

Was *Homo habilis* Really Our Ancestor?

Homo habilis or “handy man” is often featured in sixth grade textbooks. We’re told confidently that he was our evolutionary ancestor who lived around 2.4 million years ago, and that scientists believe he was the missing link between australopithecines (apes) and *Homo erectus* (humans). Are you ready for the rest of the story? In reality *Homo habilis* is not just one fossil, it is a collection of fossils that have been the center of intense controversy and confusion. Here are some interesting facts about *Homo habilis*:

- In 1964, Louis Leaky, Phillip Tobias and John Napier announced in *Nature* the discovery of a new human ancestor: *Homo habilis*. The original fossils were said to be 1.8 million years old and consisted of scattered skull fragments, hand bones and foot bones from four juvenile specimens.
- According to Louis Leakey, the foot bones showed signs that *Homo habilis* may have been able to walk upright on two feet, and the hand bones indicated a high degree of manual dexterity. However, since these bones were not found next to the skull fragments, there was no concrete proof that they belonged to the same creature. Some scientists believed that the *Homo habilis* fossils were just a mixture of australopithecine (ape) and *Homo erectus* (human) fossils—not a new species.
- Some primitive stone tools were also found at the site. Originally scientists claimed these tools belonged to another supposed missing link known as *Zinjanthropus* (who incidentally, turned out to be just an ape). Now Louis Leakey claimed the tools were used by these new fossils. This was the reason for naming these fossils “*Homo habilis*” or handy man.
- In 1986 Tim White and Don Johanson discovered a partial adult skeleton. Since the fossil was discovered in Olduvai Gorge, it was designated “Olduvai Hominid 62” and was dated (by evolutionists) at 1.8 million years old. Because the skull and teeth were similar to the original *Homo habilis* fossils found in 1964, the new fossil was said to belong to the same species. This presented three big problems for evolutionists!



Although school textbooks often state that humans descended from *Homo habilis*.¹ However, there are a lot of problems with this theory!

Fast Facts about *Homo habilis* (cont.)

1. The body of Olduvai Hominid 62 was rather ape-like and smaller than the famous australopithecine fossil known as Lucy.² Since Lucy was just slightly over three feet tall, and *Homo erectus* fossils grew to be about six feet, Olduvai Hominid 62 should have been somewhere in between them if *Homo habilis* was truly a missing link.
2. Since the body of Olduvai Hominid 62 was ape-like, it seemed to support the belief that the original *Homo habilis* fossils found in 1964 were actually a mixture of australopithecine and human bones—most notably the hands and feet.
3. If the fossilized hand and feet bones found in 1964 were actually human, then logically the tools found at that site were used by people living there.



Fossil Olduvai Hominid 62⁵

Despite the bold statements made about *Homo habilis* in many school textbooks, paleoanthropologists are still trying to make sense out of this odd collection of fossils. Here is how evolutionist Richard Leakey described the problem:

“Of the several dozen specimens that have been said at one time or another to belong to this species, at least half of them don’t. But there is no consensus as to which 50 percent should be excluded. No one anthropologist’s 50 percent is quite the same as another’s.”³

So was *Homo habilis* really our ancestor? Not even evolutionists agree. Bernard Wood (George Washington University), regarded as being an expert on evolutionary trees (phylogenies) suggests that none of the *Homo habilis* fossils represent human ancestors:

“The diverse group of fossils from 1 million years or so ago, known as H. habilis, may be more properly recognized as australopithecines.”⁴

Although evolutionists keep trying to convince us that humans evolved from ape-like creatures, interpretations of the fossil record have been filled with mistakes, fraud and fantasy. The truth is we were created by God on day six of creation week. Since the beginning, humans have always been humans and apes have always been apes.

Recommended Resources:

- *Artistic Ape Men Anecdotes* (DVD), Creation Ministries International
- *Ape Men, Missing Links and the Bible* (DVD), Creation Ministries International
- *Bones of Contention*, by Marvin L. Lubenow

References

¹ Holt, *Ancient Civilizations*, p.30

² Lubenow, Marvin, L. *Bones of Contention*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1992, 2004. P. 300

³ Leakey, Richard and Roger Lewin. *Origins Reconsidered*. New York: Doubleday, 1992. p. 112

⁴ Wood, Bernard. “The Age of Australopithecines.” *Nature* 372: 3 November 1994. pp. 31-32

⁵ Pitman, Sean, D. *Early Man*. Oct 2005. Web. 11 Aug. 2014