

# A Subhuman?

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Ninth grade

In 1856, a very controversial fossil was uncovered in Neander valley near Dusseldorf, Germany. At first the fossil appeared human, but after further study it revealed some very unusual, 'ape-like' characteristics. Instantly, the fossil was an amazing scientific find, a subhuman half-man, and a claimed proof of the evolutionary theory. The fossil was named Neanderthal man and classified as 'Homo neanderthalensis', not even fully human. As more evidence was brought to light, however, this theory cracked and crumbled. In the 1960's, evolutionists reclassified Neanderthal man as 'Homo sapiens neanderthalensis', a human. Even so the battle to make Neanderthal man a subhuman missing link has continued. "The charge against the Neanderthals is that they were not fully human. This charge is based on their alleged mental, physical, and cultural deficiencies..." (Lubenow 207). Yet there is explanation of physical abnormalities and solid evidence of intellect, culture, and interaction with modern humans. Let the truth be known; Neanderthal man was fully human.

Firstly, was there a reason for the way Neanderthal man looked if he was not half ape? Certainly, the outward appearance of the Neanderthal man is abnormal, even when not exaggerated by illustrators and evolutionists. Rudolf Virchow, who studied the original Neanderthal remains in the 1800's, came to the conclusion that these 'ape-like' abnormalities were caused by disease. He attributed Neanderthal man's stoop to severe arthritis. Virchow also stated that the bow-legged contours and oddly shaped skull of Neanderthal man was the result of rickets. Weak bones and a disfigured form characterize rickets, which is caused by a lack of vitamin D. Since vitamin D is absorbed from sunlight and Neanderthal people lived during the Ice Age, it is probable they did not receive an adequate amount of the vitamin. This caused Neanderthal man's weak bones to bend and 'bow' and his skull to malform.

Secondly, are there evidences of intellect in the Neanderthal people? Yes, archaeologists have uncovered many examples of handcrafted tools such as awls, digging sticks, and blades. There is even evidence that some of these tools were once mounted on handles! Neanderthal people used these tools to butcher animals, make dwellings, clothes, and other necessities. Intelligent design went into the crafting and use of tools.

Another indication of Neanderthal intelligence is the fact that the Neanderthal people survived the Ice Age. In order to do this, they needed to make a home, hunt animals, and keep warm. Neanderthal man often sheltered in caves, a sensible idea since caves make wonderful shelter from extreme weather. In some of these caves, animal bones with cut and burn marks have been found. This means the Neanderthals hunted, butchered, and cooked their own meat. Also, the Neanderthal people had fire. They built fire pits and used flames for light, and most importantly, warmth. These three examples of Neanderthal survival in the Ice Age show critical thinking, problem solving, and intelligence.

Thirdly, did the Neanderthal people possess a culture? Yes, there is evidence in the archaeological record for culture in the Neanderthal world. Some of this evidence deals with the common misconception that Neanderthal people did not have art or music. In 2003, a 'face-mask' engraved roughly in flint was excavated from a Neanderthal stratum. A Neanderthal flute carved from the thighbone of a cave bear has the seven-note system of western music. Jewelry has also been excavated in Neanderthal caves, signifying a desire for art that was wearable. The most important piece of Neanderthal art is a cave painting found far underground. This painting is a wonderful proof of beautiful and meaningful Neanderthal art. The 'face-mask', flute and cave painting prove that Neanderthal man definitely had artistic ability, which is a main part of culture.

Another very important part of culture is society, and a major part of society is the use of symbolism, or symbolic behavior. The archaeological record once again gives much evidence for the use of symbolism by Neanderthal people. Of these evidences, burial practices are surely the most powerful. One excavated site in Israel revealed the remains of a baby. Buried at the baby's hip was the carefully placed bone of a red deer. Another Neanderthal baby was buried across the feet of a Neanderthal male in Qafzeh, Israel. The last and greatest evidence of Neanderthal use of symbolism during burial was found in Syria. At the bottom of a pit, a tiny Neanderthal child was laid to rest with a flint tool lying where the infant's heart had once beaten. These examples show Neanderthal people had the "capability for symbolic behavior"(Oard 3). This capability for symbolic behavior is an excellent demonstration of the social capabilities of Neanderthals, which is a main aspect of culture.

Finally, did the Neanderthal people interact significantly with modern humans? At least two evidences of meaningful interaction between Neanderthals and moderns exist. The first evidence is that Neanderthal man lived side by side with modern humans for tens of thousands of years in evolutionary time. This is evidenced by the discovery of modern human remains that date to a time before Neanderthals. It is hard to imagine Neanderthals and moderns living as close neighbors without any form of contact. History has shown people groups in cohabitation for thousands of years always intermingle.

The excavation of human remains combining the features of Neanderthals and moderns provides a second evidence of interaction. Perhaps the most exciting example of combined features is the skeleton of a 'hybrid' child discovered in Portugal. After careful study and analysis, scientists decided the skeleton was the result of intermarriage. This intermarriage is solid proof of Neanderthal humanity. Only fully human people groups intermarry and reproduce.

A final evidence of meaningful interaction is the burial of Neanderthals and moderns side by side. Since the beginning of time, humans have buried their dead with dead belonging to their own culture and/or religion. Because modern man buried his relatives beside Neanderthals, it stands to reason that Neanderthals were considered fully human and interacted with moderns.

In closing, there is explanation of the physical differences and strong evidence of Neanderthal intellect, culture, and meaningful interaction with modern humans. It is certain the Neanderthal people had the ability to craft tools and dwellings, hunt food, create fire, and survive the Ice Age.

They also had art, music, jewelry, and very symbolic burial practices. For tens of thousands of evolutionary years, Neanderthals and modern humans lived side by side. There is strong evidence showing they interbred with moderns and were absorbed by modern culture. The Word of God states, “And God created man...” (New American Standard 9), which is supported by the evidence showing Neanderthal man was fully human.

### Bibliography

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