

Creation: Bible and Science



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A. Scientific Law



Principal views of scientific law

Scientific Law

By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,
and by the breath of his mouth all their host.

– Psalm 33:6

impersonalism

impersonal,
mechanistic
law

personalism

personal law,
fatherly
governance

Worldviews on Miracle

impersonalism

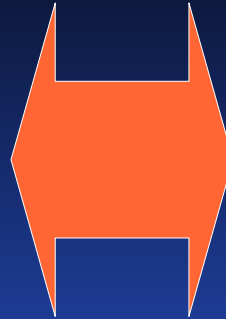
matter, energy,
motion



mechanism



no exceptions:
no miracles



personalism

God personally
created and rules



personal purposes



exceptions: miracle

Miracle of a Plague

Thus says the Lord, "By this you shall know that I am the Lord: behold, with the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it shall turn into blood." – Ex. 7:17

B. Age of the Earth



Principal theories, given that we are using a Christian worldview.

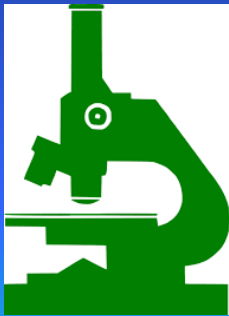
Simple Affirmation View

- God created the world in six days, cycles of God's work and rest
- Human beings imitate in a sabbath pattern (Exod. 20:8-11)
- Days of creation are unique
- So extrapolating from God's present providence involves guesswork
- We might leave open how to fit in scientific claims

Religious-Only Theory

- The Bible tells why, not how. The Bible and science offer complementary descriptions, answering different questions.
- Hence, there can be no contradiction.

How



CCO

Why



CCO

Neat, but
will it work?



MSFT gallery

Local Creation

← Creation of whole universe →

Gen. 1-2 is about
God's acts in a local area

Eden

The Gap Theory

Gen. 1:1

original act of creation

———— Gap: includes geologic ages ————

Gen. 1:2

judgment & ruin of original

Gen. 1:3-31

restoration from ruin in 6 days

1

2

3

4

5

6

Revelatory Day Theory

1	2	3	4	5	6	
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On Moses' 4th day of revelation Moses hears from God about the creation of sun, moon, and stars.

Evaluating Less Attractive Views

- Religious-only
- Local Creation
- Gap Theory
- Revelatory Day
- Bible is factual.
- Later allusions treat Gen. 1-2 as universal.
- The Hebrew of 1:2 is circumstantial, not a narrative continuation.
- No exegetical evidence.



Forget it.

Intermittent Day

- 24-hour days have gaps between them.



God's creative activity is spread out between 24-hour days, rather than occurring during them.

Evaluating Intermittent Day

- Israelites working during six days, and rested on the seventh.
- Exod. 20:11 leads to understanding God likewise. God works during days, not between them.
- On this view, introducing six days rather than some other marker appears to have no other purpose but to form a pattern for man.
- Hence, it is close to the framework view.

Literal 24-Hour Days



Straight-
forward

Mature Creation

Also called “ideal-time” view.

- God creates in place Adam and mature plants and animals. Subsequent scientific inspection would see “appearance of age.”

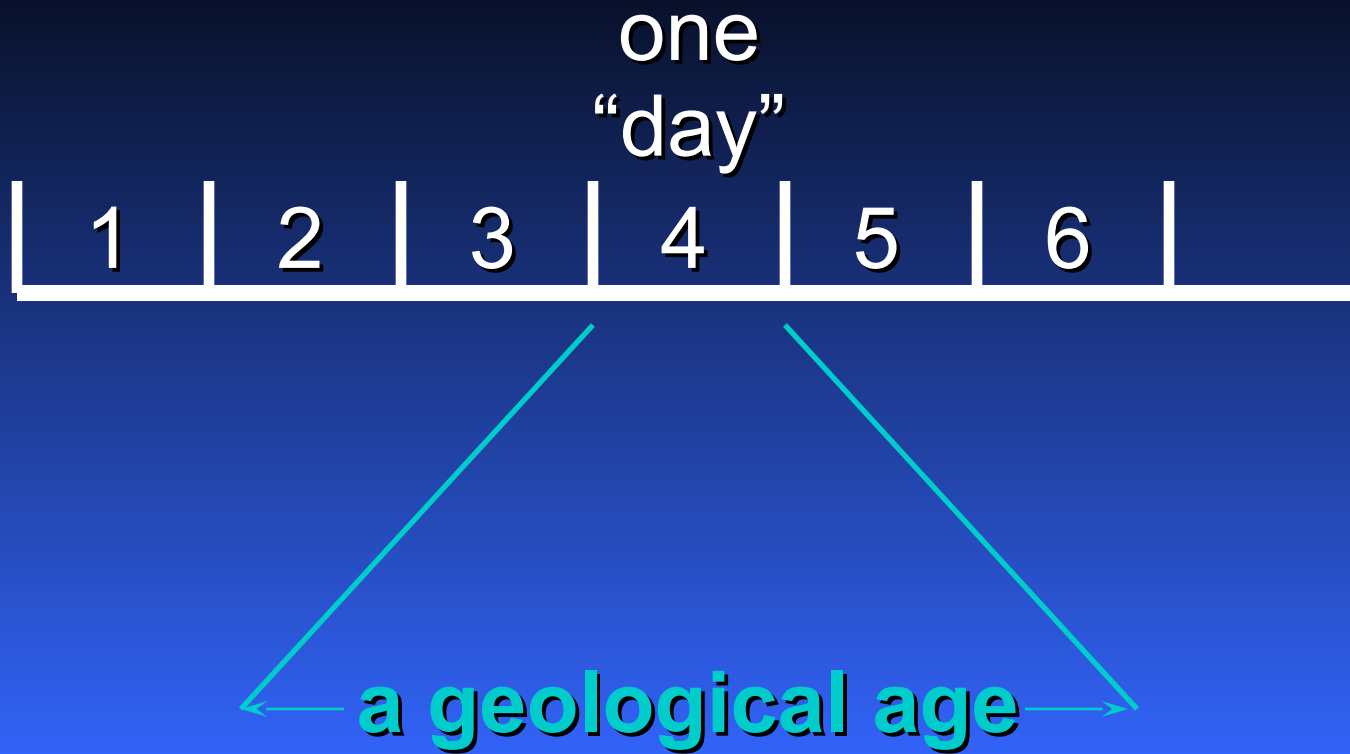
plant looks
6 months old



Adam looks
20 years old.

grapes come
from a vine that
looks 5 years old

Age-Day Concordism



Analogical Day

God works and rests



analogous

Man works and rests



Framework View

Also called pictorial day or moderate concordism.

- God uses the sabbatical framework to organize and depict creative acts.

1: light; day/night

2: sea and air

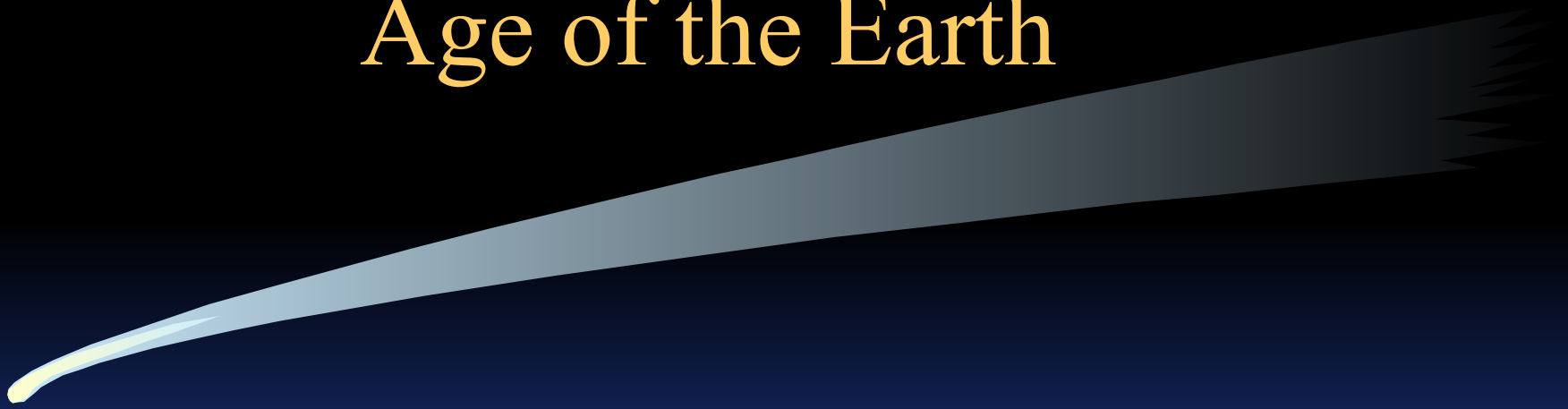
3: land

4: rulers of day/night

5: rulers of sea and air

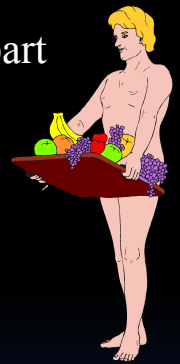
6: rulers of land

I. Evaluation of Age of the Earth



Evaluating 24-Hour Day View

- According to astronomy, light from distant galaxies requires millions of years to arrive here.
- Hence the universe appears old.
- Hence, 24-Hour Day View becomes the Mature Creation View.
- YEC proposes “alternative astronomy.” But hard to see how this can work in detail.
- How do you measure an hour?



Evaluating Mature Creation

- Automatically harmonizes with modern science.
- But is God playing fair? Is he deceiving us by dinosaur bones? (Dinosaurs never really existed, but are only an extrapolation backward in “ideal time.”)
- Deception arises only when man goes by the (unfounded) assumption that he can indeed infer a real past by uniformitarian projection from present data.

Evaluating Age-Day Concordism

counterevidence:

- Days are numbered.
- They have an “evening” and “morning.”
- Exod. 20:11 correlates the 6 days of creation with the 6/1 pattern of Israel’s weekly sabbath.

If Gen. 1 has an analogical or figurative use of time, the analogy belongs to the whole picture, not to the word “day.”

Hence, framework or analogical view.

1	4
2	5

Evaluating the Framework View

Structure of
week

1	4
2	5
3	6
7	

- Structure is there.
- Structure may add to time order rather than being an alternative.
- “Mere” framework suggests it is not serious; in fact, these are real events.
- Time dimension is significant.

Evaluating the Analogical View

God's week

1	4
2	5
3	6

7

model

man's week
(Exod. 20:11)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

- Exodus 20:10-11 indicates an analogy between God and man.
 - God worked six days, rested on the seventh.
 - man works six days, rests on the seventh.

Text for Analogy

“but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, ...



for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.”
(Exod. 20:10-11)



עָשָׂה "make",

God's Rest

work in providence, redemption

creating
(finished)

God's rest (= from creating)

(Gen 2:1)



(Gen 2:3)

consecrate time of God's rest

“sabbath” = God's rest

Man's sabbath is analogous.

Evaluating the Analogical View

God's week

1	4
2	5
3	6

7

model

God's
gardening

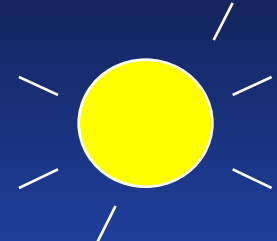
(Gen. 1:11, 2:9)



model

God makes
time measures

(Gen. 1:14)



model

man's week
(Exod. 20:11)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

man's gardening
(Gen. 2:15)



man counts
periods
(Lev. 23; 25)

Evidence for Analogical View

- God's days are a pattern for and analogous to ours, but not identical with ours.
 - Heaven/earth analogy is familiar (Exod. 25-40).
 - Man is made an earthly image of heavenly God.
 - Man's working is analogous to God's working.
 - 7th day symbolizes consummation (eternal).
 - 7th day is analogical; so is the whole week.
 - Trees now take years to grow to maturity.
 - Man measures time through means provided on the fourth day: prevents measuring God's days.

Conclusion on Age of the Earth

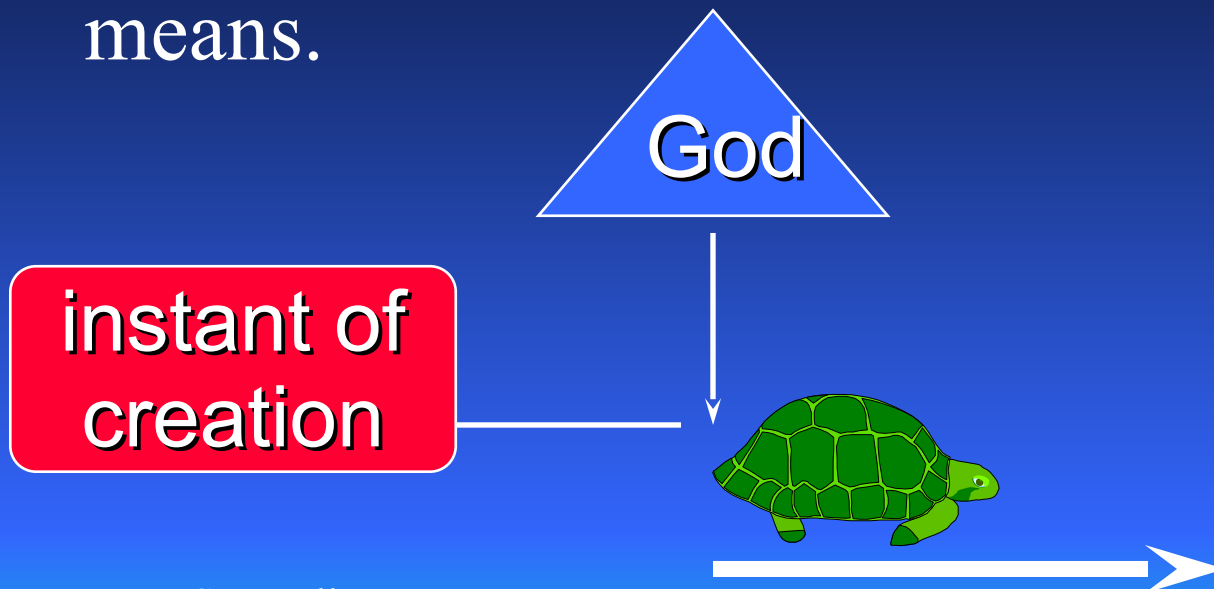
- 24-Hour Day is theologically possible, and desires to be loyal to the Bible. Exegetically, it is weak, especially with the 7th day.
- Mature Creation is possible and harmonizes with mainstream science.
- Framework View is too vague.
- Analogical View
 - avoids exegetical overreading
 - attends to 7th day
 - notes foundation of the world in Divine action.

J. Principal Christian Views of Biological Evolution



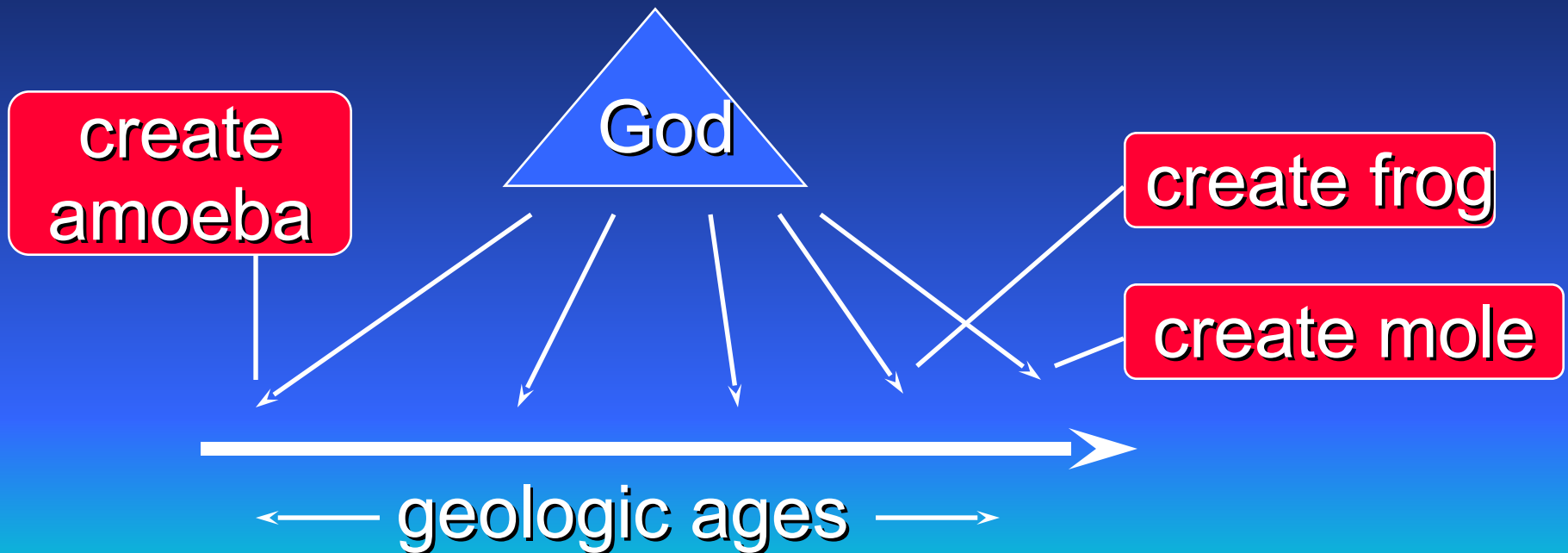
Fiat Production

- God creates the distinct “kinds” of living things instantaneously. He uses pre-existing material (e.g., dust), but no other means.



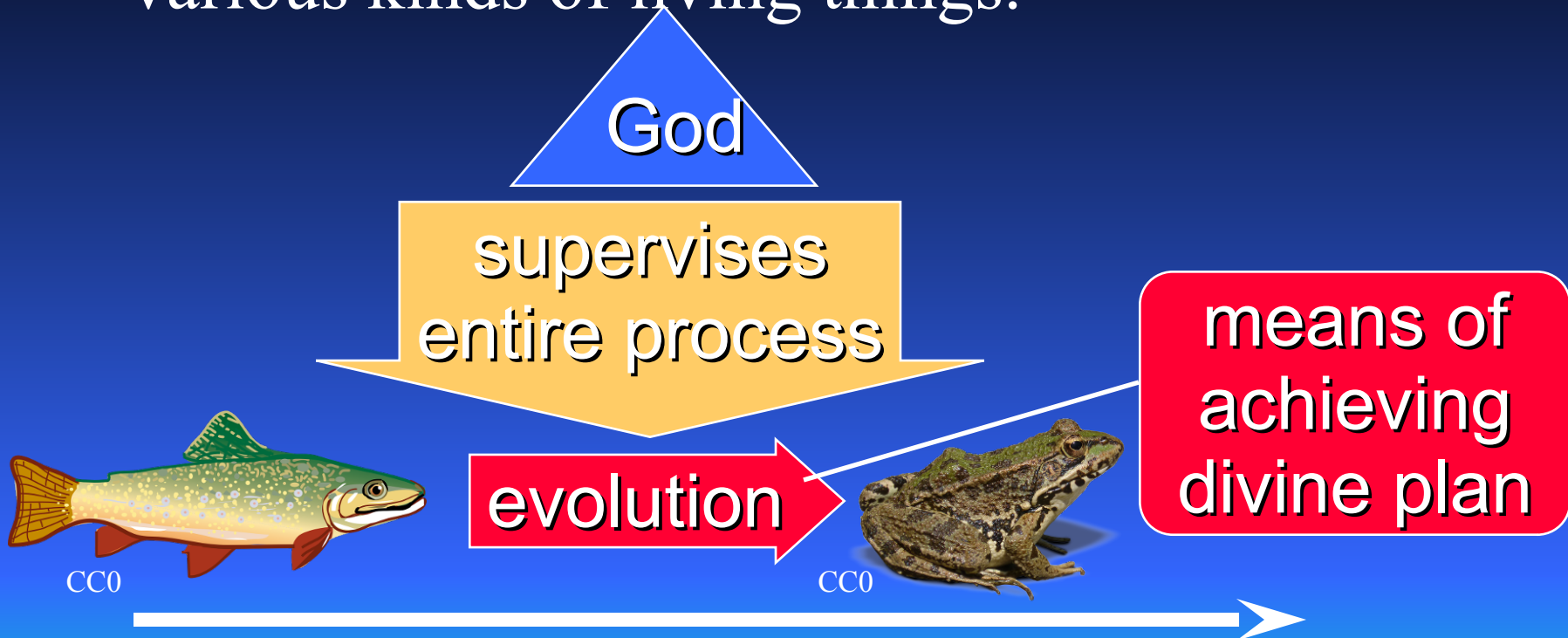
Progressive Creationism

- By special acts God creates distinct “kinds,” with acts of creation occurring at particular points along a long time scale.



Theistic Evolution

- God uses very gradual evolution as the means by which he makes (creates) the various kinds of living things.



K. Evaluating Evolution



1. Relation between Biologic Evolution and Age of the Earth



Possible Old-Earth Views

old earth

age provides
time for evolution

theistic
evolution

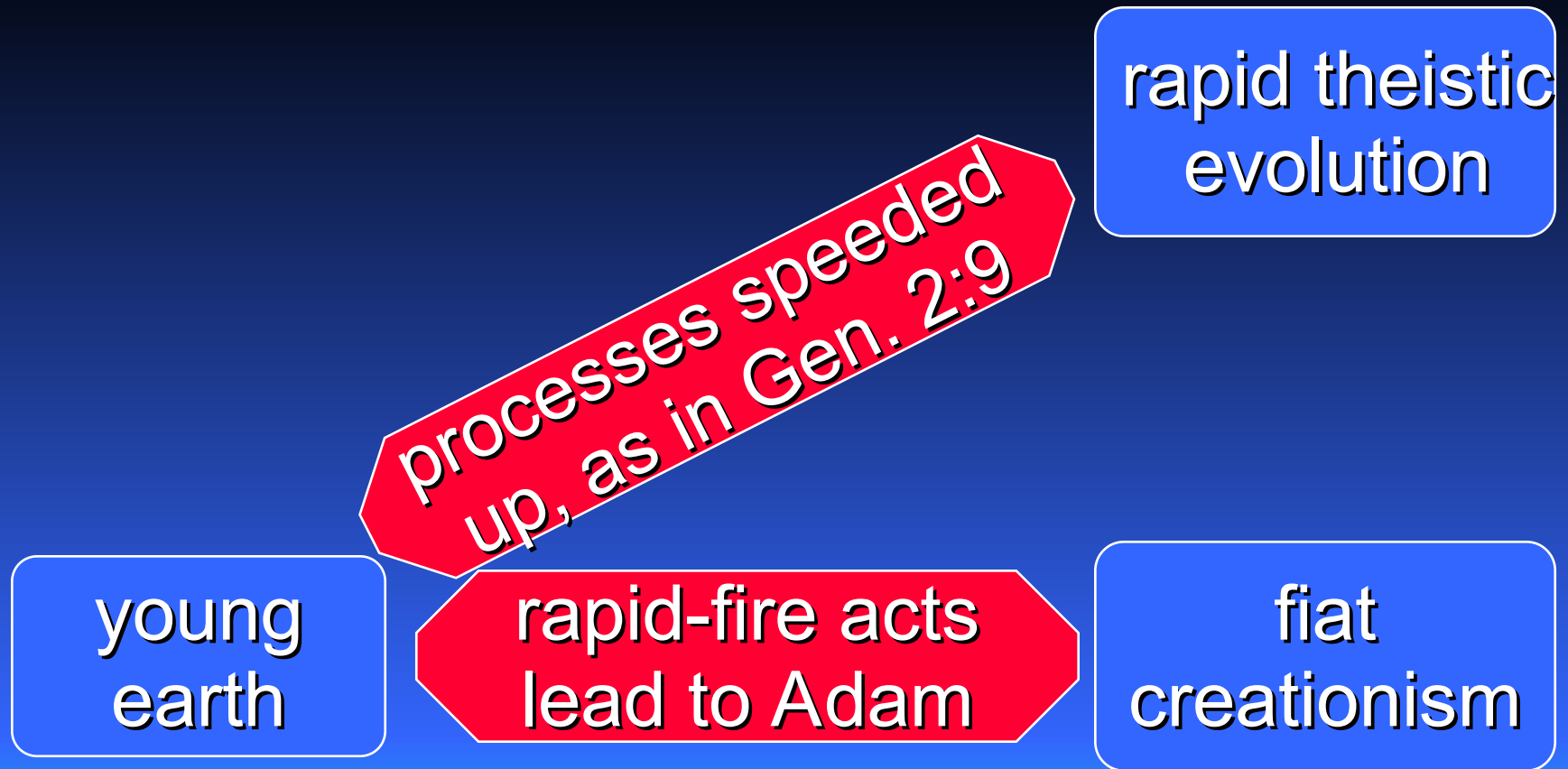
More than
one option.

acts of creation
spread over ages

progressive
creationism



Possible Young-Earth Views



2. Noah's Flood

- A complex issue, on which there is much disagreement.
- Was the flood universal (whole globe)?
 - Yes: massive miraculous action. A coherent scientific account is doubtful. Are we back to an ideal-time view?
 - No: observable mountains could be covered with water in the form of snow. Then compatible with standard geology.

3. Biblical Evidence on Evolution



Creation of Eve (Gen. 2:21-22)

“... while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and closed up the place with flesh” (Gen. 2:21).

- The Bible gives procedure (“how”), not just theological purpose (“why”). A rib.
- Hence, it contradicts theistic evolution.
- If events are supernatural here, no reason to withhold supernaturalism from other acts of creation in Gen. 1-2.



Science doesn't
dogmatize.

Creation of Plants and Animals

- No mention of means (secondary causes such as evolution)
-
- But silence is not evidence that there were no means.
 - Genesis focuses on God. No need to discuss the means.
 - Means may be omitted (Ps. 104:14) or mentioned only in another place (Exod. 15:4, 8, compared with Exod. 14:21).

Fixity of Kinds?

Does reproduction “according to kinds” imply absolute fixity of kinds (thus, no evolution)?

- God guarantees to Israelites that breeding sheep leads to more sheep, and doves to more doves. He is the author of this order of things.
- Genesis does not offer a scientific, technical comment about what might in theory happen in the course of millions of years of reproduction.



Summary of Biblical Evidence

- Eve is a special creation by God.
- The Bible does not say whether God used means in creating kinds of plants and animals.
- Go look at general revelation to learn details about means.

4. Scientific Evidence Regarding Evolution



Mainstream Science

The mainstream claims massive cohesive evidence from many subdisciplines:

- Paleontology: fossil progression
- Geographical distribution
- Physiological similarities
- Embryology
- Molecular biology
- Current occurrence of variation, mutation, and survival of favorable adaptations

Looks
impressive.



Problems with the Mainstream

- Anomalies. Anomalies in each specialty are held at bay by appealing to the “clear” conclusions of all the other specialties. (See Denton.)
- Circularities. Evolution “explains” anything and therefore explains nothing in particular.
- Assumption: Presupposition bridges gaps.
- Lack of alternatives. No good alternative except supernatural creation, which science cannot investigate with its tools.
- Use Van Til to watch those presuppositions!



Problems with Materialism

- Gaps in fossil record
- No plausible source for new information
- Experimentation: fixity of kinds
- Not enough time!



Resources

- Poythress, *Redeeming Science* (Crossway)
- discovery.org/id/