

# **LSI Journal**

*a forum for diverse views consistent with Scripture*

## **Creation / Evolution**

*a Confessional Lutheran view*



### **• Narrow Lutheran Middle Road For Creation**

- Star Light Travel Time
- Bacteria Not Primitive
- Dinosaurs –Feathers or Scales?
- Book Review: Undeniable by Bill Nye
- Devotion: Claiming To Be Wise, They Became Fools

*Spring 2016*

# Lutheran Science Institute

*Creation / Evolution: a Confessional Lutheran view*

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**Giganotosaurus**

*photo 2016 by Mark Bergemann taken at "Ultimate Dinosaurs"*

**Passion for Creation Apologetics**

Just finished reading [the Winter 2016 Journal]. Thanks for your hard work and passion for these topics!

*Rev. Chris Cordes*

**The World Sees Creationists as “Delusional”**

*Commenting on a psychotherapist's anti-creation article which he forwarded:* Apparently those of us who reject evolution are delusional. Nonetheless, thanks for your LSI ministry ... even if it is promoting delusion. <smile> Blessings are yours in Jesus!

*Rev. James Aderman*

**Free Print Journals for Congregations**

Thank you. As an elder in the congregation and adult bible study leader this will be a very useful resource.

*Craig R. Ehinger*

**LSI Rapid Growth**

Things are really “looking up” for LSI. Blessings as you continue to share God's love for His people. [*In response to reading the recent LSI Bulletin, our insider newsletter for those who have joined LSI.*]

*Craig Schwartz*

**LSI Creation Survey**

Thank you for the WELS Creation Survey Report [Winter 2016 Journal]. I find this information interesting and important to “digest”. It helps us be better “1 Peter 3:15” Christians.

*Tim Rimpel*

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*Send your comments to Lutheran Science Institute, 13390 W. Edgewood Ave., New Berlin WI 53151 (or [office@LutheranScience.org](mailto:office@LutheranScience.org)). Comments should be under 250 words. Longer submissions may be used as a guest editorial. Not all comments received can be used.*

## Claiming To Be Wise, They Became Fools

***Romans 1: 18-22 (HCSB) For God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all godlessness and unrighteousness of people who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth, since what can be known about God is evident among them, because God has shown it to them. For His invisible attributes, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being understood through what He has made. As a result, people are without excuse. For though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or show gratitude. Instead, their thinking became nonsense, and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man, birds, four-footed animals, and reptiles.***

God's tremendous power and wisdom are clearly evident to everyone. We see these attributes of God in the grandeur of mountains, in the power of storms, and in the acrobatics of a dragonfly. Everything in nature is witness to God's glory. In Romans 1 we read that God's "Eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being understood through what He has made." God reveals this same truth elsewhere in Scripture such as in Psalm 19:1, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky proclaims the work of His hands."

Atheists deny God's very existence. They know about the power and wisdom of the true God by what they see in nature, but they "suppress" that knowledge. They "claim to be wise," but they foolishly exchange the true God for the god of evolution and humanism. Followers of non-Christian religions do the same. They also know about the power and wisdom of the true God by what they see in nature, but they too "suppress" that knowledge. They "claim to be wise," but they foolishly exchange the true God for a counterfeit god. Those who deny the true God "are without excuse." They had a natural knowledge

of the true God both from their conscience and from what they saw in nature. They chose to reject the true God.

In Romans 1 God declares, “For though they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God or show gratitude. Instead, their thinking became nonsense, and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools.” But atheists and non-Christians are not alone in such folly. By our sin darkened human nature we are all fools who reject God. God reveals in His Word: “The fool says in his heart, ‘God does not exist.’ They are corrupt; they do vile deeds. There is no one who does good. The Lord looks down from heaven on the human race to see if there is one who is wise, one who seeks God. All have turned away; all alike have become corrupt. There is no one who does good, not even one.” (*Psalm 14:1-3*)

How does a fool gain wisdom? The essential foundation of all wisdom is coming to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” (*Psalm 111:10 and Proverbs 9:10*)

The means of becoming wise are mentioned in the two verses just before our text. In Romans 1:16-17 we read, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is God’s power for salvation to everyone who believes, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek. For in it God’s righteousness is revealed from faith to faith, just as it is written: The righteous will live by faith.”

By our sinful human nature we do not want to be accountable to our Creator. Evolution fits that sinful desire well. Evolution rejects the true Creator God by insisting that everything that is, came naturally from things before. Our sinful nature is terrified by the thought of an all-powerful Creator God. But as Christians who trust in Jesus, we can be comforted by knowing that God uses his great power to help and defend us. God’s power displayed in nature is a constant witness to us that our loving Savior has the power to keep His promises. He has promised to be with us at all times and one day to take us to eternal glory in heaven.

We pray using words based on Psalm 33:

**Lord we praise you. Your Word is right and all you do is trustworthy. The earth is filled with your unfailing love. The heavens were made by your Word and the stars by your breath. You spoke and the world came into being. Happy are the people you have chosen to be your possession. Thank you for watching over us and keeping us as your own. Lord we wait for you, for you are our help and shield. May your faithful love rest on us. In Jesus' name, AMEN.**

-MSB

*To read more see pages 19-27 of The People's Bible, Romans.  
Available from [www.nph.net](http://www.nph.net)*

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## The Narrow Lutheran Middle Road For Creation

*Mark Bergemann*

For thousands of years philosophers and religious leaders from various cultures have realized many of the positions they support are centered between two extremes. They found a harmony, mean, or middle way. Supporters of this idea of a central truth between two extremes include Greeks such as Aristotle, Chinese such as Confucius, Buddhists, and Christians. Today the term “middle-of-the-road” is widely used to describe centrist political positions and even moderate popular music.

Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) authors have also spoken of middle road positions. A 2003 article in our seminary’s theological journal states,

The Lutheran church is mostly alone within Christendom in its proper understanding of the sacraments and their use. That is evident from Scripture, our Confession, and the confessions of others. Two errors are treated in this article, one of which is typically Protestant in nature, the other of which is typically Roman Catholic in nature. Between these two errors runs the narrow Lutheran middle road.<sup>1</sup>

A very popular book in our circles is “The Narrow Lutheran Middle –Following the Scriptural Road,” where Deutschlander writes about several middle roads including that between that between doubt and presumption.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Peter M. Prange, “*Worship and Ministry: What of God and What of Men?*” *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 100:4 (Fall 2003), 282.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel M. Deutschlander, *The Narrow Lutheran Middle –Following the Scriptural Road* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2011).



In middle road situations, each extreme (each ditch on the side of the road) is seen as emphasizing one truth while trampling on another truth. The devil, the world, and our flesh are constantly doing their best to take our focus away from our Savior and what he has done for us. They use every tactic in their arsenal. Sometimes they tempt us to think one Scriptural truth is so important, that it should be over-emphasized, even at the expense of another Scriptural truth. Satan often mixes some truth into his lies, making his lies more appealing to our sinful nature. In Genesis 3 we see Satan tempting Eve, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat of any tree in the garden?’ ...You will be like God, knowing good and evil.” In Matthew 4 we read the account of Satan tempting Jesus with a mixture of truth and lies, “Throw yourself down” for God promises to protect you.

## **Road Named Creation**

Christians who believe the creation and flood accounts (Genesis 1-11) travel a road named Creation. Most Christians today do not travel the Creation Road. Most Christians travel a road named Evolution, ignoring so much of God’s Word and believing that God used evolution to create. Christians traveling the Evolution Road have elevated their human reason high above God’s Word. But Christians following the Evolution Road are not the only ones who are led astray by their human reason. We are all tempted to question God. Even those of us on the Creation Road can be seduced by our reason.

From Scripture we are certain that thousands of years ago God created everything in six days: Space, time, matter, angels, every kind of plant, every kind of animal, and our first parents (Adam and Eve). Death entered the world as a consequence of Adam’s rebellion against God. God destroyed all humans and animals in a global flood. Only the animals and eight humans on Noah’s Ark survived. Land animals, birds, and people alive today descended from the people and animals on that ark.

Evolution denies these truths. Evolution claims that people descended from bacteria-like creatures during 2.5 billion years of death and suffering. Evolution attacks the Gospel and the need for a Savior. Evolution denies the doctrines of sin, the law, and death.<sup>3</sup> Evolution claims there is no creator god. Evolution has shipwrecked the faith of many.

How should Christians respond to the attacks of evolution? How should we defend the faith? One's answer will depend on their understanding of the place of reason in defending the faith.

### **The Narrow Lutheran Middle Road for Creation**

There is a narrow Lutheran<sup>4</sup> middle road regarding Creation. Let's travel that narrow road while not falling into the ditches on either side. The ditch on one side incorrectly sees arguments from reason as able to aid in creating or sustaining faith. The ditch on the other side incorrectly sees no place at all for arguments from reason in our apologetic (in our defense of the faith).<sup>5</sup>

Our human reason enables us to understand what God tells us in Scripture (Acts 17:2-3, Luke 24:26-27), but our reason is also an enemy of faith. See 1 Corinthians 1:18-25, Proverbs 3:5, and Matthew 11:25. When the disciples asked Jesus "Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Jesus pointed to the faith of a little child as an excellent example of humble faith. (Matt 18:1-4 HCSB).

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<sup>3</sup> Lyle W. Lange, *God So Loved the World – A Study of Christian Doctrine* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2005), 158-161.

<sup>4</sup> This article uses the word "Lutheran" to denote those Lutherans who accept the Lutheran Confessions as correctly reflecting Scriptural truth. Such Lutherans are referred to as "Confessional Lutherans" and are a minority of Lutherans in the world today.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted with revision from: Mark Bergemann, "WELS Schools Must Teach Evolution," Issues In Lutheran Education Blog, posted Sep 1, 2015. <http://blogs.mlc-wels.edu/wels-educator/2015/09/01/wels-schools-must-teach-evolution/> (accessed Jan. 23, 2016)

## Traveling the Middle Road

First we consider the Narrow Lutheran Middle Road For Creation, before studying the ditches on either side.

Our human reason should never be used to sit in judgment over the Scriptures, nor to invent doctrine. It must submit to the Word of God (the Scriptures) and be an obedient captive to Jesus Christ. Trying to explain God's ways apart from Scripture can easily lead to false teaching.<sup>6</sup>

Reason is completely inadequate when used to defend the Christian faith. Nowhere does Scripture ascribe such power to reason. To the contrary, God tells us in 1 Corinthians that the words of human wisdom are empty of power, that the unbeliever cannot know God or understand spiritual matters, that the wisdom of this world, human wisdom, finds God and his plan of salvation to be foolishness. Rational arguments should never be used in an attempt to prove any article of faith, such as Creation. The power to turn hearts and minds to God and his teachings is found only in the Gospel as found in Word and Sacrament.<sup>7</sup>

Scripture is the very Word of God and as such is self-authenticating. Scripture itself is the best defense of Scripture, and the best defense of our faith. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (HCSB) we read: "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training

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<sup>6</sup> This and subsequent paragraphs are quoted with slight revision from: Mark Bergemann, "The Place of Reason in Defending the Christian Faith – with ministry ideas regarding creation/evolution," *LSI Journal* (2012).

[www.LutheranScience.org/2012reason](http://www.LutheranScience.org/2012reason) accessed Jan. 23, 2016.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. 1 Corinthians 1:21: "For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe." Cf. also 1 Corinthians 2:14: "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned." Cf. also Romans 10:17: "Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ."

in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” While in the desert, Jesus used Scripture three times in his apologetic with Satan: “It is written.” (Matthew 4:1-11 and Luke 4:1-13).

### Use of Reason in Ministry to Christians

God has chosen to strengthen and grow our faith only through the Gospel in Word and sacrament. However, Scripture shows that arguments from reason can help believers better understand spiritual truths and see the logical inconsistencies that are often apparent in unbelief. In places like 1 Corinthians chapters 9 and 15, Paul uses arguments from reason when addressing believers.

### Use of Reason in Witnessing to Unbelievers

The power to turn hearts and minds to God and his teaching is solely in the Gospel as found in Word and Sacraments. Arguments from reason do not in any way increase the effectiveness of the Gospel in bringing souls to faith. Even so, Jesus repeatedly used arguments from reason to silence unbelievers (Matthew 12:9-14, 12:24-29, 21:23-27, 22:15-22; Luke 13:15-16). Peter and Paul sometimes preceded their Gospel message with arguments from reason (Acts 2:14-15; 14:15-17; 17:22,23,28). Rational arguments are of worth if they provide a point of contact with the unbeliever, giving opportunity to share the Gospel message. Reason may also be useful in silencing certain objections to the validity of Scripture, but reason and non-biblical evidence at best provide a short introduction or a point of contact. Presentation of Law and Gospel should not be delayed.

### Many See No Need for a Savior

People who do not believe in a “Law Giver” imagine that each individual or society must decide for himself/itself what is right and what is wrong. Individuals who have no understanding of sin cannot understand how they can be separated from God by sin. By planting doubt about evolution, and by appealing to

their natural knowledge of God, we may help them to see their own sin (Law) and their need for a Savior, thus preparing them to listen to the Gospel. Even atheists have a natural knowledge of God, but they suppress that knowledge (Romans 1:18-32).<sup>8</sup>

### Evolution Is a Stumbling Block for Many

Evolution leads many to ignore the Gospel message. It encourages the thinking that a belief in any god was for ignorant people in the unscientific past, not for thinking people today. Questioning the assumptions of evolution in your witness may be useful for silencing objections to the validity of Scripture. Rational arguments in and of themselves are worthless for bringing an unbeliever to saving faith, but are of worth if they provide an opportunity to share the Gospel message.

### Lutherans Write About Using Arguments from Reason

In their Genesis commentary, Lawrenz and Jeske repeatedly use arguments from reason to help believers better understand spiritual truths. Regarding the flood they write several hundred words detailing the number of animals which may have been on Noah's ark, and how all the animals would fit into the ark. Then they explain why they presented this argument from reason:

The preceding paragraphs are not an attempt to prove in a lawyer-like way the truthfulness of the Genesis flood account or to somehow make it more believable. Our purpose is to try and help the earnest Bible student visualize more clearly this important chapter of world history. Finally, what God says is true whether it seems reasonable or not.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> This and the following paragraph are quoted with slight revision from: Mark Bergemann, "Witnessing in a World Where Evolution Claims 'There Is No God,'" LSI Journal (2015) [www.LutheranScience.org/2015witness](http://www.LutheranScience.org/2015witness) accessed Jan. 23, 2016.

<sup>9</sup> Carl J. Lawrence and John C. Jeske, *A Commentary on Genesis 1-11* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2004) 253.

Siegbert Becker writes:

We have heard him [Luther] say, in regard to the natural knowledge of God, that there is no argument from reason that cannot be overthrown by another argument from reason. While Luther believed it was ridiculous and downright blasphemous to presume to defend Scripture with rational argumentation, yet he also believed it was perfectly proper to point out the logical weakness in the attacks made on Scripture whenever the opportunity to do so presented itself. In his controversies with his adversaries he says a number of times, “This reason itself is forced to admit.” It is evident that Luther did not place a great deal of confidence in such a procedure, but there is scarcely an opponent against whom he did not use this approach.<sup>10</sup>

Ehlke warns us not to err either by depending on reasonable argumentation in order to convert the unbeliever, nor by rejecting all use of reasonable argumentation out of hand:

Apologetics – the defense of the Christian faith – is a difficult subject to treat. Most writers on the topic fall into one of two errors. Some apologists seem to think they can argue and reason people into Christianity. The Bible however, states that a saving faith in Jesus Christ is a supernatural gift from God the Holy Spirit. “No one can say, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ except by the Holy Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:3). This gift comes as the Spirit uses the Bible to bring people to know and believe in Jesus. On the other hand, many Christians feel that any appeal to historical evidences and logical arguments is improper. They look at it as a denial of God’s ability to convert. Yet, as Mr. Quist shows, the Bible itself makes frequent use of such appeals.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Siegbert W. Becker, *The Foolishness of God – The Place of Reason in the Theology of Martin Luther* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1982), 176 (page 169 in 2012 printing).

<sup>11</sup> Roland Cap Ehlke, in his preface to Allen Quist’s *The Marks of the Nail: A Survey of the Evidence for Christianity* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1985), v.

## **The Ditch Where Reason Aids Faith**

Most Christians traveling the Creation Road correctly see evolution as a grave danger to the faith. They correctly desire to defend the faith from the attacks of evolution. Sadly, many of these same Christians seem unsatisfied with the powerful offensive and defensive weapons God provides. They heed the siren call to use human reason in addition to or even in place of the weapons God provides. These Christians have fallen into a ditch on the side of the Creation Road, the Ditch Where Reason Aids Faith.

The Ditch Where Reason Aids Faith emphasizes the truth: Nature testifies that God is almighty and wise (Rom 1:18-20). This ditch tramples on the truth: Only the Gospel can create and sustain faith.

The devil reminds us of God's words; "Always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you," (1 Peter 3:15 HCSB), and "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky proclaims the work of His hands," (Psalm 19:1 HCSB). The devil twists the meaning of these and other passages, tempting us to think we can use our human reason (our science) to create or sustain faith.

The thought that human reason has the ability to create or sustain faith is a very large ditch. Most non-Lutheran churches fall into this ditch and never come out. These churches incorrectly credit human reason with the ability to formulate or prove Christian teachings (doctrine), and to help in creating or strengthening faith. When Christians from these churches defend the doctrine of Creation, they often use their church's false ideas about human reason. They assign to science (human reason) unbiblical abilities.

The false view of reason held by authors in this ditch is often not readily apparent in their writings. This false doctrine most frequently manifests itself in what an author emphasizes, and in what he does not say. Eventually though, the false view of reason held by these authors

becomes crystal clear in their writings, as we will see in the following quotes.

Speaking of 39 Christians who shared their personal stories, Douglas Sharp wrote, “Each one has had his faith in God strengthened by scientific evidence for creation.”<sup>12</sup> This is wrong since we know from Scripture that human reason cannot strengthen faith. Only the Gospel can do so.

In 2013 the then chief executive officer of the Institute For Creation Research (ICR) states (*italics in original*),

If the facts of science do not confirm the words of Scripture, then God is not trustworthy. If we cannot trust that which we can test and evaluate, then why should we believe the words of God when he insists that we must repent and believe what he says about the unseen eternity? Science *does* confirm Scripture. God is trustworthy.<sup>13</sup>

Here, the leader of a conservative Christian apologetics organization asserts that our sin darkened human reason should sit in judgement on God, deciding if God is worthy of our faith. This arrogant attitude opposes God (2 Corinthians 10:5, Romans 9:20-21). This is the sin of Adam and Eve who questioned God’s command, “Did God really say?” (Gen 3:1 HCSB) Our first parents used their reason and decided God was not telling the truth.

It is true that much of Scripture can be confirmed by our human reason, but our reason will always be able to find ways to question God. For thousands of years, believers had reason to doubt Scripture which told of a Hittite Empire. Secular history had completely forgotten about the ancient Hittite civilization. Then just over 100 years ago archeologists rediscovered the Hittite Empire, which to their amazement rivaled the power of ancient Egypt and Babylon. Today

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<sup>12</sup> Douglas Sharp, introduction to *Persuaded By The Evidence –True Stories of Faith, Science, & the Power of a Creator* [Green Forest: Master Books, 2008] 15.

<sup>13</sup> Henry M. Morris III, “The Paradox Of Faith,” *Acts & Facts*, June 2013, 7.



secular history knows nothing about the Hebrew slaves in Egypt or their escape under Moses. Should we judge God not trustworthy based on history? Humanly speaking it is reasonable to think that the light we see from distant stars has been traveling toward earth for billions of years. This goes against Scripture, so creationists have proposed some possible scientific solutions, but those are no more than conjectures. Christians who want to test God using science may decide against God based on star light or some other reason.

Jason Lisle writes in *Answers In Genesis*' (AIG) highly successful Answers Book series,

The notion of “faith versus reason” is an example of a false dichotomy. Faith is not antagonistic to reason. On the contrary, biblical faith and reason go well together. The problem lies in the fact that many people have a misunderstanding of faith. Faith is not a belief in the absurd, nor is it a belief in something simply for the sake of believing it. Rather, faith is having confidence in something that we have not perceived with the senses. This is the biblical definition of faith, and follows from Hebrews 11:1. ...It is appropriate and biblical to have a good reason for our faith (1 Peter 3:15). Indeed, God encourages us to reason (Isaiah 1:18). The apostle Paul reasoned with those in the synagogue and those in the marketplace (Acts 17:17). According to the Scriptures, the Christian faith is not a “blind faith.” It is a faith that is rationally defensible. It is logical and self-consistent.<sup>14</sup>

Most non-Lutheran churches reject many Biblical teachings and replace them with unscriptural teachings which they find to be more logical and reasonable. For example, why do some people come to faith and others do not? God wants all people to be saved. God brings us to faith when we are spiritually dead so we contribute nothing to our coming to faith, yet those who do not come to faith are responsible for not coming to faith. This Biblical teaching is unreasonable to our sin

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<sup>14</sup> Jason Lisle, “Is The Christian Worldview Logical?” in *The New Answers Book 3*, ed. Ken Ham, online version May 5, 2014. <https://answersingenesis.org/logic/is-the-christian-worldview-logical/> (accessed Jan 23, 2016).

darkened human minds. Lutherans accept such unreasonable teachings by faith. Many others use their human reason to make up unbiblical teachings. Some Christians incorrectly decide God has predestined some people to damnation. Other Christians incorrectly decide that those who come to faith did so by making a decision to do so. Another example: Many incorrectly decide that infants cannot have saving faith, since infants cannot reason as adults can reason. Some even decide that children are sinless until they reach some arbitrary age of accountability. A third example is Holy Communion, where many reject the very words of Jesus, “This is my body,” and “This is my blood.” They reason, “How can bread be Christ’s body and wine be his blood?” They decide Jesus meant to say that the bread and wine are *symbolic* of his body and blood.

Christians who have rejected Biblical teachings which they see as unreasonable can say with Jason Lisle that faith is “logical,” that “Biblical faith and reason go well together,” and that “Faith is not a belief in the absurd.” Lutherans cannot say these things. By faith Lutherans accept unreasonable and even seemingly absurd things which God reveals to us in Scripture. Lutherans confess with Lawrenz and Jeske, “What God says is true whether it seems reasonable or not.”<sup>15</sup>

Answers In Genesis (AIG) and the Institute For Creation Research (ICR) are two very large and respected Christian creation apologetic organizations. I subscribe to their periodicals and am very thankful for the scientific details they provide. They also provide clear gospel messages on a regular basis. That said, these are not Lutheran organizations, and their materials occasionally have messages which conflict with Scripture. That is very apparent from the AIG and ICR quotes above.

We all tend to slip toward the Ditch Where Reason Aids Faith. Sometimes we may slip all the way in, but God calls us back to the

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<sup>15</sup> Lawrence, 253.

narrow middle road. Let us each keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and avoid this dangerous ditch. May God grant our prayer in this regard.

## **The Ditch With No Place for Reason**

The Ditch With No Place For Reason is very tempting to those who correctly see the great danger of the ditch on the other side of the Creation Road. Some are so concerned that they move far away from the Ditch Where Reason Aids Faith, so far that they slip into the Ditch With No Place For Reason. This ditch emphasizes the truth that only the Gospel can create and sustain faith. It tramples on the truths that reason can be used to help believers better understand some spiritual truths, that reason can blunt some temptations, and that reason can sometimes be useful in providing a point of contact with the unbeliever giving opportunity to share the Gospel message.

I remember a bumper sticker slogan from my college days (1970s). That slogan is still a popular Christian sermon title: “God said it, I believe it, that settles it.” This can be taken as a wonderful confession of Biblical authority. Sadly, some take it to an extreme and are led into the Ditch With No Place For Reason. A song with this slogan as a title was popular among 70s Christian singing groups and versions are still being recorded today. The Heritage Singers made a music video where the song lyrics are a defense against evolution:

God said it and I believe it, And that settles it for me. Do you believe that God created you, Just like He told you in His Word? Do you believe that every world in space, Came to place by His own power?<sup>16</sup>

When a high school student asks how all the animals fit into Noah’s Ark, because his teacher said that a million species could never fit, what should be our response? Some might say, “I do not know. God can do anything, even impossible things.” Now this is a correct statement, but

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<sup>16</sup> Heritage Singers, 1976 [www.youtube.com/watch?v=924MCB12MfA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=924MCB12MfA) (accessed Jan 23, 2016)

this child may live with constant, even daily evolutionary attacks on his faith. Why allow this child to face great temptation, when a few simple arguments from reason may greatly minimize that temptation? Lawrenz and Jeske provide one explanation of how all the animals could fit.<sup>17</sup> The Lutheran Science Institute (LSI) article, *Creation-Evolution Q&A*, provides another.<sup>18</sup> LSI exists for this very reason: To provide Creation/Evolution resources to our pastors, teachers, and laity.

Some Christians with whom I have spoken believe we should never use scientific arguments against evolution. We should not say that the world's continental sized sedimentary rock layers and the uncountable fossils they contain would be expected from a planet-wide flood. We should not point out the unreasonable assumptions used for dating rocks and bones. They claim that doing so would be trying to prove an article of faith with reason, that it would deny the Means Of Grace.

Christians making this claim are slipping into the Ditch With No Place For Reason. Such claims would leave the high school student to face the temptation of evolution when some arguments from reason may significantly diminish that temptation. Such claims would take away a sometimes useful introductory conversation with unbelievers leading to presentation of the Gospel. Scripture encourages proper use of reason in defending the faith. Jesus and the Apostles modeled such use.

To defend themselves against such claims, Lawrenz and Jeske write,

The preceding paragraphs are not an attempt to prove in a lawyer-like way the truthfulness of the Genesis flood account or to somehow make it more believable. Our purpose is to try and help the earnest Bible student visualize more clearly this important chapter of world history.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Lawrenz, 252, 253.

<sup>18</sup> Warren Krug, "Creation-Evolution Q&A," LSI Journal (April-July 2013), 15. [www.LutheranScience.org/2013QA](http://www.LutheranScience.org/2013QA) (accessed Jan 23, 2016)

<sup>19</sup> Lawrenz, 253.

Ehlke calls such claims an “error” in “defense of the Christian faith,” and then he writes,

Many Christians feel that any appeal to historical evidences and logical arguments is improper. They look at it as a denial of God’s ability to convert. Yet, as Mr. Quist shows, the Bible itself makes frequent use of such appeals.<sup>20</sup>

Other Christians who have also spoken with me, say that it is good for us to use scientific arguments against evolution as long as we are addressing believers and not unbelievers. And still other Christians say that pointing out the assumptions used by evolution is appropriate, but using other scientific arguments is not permissible. Are not all of these Christians slipping into the Ditch With No Place For Reason?

**Lord, guide our travels down the road named Creation. Keep us in Your Word, so that we are prepared to avoid dangerous side ditches. Amen.**

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*Prior to publication in the LSI Journal, this article was distributed at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary’s Missions And Ministry workshop, February 2-4, 2016.*

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<sup>20</sup> Ehlke, v.

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*Q&A*

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*This is one of the questions answered on our LSI Q&A webpage.*

*You are invited to ask a question online or by mailing LSI.*

[www.LutheranScience.org/QA](http://www.LutheranScience.org/QA)

**Is the star light travel time difficulty removed if Gen 1:1-2 represents long ages? Maybe God later remodeled the planet in 7 normal days and created life.**

This question was asked in June 2015 on our LSI website by the webmaster for a non-Lutheran ministry.

You are correct in stating (in explaining your question, not printed above) that we should take God at His Word, even when our sin darkened human reason tells us that God is wrong. Creation was a supernatural event, which by very definition means we may not have a naturalistic explanation of that supernatural event. That said, the amazing thing about creation is that the world around us is very much as would be expected for a young universe and a planet wide flood at the time of Noah. While the evolution story has many major scientific problems, creation has by comparison relatively few.

Starlight travel time is one issue that at first seems to contradict a young universe. How can we see distant star light which appears to have taken billions of years to reach earth? This question has been addressed in multiple ways by young earth creationists.

--- A traditional explanation is that God made the star light “in transit.” I prefer other explanations. Why would God have us watch a video of stars, some of which never existed? We have seen stars explode, so those stars would only be in the video God created and did not really exist.

--- The speed of light may have been much faster in the past. This is not as impossible as it may sound, since we recently found that other “universal constants” such as radiation decay are faster or slower under certain conditions. We have also been able to slow down the speed of light in the laboratory.

--- The speed of light may be much faster in one direction than the other. We can only measure the time it takes for a round trip of light from the source to a reflector and back. Maybe it goes faster from the source and slower upon reflection.

--- God may have started the universe in a white hole and then expanded it (all during creation week). This could result in us seeing light today from now distant stars. This complex calculation has been advanced by Dr. Russell Humphreys and others.

Starlight travel time is NOT a strong argument against creation, since the alternative to creation, evolution, has a similar light travel problem called the horizon problem. The evolution story claims the universe is 13.7 billion years old, but that is not enough time for starlight to travel across the universe and equalize the ambient temperature (which we observe to be equalized across the entire universe). Evolutionists have proposed multiple explanations for their starlight travel problem, but even those explanations (like inflation) have their own problems and do not satisfy all evolutionists.

God is clear in his revealed Word (the Bible) that everything which was created (all matter, time, space, and angels) was created in six days. In the beginning (of time) God created the heavens (space) and the earth (matter). The “first day” (Gen 1:5) really was the first day of time. To insert billions of years into the creation would be trampling on many Bible passages.

God created everything in six days and rested on the seventh as an example to us: “But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. You must not do any work—you, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the foreigner who is within your gates. For the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and everything in them in six days; then He rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and declared it holy.” Exodus 20:10-11 (HSCB)

-MSB

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*Book Review*

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**Undeniable –Evolution and the Science of Creation,**  
by Bill Nye. New York, NY: St, Martin’s Press, 2014.  
309 pages, hardbound, \$25.99.

This book gives reasons why the author thinks evolution is “undeniable.” You will also get a glimpse of the importance of evolution to an atheist. Many words are devoted to claiming that evolution is essential to understand science, why it is foolish to believe in life after death, how creationists indoctrinate people, and that teaching Biblical creation to children harms them and society.

Mr. Nye claims that evolution is essential to understand science, and that those who reject evolution do not have a curiosity about science. Many reading this review will reject both claims simply based on their own life-long curiosity about science which led them to obtain a college degree in science. Nye writes (page 10), “Inherent in this rejection of evolution is the idea that your curiosity about the world is misplaced and your common sense is wrong. This attack on reason is an attack on us all. Children who accept this ludicrous perspective will find themselves opposed to progress. They will become society’s burdens rather than its producers, a prospect I find very troubling. Not only that, these kids will never feel the joy of discovery that science brings.”

In the chapter, “Evolution is Why We Do Not Believe in Evolution,” the author writes (pages 180-181), “Wishful thinking [that there is life after death] cannot change the facts, but scientific thinking can place them in a greater context. Human mortality can get you down.”

The next chapter is entitled, “Micro or Macro –It’s All Evolution.” In it Nye states (page 183, 186), “There are creationists who indoctrinate people to think only of the small picture. They accept the micro but reject the macro, because micro is all their faith can accept. It’s sad, and it’s not science. The natural world is a package deal; you don’t get to accept which facts you like and which you don’t. ...Creationism strikes me as an astonishing waste of time and energy. I would love to be able to ignore it and focus on real science, but



creationists work very hard to disrupt science education and force their weird worldview on our students.”

A chapter is devoted to one of the biggest names in science, Michael Faraday. Nye proposes (page 192), “Evolutionary science could use a spokesperson like Michael Faraday.” The problem for Nye is that Faraday was a creationist, just like so many of the biggest names in science.

Two chapters are devoted to medicine. The astounding claim is made and backed by poor logic (page 193), “Medical treatments have improved drastically, and evolutionary research is a major reason why.”

The author spends several chapters on how he thinks the human desire to help others came about without a creator god involved. He asserts (page 223), “Altruism is not a moral or religious ideal, no matter what some people might tell you. It is an essential biological part of who or what we are as a species.”

The book explains how various people groups came to have different colors of skin. This explanation fits creation just as well as it does evolution. Nye again attacks the truth of Scripture when he suggests, “This may be where myths like Adam and Eve living together in a garden came from. If you just sit and think about it, and realize that we are all extraordinarily alike, you might just conclude that there must have been an original pair of humans that led to you, me, and everybody we’ll ever see. The author or authors of the Book of Genesis may have reached the same conclusion logically, i.e. by just thinking about it. Humans, all of us, must have had a common ancestor.”

The end of the book speculates that maybe life on earth was seeded by space aliens (page 295).

-MSB

## **In the WELS: Growing Interest in Creation Apologetics**

The WELS consistently and correctly teaches the Biblical position of a recent creation and a planet-wide flood. That said, we do hold various thoughts on *how* to approach the lie of evolution. Individual discussions with hundreds of WELS pastors and teachers have led me to believe that they are increasingly concerned about addressing the lie of evolution. Many other indicators lead to that same conclusion. Here are some examples from the past six months:

October – Nearly one of four WELS pastors and teachers responded to a single email invitation and took our LSI creation survey. Many expressed a need for good creation apologetic materials.

October – Our seminary's theological journal (*Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*) published a 27 page article on creation apologetics. To my knowledge this was the first article devoted to apologetics since at least 1950.

December/January – *Forward In Christ* ran a series on creation apologetics. Comments from five readers about that series were published in the March and April issues.

February – Over a five day period LSI received three separate requests (to lead four workshops, for an LSI display, and to provide apologetics information for a WELS foreign mission). Previously we had to seek out ways to help others, now people regularly come to us for help.

A longer term example of growing interest in creation apologetics is the recent growth of LSI. Membership increased fourfold in the past four years. This is unprecedented in the 42 years LSI has existed. In 2015 another 60 pastors, teachers, and laity joined LSI.

-MSB

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*Know Evolution –the evolution story is a mixture of reality and fabrication*

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## Dinosaurs: Feathers or Scales?

Did some dinosaurs have feathers like birds, or did all dinosaurs have scales like lizards? New evidence is constantly found in the quest to answer this question. The Milwaukee Public Museum hosted the traveling “Ultimate Dinosaurs” exhibit in March 2016, so I paid \$24 admission to see how the above question was answered.

Evolutionists are always looking for transitional forms (or missing links), for evidence of animals partway between two different kinds of animals. The extremely limited evidence of transitional forms has led many evolutionists to propose “punctuated equilibrium,” the idea that evolution from one kind to another kind happened so quickly that little or no fossil evidence exists. Bill Nye also proposes punctuated equilibrium and devotes an entire chapter of his new book to that idea. See my review of Nye’s book elsewhere in this issue of the LSI Journal.

The two transitions which seem to get the most attention are 1) That between “ape-like creatures” and humans, and 2) That between dinosaurs and birds.

Most evolutionists propose an imaginary “ancestral paravian” dinosaur as the ancestor of birds. These evolutionists hope to find evidence of feathered dinosaurs to support their claim. Assigning the term “raptor” (raptors are hunting birds such as eagles and hawks) to certain dinosaurs with clawed feet has become very useful in advancing the claim that birds descended from dinosaurs.

### Buitreraptor

“Ultimate Dinosaurs” artists paint Buitreraptor as fully feathered from head to foot (*see page 31*). The signs state this creature,

was a small bird-like dromaeosaurid, with a typical sickle-claw on its big toe. It grew to only 5 feet long. ...Although we do not have direct evidence that Buitreraptor had feathers, we do know that some of its relatives did, so it probably had feathers as well. ... Although Buitreraptor was flightless, it appears that some of its close relatives may have been able to fly. This implies that flight may have evolved twice in dinosaurs, once in birds and once among the Gondwana dromaeosaurs. [*editor: evolutionists claim true birds evolved tens*

*of millions of years earlier than Buitreraptor, therefore Buitreraptor could not be an ancestor of birds.]*

### Austroraptor

“Ultimate Dinosaurs” artists paint Austroraptor as fully feathered from head to foot (*see page 31*). The signs state this creature,

was a large-size member of the group of dinosaurs called dromaeosaurs. It measured about 16 feet long. ... Austroraptor was closely related to modern birds and other feathered dinosaurs. Although it wasn’t found with preserved feathers, it probably had feathers when it was alive.

### Rahonavis

“Ultimate Dinosaurs” artists paint Rahonavis as a fully feathered bird in flight both on signage and on a large wall mural (*see page 30*). The signs state,

The smallest Cretaceous dinosaur found so far on Madagascar was the small feathered dinosaur called Rahonavis. Rahonavis was a close relative of other Gondwana dromaeosaurs such as Austroraptor and Buitreraptor, meaning it had a sickle-shaped claw on its big toe and a relatively long, low skull. It also had relatively long arms, compared to its relatives –arms that were bird-like in their proportions. Although no preserved feathers have been found with Rahonavis, it still likely had feathers. The arm bones of Rahonavis have small bumps on them called quill knobs; in modern birds, these quill knobs are often located on the same spot as large flight feathers. Could it fly? Based on the presence of quill knobs and the general shape of the arms, it seems probable that Rahonavis would have been able to fly. Despite this it was not a direct relative of the birds ... which raises an interesting question: did flight evolve twice in feathered dinosaurs? Paleontologists are still divided on this question –but they agree the best way to solve this mystery is to find more skeletons of these early fliers.

The “Ultimate Dinosaurs” exhibit did not attempt to present much evidence for feathered dinosaurs. It simply described creatures classified as dinosaurs which evolutionists think may possibly have had feathers.

Those who wish to read the technical details of recent feathered dinosaur finds from an evolutionary view can look to an article in the prestigious weekly science site nature.com. One lengthy article which is a good summary of the issue, also mentions that evolutionists date these proposed feathered dinosaurs “tens of millions of years” after true birds first appeared, so these

particular dinosaurs, even if feathered, are not ancestors of birds.<sup>21</sup> The fossilized creature shown below is evaluated in this article.



Fossil of a creature with what appear to be feathers. It is proposed that this was a feathered dinosaur. [JPM-0008, curated at the Jinzhou Paleontological museum.]

From observation we can determine that there are many Biblical kinds of birds, and that there were many Biblical kinds of dinosaurs. From the historical accounts God reveals in Scripture, we know for certain that one kind

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<sup>21</sup> “Most of these paravians, including all of the Liaoning taxa, lived tens of millions of years after birds split off from other dinosaurs, a long amount of time that would have allowed for diversification in size, proportions, and integument independent of birds. Therefore, we should be cautious in using only one or a few of these feathered paravians as a proxy for the ancestral morphological, functional, and behavioural conditions of birds.” Junchang Lü and Stephen L. Brusatte, “A large, short-armed, winged dromaeosaurid (*Dinosauria: Theropoda*) from the Early Cretaceous of China and its implications for feather evolution,” *Scientific Reports* 5, 11775; doi: 10.1038/srep11775 (2015). [www.nature.com/articles/srep11775](http://www.nature.com/articles/srep11775) (accessed March 23, 2016)

of animal does not evolve from another kind of animal. The various bird kinds did not have a common ancestor. The various dinosaur kinds did not have a common ancestor. And of course birds and dinosaurs did not have a common ancestor.

Did some dinosaurs have feathers? A “yes” or a “no” is completely compatible with the Biblical creation account. It is evolutionists who are biased toward feathered dinosaurs, which they think may make their story more appealing.

Here we see evolutionists making the same mistake described in the winter 2016 LSI Journal (*Evolution's Tree-of-Life* pages 28-29). Evolutionists forcefully piece together all the trees from creation's *Forest-of-Life* in a vain attempt to produce an evolutionary *Tree-of-Life*. Evolutionists mix both reality and fabrication into the evolution story.

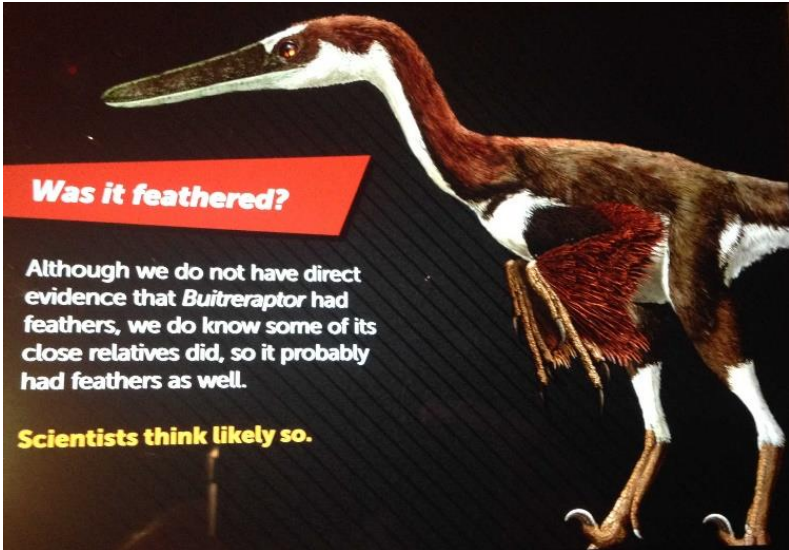
Even if one or more of the dinosaur kinds had feathers, that does not mean that dinosaurs evolved into birds! Evolutionists themselves have discarded many of their previous attempts to make birds and dinosaurs into cousins. Fossils provide very limited information about the animal that died. One can easily think that a bird fossil is a dead dinosaur, that a dinosaur fossil is a dead bird, and that bones from two different creatures are bones from a single creature.

If the claw on one creature looks similar to the claw on an otherwise completely different creature, the evolutionist assumes that these creatures had a common ancestor. The only alternative explanation acceptable to an evolutionist would be that a similar looking claw evolved twice in two different creatures. The explanation that a Creator God used a common design feature in two separate creatures is not even considered as a possibility in the evolution story. Evolution is the best story evolutionists can write, based on the atheistic premise that there is no creator god. -MSB



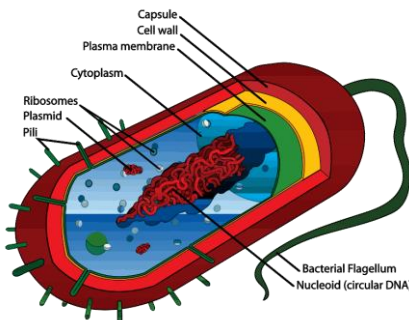
Artistic concepts of dinosaurs which may have had feathers. Rahonavis (left), Buitreraptor and Austroraptor (next page).

photos 2016 by Mark Bergemann  
taken at "Ultimate Dinosaurs"



## Bacteria Not “Primitive”

A 2016 Scientific American article proclaims, “Bacteria employ electrical signaling in the same way brain cells do. Bacteria may be ancient organisms, but do not call them primitive. Despite being unicellular, they can behave collectively –sharing nutrients with neighbors, moving in concert with others and even committing suicide for the greater good of their colony.”<sup>22</sup>



Signs in public museums and zoos, university professors on cable science shows, and even science textbooks often describe many creatures as “primitive” life forms. You may have heard trilobites, crocodiles, worms, sponges, sturgeon, clams, and many other animals described as “primitive.” All these animals are far more complex than bacteria, yet even bacteria are extremely complex creatures.

Evolutionists expect to find evidence of “primitive” (or simple) life forms. The evolution story asserts that non-living chemicals self-assembled into the first and simplest life form about 4 billion years ago. There should be primitive creatures alive today, or at least fossil evidence of extinct primitive creatures. Evolutionists need evidence of primitive life to make their story rational. While this is a problem for evolutionists, it is not for creationists. Whether extremely simple life exists or does not, either is in keeping with Biblical creation.

-MSB

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*image credit: public domain, commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/User:LadyofHats*

<sup>22</sup> Diana Kwon, The Connection Was Electric, Scientific American, March 2016, 20.