Origins 101-6

**Misconceptions about Evolution**

Script

1. Origins 101: Misconceptions about evolution
2. A number of misconceptions exist about evolution. Many people who believe in creation don’t understand evolution, and even some people who believe in evolution are sometimes confused by these misconceptions. This presentation will explain three of them.
3. One common misconception is that the theory of evolution claims that humans evolved in a direct line from monkeys. / But this is not really what evolutionists claim.
4. Instead, evolution claims that apes and humans descended from a common ancestor.
5. Here’s how it works according to evolutionary theory. / This graphic is called a cladogram or a phylogenetic tree, and its purpose is to show how closely related scientists believe these animals to be. / The yellow dot—sometimes called a node--represents the last common ancestor of apes and humans. / Each line going off to the left represents the branching off of a new kind of creature from the last common ancestor.
6. So, this would represent the last common ancestor of gorillas, chimps, and humans / and the branching off of the gorillas
7. And this would represent the last common ancestor of chimps and humans and the branching off of the chimps.
8. Monkeys *do* appear on the cladogram but further back than the apes. According to evolution, both apes and humans shared a common ancestor with monkeys at some point in the distant past.
9. But evolution doesn’t claim that these animals descended directly from one another—like grandparents, parents, and children
10. In the evolutionary paradigm, they are more like cousins on the family tree.
11. Another misconception that some people have about the claims of evolution is that individual creatures can somehow evolve a trait because they need or want it. / That would be like saying that the beak size of an individual finch could get smaller if it needed to be able to eat smaller seeds / or get larger if it needed to be able to eat larger seeds.
12. But evolution doesn’t make that claim, and we know that’s not what happens in nature. Birds can only eat whatever size seeds their beaks allow them to eat. / If there is a shortage of the right size seeds, no beaks grow or shrink to help individual birds survive. If there’s not enough food, some individual birds will die.
13. Another way to say this is that natural selection happens to individuals.—they either survive or they don’t. And whether they survive or not is usually influenced by whether or not they have the most advantageous traits. / Microevolution only happens to populations over time as gene frequencies change.
14. The final misconception we will talk about is the idea that evolution is somehow progressing purposefully toward “better” things. Notice especially the words progressing and purposefully.
15. But instead of claiming that evolution is guided by some purpose and is moving in a certain direction toward some ultimate goal, / scientists with a naturalistic worldview actually claim that evolution is an unguided progress that happens naturally without any purpose or intelligence behind it.
16. They also acknowledge that not all changes are progressive. / Sometimes traits can actually be lost—like eye sight or even eyes in cave-dwelling creatures like this fish.
17. We have looked at three common misconceptions about evolution: / that humans evolved from monkeys, / that creatures can evolve traits because they need or want them, / and that evolution is progressing toward a particular goal. / And we have compared these misconceptions with the actual claims of evolution. Why is it important to understand these points correctly?
18. It is important to be able to compare the *actual* claims of evolution with the evidence. / We also want to represent our Creator well. When we are misinformed or careless in our thinking, we can damage the reputation of creationists, Christians, and even God Himself. / Finally, in order to be able to discuss the issues intelligently with other people, we need to understand the issues accurately.
19. To learn about one of the toughest challenges to evolution, watch our next presentation.