



June 26, 2024

MESSENGER

QUOTE FOR TODAY

"We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised."
Hebrews 6:11,12

INFO

Sermons are always available...catch up on the ones you haven't heard!
iTunes: bit.ly/AltadenaBaptistPodcast
On our website:
www.altadenabaptist.org/sermons/

Also, check us out online:
On the web: www.altadenabaptist.org

Contact Information:

general office communication:
altabap@aol.com

prayer requests:
altabapprayer@aol.com

Connie Larson DeV Vaughn, pastor

George Van Alstine, associate pastor

ALTADENA BAPTIST CHURCH
791 E. Calaveras Street
Altadena, CA 91001-2447
(626) 797-8970

How Evolution Builds My Faith

The people at my Fundamentalist home church were really worried when I decided to major in biology at a secular college. Their biggest fear was about the teaching of Evolution, and they tried to arm me for battle against that evil idea. They warned me it would be a fight for my faith. I decided not to fight, but to listen. In the end, the light that an understanding of Evolution shed on my view of Creation, myself and my relationship with God has been a great asset to my personal faith.

Toward the end of my time in college, I read a book that helped me put it all together. It was entitled *Creative Evolution*, by French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941). Bergson discussed the origin of animals and plants, not as a series of individual creative events, but as a single momentous reality --- **Life!** This giant step beyond the inanimate universe ultimately evolved into a vast kaleidoscope of living things, from single-celled microbes to massive dinosaurs. The whole composite of life forms can be seen as one entity that is constantly regenerating itself through mortality and new birth.

Bergson taught that humans, as one of many mammalian species, are part of this **Life!**, and I, as a human person, am as well. I have many things in common with all other living things: germination or birth, feeding, growth, respiration, reproduction and death. Yes, death is part of who I am! The idea of evolution puts my birth, my existence and my death into perspective. I'm part of **Life!**, the great climax of Creation which brings glory to its Creator. If my personal life and death mean any more than that, it's a gift of God's grace to me.

Continued on other side...

June 26, 2024

(Continued from other side)

From this perspective, the Bible's teaching about Creation took on entirely new meaning for me. I was particularly impressed with Paul's insight in a familiar passage from 1 Corinthians 15: *Someone may ask, "How are the dead raised? With what kind of body do they come?" Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain. But God gives it a body as he has chosen and to each kind of seed its own body. Not all flesh is alike, but there is one flesh for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. (verses 36-39)*

I'm part of this mortal evolutionary cycle, on a level with birds, fish and other animals. But this is only one aspect of a larger Creation reality that I can study through science: *There are both heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one thing, and that of the earthly is another. There is one glory of the sun and another glory of the moon and another glory of the stars; indeed, star differs from star in glory. (verses 40-41)*

This is the basic reality of my life as part of Creation **before** God's surprising intervention of a New Creation bursting out of the old:

Here is how it is with the resurrection of the dead: What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body; it is raised a spiritual body. . . What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. . . For this perishable body must put on imperishability, and this mortal body must put on immortality. When this perishable body puts on imperishability and this mortal body puts on immortality, then the saying that is written will be fulfilled:

"Death has been swallowed up in victory."

"Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" (verses 42-44, 50, 53-55)

This is the beginning of the story of how my open-minded study of science, and particularly of Evolution, has led me **toward**, not **away from**, the God of the Bible. I feel the need to continue next week with Part 2.

Pastor George Van Alstine