


1  **Human Origins:
God, or the Great Apes?
&
What Is Intelligent Design?**

- Module: Science
- Lesson 28

2  **Some Recommended Sources**

- Theistic Evolution, a Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique, ed. by Moreland, et. al., Section I, Part 2: "The Case against Universal Common Descent and for a Unique Human Origin", pp. 331-546
- Science and Human Origins, by Ann Gauger, Douglas Axe, and Casey Luskin
- Icons of Evolution, Science or Myth, by Jonathon Wells

3  **Two Views of Human Origin**

- The human race descended from the great apes by evolution over millions of years?

"More specifically concerning human origins, the neo-Darwinian view is that we have a purely natural origin, fully explicable by unguided natural selection acting on random variation. According to this view, the fossil record shows that we evolved from an ape-like ancestor, we share common ancestry with chimps, and we evolved from a population of several thousand (at a minimum).

-Ann Gauger, "The Battle Over Human Origins," in Theistic Evolution, a Scientific, Philosophical, and Theological Critique-

4  **Two Views of Human Origin**

- The human race descended from two individuals uniquely and specifically created by divine act?

"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. ...Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being." Gen.1:26-27; 2:7

5  **The Question of Human Origins**

- Crucial Christian Theology and Ethics Hang on This Question

- The Imago Dei

Are humans made by a specific and unique act of God, bearing his image (Imago Dei) and thereby unique, possessing immeasurable worth and value in God's eyes, far exceeding any other living thing? Or are we merely the product of chance mutations and natural selection, of no greater intrinsic value than chimpanzees or fungi?

- These questions bear on vast areas of Christian theology and personal and social ethics.

- Of Sin and Salvation

Was there an original Adam and Eve, a single couple, who actually sinned and introduced an inherited sin nature into the lives of all their descendants, thus necessitating the atoning work of Jesus? Or are we as a race descended from chimpanzees and/or several thousand protohumans, and are Adam and Eve and the fall merely a morality myth, and is morality based simply in the social constructs of evolved creatures?

- These questions go to the issue of whether or not all humans stand in need of salvation, whether Jesus really needed to die, the problem of evil, and a host of theological and practical matters.

6 The Question of Human Origins

- The Claims of Contemporary Evolutionists

- Human beings (homo sapiens) are descended through an evolutionary process from the great apes.

- Our last common ancestors were the chimpanzees or some intermediate protohumans between chimpanzees and humans.

- The present human species arose, not from a single pair of humans, but from a population of up to ten thousand. At no time were there less than several thousand human beings.

7 The Question of Human Origins

- The Claims of Contemporary Evolutionists (cont.)

- The primary evidence that is cited for such claims.

- The fossil record reveals a clear path of evolution from early hominins to homo sapiens.

- The morphological (structural) similarities between chimpanzees and humans. (An undergirding assumption of human origins science is that morphological similarity indicates evolutionary common ancestry.)

- The genetic similarities between chimpanzees and humans. There is supposedly only 1% difference in our genes from that of chimpanzees.

- The diversity we observe in human DNA across the world is too great for humans to have arisen from a single couple (e. g. Adam and Eve) in what evolutionists believe was the allotted time. The fewest humans at the time of their evolution from chimpanzees were no less than several thousand.

8 The Question of Human Origins

- Currently Accept Tree of Common Descent for Homminids

9 Problem 1: Challenges Facing Darwinian Evolution

- Any proposal about human evolution must overcome the numerous problems of neo-Darwinism we discussed last week. (e.g. genetic information, irreducible complexity, new body plans, consciousness and cognition, probabilities, devolution, etc. etc.)

10 **Problem 2: Science of Hominid Fossils**

- The science of hominid fossils is deeply fragmented:
- The fossil record itself is profoundly fragmented.
 - The actual evidence in the fossil record is starkly at odds with the claims of the evolution of humans.
 - There are long periods of time for which few or no hominin fossils exist. "Fossils attributed to Homo in the period two to three million years ago are exceedingly rare, ...You could put them all into a small shoe box and still have room for a good pair of shoes."
(National Geographic, March 5, 2015))
 - "...according to Harvard zoologist Richard Lewontin...'No fossil hominid species can be established as our direct ancestor.' ...Despite the claims of evolutionary paleoanthropologists and unceasing media hype, the fragmented hominin fossil record does not document the evolution of humans from ape-like precursors. ...known hominins fall into two separate groups: ape-like and human like, with a distinct gap between them. The genus Homo appears in an abrupt, non-Darwinian fashion, without evidence of an evolutionary transition from ape-like hominins."
(Casey Luskin, "Missing Transitions: Human Origins and the Fossil Record" in Theistic Evolution...).

11 **Problem 2: Science of Hominid Fossils**

- The science of hominid fossils is fragmented. (cont.)
- The fossil specimens themselves are fragmented.
 - In most cases the fossil remains are mere scraps of bones, which renders conclusions about morphology, behavior, and relationships highly problematic and speculative.
 - Flesh reconstructions of extinct hominins from fragmented specimens are subjective, and often are subjected to efforts to minimize the intellectual abilities of humans and exaggerate those of apes.
 - "...the public is rarely told that the fossils have been placed into 'preexisting narrative structures' or that the story they are hearing rests on 'biases, preconceptions and assumptions.' It seems that never in the field of science have so many based so much on so little." (Jonathon Wells, Icons of Evolution, pp. 225-6)

12 **Problem 2: Science of Hominid Fossils**

- The science of hominid fossils is fragmented. (cont.)
- The field of human paleontology is fragmented.
 - The sparse and fragmented nature of the data lends itself to widely varying interpretations and contradictions.

- “(H)uman evolutionary studies have been plagued by debate and controversy. The reasons for argument over a fragment of a jaw, a partial skull, and a handful of teeth, or an uncertain geological era are not that difficult to understand.” (Donald Johnson and Blake Edgar)
- Mark Davis, PBS NOVA producer, after interviewing several paleoanthropologists for a documentary reported: “Each Neanderthal expert thought the last one I talked to was an idiot, if not an actual Neanderthal.”

13 **Problem 3: Claims of Genetic Similarity**

- Claims of genetic similarity are seriously misleading.
- While the claim is that there is only 1% difference between the genes of humans and chimpanzees, this number arises from merely comparing nucleotide bases. The actual difference is five to six times greater than that. Moreover, there are many other factors besides merely DNA structure which determine the vast differences between chimpanzees and humans.
- “Our results imply that humans and chimpanzees differ by at least 6% (1,418 of 22,000 genes) in their complement of genes, which stands in stark contrast to the oft-cited 1.5% difference between orthologous nucleotide sequences.” (Demuth, et. al. “The Evolution of Mammalian Gene Families”, cited in Theistic Evolution..., p. 481)
- Small sections of DNA can have a huge impact on how things come together and work.
- Many coding genes code for multiple proteins, so a slight variation in a gene may yield substantially different proteins.
- The coding genes direct the manufacture of proteins, the building blocks of living organisms. It is unsurprising that there is great similarity in the building materials. Two different buildings may employ many of the same basic building blocks—bricks, 2x4s, sheetrock, electrical wires, glass, etc., and yet have considerably different structures and purposes.
- Much of the non-coding portion of DNA, the majority of the DNA, functions as an operating system. The routine processes of life are carried out by the “operating system”, which is similar across many species.

14 **Problem 4: Common Descent or Common Designer**

- The logical fallacy of claiming of the argument from similarity:
 - To insist that similarity of form (homology) or genetic similarity is the result of common descent commits the fallacy of Affirming the Consequent:
 - The fallacy of Affirming the Consequent takes the form
If A, then B
B
Therefore A
 - While “if A, then B” may be true, it may equally be the case that “if C (or something else) then B”. So one cannot argue with certainty backwards from B to A, because C is also a possible cause of B. To do so is a logical fallacy.

- The claim that similar homology or genes proves common descent (evolution) commits this fallacy:
If A, then B. (if common descent, then similarity)
B, (similarity)
Therefore A (common descent)
- Common descent may result in similarity. But a common designer may also design different things with similar features. We witness this countless times in everyday life. Similarity can just as justifiably be attributed to a common designer as to common descent, or more so, given additional evidence.

15 **Problem 5: The Utter Uniqueness of Humans**

- The remarkable uniqueness of humans among living things, and the gap between chimpanzees and humans is far greater than is usually acknowledged by evolutionists. The gaps are far too great to be transversed within the evolutionary time evolutionists believe to have been available, and the necessary co-ordinated multiple mutations virtually impossible.
(See handout)

16 **Problem 6: Not Enough Time**

- There simply is insufficient time, given the time allotted by evolutionists (six million years), for the number and kinds of mutations, selection, and fixing in the population for the myriad adaptations necessary to occur to transverse the morphological and genetic space between the great apes and humans.
- “Here’s the problem: To get a single mutation in a DNA binding site and have it become fixed would take anywhere from 1.5 million years to 6 million years, depending on whose calculations are used. If two mutations are needed to get a change in behavior or anatomy, it would take approximately between 84 and 216 million years—once again depending on whose calculations are used. ...Yet we have only 6 million years since we supposedly diverged from chimpanzees. ...If even one essential trait required two specific coordinated mutations, the evolutionary process would stall completely, because 216 million years is too long to wait. The neo-Darwinian process cannot accomplish what is needed to explain our origin in the time available.” (Italics in the original.)
(Gauger, Hössjer, and Reeves)

17 **Problem 7: Reconstruction of Human Origins**

- The original human population, two, or thousands?
 - Given the fragmentary nature of the fossil record, and the absence of data from the most ancient past, reconstruction of human origins by analysis of DNA amounts to little more than estimates.
 - The possibility that an original pair began with “created diversity” would significantly impact the probability of a single pair as opposed to a population of thousands.
 - The common descent model has difficulty dealing with the genetic difference between humans and other species (and many of the problems with macroevolution we detailed last week).

- Two competing hypotheses of human ancestry present themselves:
- Common descent model, involving an original population of several thousand.
- A unique origin model, in which humanity originates from a single created couple who were created with genetic diversity in their chromosomes.
- New research on the Unique Origin Model is now underway by Ann Gauger, Douglas Axe, and others. This is a long term research project, but to date is proceeding well.

18 Understanding Intelligent Design (ID)

- Intelligent Design is strictly speaking a scientific argument for design from the scientific data. It makes no claims or assertions regarding the nature or identity of the designer aside from the scientific data.
- The Design Argument (the teleological argument), on the other hand, is a philosophical or theological argument from the appearance of design in nature to the existence and identity of the creator/God.

19 The Design Hypothesis

- The best inference from the existence of information and other features of the natural world is an intelligent source.
- “The theory of intelligent design, brief definition, is that the idea is that there are certain features of living systems in the universe that is best explained by a designing intelligence as opposed to a purely materialistic undirected process.” —Stephen Meyer, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ukaz2aULa0U> at 41:39, last accessed 3/22/19—
 - Many scientists strenuously oppose ID due to its metaphysical implications (the existence of God).
 - However, it is their own metaphysical presupposition (metaphysical naturalism) that leads them to make such objections.
 - Science, freed from the restrictions of metaphysical naturalism (that nature is all there is), can lead us to conclusions based solely on the scientific evidence without the prejudice of metaphysical naturalism.

20 How Do We Recognize Design?

- Alvin Plantinga argues that the ability to recognize design is hardwired into us, and is part of the “proper function” of our cognitive capacities.
- Douglas Axe, in *Undeniable*, similarly argues that humans have a virtually universal intuition to detect design, even from infancy.
- Intelligent Design brings an analytical precision to our innate ability to recognize design.

21 How Do We Recognize Design?

- We infer design when we detect Specified Complexity
 - High improbability (complexity).
 - Specificity (a recognized pattern)

- A rock slide exhibits a highly improbable arrangement (complexity), but not a recognized pattern. Hence we don't consider it designed.
- Three rocks in a row may exhibit a pattern, but not a high level of improbability. We don't consider them designed.
- When a collection of rocks exhibits both a highly improbable arrangement and a recognized pattern, we detect intelligent design.

22 **Intelligent Design and Christian Faith**

- Intelligent Design is only intended as a scientific explanation.
 - It does not define all the characteristics of the intelligence it detects.
 - It does not say which, if any, theistic belief is correct.
 - An increasing number of non-Christian scientists are recognizing the value of the intelligent design hypothesis.
- Christian Faith (and Christian apologetics)
 - Presents the revealed God of the Bible.
 - Employs ID as data within the broader Design Argument (teleological argument) in support of the credibility of the Christian faith.

23 **Next Week:**

- Miracles and Science