

CHAPTER 10

INTELLIGENT DESIGN

KENOSIS AND EVOLUTION

Evolutionary creationists believe that God chose to create our sun and our planet, and to govern the history of pre-human life on earth, through the ordinary operation of natural laws. If this is true, it makes God's governance of the natural world appear "hidden." Some evolutionary creationists find religious support for this idea in the theological concept of *kenosis*.

Kenosis is a Greek term meaning *to empty*, and it is used in the Bible to describe God in the person of Jesus Christ "emptying himself" (Phil. 2:7). The ultimate expression of God's good character is shown not in his great power or his great knowledge but in his self-emptying and self-sacrifice. Jesus Christ set aside the use of some of his divine power and lived as a human being. And as a human being he suffered rejection, betrayal, torture, and murder, all the worst evils that humans inflict on each other. Instead of striking out in retribution, Jesus forgave the evils that were done to him and offered a renewed relationship between himself and humanity.

God could override our will and force us to do good deeds instead of evil. Instead, God lets us make choices. God transforms us to bring our choices more in line with his will, but God works through the seemingly weak acts of self-emptying and self-sacrifice rather than acts of overt control or forced obedience.

Several evolutionary creationists have written books and articles arguing that this theological concept of kenosis can also help us understand the history of life on earth. At any time God has the power to break the ordinary laws of nature and supernaturally force the world into whatever form he chooses. But God chooses to respect the creation that he made and to work through the ordinary laws of nature by which it operates. According to these evolutionary creationists God accomplishes his design in the natural world as God does in the human world, not primarily through supernatural miracles, but by respecting and working through the ordinary capabilities of his creatures.

To read more, see

- ▶ Edwards, Denis, *The God of Evolution: A Trinitarian Theology*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1999.
- ▶ Polkinghorne, John. *The Work of Love: Creation as Kenosis*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2001.