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Bush Says Creation 'Not Incompatible' With Evolution

President says in televised interview the Bible is "probably not" literally true and that a belief God created the world is compatible with the theory of evolution.

AP

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WASHINGTON -- President George W. Bush said his belief that God created the world is not incompatible with the scientific theory of evolution.

In an interview with ABC's "Nightline" on Monday, the president also said he probably is not a literalist when reading the Bible although an individual can learn a great deal from it, including the New Testament teaching that God sent his only son.

Asked about creation and evolution, Bush said: "I think you can have both. I think evolution can -- you're getting me way out of my lane here. I'm just a simple president. But it's, I think that God created the earth, created the world; I think the creation of the world is so mysterious it requires something as large as an almighty and I don't think it's incompatible with the scientific proof that there is evolution."

He added, "I happen to believe that evolution doesn't fully explain the mystery of life."

Interviewer Cynthia McFadden asked Bush if the Bible was literally true.

"You know. Probably not. ... No, I'm not a literalist, but I think you can learn a lot from it, but I do think that the New Testament for example is ... has got ... You know, the important lesson is 'God sent a son,'" Bush said.

"It is hard for me to justify or prove the mystery of the Almighty in my life," he said. "All I can just tell you is that I got back into religion and I quit drinking shortly thereafter and I asked for help. ... I was a one-step program guy."

The president also said that he prays to the same God as those with different religious beliefs.

"I do believe there is an almighty that is broad and big enough and loving enough that can encompass a lot of people," Bush said.

When asked whether he thought he would have become president had it not been for his faith, Bush said: "I don't know; it's hard to tell. I do know that I would have been -- I'm pretty confident I would have been a pretty selfish person."

Bush said he is often asked whether he thinks he was chosen by God to be president.

"I just, I can't go there," he said. "I'm not that confident in knowing, you know, the Almighty, to be able to say, Yeah, God wanted me of all the other people."

He also said the decision to go to war in Iraq was not connected to his religious beliefs. "I did it based upon the need to protect the American people from harm," Bush said.

"You can't look at the decision to go into Iraq apart from, you know, what happened on Sept. 11. It was not a religious decision," he said. "I don't view this as a war of religion. I view this as a war of good, decent people of all faiths against people who murder innocent people to achieve a political objective."

He said he felt like God was with him as he made big decisions, but that the decisions were his. "George W. Bush has to make these decisions."

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