

The Origin of Wild Animals

by: Steven J. Wallace

“For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind” (Jas. 3:7).¹

We live in a world shared with wild beasts of the field, sea and air. When our space, or theirs, becomes compromised or threatened, it is not uncommon to hear of some kind of an attack. The recent shark attacks in Florida or bear attacks in New York are a sampling of many. We learn to take precaution when exploring the mountains, canyons and forests, not only because of the ruggedness of the natural terrain, but also because of the wild animals that surround us (mountain lions, rattlesnakes, bears, coyotes, wolves, etc.).

We have also seen various creatures tamed by man. Wild horses have been broken and bridled; bears and lions have been tamed; iguanas and snakes have been made into pets!

As James wrote long ago so it remains true today, every kind of animal is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But we should note the elevated status of man as seen in this God-breathed passage as well as in nature. Mankind has the ability to tame every kind of animal but in doing such, elevates himself above the animal kingdom! Man is therefore not reduced to an animal, as evolutionary proponents would have us to believe. Man in taming an animal is not taming his kinfolk or distant relative! Do we ever observe or experience any kind of animal seeking to tame man?

There are unique relationships observed in nature. For example, the Cornfield Ant fosters the Corn Root Aphid. In this mutual relationship, the ants provide protection and nourishment for their young in return for the aphid's excrement.² But even this example falls short of man's achievement, for man tames things that are superior in strength and even dangerous to his existence.

¹ All scripture cited is the New King James Version (NKJV) unless otherwise noted.

² Weston, Paula, “Ants: swarm intelligence,” <http://www.answersingenesis.org/creation/v24/i1/ants.asp>

Why can man tame wild animals?

Man has the ability to tame animals because of several reasons. We may note:

- *Man is superior to animals.* Man's creation stands higher than that of animal. While land-beasts and man are affirmed to have been created on the same day, God elevated man by building him last. He was the acme of God's creation on earth! The Psalmist declares: *“For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor”* (Ps. 8:5).
- *Man was charged to have dominion over the creation.* Man can tame animals not simply because he is greater than them. Angels are greater than man, but do we see angels taming humans? They were not charged to exercise dominion over us. . .but this is precisely what God has charged man in reference to the animal kingdom. *“You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen—even the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas”* (Ps. 8:6-8; cf. Gen. 1:26-28).
- *Because they are wild.* This is a key component as well. If there were no wild animals, there would be no taming of them. Our quest then takes us to two questions: One, “What is God's purpose in giving wild animals?” and two, “Where did the *wildness* of animals come from?”

The purpose of the presence of wild animals

What is the purpose of having wild animals in the world? First we should note that everything created in this life has a purpose even if we don't fully understand it. We can look at revelation and discover a few reasons, however.

Man's Enjoyment

God has given all animals to be under the dominion of man. One reason why there are animals, then, is for man's enjoyment. Solomon found ivory (presumably from elephants) as well as apes and peacocks useful in his merchant life (1 Kin. 10:22; NASB).

Man's Diet

God told Noah and his sons,

"And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood" (Gen. 9:2-4).

God had removed any previous restrictions on man's diet at this time. He was able to eat any thing that moved. Later, one by the name of "Nimrod" became a "mighty hunter," which trait seemed to assist in establishing his subsequent kingdom (Gen. 10:9-14). It may be inferred by noting such a skill, that there were many large and seemingly fearsome animals in the world at that time which could pose dangers to humans. Acquiring a skill of slaying such beasts would have bolstered one's reputation as a world-leader.

Man's Betterment/Punishment

God had used animals for man's betterment or for his detriment. Of the former we are reminded of how God provided a "ram" for Abraham to sacrifice (Gen. 22) and how the ravens helped to feed Elijah (1 Kin. 17:4-6). Even Agur had drawn from the working code of animals to teach men lessons, writing,

"The rock badgers are a feeble folk, yet they make their homes in the crags" (Prov. 30:26).

Of the latter, God had used animals to punish the wicked.

"Then, if you walk contrary to Me, and are not willing to obey Me, I will bring on you seven times more plagues, according to your sins. I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, destroy your livestock, and make you few in number; and your highways shall be desolate" (Lev. 26:21, 22; cf. Deut. 32:24; 1 Sam. 17:46; Ezek. 5:17).

On another occasion, Elisha had summoned two female bears to maul forty-two youths who were disrespectful to his person and good work (2 Kin. 2:23-25). He could not have summoned them to do this violent action if the Lord had not sent them.

Man's Pride

God had created mighty creatures to show His own power so that man might reflect on his own humble nature. Jehovah describes dinosaurian creatures which He paraded before Job to show Jehovah's greatness and Job's smallness. Consider. . .

"Look now at the behemoth, which I made along with you. . . He moves his tail like a cedar. . . His bones are like beams of bronze, his ribs like bars of iron. He is the first of the ways of God; only He who made him can bring near His sword" (Job. 40:15-19).

This creature resembles the skeletal structure of some that have been preserved in the rock strata with long tails that would have swayed like a cedar tree. Leviathan, another monstrous creature was created as the king of pride:

"Can you draw out Leviathan with a hook, or snare his tongue with a line which you lower? Can you put a reed through his nose, or pierce his jaw with a hook? . . . No one is so fierce that he would dare stir him up. Who then is able to stand against Me? . . . On earth there is nothing like him, which is made without fear. He beholds every high thing; He is king over all the children of pride" (Job. 41:1, 2, 10, 33, 34).

That this creature, like Behemoth, was "made" is thoroughly affirmed from the passage and is therefore not to be reduced to some fictitious animal or to some poetical expression. In fact, these creatures were just as "living" and just as real as Job was (see Job. 40:15; cf. Ps. 104:26).

Where did the "wildness" of animals come from? Were there wild animals in the Garden of Eden?

Because wild animals exist today, doesn't mean that they have always existed. There were no wild animals in Eden:

"Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air,

and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him” (Gen. 2:19, 20).

One cannot speak by faith saying that the animals in Eden were wild, poisonous and vicious. In fact, all we can say by faith is that “they were good” (see Gen. 1:25). God created the creatures and pronounces that he “saw that it was good.” Yet, years later the scripture calls some “evil beasts.”

“I will give peace in the land, and you shall lie down, and none will make you afraid; I will rid the land of evil beasts. . .” (Lev. 25:6).

Wherever the origin of evil and wild beasts, it was not in the Garden. The scriptures hint that the “wildness” of the animals came into play after the flood.

“And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand” (Gen. 9:2).

Something altogether different would inhabit Noah’s new world that was lacking in Adam’s—the chasm of the fear and dread befallen upon beasts. After the flood, man was permitted to eat animal flesh and all of the animals were therefore filled with the fear and dread (terror and dismay) of man. The scripture is silent as to whether this began happening prior to the flood.