

Neanderthals – Far From a “Sub-Human” Species!

Did modern man evolve from so-called “ape-like” creatures? The Neanderthals are one of the most famous examples of fossils which were previously thought to represent “sub-human” cavemen. DNA has recently been extracted from Neanderthal bones, and the Neanderthal genome has been sequenced. What does the new data reveal?

The Neanderthal genome shows that this people group was fully human. In fact, Neanderthal genes are found within modern Europeans – meaning that Neanderthal was a unique ethnic group that interbred with other human, European ancestors. This is consistent with Scripture that states that all men are of one blood, being descended from a literal first couple who were miraculously made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27, Acts 17:26). It turns out there is no such thing as a “sub-human” race. All of the reputed “ape-like” transitional forms can be shown to be either fully human or fully ape – Neanderthal’s included!



Figure 1: The Ferrassie skull discovered in 1909. The most complete Neanderthal skull discovery to date. Exhibits features typical of Neanderthal morphology (heavy brow ridge, low forehead, etc.), yet overlaps extensively with modern humans. Evolutionists now accept their fully human status. Image credit: Wikipedia.org

The Genetic History of Man

The first Neanderthal remains were discovered in the Neander’s Valley region of Germany in 1856. Although first believed to be fully human, this view changed shortly thereafter when it was reevaluated by evolutionary scientists. They considered Neanderthal to be a primitive ancestor of man. Yet, this long held perception has recently undergone a drastic revision. It seems the more researchers learn, the more we can see that the Neanderthals were fully human. A recent study, published May 2010 in the prestigious journal *Science* shed new light on the true identity of Neanderthals.¹ Researchers were able to successfully extract “ancient” DNA from a well-preserved Neanderthal specimen and reconstruct much of the Neanderthal genome – some 2 billion nucleotides (out of a suspected 3 billion total).

This sequence was then aligned with the DNA from five modern humans of various geographic locations, as well as with the chimp genome. The human and Neanderthal samples were so similar that investigators were concerned any contamination between the two would go undetected. The researchers concluded, "Neandertals fall within the variation of present day humans for many regions of the genome..." According to the National Human Genome Research Institute, Neanderthal DNA is 99.7% identical to modern man.¹ These findings also confirmed earlier suspicions based on fossil evidence that Neanderthals interbred with the ancestors of modern day Europeans. This was believed because anatomically modern human and Neanderthal skeletons are found buried together in the same gravesites, clearly indicating they lived at the same time.

In regard to present-day humans, those of European descent have approximately 4% shared DNA with Neanderthals. In fact, based upon these new findings, some museum displays have abandoned their now-outdated representations of Neanderthals, where they were represented as sub-human. In place of these are new, very human-looking Neanderthals with red hair, blue eyes and even freckles – as indicated by the new genetic evidence. These recent genetic findings are just some of the many evidences that Neanderthals were fully human. Previous archeological discoveries have indicated Neanderthal use of musical instruments (flutes), medicinal plants, jewelry and other ornaments, decorated gravesites, paint, weapons employed in hunting strategies, and even human figurine carvings.^{2,3,4}

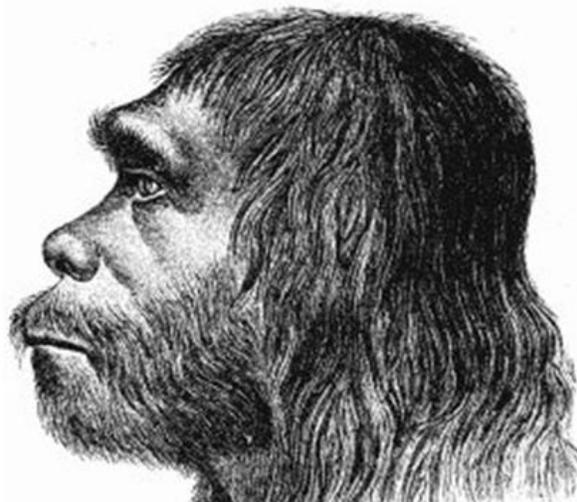


Figure 1: Earlier reconstructions portray Neanderthals as an archaic sub-human species (left). Newer museum displays are replacing the outdated representations. In accord with the latest genetic evidence, replacement displays are showing Neanderthals as fully human (right). Image credit: Anthropological Institute and Museum, University of Zürich.

This data, especially the recent sequencing of the Neanderthal genome, all support the biblical model of human origins. Scripture teaches that all humans, including Neanderthals, are of "one blood," – descendants of Adam and Eve, the first man and woman.⁵ The Genesis account (Genesis 1:27, Acts 17:26) and all the latest genetic evidence indicate there is only one race – the human race. We were created in the image of God – but because of the fall we are hopelessly lost without Him.

FURTHER READING

[Neanderthal Genome Confirms Creation Science Prediction](#)

[More Evidence Neanderthals Were Human](#)

REFERENCES

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