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Topics in Philosophy of Religion
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Are Christian teaching and evolutionary biology (largely) compatible? If not, what do you see as the most significant reason? If they are, what do you see as the most significant reason for the widespread belief in their opposition?

Christian teaching is not compatible with evolutionary biology. Christian teaching would probably best be defined by that which Jesus the Christ taught or is remembered as teaching. Mark, the earliest record that we possess of the Christ's teachings contains the tradition that Jesus said, "at the beginning of creation God¹ made them male and female" (10:6 NIV). If Jesus, the Christ believed that the Creator created man and woman in the beginning, this is in direct conflict, in fact contradictory to the idea that man and woman evolved onto the scene of history eons after the beginning, in evolutionary terms, the big bang. If an evolutionary biologist wants to hold Christian teachings and be consistent, they should qualify that they disagree with the Christ when it comes to human origins or at least argue like the Jesus Seminar that Jesus probably did not really say what is recorded in the gospels. This would leave open the question of whether or not Jesus agreed with the creation accounts found in the Pentateuch.

However, given the fact that Jesus was a mainstream Jew, debating the classical issues within traditional circles, it seems highly unlikely that he disagreed with his culture, especially since there is positive evidence that Jesus believed God created the world, including man and woman in the beginning, in multiple strands of tradition (Mark 13:19; Matt 19:4). It seems probable that Jesus was a creationist, believing that man and woman was created in the beginning and highly unlikely that he was an evolutionary biologist. Taken together, evolutionary biology and the teachings of Jesus the Christ are incompatible.

¹ Matthew records the same saying in this way, "At the beginning the *Creator* made them male and female" (19:4 NIV Emphasis mine).