a Gnostic begins with an impersonal and vague primal god that "emanates" a few dozen deities of whom Sophia ("wisdom"), the earth goddess, is foremost. She gives birth to Jehovah and things begin to go wrong. Jehovah creates a corrupt Earth that *from the start* was full of suffering, pain, and death yet who attempted to pass it off as "good." Adam and Eve, having developed through Jehovah's cruel method of evolution, are also corrupt, yet they and their offspring retain a "divine spark." Only by accepting the Serpent's offer of knowledge (Gnosis) can man escape the cruel designs of Jehovah and evolve according to the

promise, "ye shall be as gods." The Serpent becomes the hero. A rite of initiation among some modern Gnostics is to ritually eat an apple in open rebellion against their Creator.

The point is this. The Gnostic's point of departure, which is evident on any of their websites, is that only an evil god would deliberately create a world in which physical suffering is so central to his program. They feel the brunt of this more acutely than most Christians.

For three reasons I commend the Gnostics. First, they are to be commended for understanding evolution better than the Darwinists do. For man to advance to his next evolutionary stage, Gnostics see the need for *information*. Darwinists are utterly blind to this. Second, I commend Gnostics for their consistency. Today's animal economy, based upon "survival of the fittest," rewards cunning brutality, and predation. Young Charles Darwin felt that a god who ordained such an economy from the start is not the kind of god he was inclined to worship (and I agree). Third, I commend the Gnostics for bringing to light an issue that we ignore at our peril—the origin of physical suffering and death (human and animal).

Theistic evolutionists, progressive creationists, and all Christians who believe in an old Earth have this in common: they see in the fossil record a saga of millions of years of death, physical suffering, and bloodshed of animals that *preceded* Adam. In embracing this, they have no credible answer for human suffering and give fuel to the Gnostics. God's goodness must be defended. An event after the Fall sufficiently accounts for the fossil record. That event was the Genesis Flood. 🌀

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# Mature at Birth: Universe Discredits Evolution

by David F. Coppedge\*

Critics of recent creation ridicule the belief that a universe so vast, composed of so many diverse phenomena and processes running at diverse rates, could be fit into a few thousand years. They are less likely to acknowledge the many and severe problems with an old, evolutionary universe. Some of these problems have become accentuated in recent months. Any cosmological system is going to have its share of challenging phenomena to explain. Before casting stones, a little humility is in order.

A strange cartoon graced the cover of *Science News* last fall (10/08/2005) that serves as a symbol for a whole class of problems for evolutionary astronomers. It showed a star-shaped old man in a stellar maternity ward. With its title, "Crisis in the Cosmos? Galaxy-formation theory is in peril," the article exposed a running theme in astronomy: as far back as we look, stars and galaxies appear mature.

"Imagine peering into a nursery and seeing, among the cooing babies, a few that look like grown men," Ron Cowen quipped. "That's the startling situation that astronomers have stumbled upon as they've looked deep into space and thus back to a time when newborn galaxies filled the cosmos."

Other recent findings echo this theme of "mature at birth." Consider three examples from March of this year:

- The Spitzer Space Telescope found clusters of galaxies a third of the assumed age of the universe.


- UV and infrared surveys found "ubiquitous" galaxies at redshift 6.7, corresponding to 5% the assumed age.

- The Swift satellite detected a gamma-ray burst 12.8 billion years old in the assumed time scale. "This means," said *Nature* (3/9/2006, p. 164) "that not only did stars form in this short period of time after the Big Bang, but also that enough time had elapsed for them to evolve and collapse into black holes."

More examples could be cited. These findings corroborate a January 8, 2002, NASA press release that was considered astonishing at the time: based on Hubble surveys, "the grand finale came first" in stellar and galactic evolution. As far back as telescopes look, they see mature creation, not evolution.

Add to this other problems with evolutionary views. Theories of star formation, galaxy formation, planet formation, globular cluster ages, universal expansion and much more—including some of the best-established ideas in astronomy—have had their share of upsets.

In a sense, this is how science works. No "fact" of science should be immune from challenge by new findings. What this teaches us, though, is that cockiness is out of order. Critics of recent creation should not be the first to throw stones.

Believers expect God's ways to be inscrutable. Creation involved unique processes that could have had unusual effects on our perceptions of space and time. Given the fallibility of human understanding, the reasonable approach in any area of science, especially the historical sciences of ultimate origins, should be to begin with the word of the Eyewitness. 

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