

Creationists Say Science and Bible Disprove 'Ardi' Fossil Is Evidence of Evolution

Discovery of 4.4 Million-Year-Old Fossil Does Not Shake Creationists' Faith

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Oct. 7, 2009 

<http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/creationists-science-bible-disprove-ardi-fossil-evidence-evolution/Story?id=8766121&page=3>

Note from Pastor Kevin Lea: Every few years, secular scientists tout a newly discovered collection of bones as a key link in the evolution of human beings. Without exception, the so called "missing link" is eventually revealed to be either the skeletal remnants of a known species or a total hoax. The creation science community will be able to silence the evolutionist once and for all only when we give proper priority to understanding and communicating the science on the flood of Noah (Genesis 6). This is currently available in In The Beginning: Compelling by Evidence for Creation and the Flood by Dr. Walt Brown, www.creationscience.com.

Sometimes an ape is a 4.4 million-year-old fossil that sheds light on the evolutionary origins of human beings, and sometimes... an ape is just an ape.

A partial skeleton is believed to be the oldest link in the evolutionary chain.

In the case of "Ardi," the ape-like fossil recently discovered in Ethiopia and already being celebrated as the oldest found relative of modern human beings, the final determination depends on who is doing the talking.

In one camp are evolutionary scientists who last week published and hailed the discovery of an upright walking ape named *Ardipithecus ramidus*, or "Ardi" for short, who made Ethiopia her home nearly 5 million years ago.

But despite the excitement from the paleontology community, another group of researchers, many of them with advanced degrees in science, are unimpressed by Ardi, who they believe is just another ape -- an ape of indeterminate age, they add, and an ape who cannot be an ancestor of modern man for a range of reasons, including one of singular importance: God created man in one day, and evolution is a fallacy.

"What creationists believe about human origins we get from the Bible," said David Menton an acclaimed anatomist and also a creationist. "The creation of the world takes place on page one of the Bible. If you throw out the first page of the Bible you might as well throw out the whole thing. If you can't live with the first page then pitch out the remaining thousand pages."

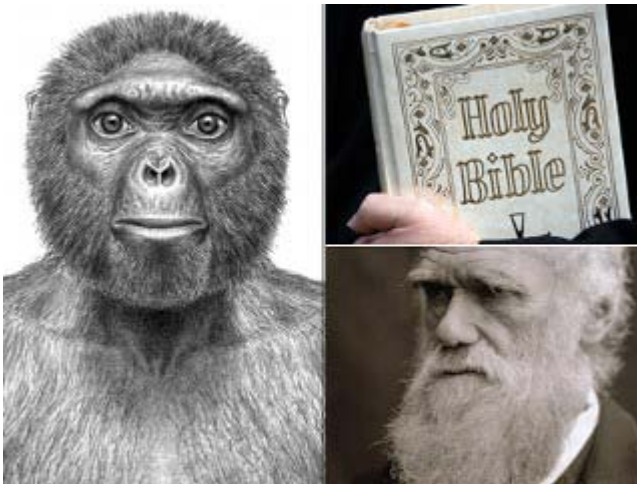
And so for creationists, this latest piece in the puzzle of human evolution is just more bunk, Godless claptrap wrapped in the language of science and all too conveniently rolled

out on the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth and the 150th anniversary of his seminal work "On the Origin of Species."

"In 'The Year of Darwin,' this is a concerted campaign to capture the public mindset and say the 'jury is out' and relegate the Christian view to the trash bin," said Gary Bates, CEO of Creation Ministries International.

In a deluge of Web postings, articles and lectures, creationists have -- with scientific language and precision -- set out to debunk the importance of Ardi and have collectively asked, "What's the big deal?"

"This is not the latest and greatest discovery. We have a different interpretation of the facts, and that is that Genesis is the real view of the creation of man. There is nothing Christians need to worry about," Bates said.



This undated artist's rendering provided by the journal Science shows the probable life appearance in anterior view of *Ardipithecus ramidus* also known as "Ardi". The story of humankind is reaching back another million years with the discovery of "Ardi," a hominid who lived in what is now Ethiopia 4.4 million years ago.
(AP Photos/Getty Images)

Creationists Aim to Debunk Ardi

"This is a meaningless discovery of another ape. As far as the creationist community is concerned, this is a big yawn. There is nothing about Ardi that has anything to do with the evolution of man," said John Morris, President of the Institute for Creation Research in Dallas.

That's a tone significantly different than the one C. Owen Lovejoy, an anthropologist at Kent State University in Ohio, struck in a recent interview with ABCNews.com, when he called Ardi perhaps "the most important specimen in the history of evolutionary biology."

For Morris and other creationists, the approach to handling new discoveries like Ardi by evolutionary scientists is twofold: fight the science and promote the Bible.

“People are talking about Ardi. It’s all over the news, so we have to explain it and answer people’s questions. We’re not making a theological argument, but a scientific one. The science of evolution is so flawed we have to be opposed to it,” Morris said.

The response to Ardi opens the door on a decades-long shift in the way creationists fight evolution in schools, universities and occasionally the courts.

Nearly a dozen states allow for the teaching for “intelligent design” in public elementary and high schools, or otherwise require teachers to explain evolution as a still unproven theory.

Creationists have written books about complex organisms and natural processes like photosynthesis to argue that only a designer’s work, and not the chance inherent in evolution, could result in the Earth’s natural diversity.

In 2007, Answers in Genesis, better known as the Creation Museum, opened in Kentucky giving creationists a place to promote their understanding of the world through exhibits that depict the Biblical flood and men living with dinosaurs.

Menton, an anatomy professor for 20 years at Washington University School of Medicine, is a researcher in residence at Answers in Genesis and has made a new career out of picking apart evolutionary discoveries.

Direct Ancestor, But Not a ‘Missing Link’

The scientists who have spent the past decade pouring over Ardi’s fragmented skeleton believe she walked upright and that her teeth resemble modern human teeth more closely than they do those of a chimpanzee.

Though they do not believe Ardi is a direct ancestor of humans or the long-sought “missing link,” paleontologists say she helps show that both human beings and apes evolved from a common ancestor about 6 million years ago, that did not look much like either.

Ardi, paleontologists say, was capable of grasping, something chimps need in order to climb in trees, but likely did not swing from branches the way modern chimps do.

For Menton, all the fragments indicate is that Ardi is an ape, plain and simple -- and not anywhere nearly as old as scientists would have you believe.

“This is just a pea and shell game. Is it a human ancestor, or isn’t it?” asked Menton.

Menton believes scientists sat on the Ardi discovery for over a decade just to roll it out during the Darwin anniversary. He questions the ability to accurately date any fossils

more than a few thousand years old, let alone millions, and he said the condition of the skeleton was so incomplete and fragile that serious research was almost impossible.

Menton said Ardi's skull and feet are exactly the kind of skull and feet you would expect an ape to have and have none of the features of modern humans.

"Evolutionists want to call Ardi 'ape-like.' This creature is ape-like, because she is an ape. Just call it an ape," he said.

The biggest problem Menton has with Ardi is her estimated age. The Earth, he says, is no more around 5,000 years old, a number creationists have estimated by counting the generations of man named in the Bible from Adam to Jesus.

"Evolution is supposedly based on science, but the science does not prove what they want it to. Creationism is not based on scientific observation but on God's word. God created everything in six days, and that's it."