

“The Case for a Creator”
Session 4: Who Was Adam?
Rev. Rick Dietzman
September 27, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Darwinian biologist William B. Provine gives the philosophical conclusion of a world without a Creator: "There are no gods, no purposes, and no goal-directed forces of any kind. There is no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be dead. That's the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either." (Stanford University debate, 1994).

In fact, given a slightly different set of circumstances, it might not have produced humans at all. Lucky happenstance caused bipedal primates to appear, followed by primates with large brains, and only lucky happenstance kept modern humans from becoming extinct.

Improbable things that happened by chance?

- The evolutionary path from primitive Cambrian chordates to Homo sapiens is a highly improbable event. For example, the large brains of humans have marked adaptive disadvantages, requiring as they do an expensive metabolism, a long gestation period, and a childhood lasting more than 25% of the average total life span.
- Being the only extant bipedal land (non-avian) vertebrate. Combined with an unusual eye-hand coordination, this permits dextrous manipulations of the physical environment with the hands.
- A vocal apparatus far more expressive than that of any other mammal, enabling speech. Speech makes it possible for humans to interact cooperatively, to share knowledge, and to acquire a culture.
- The capability of formulating abstractions to a degree permitting the invention of mathematics, and the discovery of science and technology. Keep in mind how recently humans acquired anything like their current scientific and technological sophistication.

Acts 17:25-27

God himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. From one he made all the ethnicities of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.

What can we observe about God's creative means?

Genesis 2:7 (New American Standard Bible)

Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person (soul).

Psalm 139:13-17 (New American Standard Bible)

¹³For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. ¹⁴I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well. ¹⁵My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; ¹⁶Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them. ¹⁷How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them!

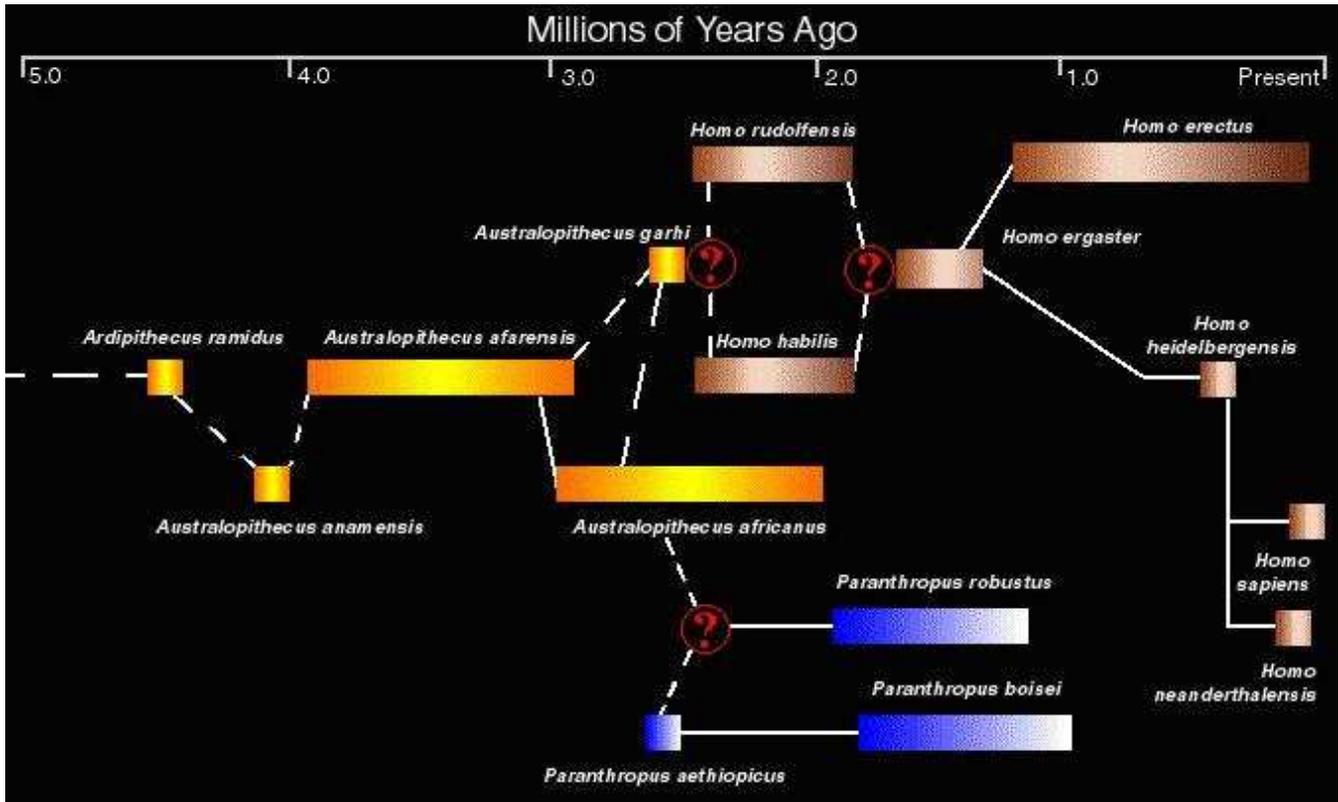
Observations:

The first act of creation is referred to in our present manner of birth; something on the surface which looks like a completely natural process. The fastest sperm makes it way to the finish line and fertilizes the egg, which begins to divide and form a human being. Yet behind all that something is going on.

- a. No one in their right mind would say the little sperm and egg collided and “by chance” a complicated human emerged. No, a very complex set of instructions unfolded and amazingly a little baby was formed.
- b. Even though we might think this process is natural – or on auto pilot. God works through it and specifically creates us. We are not an accident.
- c. Parallels abound between these two passages. We are “formed”, we have “souls”. We are even “wrought in the depths of the earth” vs. “formed from the dust of the ground.”

Q: How does a comparison of these passages help you understand or interpret them?

What do you see - A Tree or a Lawn?



“Hominid fossil remains are precious. Complete skeletons are extraordinarily rare before recent times. Teeth and lower jaws, and the facial and upper cranial bones of the skull, are the most common fossils to survive from any period. Skulls are almost never found intact but must be reconstructed from fragments. Thigh bones are next most often retrieved, while remains of the feet, hands, pelvis or spine are extremely rare.”

A qualifier from the source of a similar graph.

I. What is it that makes humans alike and different than animals? In other words, what made Adam the first human?

- a. **They were fashioned from pre-existing materials.** Humans, mammals, birds were all fashioned from the earth’s raw materials. See Genesis 2:7 and 2:19

“Being created from the same substance implies physical similarity between humans and animals. Comparative studies should uncover common anatomical, physiological, biochemical and genetic characteristics.” Fazale Rana in the book “Who was Adam?”

b. Contrary to popular theology, animals have souls too! The Hebrew word is *nephesh*

Genesis 1:24

*And God said, "Let the land produce **living creatures (literally - living souls)** according to their kinds: livestock, creatures that move along the ground, and wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so.*

Note that during the flood, "all in whose nostrils was the breath of life, died." (Gen 7:22). So animals have both "the breath of life" and "living souls" according to the Bible.

Genesis 1:30

*"and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has **life (soul)**, I have given every green plant for food"; and it was so.*

Genesis 2:7

*The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a **living being (literally – living soul)**.*

c. Humans were made in God's image and were given responsibility.

Genesis 1:26-27 (New Living Translation)

Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground." So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

d. Humans were able to cultivate the soil and tend to it (Gen 2:5, 15)

Genesis 2:15

The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it.

e. In Genesis 1 and 2 there is not a word about fire, painting, carvings, musical instruments or other cultural expressions. There's nothing said about the human's appearance, height, ability to walk or use their hands. **But there is one thing very clearly mentioned a number of times in these two chapters that made these humans like God and set them apart from the animals. What was it?**

To animals: “God blessed them and said ‘Be fruitful and multiply’” – Gen 1:22

To humans: “God blessed them and said **to them** ‘Be fruitful and multiply’” – Gen 1:28

Genesis 2:16 The Lord God warned the man - “Don’t eat from the tree”

Genesis 2:20 The man named the animals

Genesis 2:23 “At last” the man exclaimed when he saw Eve

Behavioral modernity is a term used in anthropology, archeology and sociology to refer to a list of traits that distinguish present day humans and their recent ancestors from both living primates and other extinct hominid lineages. It is the point at which *Homo sapiens* began to demonstrate a reliance on abstract thought and to express cultural creativity. **These developments are often thought to be associated with the origin of language.**

One evolutionary theory holds that behavioral modernity occurred as a sudden event some 50,000 years ago, possibly as a result of a major genetic mutation or as a result of a biological reorganization of the brain that led to the emergence of modern human natural languages. Proponents of this theory refer to this event as the **Great Leap Forward**.

Studies of the speech anatomy of human infants, apes and examination of the fossil record suggest that fully modern human beings who could talk and think as we do, appeared comparatively recently – somewhere between 70,000 and 50,000 years ago. Fully human speech anatomy first appears in the fossil record about 50,000 years ago and is absent in both Neanderthals and earlier hominids. The data shows that Neanderthal necks were too short to accommodate human vocal tracts. Surprisingly, a similar constraint rules out a human vocal tract in the Middle Pleistocene fossil Skhul V (McCowan and Keith 1939), which has often been thought to be fully modern. Fully modern speech anatomy is not evident in the fossil record until the Upper Paleolithic, about 50,000 years ago. The neural circuits that confer the reiterative abilities necessary for human speech appear to be absent in chimpanzees and other nonhuman primates.

Phillip Lieberman is the Fred M. Seed Professor of Cognitive and Linguistic Sciences and Professor of Anthropology at Brown University

See http://www.cog.brown.edu/people_lieberman_personal.htm for more on this subject. Lieberman’s analysis was first published in 1971, and has withstood over 36 years of scrutiny. As more fossil evidence has surfaced, it has only been strengthened, as is shown in a 2007 article comparing speech capabilities of hominids and humans.

II. When did humans originate?

Dating of Genesis is difficult for a number of reasons

- a. The Hebrew words translated father and son can mean ancestor or descendant.
- b. The word “begot” can mean to father an individual or to bring forth a lineage.

There’s an interesting data point in the midst of the genealogies referring to a time when “the earth was divided” (Gen 10:25). If this was referring to the breaking of the land bridge from Eurasia to North America (which happened about 11,000 years ago), then you can roughly calibrate Noah’s flood to 20,000 – 30,000 years ago, and the creation of Adam and Eve “a few tens of thousands of years earlier.” - Fazale Rana from “Who was Adam?” p 47

III. Where was the Garden of Eden? Somewhere in Mesopotamia and possibly extending into northern and eastern Africa.

The Mitochondrial Eve Hypothesis

In the early 1980s, geneticist Allan Wilson started to focus on mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) - genes that sit in the cell, but not in the nucleus, and are passed from mother to child. This DNA material is important because it mutates quickly, thus making it easy to plot changes over relatively short time spans. By comparing differences in the mtDNA Wilson believed it was possible to estimate the time, and the place, modern humans first appeared. The most controversial implication of the geneticists' work was that modern humans didn't slowly and inexorably evolve in different parts of the world, as many anthropologists believed. The supposed evolution from archaic to modern Homo sapiens seemed to have occurred in only one place, Eve's family. The location has generally been traced to Africa. Then, according to the hypothesis, sometime between 90,000 and 180,000 years ago (with a recent recalibration that number decreased to around 50,000 years ago), a group of her progeny left their homeland endowed apparently with some special advantage over every tribe of hominids they encountered. As they fanned out, Eve's descendants replaced the locals, eventually settling the entire world.

If you’d like to study any of these topics in greater detail see “Who was Adam?” by Fazale Rana and Hugh Ross

Starting next week, October 4th. We begin a new series:

The Fruit of the Spirit: Becoming the Person God Wants You to Be

The audio and notes for this and previous sessions of this series are available at www.sequimcommunitychurch.org in the Sunday Seminar section