

WEIRD AND WONDERFUL

The Spadefoot Toad

Most frogs and toads like to live near or in the water, and need moisture to breed and lay their eggs. But the Spade-foot Toad lives in the deserts of North America, and is specially designed to live in such dry conditions.

First of all, its back legs are shaped like a spade, which explains its name. These special feet are used to dig its way backwards into the ground. It digs a burrow and buries itself underground, where it will stay for as long as a year, without any food, waiting for rain to fall. It seems that the toads can hear the rain falling in the distance, which is a signal for them to come out of the ground and search for a mate. Their eggs are laid in pools left by the heavy rain, and hatch within days.



A Spade-foot Toad

Photo by Clinton & Charles Robertson: Wikipedia

may not be for another year. Then the whole process is repeated.

Do you think that evolution by small, gradual changes could have produced the Spade-foot Toad? Why would it start to live in a desert? And how would these toads have survived before they had their special feet, and the ability to breed quickly and survive so long underground? We believe God created and designed these fascinating toads!

When the babies hatch, they only have a few weeks at the most to eat enough food to last them until the next rains arrive. Then, like their parents, they dig a burrow, and hide under the ground until rain returns — which



A Spade-foot Toad's back foot

Photo by Dawson: Wikipedia

Walking the road of life

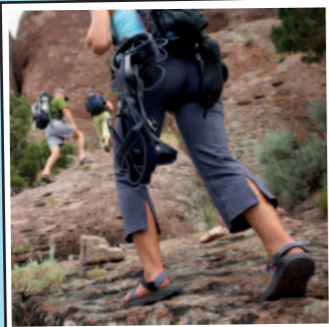
WHEN we are born we are quite helpless, and depend on other people to look after us. After a few months we begin to crawl, but after a while — usually before we reach the age of two — we learn to walk, with a bit of help from Mum or Dad. Once we start walking, there's no stopping us! Life then becomes very exciting as we discover new things. Being able to walk upright is just one of the things that makes us special and different from animals.

We are also different in another very important way: we can know God our Creator as our Father and Friend. Although God is great, powerful and holy, He has come to us in the Person of

Jesus. He was born as a helpless baby, learned to walk, and with feet like ours walked on earth for just over 30 years. Jesus died on the Cross so that we could be forgiven for all the wrong things we have done, and He rose from the dead so that we can live for ever with Him.

Sometimes, walking the road of life is difficult, but if we put our faith in Jesus, He will never leave us. He promised "You can be sure that I will be with you always." (Matthew 28: 20). God hasn't left us to walk alone through life. He has given us the Bible as our map and guide, and the Holy Spirit to be our Helper. Jesus's call to His first disciples was "Follow me."

Have you begun to follow Him?



Walking the road of life can be difficult



Hemera photo-objects

PUZZLE ANSWERS

1. Potato — not a fruit.
2. Newt — not a mammal.
3. Bat — not a bird.
4. Dolphin — not a fish.
5. Dandelion — not a tree.
6. Frog — not a reptile.

ODD ONE OUT:

my feet and a light for my way (Psalm 119: 105)

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Only humans have two hands and two feet!

Think about it: most animals have four feet, except apes, which have four hands. Only humans have two hands and two feet!



This orangutan has four hands, all designed for grasping



FEET: made for WALKING!

Unlike the feet of apes, our feet are designed so that we can walk upright

OUR FEET ARE DIFFERENT

A human foot contains 26 bones, 33 joints, and over 1200 muscles, tendons and ligaments. Apes have the same number of bones in their feet as we do, but their feet are very different — more like hands, made for grasping not walking on two legs. It's true that some apes can walk on two legs for a short time, but they never stand upright like us. They are designed for walking on their knuckles (left), with short legs and long arms, and can move much faster on all fours or swinging in the trees.



FOOTPRINTS TELL A TALE!

In 1973, a trail of footprints was discovered in hardened volcanic ash in Tanzania, Africa. Footprint experts said they looked exactly like the footprints of modern humans, and not at all like apes' footprints (see below). Yet the scientists who found them decided they were made by 'ape-people.' Why? The reason was that they believed the rocks were 3½ million years old, and according to their evolution theory human beings were not around that long ago. So even though the prints looked modern, they would not believe that humans made them because it doesn't fit their theory.

We believe their dating is wrong, that these footprints are only a few thousand years old, and that they were made by people just like us!



Left: footprint in hardened ash in Tanzania. Right: a modern human footprint

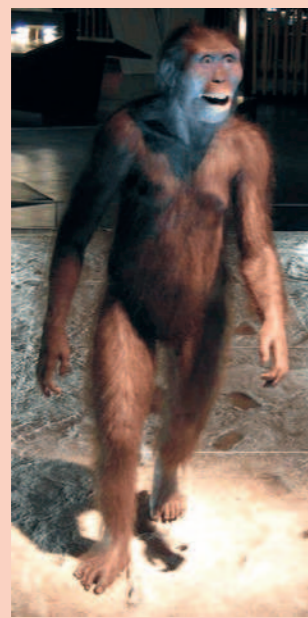


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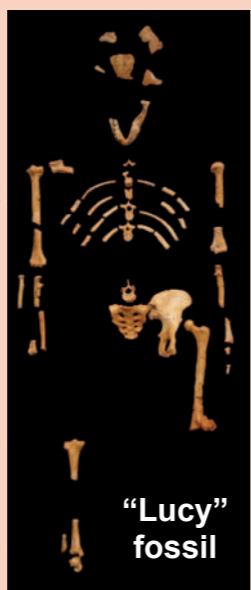
An ape with human feet?

When some fossils of an ape were discovered in Africa in 1974, some scientists believed it was an ancestor of modern humans. The fossil was less than half complete. Most of the leg bones were missing, and there were no feet. Yet full-size models of this ape



were made, like the museum exhibit on the left, and it was named "Lucy."

You will see that this model has human feet, even though no foot bones were found with the fossil! The fossil looks like the fossil of an ape, so why didn't the people who made the model give it apes' feet? Is it because they want us to believe that humans were not created, but evolved from ape-like ancestors? We believe that "Lucy" was just an ape, and that giving her human feet was a big mistake!



"Lucy" fossil

FEET GALORE!

How many feet does a starfish have? Five, right? Wrong! Most starfish have five arms, but along each of them are hundreds of tiny feet (below right). Lots of tiny valves make them open and shut as water is pumped through. A very clever design that evolution can't explain!

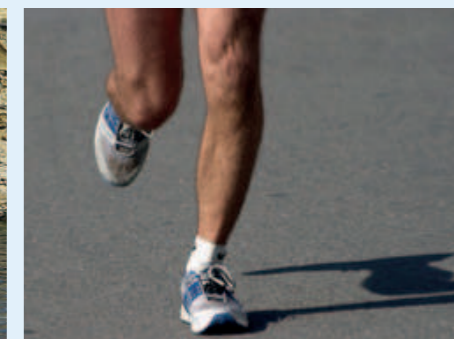


Centipedes (below) have lots of feet – some as many as 300! It's a good thing they don't need shoes!



We need our arches!

Our feet are so unique, that it would be impossible for a human foot to evolve from the foot of an ape. The "thumb" (big toe) would have to move, which would make walking difficult while this was happening. Our feet have arches, much like the arches of a bridge, but apes have flat feet. This means we can do many things apes can never do. The arches in our feet enable us to run on two legs and stand on tiptoe. Sometimes people suffer from "fallen arches", which makes their feet flat. It then becomes difficult for them to do things like running or sports. The arches of a bridge were designed; surely the arches in our feet were designed by God, who created humans in the beginning?



Famous scientist Leonardo da Vinci said, "The human foot is a masterpiece of engineering and a work of art."



Our 3 foot arches

NATURE NOTES by the editor



When we run short of food it is usually easy to pop along to a food-store. And most people have freezers or cold stores where food can be kept. During winter in cold countries, many animals find it difficult to get enough food. How do they survive? Some animals hibernate, and many manage to find food, even if it means digging through deep snow. However, some animals actually store up food before winter begins.

Moles store clumps of worms, and wood mice (left) store up berries and seeds. Squirrels (below right) gather nuts and bury them, but not all in the same place. This means that if some other animal discovers one of the squirrel's hoards, it can still eat food from the other stores – a very clever trick!

How do these animals know that winter is coming, and that they need to store up food before the cold weather begins? They do it by instinct, which means that they are programmed to do it, just as a computer is programmed to do different things. We know that computer programmes were designed by intelligent people. Surely animals that prepare for winter by storing food had an intelligent Creator too? —Geoff Chapman



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A mudskipper using its fins to "walk". However, these fish are not evidence for evolution.

"Walking fish" doesn't prove evolution

Mudskippers crawl out of the water and use their fins to "walk" near the shore. The evolution theory teaches that, millions of years ago, some fish grew legs, crawled out of the sea, and evolved into amphibians. But amphibians are supposed to have evolved from bony-finned fish like the coelacanth (above right). Mudskippers are "ray-finned" fish, so have the wrong kind of fins to be ancestors of amphibians. But they are well designed for the way they live!



Coelacanths – which have bony fins – were once only known from fossils, and thought to be extinct. Some people even thought they were the ancestors of land animals, until they were found to be still alive in the ocean.

PUZZLE CORNER

Use the code to decipher the Bible verse, which gives good advice about our feet!

XNTQ VNQC HR KHJD Z KZLO

ENQ LX EDDS ZMC Z KHFGS

ENQ LX VZX

Code key:

BCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZA
 ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

Find the ODD ONE OUT

1. Orange, apple, banana, potato, pear.
2. Hedgehog, mole, newt, mouse, squirrel.
3. Swan, goose, eagle, owl, bat.
4. Shark, trout, seahorse, dolphin, tuna.
5. Oak, dandelion, ash, sycamore, maple.
6. Frog, tortoise, alligator, gecko, iguana.

(Answers on the next page)