

## Ann Gauger Puts Ape-to-Man Evolution Under the Microscope (April 8, 2022)

Could you tell us a little bit about what theistic evolutionists say about human origins?

2:07 mark

Could I start by defining theistic evolution?

Sure.

Theistic evolutionists are people who accept evolution as the mode by which humans developed from lower animals. So, a, for example from chimpanzees to present-day humans is the standard story. Now, they are also, for the most part, Christians, so they accept God's role as creator, they think he used evolution to create. There are some theistic evolutionists who go farther than that who essentially push God to the margins and say he would have started things off but then completely hands off in a letting things go. So, it's contrary to ID in that, well, first of all, we don't specify who the designer is, and we restrict ourselves to scientific arguments. Whereas theistic evolutionists are willing and do talk about the relationship between faith and science and their language can be somewhat deceptive. They're making the argument that you can have both evolution and be accepted by the scientific community and you can have God and the story of the Bible, with one exception, and that's human origins. They deny the story of Adam and Eve as historical and they argue that we evolved from apes and that's the history, the true history, of humanity. And that's why in this book on theistic evolution which is a critique of theistic evolution, I want to make that clear, it's not something about theistic evolution as a positive case, it's a critique of it. We devote 3 chapters to the question of human origins, because it is an important issue that distinguishes theistic evolution from Intelligent Design. But we don't approach it from the religious standpoint, we approach it from the science, what does the science say. And are they right that there can only have been an evolution from chimpanzees, or ape-like ancestors, rather. Now, onto the question. Remind me the question please?

So, what do theistic evolutionists say regarding human origins?

OK, I've already mentioned it some, they say that there is fossil evidence that is sufficient to demonstrate we evolved from a common ancestor with chimps. They say that the genetic evidence is sufficient to demonstrate that we have common ancestry with chimps. And they say that the population genetics argument is strong enough to say that we had to come from a population of 10,000, never just 2. So that's the 3 main parts of their argument.

So, is it true that there are transitional fossils showing a bridge between some ape-like ancestor species and human?

That's not a simple question to answer because there are a bunch of fossils out there that are supposed to be ancestors to the human lineage. Each year it seems a new one is discovered and splashed across the headlines as revising and revamping, redoing the history of the human lineage. This year in particular that's been the case, there have been a number of finds which people have claimed have completely overturned what we knew before. And it's usually to an extent hype. So, transitional fossils. I was just looking at the chapter in the book, and there was a statement by a scientist that the number of transitional fossils that can be found would all fit in a shoe box, and they are fragmentary, they are sometimes badly crushed, and so it's not enough to build a case between the supposed ancestors and

modern-day humans. Let me be specific. The Australopithecine fossils, which are the best characterized and the most commonly found fossils, they date back say 4 million years ago. They continue to be in the fossil record up to about 3 million years ago, roughly. And then humans, modern humans, appear roughly 2 million years ago, and there's a gap there between 3 and 2 with very little in it. They find for example, pieces of jaw bone which they interpret to be intermediate between Australopithecines and early humans, but there's not much there. They're continually looking for the missing link, so they find a jaw bone, and they say 'Oh look! This is the missing link! This is evidence for the missing species that should link us between Australopithecines and us.' It's just too, too fragmentary to make any claims in my opinion. Well imagine, you have only a jaw bone, you have to imagine the skull and the body. You have no evidence aside from inference that the jaw has this particular shape that looks like it might be on the way to being human, that's it.

So, it sounds like there's a lot of hype regarding these candidates for transitional fossils, whereas the evidence is slim.

OK, the evidence for between Australopithecines and us is slim. The evidence for Australopithecines themselves is a ton of fossils for them. The most well known is Lucy, ah she was on tour around the country, I think, not too far distant. And she's well known because she's one of the most complete fossils we have, roughly 70% I think of her body's, her bones have been recovered? And she was considered transitional because she appeared to have some of the characteristics necessary to walk upright, and yet she also had some of the characteristics necessary for life in the trees, her arms and her shoulders for example, were adapted to swinging from branch to branch. Like I said, there are lots of bones for Australopithecines. What's missing is what goes from them to us.

Well thank you for coming on the show today Dr. Gauger to talk about human origins.

You're welcome.

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