

Bible makes no hint that Satan has ever had the power to make a fundamental, permanent alteration in any segment of the animal kingdom. (It should be remembered that this rapid feeding mechanism requires not only a high degree of specialization of several parts of the nervous system, but also requires that there be precise and exact genetic programming present in the fertilized eggs of these animals to guide the formation of such specialized nervous parts and connections.) The only two alternatives we have left are either (a) that God originally created these animals as insect-eating creatures, with the necessary abilities and genetic programming, or (b) that He altered their nervous system and genetic make-up at the time of the fall of man. Of course God could have done the latter, but we surely have no grounds for saying that He did. He changed the life-habit and physiological make-up of the particular serpent which tempted Eve, but the Biblical account leaves us to assume that the remainder of the animals which suffered loss because of the fall were merely influenced by the degenerative forces which played upon them from then on (Romans 8:22). Therefore there is every reason to believe that God created the lizards and amphibians as they are now--or perhaps with even greater insect catching ability (since they may have undergone some degeneracy).

All these factors together, plus the fact that the Bible makes no specific reference to the origin of death in the animal, plant, or microscopic worlds, should explain at least most of the problem of the death of animals and plants before the fall of man. We are thus free to believe the testimony of the fossil-bearing strata: that many, many generations of animals and plants made their contributions to the earth, passed away, and were replaced by others, long before man was created. We can be satisfied that God's plan for living organisms, and for their provision of each other's needs, was a wise one. His organization of the living world and its biological principles may seem strange, or even sometimes repulsive, to us; but this is only because of our corrupted and imperfect understanding of the ways of God, together with our natural aversion to death which came upon us because of sin.

There is, however, one problem which seems to be particularly bothersome to us, concerning the existence of violence and death in the animal world. This is the pattern of behavior and way of life of the carnivorous mammals. The seemingly ruthless capturing of other mammals, and even of human beings by carnivores appears to be--and perhaps is--contrary to what we believe concerning God's original creation. So we are quite willing to say that the carnivorous mammals may have begun their ruthless hunting of other animals only after the fall of man. (We have referred above to the likelihood that the curse mentioned in Genesis 3:17 did have detrimental and degenerating effects upon the natural world.) If the specialized flesh-tearing teeth of the carnivores make us wonder if they did not possess an instinct for ruthless hunting as soon as they were created, we should consider the possibility that in earlier times their diet was restricted to invertebrate animals (insects and sea-shore animals), and to fruits and other plant materials which their teeth could handle. After all, many carnivores even now eat large amounts of such