

The Question of Human Evolution (Was Adam the First Man?)

I. Introductory Concerns:

- A. The Grand Assumption: When Darwin wrote *The Descent of Man* he had no evidence of human evolution though some hominin fossils (the word *hominin* means *apelike*) were being discovered around the time of publication(1871). Darwin just assumed that if other life forms evolved, humans did also. After a century and a half that grand assumption is still in effect even though the fossil evidence has not produced any definitive evidence.
- B. Present Concerns:
1. The science of paleoanthropology (the study of ancient humans) is riddled with contention. There is almost zero consensus on the interpretation of every new discovery. *The question of human evolution is anything but settled science* as demonstrated in *Contested Bones* by Christopher Rupe, and John Sanford. These two highly qualified scientists look at the evidence and claims of the major spokespersons in the field, and for the most part, only quote from the most notable journals of the discipline of paleoanthropology. (Note: Most of my remarks and critique about the claims of human evolution in this outline are from this book.)
 2. However, despite the above, and what is really a disturbing concern, is many evangelical seminaries (in particular the Old Testament departments) are now assuming since evolution of living things is settled science then human evolution is also a fact (See: *The Lost World of Adam and Eve*, by John Walton, *The Evolution of Adam*, by Peter Enns, and, *Four Views on The Historical Adam*, by Matthew Barrett, and Ardel B. Caneday (editors).
 3. These scholars advocating evolution ignore that theistic evolution is not compatible with biblical theology. The recent publication of the 1000 page critique: *Theistic Evolution: A Scientific, Philosophical and Theological Critique*, edited by J.P. Moreland, Stephen C. Meyer, Christopher Shaw, Ann K. Gauger, and Wayne Grudem in my opinion, will never be refuted. The chapter by Grudem alone is worth the price of the book!
 4. While many evangelical scholars are now accepting evolution as settled science, it is ironic that the theory of evolution has never been under attack as it is currently. For example: see the works of Stephen C. Meyer, William Demski, Jonathan Wells, and Michael Behe. The discovery of the intricacy of the cell and DNA has put the theory of evolution on the defensive as never before. Again, it is ironic that a major Christian organization with the set goal of convincing Christians and the Church that evolution is settled science is the well-funded Logos Foundation headed up by geneticist, Francis Collins!
 5. In 1965 Time-Life published a book entitled *Early Man*. Its publication changed everything in the eyes of the public. In the middle of the book there is a foldout depicting nine figures showing the gradual evolution of man. This was not based on evidence, but was rather an artistic representation. Today you will find variations of this in every museum and every science textbook from elementary to college! This has been probably the most successful tool ever created to promote evolution. Even the prestigious journal, *Nature*, admitted: ***The once-popular fresco showing a single file of marching hominids becoming ever more vertical, tall, and hairless now appear to be fiction.***

6. In this postmodern, post truth world we live in, this issue is of utmost concern for the integrity and authority of Scripture. With Adam, there are two issues: Was he a historical person, and was he the first human? There are over 30 passages in the OT and NT that speak of a real person named *Adam*. The Bible is also clear that he and Eve were the first humans and were specially created by God's hand. In order to harmonize the evolution of man, i.e., Adam, all kinds of contortion of Scripture must take place. Ultimately what happens, is science (or the current consensus) becomes the ultimate authority. Scholars like J. Walton (Wheaton) and P. Enns (Eastern U.) see the creation story of Adam and Eve as an example of Ancient Near Eastern Myth. *It's just the way they saw things back then*. Question: If the Genesis account is not literal, what do we do with the rest of Scripture which interprets it as such?

II. The Nature of the Evidence

New hominin discoveries are frequent and much ballyhooed by the news media, and almost on a weekly basis. The actual hard evidence is rarely seen by anyone even the most notable professionals. The original, usually only fragments, are kept in a vault and guarded like gold at Ft. Knox! The top scientists in this field only study casts made from the originals. There are several reasons for this: The fossils are extremely fragile and sometimes only partial fossilized, but also, the scientists who discover these fossils are very particular about whom they allow to examine them! (Call it professional pride and jealousy)

III. A Word about Biological Classification

In the field of biology this is known as *taxonomy*. Humans are classified in this way: Phylum=*chordates*; Class=*mammals*; Order=*primates*; Family=*Hominidae*; A genus=*Homo*; Species=*Sapiens*. For this briefing, what is important to know: To be classified as the same species they must be inter-fertile and be able to produce fertile offspring.

IV. The Proposed Evidence for Human Evolution

A. Neanderthal

By far it was the most important discovery presented as evidence of human evolution. The bones were first discovered in 1856 in Germany. Currently, there are about 500 specimens from 124 sites. They are often depicted as primitive (carrying a club), hairy and brutish. It is claimed that they evolved from an African ancestor 650,000 years ago! They have a larger braincase than modern humans, and we now know that they lived and thrived alongside anatomically humans, were inter-fertile with them, created fertile offspring, and indeed many humans today contain Neanderthal genes. So why aren't Neanderthal fully humans? In addition, Neanderthals used stone tools, had the ability to abstract, i.e., create art, were spiritual in the way they buried their dead, and used fire. Even today you can still find many people with similar skull features. For example, go online and check out Russian wrestler, Nikotal Valuev. Conclusion: Neanderthals were human.

B. Homo Erectus

The first HE bones were discovered in Indonesia in 1891. They were immediately declared a transitional form and separate species of *Homo*. The skull shape was similar to N above, but

with a smaller frame and braincase. About 300 specimens have been found mostly consisting of skull cap, teeth and broken bones. In 1971 a fairly complete skeleton of a boy was found in Kenya dubbed *Turkana Boy*. From the neck down the skeleton is indistinguishable from modern form. TB's body proportions are almost identical to those of the Dinka people of southern Sudan. There is evidence that HE mastered complex navigation around the islands of Indonesia. Paleoanthropologists now admit that many of their specimens from SE Asia suffered from a pathology known as prognathism (see the Pygmy tribes in Africa). There is evidence they coexisted and bred with modern humans. Evidence also shows they had the following abilities: to sail against the current, speech, reasoning, planning, make jewelry, used fire, cooked food, wood-working, co-ordinated hunting, artwork, cared for old, etc. Conclusion: They were fully human, but suffered some known pathologies from in-breeding, isolation, mutations, and teratogens.

C. *Homo floresiensis*

The media was breathless when first found in a cave on the island of Flores in Indonesia in 2003. Due to its small size it was dubbed *Hobbit Man*. The specimen was a complete skull and a partial skeleton. The specimen was partially fossilized and very fragile. The skull was only one-third the size of a modern man and the complete individual would have stood only 3ft. 6in. The bones of 14 more individuals were found nearby. Interestingly enough modern pygmies still live in the neighborhood of the cave! The scientists found the HF very similar to HE only smaller. Research of the braincase revealed it was capable of cognition and had the capacity for complex decision-making, creativity, tool-making, and complex navigation. Some now conclude that HF was the victim of island-dwarfing. Rupe and Sanford remark:

The Hobbit is still surrounded by controversy, and dates for this skeleton are all over the map. However, it seems very clear that Hobbit is human, especially in consideration of the shared features among the Palauan bones and the Ramapassa pygmies living on the island of Flores. The impressive cultural inventory (an array of sophisticated stone tools), ability to sail the open ocean, endocast scans revealing a modern brain, and overall modern human anatomy further confirms their fully human status. p.90.

D. *Australopithecus afarensis* (*Lucy*)

Lucy is by far the most famous of all the hominin specimens and is considered the best evidence of human evolution. *She* is represented by a very loose collection of bone fragments. About 400 bits and pieces exist with no complete skeleton. The initial fragments were found in 1974 by Don Johansson and his crew. *Lucy* is about the size of a chimpanzee and hard to classify since it is uncertain the bone fragments in the collection belong to the same individual. Hard evidence discovered later by other scientists showed that *Lucy* **did not walk upright like a modern man**. What is unfortunate about this discovery is that the general public has not been made aware that a large portion of the paleo-community holds a competing view about *Lucy*'s foot anatomy and locomotive behavior. Scientists at the State U. of NY at Stonybrook insist that *Lucy* was predominantly a tree-dwelling Australopithecine. In fact, because of the media, and the best-

selling book by Johanson, the public is unaware of the important disputes about *Lucy*. Another major dispute about this discovery has to do with the dating: Fossilized footprints (The Laetoli trail) were found 1000 miles from where the specimen was uncovered. Johanson claimed they were made by a Lucy-type hominin. The footprints were dated as one half a million years before *Lucy*, yet **they have now been shown to be anatomically modern human**. Conclusion: Practically everything you are told by the media and science textbooks are incorrect. They also do not tell you that modern *Homo* bones were found among the afarensis bones! This was even admitted by Johanson in 1976! Conclusion: *Lucy* is an extinct ape.

V. Conclusion

1. Christians do not have to shiver and hide from human evolution propaganda. You can breathe easy; Human evolution, like the general theory, is in crisis.
2. In order for the evolutionary theory to hold up, there must be evidence of transition, yes, those nasty missing transitional forms! We don't find them for animals, nor do we find them for man.
3. I find it interesting that after every new discovery of a hominin fossil you invariably hear some scientist proclaim that this discovery will require a major re-write of human evolutionary history.
4. One of the main figures in paleoanthropology wrote in *Nature* as late as 2014: *Even with all the fossil evidence and analytical techniques from the past 50 years, a convincing hypothesis for the origin of Homo remains elusive. (Nature 508:31-33)*
5. Rupe and Sanford conclude: *...(T)he ancestral status of nearly every major hominin species is hotly contested. After 150 years of cataloguing thousands of hominin bones and fragments, the paleo-community now openly confesses that the human fossil record does not reveal any recognizable evolutionary progression from ape to man. p.309.*
6. If there is so much uncertainty and controversy among the paleo-community, why is it that many Evangelical seminaries and Christian Universities are accepting human evolution as fact and interpreting the Scriptures in this light (a very difficult thing to do!)? I can only speculate; many of these professors received their training in institutions where human evolution was accepted and Scriptural integrity was not. Academic respectability and group think seem to account for much of the assent.

Recommended Resources:

Cuozzo, Jack. *Buried Alive*.
 Fix, William R. *The Bone Peddlers: Selling Evolution*.
 Lewin, Roger. *Bones of Contention: Controversies in the Search for Human Origins*.
 Lubenow, Marvin L. *Bones of Contention: A Creationist Assessment of Human Fossils*.
 Mortenson, Terry. Ed. *Searching for Adam: Genesis & the Truth About Man's Origin*.
 Pitman, Michael. *Adam and Evolution*.
 Rupe, Christopher, and, Sanford, John. *Contested Bones*.