

APES IN YOUR ANCESTRY?

"I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made:
marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well."
Psalm 139:14

Cavemen. Transitional forms. Primitive. Go to most natural history museums, open a book, or attend a lecture, and you're likely to hear these types of concepts when the origin of man is discussed. Our ancient ancestors are commonly painted as bumbling brutes gradually groping their way out of the darkness of animal instinct toward intelligence and technology. Even some common human ailments are blamed on this supposed animal past. But is there any truth to the idea?

MISSING LINKS

If we really did evolve from apelike creatures, then we would expect to find fossils of 'transitional forms'—creatures that are partway between ape and human. These are often called 'missing links,' because evolutionists believe they existed, but they just haven't found them yet. Today they've made many claims about different fossils being those links. Let's look closer at some of them.

THE APE SIDE

On the ape side of the lineup of supposed transitional forms is *Australopithecus afarensis*, more commonly known as Lucy. Discovered in 1974 in Ethiopia, the incomplete first skeleton looks similar to a chimpanzee in many ways. It is claimed to have walked upright. Interestingly, it's hips were straight like ape hips, which would indicate it did not walk upright, so evolutionists theorized that the hip was curved like ours, but then after death was crushed into a straight, ape-like position. With all the clearly ape anatomy, this is just a desperate attempt to make a fossil what it is not.

They also have often depicted Lucy with human-like feet, but the original specimen lacked foot bones. Later discoveries clearly showed these creatures had ape feet (ape feet are more similar to our hands). Lucy was an ape.

THE HUMAN SIDE

On the human side of the lineup of supposed transitional forms are the Neanderthals, a group of fossils with the stereotype of primitive cavemen, but which are increasingly being found to be fully human. Some of the fossils that seemed more apelike have been shown to have simply been individuals suffering from arthritis and rickets. They buried their dead, made cave paintings,

made musical instruments, seemed to have some kind of medical care, and had many other markers of a non-primitive society.¹ I am not aware of any group of apes that engage in such activities. This is clearly fully human.

FRAUD

Not all of the supposed transitional fossils have been ape or human, though. One that came to be called Piltdown man was actually both. Someone had taken a human skull and an orangutan jaw and put them together, and sadly, it wasn't caught for over 50 years.² Perhaps no one wanted to catch it?

UP TO THE ARTIST

In the whole process of discovering transitional forms, the artist is an important, but often overlooked, character. Before we get to see the reconstruction of these fossils, scientists and artists have spent many hours of work and research on them.

What many don't consider is how many features we just don't know about when starting with a bare, fragmentary skeleton. We don't know what color it was, how hairy it was, how big the ears or nose were, and, depending on how sparse the bones are, we might not even know, for example, what kind of feet it had (as was the case with Lucy). So you can see that if the artist already believes that the fossil he is working with is an ape-man, it will likely look like an ape-man when he is done reconstructing it, even if the fossil evidence is questionable.

SIMILARITY AND ANCESTRY

Another key thing to consider is that similarity does not necessarily equal common ancestry. Just because two creatures have a feature in common does not mean they are related. Humans have a radius and ulna, the two bones in our forearms, and so do whales. Are we therefore cousins? No. Having two bones in your forearm is a good design, and it makes a lot more sense that the similarity is the result of a common Designer.

DRASTIC CONSEQUENCES

Why is it important to know whether we are created by God or descendants of apes? As in every other area, our beliefs determine our actions, and what we believe about where we came from and who we are can have drastic consequences.

Take abortion, for example. If we are simply highly evolved primates, then we are just animals, and have no good reason to not operate by animals' morality. Some animals will kill their young if they are unable to care for them or one is too weak. Why should we not do the same? Why not abort a baby if caring for it would be too hard or it has some defect? From a naturalistic worldview, there is no consistent basis for saying abortion is wrong. Human life is no more sacred or special than animal life.

However, from a Biblical worldview, human life is sacred because we are specially created in God's image. *"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."* (Genesis 1:27). As our Creator, God has authority over His creation, and He has made it clear that murder is wrong. Children are a blessing that should be loved and protected, not killed.

CONCLUSION

It matters what we believe, and it's clear from the Bible that we were created in God's image, not evolved from apelike creatures. And since God created us, we are morally accountable to Him for all our sins. But praise God, He *"so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* (John 3:16)

~Denton Ford

Endnotes:

1. Ken Ham, ed., Dr. David Menton, "The New Answers Book 2: Over 30 Questions on Creation/Evolution and the Bible" (Green Forest, Arkansas: Master Books, 2008), 92.
2. Ken Ham, ed., Dr. David Menton, "The New Answers Book 2: Over 30 Questions on Creation/Evolution and the Bible" (Green Forest, Arkansas: Master Books,