

# Neanderthals And The Ice Age

**Introduction.** Perhaps the most bitter pill to swallow for any Christian who attempts to “make peace” with Darwin is the presumed ape ancestry of man. Even many Christians who uncritically accept evolution as “God’s way of creating” try to somehow elevate the origin of man, or at least his soul, above that of animals. Evolutionists attempt to soften the blow by assuring us that man did not exactly evolve from apes but rather from apelike creatures. But what does the Bible say about the origin of man, and what exactly is the scientific evidence that evolutionists claim for our ape ancestry?

If you ask a youngster the question, “Was there really an Ice Age?” they might say rather quickly that there was. Then they may tell you that there were three of them. Of course, if you listen much longer, they will tell you that they saw all of those movies in the theater. The Ice Age is a popular topic that is often discussed in school, at home, or in Hollywood. Sadly, most people hear the secular/uniformitarian view and do not look at this subject from a biblical perspective. This is where it gets interesting, though. The secular view has no good mechanism to cause a single Ice Age, let alone the many they propose. But the Bible does have a mechanism.

## I. ***What About Neanderthals?***

- A. God tells us that on the same day He made the animals (the sixth day), He created man separately in His own image with the intent that man would have dominion over every other living creature on earth (Genesis 1:26-28). From this it is clear that there is no animal that is man’s equal, and certainly none his ancestor (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:39).
- B. When God paraded the animals by Adam for him to name, He observed that there was no help meet for Adam (Genesis 2:20). Jesus confirmed this uniqueness of men and women (Mark 10:6). This leaves no room for prehumans or for billions of years of cosmic evolution prior to man’s appearance on the earth. Adam chose the name “Eve” for his wife because he knew she would be “the mother of all living” (Genesis 3:20).
- C. While Bible-believing Christians begin with the assumption that God’s word is true and that man’s ancestry goes back only to a fully human Adam and Eve, evolutionists begin with the assumption that man has evolved from apes. None of those who study the fossil evidence for man’s origin would dare to seriously raise the question, “Did man evolve from apes?” For them, the only real question is, “From which apes did man evolve?”
- D. Since evolutionists generally do not believe that man evolved from any ape that is now living, they look to fossils of humans and apes to

provide them with their desired evidence. Unfortunately, the fossil record of man and apes is very sparse. Approximately 95% of all known fossils are marine invertebrates, about 4.7% are algae and plants, about 0.2% are insects and other invertebrates, and only about 0.1% are vertebrates (animals with bones). Finally, only the smallest imaginable fraction of vertebrate fossils consists of primates (humans, apes, monkeys, and lemurs).

- E. Knowing from scripture that God did not create any apemen, there are only three ways for the evolutionist to create one.
1. Combine ape fossil bones with human fossil bones and declare the two to be one individual -- a real "apeman."
  2. Emphasize certain humanlike qualities of fossilized ape bones, and with imagination upgrade apes to be more humanlike.
  3. Emphasize certain apelike qualities of fossilized human bones, and with imagination, downgrade humans to be more apelike.
- F. In an effort to fill the gap between apes and men, certain fossil men have been declared to be "apelike" and therefore ancestral to "modern" man. Human fossils that are claimed to be "apemen" are generally classified under the genus *Homo* (meaning "self"). The best-known human fossils are of Cro-Magnon man (whose paintings are found on the walls of caves in France) and Neanderthal man. Both are clearly human and have long been classified as *Homo sapiens*. In recent years, however, Neanderthal man has been downgraded to another species (*Homo neanderthalensis*). The story of how Neanderthal man was demoted to an apeman provides good insight into the methods of evolutionists.
1. Neanderthal man was first discovered in 1856 by workmen digging in a limestone cave in the Neander valley near Dusseldorf, Germany. The fossil bones were examined by an anatomist who concluded that they were human.
  2. At first, not much attention was given to these finds, but with the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859, the search began for the imagined "apelike ancestors" of man. Darwinians argued that Neanderthal man was an apelike creature, while many critical of Darwin argued that Neanderthals were human in every respect, though some appeared to be suffering from rickets or arthritis.
  3. Over 300 Neanderthal specimens have now been found scattered throughout most of the world. This group of people was characterized by prominent eyebrow ridges (like modern Australian Aborigines), a low forehead, a long, narrow skull, a protruding upper jaw, and a strong lower jaw with a short chin. They were deep-chested, large-boned individuals with a powerful build. It should be emphasized, however, that none of these features fall

- outside the range of normal human anatomy. Interestingly, the brain size (based on cranial capacity) of Neanderthal man was actually larger than average for that of modern man, though this is rarely emphasized.
4. Most of the misconceptions about Neanderthal man resulted from the claims of Marcelin Boule who, in 1908, studied two Neanderthal skeletons that were found in France. Boule declared Neanderthal men to be anatomically and intellectually inferior brutes who were more closely related to apes than humans. He asserted that they had a slumped posture, a "monkey-like" arrangement of their spinal vertebrae, and claimed that their feet were of a "grasping type" (like gorillas and chimpanzees). Boule concluded that Neanderthal man could not have walked erectly, but rather must have walked in a clumsy fashion. These highly biased and inaccurate views prevailed and were even expanded by many other evolutionists up to the mid-1950s.
  5. In 1957, the anatomists William Straus and A. J. Cave examined one of the French Neanderthals and determined that the individual suffered from severe arthritis, which had affected the vertebrae and bent the posture. The jaw also had been affected. These observations are consistent with the Ice Age climate in which Neanderthals had lived. They may well have sought shelter in caves, and this, together with poor diet and lack of sunlight, could easily have led to diseases that affect the bones, such as rickets.
- G. Evolutionists are quite skilled at distortions, half-truths, and the manipulation of evidence to their theoretical ends. Certainly there have been those of the past (and present) who lived in caves, but the type of domicile in which a being dwells says nothing about his "humanity." A man who lives in a cave is no more "half-animal" than is a dog "half-human" who happens to live in a house!
1. The Bible itself speaks of those who lived in caves. After the destruction of Sodom and the other cities of the plain, Lot and his daughters "dwelt in a cave" (Genesis 19:30). Caves frequently were used as places of refuge in biblical times (cf. Judges 6:2; 1 Samuel 14:11; 22:1-2; 23:29; 1 Kings 18:4; 19:9; see also other general references, e.g., Numbers 24:21; Song of Solomon 2:14; Jeremiah 49:16; Obadiah 3).
  2. Anthropological evidence from many cave sites reveals a strictly "human" mode of habitation. They buried their dead and had elaborate funeral customs that included arranging the body and covering it with flowers. They made a variety of stone tools and worked with skins and leather. A wood flute was recently discovered among Neanderthal remains. There is even evidence that suggests

- that Neanderthals engaged in medical care. Some Neanderthal specimens show evidence of survival to old age despite numerous wounds, broken bones, blindness, and disease. This suggests that these individuals were cared for and shown human compassion.
3. The more isolated and primitive peoples have continued to live in caves even in modern times. The Pueblo Indians lived in caves. Were they semi-human? A century ago people still were living in caves in Palestine (see McClintock and Strong, 1969, 1:168). In fact, there are many tribes today, composed of people who are unquestionably and totally "human," yet, who are less civilized than many cultures of the ancient past -- thousands of years past!
- H. Although efforts continue to be made to somehow dehumanize Neanderthal man, there is, in fact, nothing about Neanderthals that is in any way inferior to modern man. One of the world's foremost authorities on Neanderthal man, Erik Trinkaus, concludes: "Detailed comparisons of Neanderthal skeletal remains with those of modern humans have shown that there is nothing in Neanderthal anatomy that conclusively indicates locomotor, manipulative, intellectual, or linguistic abilities inferior to those of modern humans."

## II. ***What About The Ice Age?***

- A. An ice age is defined as a time of extensive glacial activity in which substantially more of the land is covered by ice. During the Ice Age that ended several thousand years ago, 30% of the land surface of the earth was covered by ice. In North America, an ice sheet covered almost all of Canada and the northern United States.
- B. Although the Bible does not specifically reveal the cause of the millions of cubic miles of ice on the Earth today (such as what covers Antarctica and Greenland), and even though the Bible does not reveal specific information about a time when ice apparently covered much of northern Europe, northwest Asia, and North America, these ice sheets likely formed as a result of the global Flood.
- C. Some claim that there were as many as 30 different ice ages over the past 2.5 million years. But most formerly glaciated areas show evidence for only one Ice Age, and a substantial amount of information indicates only one Ice Age. The idea of multiple ice ages is essentially a uniformitarian assumption.
  1. Today this idea is strongly based on oxygen isotope ratios from seafloor sediments. The paleothermometers developed from these data assume highly questionable statistical comparisons between peaks and valleys in temperature, which are claimed to correspond to changes in the heating of the earth.

2. Another key assumption in the multiple glaciation hypothesis is the astronomical model of ice ages. This mechanism is based on cyclical past changes in the geometry of the earth's orbit.
  - a) Uniformitarian scientists believe that a decrease in solar radiation, resulting from orbital changes, causes repeating ice ages, either every 100,000 years or every 40,000 years.
  - b) By matching wiggles in variables taken from deep-sea cores, scientists believe they have proven the mechanism of multiple ice ages. But there are many problems with this model and relating deep-sea cores to it; mainly, the change in sunshine at high northern latitudes is insignificant for such a dramatic change as an Ice Age.
- D. Uniformitarian scientists claim to be able to count annual layers in the Greenland ice sheet to determine its age, in the same way people can count tree rings. In doing so, they arrive at 110,000 years near the bottom of the Greenland ice sheet.
  1. On the other hand, creation scientists have found that the average annual thickness of ice near the northern tip of Greenland is believed to vary from about fourteen inches near the surface to less than two inches near the bottom (Hammer, et al., 1978).
  2. If, for simplicity, we assume the average annual thickness to be about eight inches, this still gives an age of less than 6,000 years for the 4,000-foot-thick ice sheet to form under uniformitarian conditions.
  3. Areas that appear to indicate more than one Ice Age can be reinterpreted to be the deposits from one ice sheet that advanced and retreated over a short period. Modern understanding of glacial activity indicates that ice sheets are very dynamic. We do not need 100,000 years for each ice age or 2.5 million years for multiple ice ages.
- E. Two factors logically explain the build up of ice sheets: (1) increased snowfall; and (2) cooler summers. With more snowfall in the winter, and less snow melting in the summer due to cooler temperatures, snow could build up rapidly and turn into ice. But what could cause these conditions? From whence did the trillions of gallons of water come, which were needed to make snow that formed the massive ice sheets? What catastrophic event could have changed the weather so that the water turned into snow, and eventually into millions of cubic miles of ice? About 4,300 years ago God judged all the people on earth because of sin, by bringing a Flood that destroyed everything on land. The whole world and its weather was drastically affected, causing a unique set of conditions that explains how one Ice Age, lasting only a few hundred years, could happen.

1. At the start of the Flood, the fountains of the great deep broke open (Genesis 7:11, 17-24). Volcanoes erupted around the world, dumping hot lava into the waters during and after the Flood.
  2. These volcanoes threw lots of dirt and dust into the air, blocking the warm sunshine. The barren land had no forests to absorb the sun's warm rays. The warm oceans sent lots of warm water vapor into the air. When it mixed with the cold air over the land, great storm clouds formed. These storms eventually dumped thousands of feet of snow on land.
  3. A reduction in solar radiation, in turn, could have caused a rapid cooling of certain landmasses, which allowed snow to remain during the summer months in certain areas of the world where it currently thaws. Over time, the thousands of feet of snow would compact and form huge sheets of ice that would remain until the weather patterns on earth changed.
  4. The best estimate is about 500 years after the Flood to reach glacial maximum with an average ice and snow depth of about 2,300 feet in the Northern Hemisphere and 4,000 feet on Antarctica.
    - a) Once the conditions for the Ice Age ended, those ice sheets in unfavorable areas melted rapidly. It never got warm enough to melt all the snow, so the heavy pile of snow turned into thick ice sheets near both the north and south poles (Greenland and Antarctica), which would continue to grow during deglaciation and afterward.
    - b) A good estimate of the average melt rate along the periphery of the ice sheet in North America at about 33 feet per year. Such a melting rate compares favorably with current melt rates for the melting zones of glaciers in other areas. At this rate, the periphery of the ice sheets melts in less than 100 years. Interior areas of ice sheets would melt more slowly, but the ice would be gone in about 200 years.
    - c) Therefore, the total length of time for a rapid, post-Flood Ice Age is about 700 years. As a result, processes that seem too slow at today's rates were much faster in the past. The Flood was never disproved; it was arbitrarily rejected in the 1700s and 1800s by intellectuals in favor of slow processes over millions of years.
- F. Since the Flood offers a viable explanation for the Ice Age, one could expect that the Ice Age would be mentioned in the Bible. It is possible that Job, written about 500 years or so after the Flood, may include a reference to the Ice Age (38:29-30). However, Job could have observed frost and lake ice during winter in Palestine, especially if temperatures were colder because of the Ice Age.

1. The reason the Ice Age is not directly discussed in the Bible is probably because the Scandinavian ice sheet and mountain ice caps were farther north than the region where the Bible was written.
  2. Only an increase in the snow coverage of Mt. Hermon and possibly more frequent snowfalls on the high areas of the Middle East would have been evident to those living in Palestine.
- G. A final subject to discuss during the Ice Age is the mystery of the woolly mammoths. The woolly mammoths were part of a Northern Hemisphere community of animals that lived and died during the post-Flood Ice Age. Woolly mammoths probably died after the Flood because there are thousands of carcasses scattered across Alaska and Siberia resting above Flood deposits, and there must have been sufficient time for the mammoths to have repopulated these regions after the Flood. Millions of woolly mammoth bones, tusks, and a few carcasses have been found frozen in the surface sediments of Siberia, Alaska, and the Yukon Territory of Canada.
1. There are many perplexing aspects to the mammoth finds, including the existence of frozen carcasses and the good preservation of their stomach contents. In addition, a number of the carcasses and skeletons have been unearthed in a general standing position, as if the animal sank in a bog. The Selerikhan horse and the Jarkov mammoth was entombed in a general standing position.
  2. It is also relevant that an analysis of several features of the carcasses shows that three woolly mammoths and two woolly rhinoceroses suffocated, including the Beresovka mammoth. The Beresovka mammoth also had a broken pelvis, ribs, and right foreleg.
  3. For carcasses to be frozen and the bones and tusks well preserved, quick burial is necessary. What would these large beasts eat in that region? How could all these woolly mammoths have been forced into the rock hard permafrost?
    - a) The mammoths spread into these northern areas during early and middle Ice Age time because summers were cooler and winters warmer. The areas were unglaciated (just the mountains glaciated) and contained rich grasslands -- quite different from the climate in the region today. The region's climate was ideal for rapid population growth and, in the 600 or so years before their demise, the population had grown to many millions of animals.
    - b) However, near the end of the Ice Age, winter temperatures turned colder and the climate drier with more seasonal extremes.
      - (1) Permafrost began to develop, and the substrate would become boggy in summer. As the climate became more

continental during deglaciation, many animals in Siberia would tend to migrate closer to the Arctic Ocean, where the waters were still unfrozen and the climate would have been less continental. However, the changing climate finally caught up with them and they ended up buried in the permafrost that has continued to this day.

- (2) Also in the post-Flood Ice Age, with its dry environment, wind would have picked up and transported large quantities of silt and sand. These dust storms would be so intense that they could cover and suffocate a woolly mammoth trying to survive the storm. It may even be possible to suffocate a mammoth by the strong wind and blowing dust. The animal would have been buried quickly, since the animal would act like a snow fence. It is not inconceivable that a few of these animals would have been left in a standing position, braced by the dust around them. The permafrost would then move upward after the loess was deposited and rapidly freeze the remains.

H. While we cannot be sure about all of the causes of the Ice Age, we can offer possible explanations that would not require millions of years, and would take into account the biblical record of the Flood. Remember, true science never contradicts the Bible.

**Conclusion.** Always remember that you can trust your Bible. It is God's true word. It gives us real, true answers -- even to subjects that at first do not seem to make sense. We are not descended from apes. God created man as the crown of His creation on the sixth day. We are made in His image to bring Him glory. What a revolution this truth would make if our evolutionized culture truly understood it!

Although a major mystery of uniformitarian history, the Ice Age is readily explained by the climatic consequences of the Genesis Flood -- it was a short Ice Age of about 700 years, and there was only one Ice Age. We do not need the 100,000 years for one Ice Age, or the few million years for multiple ice ages, as claimed by uniformitarian scientists.

The post-Flood rapid Ice Age can also account for a number of major mysteries and other interesting phenomena that occurred during the Ice Age, including the life and death of the woolly mammoths in Siberia and elsewhere. When we stick to the Genesis account of the Flood and the short scriptural timescale, major secular/uniformitarian mysteries are readily explained.

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