

Celebrating “Man: His Origin & Destiny” by President Joseph Fielding Smith

President Ezra Taft Benson prophesied that this great book would “stand the test of time.” He said, “It is also apparent to all who have the Spirit of God in them that Joseph Fielding Smith’s writings will stand the test of time.” (President Ezra Taft Benson, “God’s Hand in Our Nation’s History,” March 28, 1977) Written as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles some 70 years ago, Smith’s book against evolution is more relevant than ever.

Smith was Assistant Church Historian from 1906-1921, and Church Historian from 1921-1970. His faithful witness of Joseph Smith and the doctrines of the restoration are unparalleled. Smith was President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles at the time of the publication and later became President of the Church. As President of the Church in 1970, Joseph Fielding Smith said, “What I have taught and written in the past I would teach and write again under the same circumstances.” (President Joseph Fielding Smith, Conference Report, October 1970, 5) At least three future church Presidents quoted from the book. In total, at least seven Apostles quoted from it. Many Apostles have praised and advocated this work, their statements are too many to all include here. Ben Spackman’s thesis titled “The Scientist is Wrong” should have been titled “Joseph Fielding Smith is Wrong.” The whole premise of his work is that this mighty prophet was wrong. Dead wrong. Several have jumped on the bandwagon to point fingers of scorn at President Smith. Plenty of secular voices complain about this book. Read it and see for yourself! Use this [link](#) to read and obtain the book, or find it at <https://richardsonstudies.com/creation-books/>.

Ezra Taft Benson encouraged **parents to get the book for their children**. He said, “I know one noble father who reviews with his children regularly what they have been taught, and if they have been taught any falsehoods; then the children and the father together research out the truth...If your children are taught untruths on evolution in the public schools or even in our Church schools, provide them with a copy of President Joseph Fielding Smith’s excellent rebuttal in his book *Man, His Origin and Destiny*.” (Ezra Taft Benson, *God, Family, Country: Our Three Great Loyalties*, p. 227)

Joseph Fielding Smith lamented the **prevalence of worldly philosophies** even in his time and cheered on the few who have remained faithful. He said, “The more I see of educated men, I mean those who are trained in the doctrines and philosophies of men now taught in the world, the less regard I have for them. Modern theories 138 which are so popular today just do not harmonize with the Gospel as revealed to the Prophets and it would be amusing if it were not a tragedy to see how some of our educated brethren attempt to harmonize the theories of men with the revealed word of the Lord. Thank the Lord there is still some faith left, and some members who still cherish the word of the Lord and accept the Prophets.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Small Journals*, Dec. 28, 1938. Typescript of this quotation in Eugene Thompson Collection, BYU Archives. https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V15N01_81.pdf)

Joseph Fielding Smith denounced the **self-proclaimed superiority of evolutionists**. In a letter to Henry Eyring he said, “I speak frankly and to some my words may appear harsh, and even filled with “ill humor,” by those who hold to the theories I have attacked. Nevertheless I feel that I am justified in referring thus to those who hold these evolutionary theories and who feel themselves to be superior in intelligence and wisdom and entitled to treat the rest of us as school boys and need disciplining and have no right to call them in question. It remains a definite fact that the majority of scientists have considered themselves to be superior in intelligence and wisdom.” (Letter to Henry Eyring, <http://signaturebookslibrary.org/agreeing-todisagree-henry-eyring-and-joseph-fielding-smith/>)

Joseph Fielding Smith wrote to Sterling B. Talmage in 1934 about **our right to question science** claims which aren’t aligned with divine revelation. He said, “I have not felt that I am under any obligation to accept the theories which are based on scientific research, but have the divine right to question them. I am, however, under obligation to accept revealed truth which comes through the opening of the heavens 135 from the One who “comprehendeth all things,” and when I find what I believe to be a conflict between the theories of men and the word of the Lord, I am bold to say that I accept the latter with full confidence that the [scientific] theories must be changed. When I think I find something which tends to destroy the faith of the youth in these revelations, or which is hurtful to this truth, I have opposed it with vigor and have freely expressed my views. I believe I am willing to modify my views if the evidence indicated that my interpretation has been wrong.” (Joseph Fielding Smith to Sterling B. Talmage, September 29, 1934. Sterling B. Talmage Papers, Marriott Library.)

Joseph Fielding Smith taught that we can’t recognize which **pagan elements have entered the church** when we **care more about the world of academia than scripture**. He said, “Much of the difficulty experienced by these scientists and many others, is the fact that they confound apostate Christianity with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They recognized fully that great changes gathered from the pagan world, have come into the churches, but they were unable to discern the truth from the darkness, and having been led into the pitfalls of organic evolution and the mis-interpretations and confusion which came through the destructive criticism, they were unable to see the light. Therefore they discarded the history of the scriptures as it had been given by revelation, and lost all faith in the miracles and classed them among the mythology of the nations with whom the Israelites were surrounded. They looked through colored glasses that distorted all things out of proportion, and hence they became easy prey to the “strong delusions, that they should believe a lie.” (2 Thes. 2:11) (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Man: His Origin & Destiny*, Ch. 2 Conflict Between Science & Religion p.39)

Joseph Fielding Smith specifically taught against evolutionary **biology’s tree of common ancestors**. He said, “the altogether useless concept of the animal genealogical tree...affords no satisfactory picture of the relationships between the million living species of animals and the 120,000 known extinct species. For the last 70 years evolutionists have discussed hundreds of supposed ancestral derivations, without having agreed about a single one. Attempts to blend together the characters of the fourteen different phyla into one hypothetical common stock only result in producing an opalescent pattern of body structures, which proves nothing for the common origin of those phyla. The so-called pedigree of the animal kingdom is utterly unlike the genealogical trees of human families, because the latter deal only with members of one species, whereas the former include multitudes of different species and postulate countless purely hypothetical links between them. Even the shortened genealogical trees found in popular writings are apt to dogmatize about the derivations of whole phyla—that is, of anything from 2,000 to 100,000 species at a time. The family genealogical tree shows a limited number of names, arranged in the semblance of a tree, of people actually known to have been related by descent. It is a compilation of facts, like a dictionary. Nothing resembling it is known regarding species connections. When we come to discuss the latter, we are no longer dealing with firsthand evidence (i.e. with verbal or written traditions) as to the connections concerned. All is hypothesis. We postulate long ancestries simply because we do not know the real ones, and because creatures have to be accounted for somehow. We note the incontrovertible fact that new creatures, born every year, experience the same time—and form—regulated fate as their parents; hence the sequences we see are obviously links in chains or organisms of which neither the beginnings nor the ends are visible to us. But that does not justify us in supposing that, just because each individual changes in form while developing from childhood to adolescence, therefore its remote ancestors must have changed from one species into 56 another. Again, even when we deal with the members of a single existing species, we find it impossible, on purely anatomical grounds apart from historic testimony, to demonstrate the connection between individual parents and their offspring. Among animals, the father is apt to disappear nameless among the multitude of his species, after taking his brief part in procreation, and science is powerless to re-identify him. Despite these facts, evolutionists search for “ancestors” in the graveyards of the past, and arrange fossil fragments (e.g. leg bones, teeth, or skulls) of various extinct species of horse into hypothetical series, and—in complete

disregard of the rules of group-position and form-believe that these represent real ancestries." (Joseph Fielding Smith, Man: His Origin & Destiny, Ch. 10 The Hypothesis of Organic Evolution pt.4)

Joseph Fielding Smith commented on the absurd logic involved in **common origin claims**. He said, "Let us suppose for the sake of argument, that the first speck of life was an amoeba. We can suppose for that is in keeping with the entire doctrine of organic evolution, for its entire structure is based on supposition, and cannot be based on anything else—so, we will suppose, that back several millions or billions of years—no one was there to watch the process by which this speck of life came spontaneously into existence—the amoeba suddenly appeared and multiplied, as the amoeba will do, and after millions of years, it, or one of its descendants began to develop fins, then a head and then a tail and after several more millions of years it became a fish, or a tadpole, or a brachiopod, or a trilobite, or a snail, even a worm—it makes no difference which, one guess is as good as another—and becoming tired of the water it came out upon the land, leaving its companions to develop into aquatic [sic] animals, while it dug itself in the soil and became a plant, a fern, a rose bush or a tree. Then another, discovering that the land was pleasant, also came forth from the water and became a frog, a toad, a lizard or a snake and in course of time its descendant became a tiger, a lion, a bear, an elephant, dinosaur or a little timid lamb; perhaps it took to the air as a dove, a robin, a hawk or an eagle. Why go any farther? Does it not all sound extremely ridiculous? Well, so it is! Yet it is this kind of rubbish that is put forth apparently in all seriousness. Books are written about it; lectures are given in classrooms, from pulpits and platforms, and thousands of well-meaning people say they believe it! Then again the question arises: Each of these animals had to have a companion, and we find ourselves in a quandary to discover just why and how both males and females came into existence, both in the animal world and among trees and other vegetation. So we find ourselves floundering in the depths of an unfathomable hypothesis about which no one has ever been able to do more than to make an uncertain guess. Others of this amoeba's descendants became a bee, a wasp or a grasshopper, a gnat or a fly. Among these wonderful mutations there also came forth a monkey, then a baboon, a gorilla and then man! My dear friends, cannot you see how utterly foolish it all is? Why is it that thousands of intelligent-looking human beings are willing to accept these stupid teachings? Frankly it is because Satan has deceived them and they loved darkness rather than the light. Surely the day has come prophesied by Paul and written in his second Epistle to the Thessalonians: "And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thes. 2:8-12)" (Joseph Fielding Smith, Man: His Origin & Destiny, Ch. 7 The Hypothesis of Organic Evolution)

Joseph Fielding Smith commented on the bazaar methods used to gather supposed **hominid** specimens. He said, "One of the strange things about the arguments and deductions for descent of man from the lowest forms of life is the scatter-brain way in which the "evidence" is obtained. To illustrate the point: The Piltdown skull and tooth were found in or near, Piltdown, Sussex, England, and out of these the vivid imaginations of certain so-called scientists create a whole race of men; the Trinil Ape-Man, was manufactured from fragments of skull and found at Trinil, Java, clear around on the other side of the world; then one stage higher, the Neanderthal Man was manufactured from a portion of skull and a few other fragments of bones, found at the Neanderthal gorge near Westphalia, Germany; and as we approach further towards the Homo perfection the discovery is made from bones found at Cro Magnon, Dordogne, France. These poor fellows must have wandered about a good bit, from England to Java, to Germany to France, and if we carry it further to deserts of China and even to parts of the Western Hemisphere. It is too bad that these poor fellows did not keep all their bones in one place so that the evolutionists would not have to be put to the inconveniences of manufacturing the missing parts. However, any man who can manufacture a Man from an Amoeba through countless stages covering millions of years, is capable of doing most 70 any thing. The numerous imaginary pictures of this process published by the gentlemen in the American Museum of Natural History and by writers of numerous textbooks circulated and used in our public schools and colleges reveal the startling story that we have reached an age when good clear reasoning and logical deductions are entirely out of place." (Joseph Fielding Smith, Man: His Origin & Destiny, Ch. 8 The Hypothesis of Organic Evolution pt. 2) Joseph Fielding Smith encouraged students to **study other theories** than evolution. He said, "A few years ago the parents of a young man who was studying scientific courses came to me in great alarm. Their son was doubting some of the doctrines of the Church. He declared that they could not be true for they were in conflict with the teachings given in his classes. They wished me to have a talk with their son. This I did and we went into the matters at some length. I tried to convince him that there were other textbooks and other scientists which do not hold to the views he was being taught. That what he was being taught was merely a theory and not a proved fact." (Joseph Fielding Smith, Man: His Origin & Destiny, Introduction)

Joseph Fielding Smith summarized his reasoning on why God didn't use the **drawn-out process of evolution** when he could have simply transported life to this planet. He said: "Now let us reason together on what is here presented: 1. Worlds without number have been created. 2. They have been created as habitations for the children of God. 3. The great work and glory of our Father is to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man. 4. Inhabitants of other worlds are begotten sons and daughters of God. 5. When one earth passes away to its exaltation another comes. 6. The making of earths is a glorious work which has been carried on eternally. This being true, then does it not appear to you that it is a foolish and ridiculous notion that when God created this earth he had to begin with a speck of protoplasm, and take millions of years, if not billions, to bring conditions to pass by which his sons and daughters might obtain bodies made in his image? Why not the shorter route and transplant them from another earth as we are taught in the scriptures? Surely to any reasonable mind, the Lord would not have to start with an amoeba, pass through the stage of lower fish to higher fish to reptiles to apes and to man! When we stop to consider how perfect are the workings of God; how thorough he is and orderly, surely these theories flatten out and are without substance." (Joseph Fielding Smith, Man: His Origin & Destiny, Ch. 12 Man the Offspring of God)

Smith realized the implications of evolution being opposite of the Bible. He said, "If the Bible does not kill Evolution, Evolution will kill the Bible." He continued, "There is not and cannot be, any compromise between the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the theories of evolution...It is not possible for a logical mind to hold both Bible teaching and evolutionary teaching at the same time...If you accept [the scriptures] you cannot accept organic evolution." (Joseph Fielding Smith, 1954, Man, His Origin and Destiny.)

His other writings continue these inspired themes. In Doctrines of Salvation, he wrote: "IF EVOLUTION IS TRUE, THE CHURCH IS FALSE. If life began on the earth, as advocated by Darwin, Huxley, Haeckel who has been caught openhanded perpetrating a fraud, and others of this school, whether by chance or by some designing hand, then the doctrines of the Church are false. Then there was no Garden of Eden, no Adam and Eve, and no fall. If there was no fall; if death did not come into the world as the scriptures declared that it did—and to be consistent, if you are an evolutionist, this view you must assume—then there was no need for a redemption, and Jesus Christ is not the Son of God, and he did not die for the transgression of Adam, nor for the sins of the world. Then there has been no resurrection from the dead! Consistently, logically, there is no other view, no alternative that can be taken. Now, my brethren and sisters, are you prepared to take this view?" (Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, 1:143.)