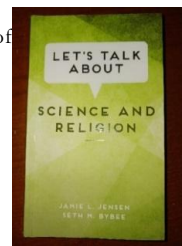


Excerpts from Evolutionist 2023 Deseret Book “Let’s Talk About Science & Religion” & Brief Response

The theme of BYU professors Jamie L. Jensen and Seth M. Bybee’s book, published at Deseret Book Co. in 2023, is that we need to accept the fact of evolution, and adjust our religious beliefs accordingly.

The back cover fold reveals that “[Jamie] is also a member of the Broader Social Impacts Committee for the Human Origins Initiative at the Smithsonian, joining other religious scientists to help the **American public feel more comfortable with evolution.**”



Here are a few key claims from the Let's Talk About Science and Religion:

- “all living things on earth (both plants and animals) share a common ancestor.” -pg. 48
- “why are homo sapiens (us) the only species left among our human-like ancestors?” pg. 39
- “...strong evidence that we all shared a common beginning.” Pg. 53
- “...humans and animals hint at an evolutionary past.” Pg. 53
- “...there are at least 21 known species of hominin (ancestors of our species) that once existed on our planet dating back 5 million years. Modern Homo sapiens first appeared around 300,000 years ago.” -pg. 62
- “...these specimens are physically different enough from us (using the phylogenetic-species concept) to be considered a different species.” -pg. 62
- “Given the evidence, science suggests the human body is a product of evolution.” -pg. 62
- On page 62 they claim we have 300 “Homo neanderthal” specimens and 18 “Homo naledi” (“the latest hominid discovery”) specimens which supposedly lived 400,000 years ago.
- “evolutionary leftovers” pg. 54
- “scientists have not come lightly to the conclusion that all organisms evolved on earth. They have accumulated mountains of evidence...” pg. 56
- “the varying views [on evolution] of church leaders over time.” Pg. 50
- “Neither [1st Presidency] statement confirmed or denied the claims of evolutionary science...” pgs. 49-50
- “Young earth creationism is not supported by the science that shows our earth has existed for at least 4.5 billion years and that life has existed upwards of 3.5 billion years.” Pg. 20
- “potential issues of compatibility [with evolution] only arise if one **stipulates** that the **creative periods had to occur in the exact order** described [in the scriptures]...” pg. 57
- “the most appropriate version of evolution, from a scientific standpoint, is agnostic, often referred to as “naturalistic” evolution.” Pg. 21
- “science is agnostic.” Pg. 16
- “[science] cannot offer evidence for or against the existence of God.” Pg. 19
- “these evidences [of nature] would hardly witness to them [non-believers] of a Supreme Creator” pg. 28
- “scientific evidence will not reveal God to us.” Pg. 29
- “a testimony pertains to spiritual matters” pg. 29
- “searching for signs of God’s existence, while possible to receive, equally puts our testimony in jeopardy.” Pg. 24
- “[scriptures are] not meant to be a scientific textbook on how the creation took place.” Pg. 50
- “we have encountered individuals who have the mistaken idea that providing pseudoscience will somehow save testimonies. They place the blame for declining religious devotion among the rising generation squarely on science [evolution] and believe that creating and teaching an alternative to science [evolution] will not threaten testimonies and will help students avoid spiritual conflict.” Pg. 34
- “You can almost think of educating ourselves and our children [about evolution] as a vaccination against Satan’s attempts to destroy our faith...[Satan] seeks to infuse doubt into our minds when we encounter something in science [evolution] that seems to disagree with what we thought about the world.” Pg. 35
- “[We are] concerned with the rising secularity in the youth. We suggest that the solution is to endow your children (and yourself) with the truth, with the real science [evolution] and, if needed, seeking and offering ways to reconcile science [evolution] with what we believe.” Pg. 35
- “this [“nonthreatening”] approach is effective in increasing evolution acceptance.” Pg. 36
- “recognize that in both science and religion we still have much to learn.” Pg. 38
- “we need to learn to feel comfortable with not having all the information right now.” Pg. 38
- “Comfort with Uncertainty.” Pg. 38
- “[take] time to learn and progress without having to make a decision that places science [evolution] and religion at odds with one another.” Pg. 38
- “when people encounter information about a topic that seems to contradict their worldview, they tend to assume science [evolution] is useless in answering questions about that topic.” Pg. 42
- “We sometimes set up a culture that demands that we “know” the truth of all things.” Pg. 46
- “Lastly, if learning scientific theories puts your faith in jeopardy, choose your faith **until** you can better understand **the science** (or until science can provide better explanations).” Pg. 46
- “...the earth is about 4.6 billion years old. We can also look to science to learn when the first life-forms appeared.” Pg. 52
- “the first living things began to appear at least by 1.9 billion years ago and possibly even before, at 3.4-3.6 billion years ago. Thus, if God prepared evolution as a mechanism for creation, then this creation presumably began with this first life-form, which then transformed through generations...” pg. 52

Do you see some flaws and bias in these points? Clearly these authors are pushing beyond spreading knowledge, and are trying to get students to accept evolution, and they admit as much in many of their publications, such as their 2025 book “The Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ and Evolution.”

Check out my detailed rebuttal to these claims in my book, available free at RichardsonStudies.com/Creation.

Is Evolution Advocacy Inspired?

Let's look at how Brigham really felt about evolution: "We have enough and to spare, at present in these mountains, of schools where young infidels are made because the teachers are so tender-footed that they dare not mention the principles of the gospel to their pupils, but have no hesitancy in introducing in to the classroom the theories of [Huxley](#), of [Darwin](#), or of Miall . . . this course I am resolutely and **uncompromisingly opposed to**, and I hope to see the day when the doctrines of the gospel will be taught in all our schools, when the revelation of the Lord will be our texts, and our books will be written and manufactured by ourselves and in our own midst. As a beginning in this direction I have endowed the Brigham Young Academy at Provo." (Brigham Young, Letters of Brigham Young to His Sons, p. 200)

Michael Ruse, professor of philosophy and zoology pointed out how evolution is a religion of its own. He said, "Evolution is promulgated as an ideology, a secular religion – a full fledged alternative to Christianity, with meaning and morality... Evolution is a religion. This was true of evolution in the beginning, and it is true of evolution still today" (Michael Ruse, Professor of Philosophy and Zoology, University of Guelph). While Christian evolutionists seek to create a hybrid religion between Christianity and evolution, such blends have historically proven disastrous.

No official position on evolution? That's what the anonymous articles claim. Elder Boyd K. Packer's response: "**Twice the First Presidency has declared the position of the Church on organic evolution.** The first, a statement published in **1909** entitled The Origin of Man was signed by Presidents Joseph F. Smith, John R. Winder, and Anthon H. Lund. The other, entitled Mormon View of Evolution, signed by Presidents Heber J. Grant, Anthony W. Ivins, and Charles W. Nibley, was published in **1925**. It follows very closely the first statement, indeed quotes directly from it." (Boyd K. Packer, The Law and the Light, Book of Mormon Symposium, BYU, 30 October 1988)

*From 1909: "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints basing its belief on divine revelation, ancient and modern, proclaims man to be the **direct and lineal offspring of Deity.**"* (The Origin of Man, 1909 First Presidency)

From 1909: "It is held by some that Adam was not the first man upon this earth, and that the original human being was a development from lower orders of the animal creation. These, however, are the theories of men." (The Origin of Man, 1909 First Presidency)

In 2002 the 1909 First Presidency Statement was reprinted and labeled as the doctrinal position. The preface on this [2002 page](#) describes the importance of this statement: "*In the early 1900s, questions concerning the Creation of the earth and the theories of evolution became the subject of much public discussion. In the midst of these controversies, the First Presidency issued the following in 1909, which expresses the Church's doctrinal position on these matters.*"

Here are some official positions of the scriptures:

- No birth or death before the fall of Adam & death entering the world as a consequence of sin. (Nephi 2:22; Romans 5:12-14; 8:21-22; 1 Cor. 15:21-22, 45; Moses 6:48) (See also D&C 77:6-7, 12 which shows no moral life existed before Adam because Earth has a 7000 year temporal lifespan.)
- Adam is the physical, not just spiritual, offspring of God. (Luke 3:38; Moses 6:22)
- Adam as a real person, & Eden as a real place on this Earth. (Every volume of the standard works affirms this.)
- We were born 'of the dust' just like Adam (Moses 6:59).
- The Fall of Adam impacting the whole world, including plants and animals. (Gen. 3:17-20)
- God's direct involvement in the creation.
- Earth has a temporal lifespan of 7000 years (not billions). (D&C 77:6-7, 12)
- A creation of a shorter duration than is commonly advocated. Each day of creation probably as 1000-year periods because a day to God is 1000 years to man. (JST 2 Peter 3:8; Facs. 2 Fig. 1; Abr. 3:6-11)
- Adam was the first man and the first flesh on Earth. (D&C 84:16)
- Temporal and spiritual things should not be separated. (D&C 29:34)
- Nature proves the existence of God. (Ps. 19:1)
- Animals only reproduce after their kind. (Gen. 1; 6; 7; Moses 2)
- The flood of Noah was worldwide. (JST 2 Peter 3:5-7; Gen. 1:1-10; Abe. 1:24; Moses 8:3; Ether 2:1-3; 6:4)
- Adam and the patriarchs lived long lifespans, hundreds of years.

And a few scientific facts against evolution:

- Mutations are overwhelmingly deleterious or neutral. Beneficial ones are rare and trivial.
- No peer-reviewed study has documented the origin of a single new functional gene or protein fold via unguided processes. This is precisely what macroevolution demands.
- Human genetic diversity is far too low for a multi-million-year evolutionary history
- Pre-Adamite populations would require unobserved massive genetic bottlenecks and impossible mutation rates without genetic entropy overwhelming the lineage. The hypothesis also fails to explain the sudden appearance of fully modern human behavior, art, and technology [and language] in the archaeological record with no evolutionary precursors.
- There is no smooth progression from ape-like ancestors to modern man. In reality, after 150 plus years of searching, paleoanthropologists have only fragmentary remains (fewer than 2,000 specimens) with no clear intermediates. Proposed links are routinely reclassified as fully ape or fully human.