

April 2013

Volume 24:04

Discovery

Scripture & Science for Kids



Changes: BIG and SMALL



amoeba

THE WORD "EVOLUTION" CAN HAVE MANY DIFFERENT MEANINGS. BASICALLY, THE WORD MEANS "TO UNROLL, UNFOLD, OR

change." Anything can "evolve" or change over

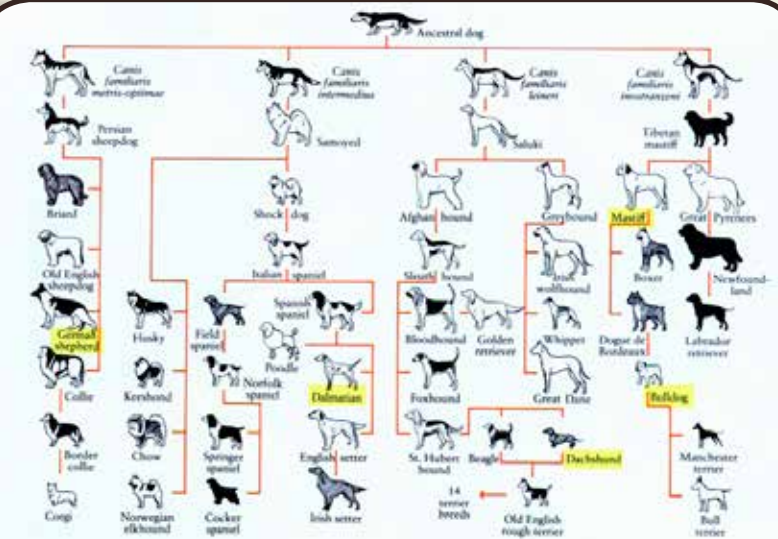
a period of time. For instance, the body style of the Corvette[®] certainly has "evolved" since the 1960s. Young children "evolve" into adults. A bud can "evolve" into a flower. However, when most people think of evolution, they do not think about small changes, such as in the design of a car, the growth of children into adults, or the development of a bud into a flower. In the present day, the word "evolution" brings to mind thoughts of an amoeba gradually changing over millions of years into a human. So, in order to determine whether or not evolution is true, we must clarify what kind of "change" we are discussing.

Small changes in living things are recognized and accepted by both creationists and evolutionists. Such changes have been given the name "microevolution," meaning "small change." Microevolution is responsible for much of the diversity that we see in dogs, cats, and other animals. However, even though through the years people figured out how to breed different dogs to create the particular variety of dog they wanted, no one has ever figured out how to breed two dogs together and get a cat. Small changes occur within limits, but eventually those changes come to a genetic barrier that is impossible to cross.

Both evolutionists and creationists recognize the fact that small changes take place in plants and animals. However, some people refuse to recognize that these changes have certain limits. They believe that if nature is given enough time, then it will eventually turn a dog into something other than a dog. This idea of "big change" is often called "mac-

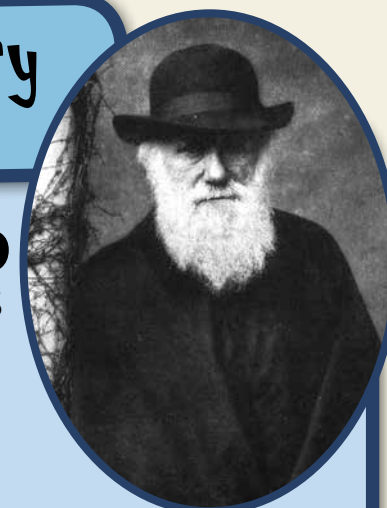
roeolution" (also known as the "General Theory of Evolution"). This idea basically states that all living things originated from a single life form billions of years ago. Then, by a series of changes over billions of years, this life form "evolved" into different creatures such as fish, lizards, monkeys, and man.

The problem with "macroevolution" is that it goes against what we observe in nature, in that it does not recognize the **limits** of change. No one has ever seen a dog produce anything other than a dog. Sure, a long-eared dog with a long tail and long legs can have a puppy with short ears, a short tail, and stubby legs. But the puppy will always be a dog.



This chart shows the microevolution that has occurred within the dog kind.

CHARLES DARWIN'S Theory



Charles Darwin

CHARLES DARWIN, OFTEN REFERRED TO AS "THE FATHER OF EVOLUTIONARY THEORY," DID NOT ALWAYS BELIEVE IN EVOLUTION. IN FACT, AT ONE POINT IN HIS LIFE HE

believed in God as Creator. But as he grew older, he changed his view and began to think that natural forces, not God, created this world. One of the reasons for his change in thinking came from a misunderstanding of the Bible. In Darwin's day, the Church of England misunderstood the biblical account of Creation. The book of Genesis says that animals reproduce "according to their kind" (Genesis 1:21). That means that an elephant will always give birth to a baby elephant, and a finch will always give birth to a baby finch. However, the Church of England confused the biblical word "kind" with the biologists' word "species." The Church of England taught that God had created every species in the world—an idea that came to be known as "fixity of species." The problem with this view was that it simply was not true; people had misunderstood what the Bible said. When Darwin went on a trip around the world to study nature, he discovered that animals within a species are not fixed, but can (and do) change. He looked closely at

nature, and rejected the incorrect idea of "fixity of species" based on the factual evidence that he found. Darwin was wrong, however, to go beyond the facts and refuse to recognize that change has built-in limits. If the Church of England had not misunderstood the Bible, then things might be different today. Let this be a lesson to all of us. We all must study the Bible so we can properly understand it and teach it, and we must be honest with the facts of nature. When both are correctly understood, they will not disagree.

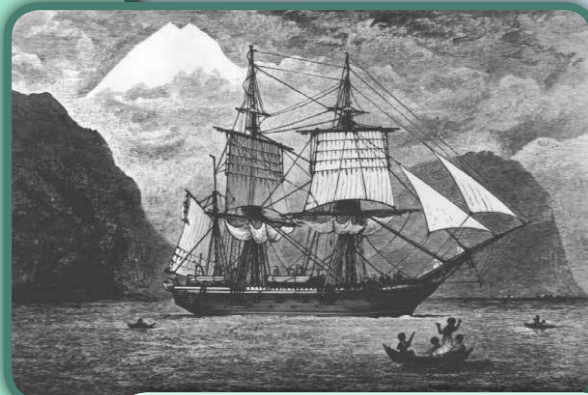


FINCHES OF THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

CHARLES DARWIN LOVED TO LOOK AT NATURE. IN FACT, HE WAS INVITED ON A TRIP ABOARD A SHIP CALLED THE H.M.S. BEAGLE THAT TRAVELED AROUND THE WORLD. His job was to be a naturalist—a person who looks at different kinds of animals and plants. In 1835, Charles Darwin and his shipmates traveled to the Galápagos Islands. All sorts of strange, exotic creatures lived on these islands. Huge tortoises and swimming iguanas were just a few of them. Also on these islands there lived several different kinds of finches. The different finches looked very similar to each other, except for the fact that they had different-sized bodies, and their beaks were different sizes and different shapes.

The story that you will read in many science books goes something like this. Darwin supposedly looked at the different species of finches, and noticed how similar they were. He thought that all of the finches must have originally come from one kind of finch. A long time before he came to the island, so the story goes, a storm blew a flock of finches away from the mainland and onto the islands. Some of the finches in the flock had beaks better suited to eating large seeds. Other finches had

beaks better suited for eating small seeds. Finches with similar beaks stayed together, because they ate the same kind of food. Eventually, the one flock became about thirteen different kinds of finches. According to most science books that tell this story, these finches influ-



The H.M.S. Beagle in the Straits of Magellan, 1832. Darwin had the job of naturalist on this ship. His 5-year voyage of exploration would take him around the world, including the Galápagos Islands.



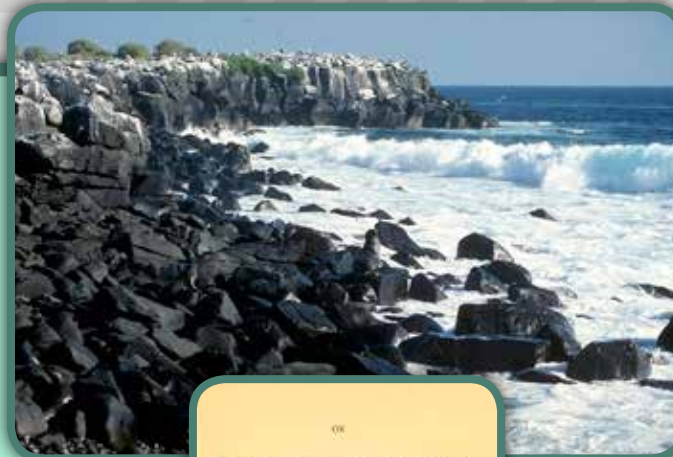
enced Darwin to believe in evolution.

The true story, however, is much different from that. Darwin collected only nine species of finches, and he thought only six of them were finches. In fact, in Darwin's famous book, *The Origin of Species*, he did not even mention the finches. When he first saw them, it seems that Darwin did not think they provided evidence for evolution.

Many years after his trip to the Galápagos Islands, and after writing his book, Darwin began to think about the finches again. If nature could change the size and shape of a finch's beak in a few years, what could nature change in a few **million** years? Could nature turn the finch into a different animal? He began to think that the finches might be good evidence of evolution. In fact, many school textbooks today teach that "Darwin's finches" are a good example of evolution. But it turns out that "Darwin's finches" are not good evidence for evolution at all!

First, no one can prove that the finches came from the same flock. Even though the finches look very similar, they might have all been different in the first place. No one knows if a flock of finches ever really was blown by a storm to the Galápagos Islands.

Second, every kind of creature in the world has built-in limits in its genetics. Finches might have larger beaks, and finches might have smaller beaks, but finches always had beaks. The finches' beaks did not change into a muzzle with teeth. Their beaks did not change into a scaly, lizard-mouth. For the past 160 years, people have been



studying the finches on the Galápagos Islands, and those finches have always had beaks.

Third, the finches never changed into anything other than finches. Even if all the species did come from one flock, they are still finches. None of them has changed into a crow, a snake, a dolphin, or a dog. For over 160 years, the finches have changed into...more finches! The only thing that "Darwin's finches" prove is that a finch always stays a finch!



THE ONLY THING THAT "DARWIN'S FINCHES" PROVE IS THAT A FINCH ALWAYS STAYS A FINCH!



Large ground finch



Warbler finch



MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. ____ What is another term for the "General Theory of Evolution"?
 - A. Microevolution
 - B. Macroevolution
 - C. Spontaneous generation
 - D. Genetic mutations
2. ____ Who is often referred to as the "father of evolutionary theory"?
 - A. Charles Darwin
 - B. Martin Luther
 - C. Louis Pasteur
 - D. Thomas Edison
3. ____ The Church of England in Darwin's day misunderstood the biblical word "kind" in *Genesis 1:21* as meaning _____.
 - A. Gracious
 - B. Loving
 - C. Species
 - D. Compassion
4. ____ Which incorrect idea of the Church of England did Charles Darwin reject?
 - A. General Theory of Evolution
 - B. Original Sin
 - C. Baptism
 - D. Fixity of species
5. ____ On what islands did Darwin observe nature?
 - A. Galápagos Islands
 - B. Hawaiian
 - C. Madagascar
 - D. Japan
6. ____ What bird was Darwin famous for observing?
 - A. Eagle
 - B. Finch
 - C. Mockingbird
 - D. Woodpecker
7. ____ What book did Darwin write that outlined his theories on the evolution of life?
 - A. *Alice in Wonderland*
 - B. *Evolution Revolution*
 - C. *The Origin of Species*
 - D. *The Last of the Mohicans*
8. ____ Goats on a farm having less hair than wild goats is an example of
 - A. Microevolution
 - B. Macroevolution
 - C. Both of the above
 - D. None of the above

TRUE OR FALSE

1. ____ Microevolution means "large change."
2. ____ Creationists recognize the fact that small changes do take place in plants and animals.
3. ____ Genetic change has limits.
4. ____ An elephant will always give birth to an elephant.
5. ____ Darwin does not mention finches in *The Origin of Species*.
6. ____ Microevolution often happens in nature.
7. ____ Darwin proved that finches evolved over million of years.

FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. _____ is a type of evolution that refers to small changes.
2. _____ is referred to as the "father of evolutionary theory."
3. _____ spent time studying as a naturalist on the H.M.S. Beagle.
4. _____ was supposed to ensure the "survival of the fittest."
5. _____ is a type of evolution that deals with large changes.
6. The Church of England taught that God had created every species in the world—an idea that came to be known as the _____.
7. Darwin's book that explained his views on macroevolution was titled _____.



Dear Digger Doug,
Do we all have different talents?
—Annie Perkins,
Hamlet, NC



Dear Annie,
Yes, we do all have different talents. Paul tells us in Romans 12:3-8 that although we are all one in the body of Christ, we are different and have different talents. Some people have a talent for serving, while others have a talent for teaching. Some people are better at leading, while others are better at being generous. That is not to say that we should not all try to be the best we can in each of these areas. But God has blessed each of us with different abilities.

The apostle Paul gives us another way to look at this. In 1 Corinthians 12, he also talks about Christians being one body and having different abilities. And he tells us how important this is. He explains that if the entire body were one big ear, then the body could not see. If the whole body were one big eye, then there would be no hearing. God specially designed each one of us and has given us different talents and abilities. We should remember that and be thankful for our abilities and use them to bring glory to God.



Thank you so much for your question!



APOLOGETICS PRESS, INC.
 230 Landmark Drive
 Montgomery, AL 36117
 (800) 234-8558 (Orders)
 (334) 272-8558
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Nonprofit Organization
 U.S. Postage
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Natural Selection

THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES

BY MEANS OF NATURAL SELECTION WAS THE MAIN TITLE OF CHARLES DARWIN'S BOOK, first published in 1859. Those last two words, "natural selection," have been discussed often in the halls of science. And it is no secret that Darwin's concept of natural selection (or "survival of the fittest," as it has come to be known) has been at the center of evolutionary thought.

According to Darwin, a creature with a particular advantage—the "fittest of its kind"—would be "naturally selected" to pass on the advantage to its offspring. A horse with long legs, for example, would be able to gallop faster than the rest, thus escaping from wolves or other predators in order to produce other baby horses with long legs. A "fit" creature, therefore, was one that could best carry out the functions that kept it alive, and made it best adapted to its environment. This is what Darwin meant by "survival of the fittest."

But problems with the theory of natural selection soon developed. Somehow, natural selection was supposed

to ensure the "survival of the fittest," but the only realistic way to define the "fittest" was "those that survive." Basically, then, natural selection simply says that all the winners win, and those who win are the winners. Natural selection does not explain **how** those creatures came to be the most "fit."

Creationists have never objected to the idea of natural selection as a way that gets rid of unfit, poorly adapted organisms. As a matter of fact, creationists long before Darwin said that natural selection was a good conservation principle (think of it as a screening device for getting rid of the unfit). If a harmful mutation causes a grasshopper to have only one leg, then that grasshopper will be an easier meal for a bird. Natural selection is the Creator's plan for preventing harmful mutations from destroying an entire species. But natural selection cannot cause one kind of animal or plant to "evolve" into another kind of animal or plant. In reality, it is nothing more than an argument that reasons in a circle. As one scientist said, "[N]atural selection can account for the **survival** of the fittest, but it cannot account for the **arrival** of the fittest."



ANSWERS

MULTIPLE CHOICE: 1. B (Macroevolution); 2. A (Charles Darwin); 3. C (Species); 4. D (Fixity of species); 5. A (Galapagos Islands); 6. B (Finch); 7. C (The Origin of Species); 8. A (Macroevolution). TRUE OR FALSE: 1-F; 2-T; 3-T; 4-F; 5-T; 6-T; 7-F; 8-T; 9-T; 10-F. *The Origin of Species*.
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