

# Humans and Chimps: How Similar are We?

By Gerald McKibben

**Monkeys and other primates** are favorites among many zoo visitors; perhaps because of their human-like antics. They really do look a lot like us. Man's fascination with them has gone on for least three thousand years; King Solomon had "apes" and "monkeys" in his private zoo:

*For the king had merchant ships at sea with the fleet of Hiram. Once every three years the merchant ships came bringing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and monkeys. So King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. Now all the earth sought the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart. (I Kings 10:22-24).*

**Monkey Business** – One of the most publicized studies the past few years is the similarity of human and chimpanzee DNA. Depending on which report you read, the degree of similarity is anywhere from 95 to 98%. The reports imply that this is modern, high-tech proof that humans evolved from apes. Very few people go to the trouble to find out just what the supposed similarities actually mean.

**The Human Genome** – the total of all our genetic information coded as DNA – has been studied extensively the last few years. The size and complexity of the human genome is staggering; there is simply nothing designed by man with which to compare it. The genome is God's blueprint or instruction manual imbedded in each cell that determines our physical makeup.

**Our Body Plans are Complicated!** A human genome consists of two sets of 3 billion individual 'letters'. If the 'letters' were arranged linearly, in one long string, the result would be equivalent to many complete sets of a large encyclopedia. But the genome is not just a long, one-dimensional string of information. Most DNA sequences carry information on several different levels, so the total amount of information imbedded in our DNA is mind-boggling.

But, first of all, God used DNA and RNA as the backbone of His genetic blueprints for all organisms, from one-celled ones to the great blue whale. He did not design a different blueprint system for each class or creature; human bodies are in a very real sense made the same as other earth-dwelling creatures. We are most similar, physically, to mammals, and within the mammals, we are most similar to chimpanzees and other primates. That much is obvious.

An article in *Science* a few years ago reported an 81% match between the protein collagen of humans and frogs, and a 97% match between human and cow collagen. Evidence of a common evolutionary descent? No, proof that God used the same basic material to build all organisms, much as we use wood, bricks, stone, and steel to build a wide range of structures.

But to put the DNA similarity issue in perspective, I found the following published results of studies of DNA comparisons of various organisms, animal and plant:

<b>Genome Comparisons:</b>	<b>Similarity of DNA</b>
Parent and child	99.5%
Human and cabbages	40-50%
Any particular human and every other human	99%
Human and fruit fly	60%
Human and the nematode <i>Caenorhabditis elegans</i>	75%
Humans and bananas	50%

**As Dr. Georgia Purdom** – she has a doctorate from Ohio State University in molecular genetics – pointed out, *“If human and chimp DNA are so similar, why are there so many physical and mental differences between them?”*  
So, just for fun, I decided to list some of the differences.

**Things humans can do that chimps can also do:**

Eat bananas; climb trees; grunt.

**Things humans can do that Chimps cannot do:**

Compose music; write books; program computers; build and fly airplanes; build space ships; use modern chemistry to produce medicines and modern plastics; communicate almost instantly with anyone on earth; invent electronic devices that take pictures and movies; invent radio and television; build educational institutions that teach the young of our kind the basics of language, history, mathematics, the fine arts, and science; grow agricultural crops to produce food and fiber; build weapons for personal and national protection; build trucks, trains, airplanes and ships for worldwide commerce; invent mathematical procedures such as arithmetic, calculus, and trigonometry. That’s just off the top of my head; there are many, many more, but you get the idea.

**Ninety-Eight Percent Similar?** I don’t think so. But regardless of any physical or mental similarities, humans are ultimately separated from all other organisms by the fact that we have a soul and will live forever. And we alone are made in God’s image.

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