

Genesis and the Demise of the Dinosaurs

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Abstract

The taxonomic divisions presented primarily by God in the Bible differ in part from the Linnaean classification system, which is familiar to modern biology. An evaluation was completed of the usage of the Hebrew terms for each division during the Creation week, after the Fall, during the Flood, and later in Biblical history. The analysis suggests that dinosaurs declined significantly after the Fall and before the Noachian Deluge. Conversely, after the Fall, mammals increased markedly. This conclusion runs contrary to other creationist theories that suggest that most dinosaurs died during or after the Flood. The Bible suggests these trends may have occurred for theological reasons: the danger that dinosaurs posed to the existence of mankind, their susceptibility to demonic influence, and their capabilities under infernal control.

Introduction

The prevailing theory held by many creationists is that the majority of the dinosaurs perished during the Flood and subsequent glaciations (Ham 2006; Morris 1989; Oard 1990, 1993). This theory coincides with the majority belief that the Noachian Deluge and its attendant events caused “most of the geological formations of the earth” (Gish, 2006, p. 49). The debate concerning the pre-Flood/Flood boundary follows this premise with researchers placing this horizon in strata at the beginning of Phanerozoic or Proterozoic eras—before the Cenozoic, Mesozoic, and Paleozoic (Austin, 1994; Hoesch, 2007; Austin and Wise, 1994; Wise and Snelling, 2005;

Oard and Froede, 2008). Many regard the period between the Fall and the Flood as having a minimal impact on the extirpation and fossilization of terrestrial animal kinds and its impact on geological strata (Reed et al., 1996; Froede, 1995; Walker, 1994; Reed et al., 2006). Others postulate that pre-Flood deposits were either degraded or removed by the Flood (Austin and Wise, 1994, p. 584; Morris, 1994, p. 106; Walker, 1994, p. 584). Still, there are a persistent few who object to the minimalization of the Fall and maximalization of the Flood, especially in regard to the curses God made on the ground, serpent, and on Adam’s descendants after the Fall (Gentet, 2000;

Watts, 1984). Both authors cite Biblical passages which describe the impact of the Fall, namely that God cursed the serpent (Genesis 3:14–15) and the ground (Genesis 3:17), creation groaned (Romans 8:22), sin and death entered the world (Genesis 3:19, 4:8; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Romans 5:12–14), all flesh became corrupted and the earth was filled with violence (Genesis 6:10–13), and carnivory began (Genesis 1:29–30; 9:3–4). God’s curse of the ground during the antediluvian period is repeatedly mentioned by Cain when he is judged (Genesis 4:10–12), in the statement by Lamech after Noah is born (Genesis 5:28–29); and by God after the Flood: “Never again will I curse the ground...” (Genesis 8:20–22). Furthermore, flood geologists cite examples today where natural disasters, such as the recent eruption of Mount Saint Helens, caused the rapid buildup of stratigraphy. They

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apply these observations to the effects of volcanism during the Noachian Deluge (Morris and Austin, 2003). Conversely, no mention is made of similar events after the Fall and before the Flood. Since modern natural disasters can cause the rapid formation of stratigraphy, in an era when God does not curse the ground, it is likely these same catastrophes were more pronounced after the Fall and before the Flood, when God cursed the earth, and this curse was readily noticed by the antediluvian patriarchs. Watts (1984, p. 21) notes that the pre-Flood world should be considered as “a possible era of fossilization.” Gentet (2000, p. 19) places “the North American Mesozoic strata with its dinosaur fossils, tracks, nests, etc. as pre-Flood.” The analysis below lends support to the minority view that most dinosaurs perished in the period after the Fall and before the Flood.

Major Taxonomic Classifications of Terrestrial Animals in the Bible

Klenck (2009) provided an analysis of the major taxonomic groups of terrestrial animals as defined by God in the Bible, especially in Genesis, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. The major terrestrial animal groups are shown below, with the animal kinds assigned to each group, their Hebrew spelling, English pronunciation, Strong's Concordance number and translation(s).

1. Every bird [עוף] *with wing* (Gen 1:21)
עוף 5775
2. The beasts of the earth [הארץ-הית] (Gen 1:25)
הית 2416
ארץ 776
3. The *cattle* [הבהמה] (Gen 1:25)
בהמה 929
4. Every thing that creepeth [רמש] (Gen 1:25)
רמש 7430
5. Man [אדם] (Gen 1:27)
אדם 120

Table I. Animal kinds attributed by God to *ohf*, or bird.

Bird, עוף, <i>ohf</i> , 5775					
Book	Chapter	Verse	Hebrew	English Pronunciation	English Translation
Lev	1	14	התרים	hatorim [8449]	Turtledoves (6), turtledove (3), turtles (3), turtle (3).
Lev	1	14	היינה	hiyanah [3123]	Dove (14), pigeons (9), doves (5), doves' (2), pigeon (1).
Lev	11	13	הנשר	ha'neshar [5404]	Eagle (19), eagles (5), eagle's (1), eagles' (1).
Lev	11	13	הפרם	ha'perem [6538]	Ossifrage (2), black vulture (1).
Lev	11	13	העזניה	ha'ozniyah [5822]	Osprey (2), bearded vulture (1).
Lev	11	14	הדאה	ha'da'ah [1676]	Vulture (1), red kite (1), kite (1).
Lev	11	14	האיה	ha'ayah [344]	Aiah (6), kite (2), black kite (1), vulture's (1), falcon (1).
Lev	11	15	כל-ערב	kol erev [6158]	Raven (6), ravens (4).
Lev	11	16	בת היענה	ha'ya'anah [3283 & 3284]	Owl (9), ostriches (5), ostrich (1), eagle owl (1).
Lev	11	16	התחמס	ha'tach'mas [8464]	Nighthawk (2), screech owl (1), great owl (1).
Lev	11	16	השחף	ha'shachaf [7828]	Cuckow (2), gull (1), bat (1).
Lev	11	16	הנץ	ha'netz [5322]	Hawk (3), small hawk (1).
Lev	11	17	הכוס	ha'kos [3559]	Little owl (2), owl (1).
Lev	11	17	השלך	ha'shalach [7994]	Cormorant (2), Egyptian vulture (1).
Lev	11	17	הינשורף	ha'yan'shuf [3244]	Great owl (2), owl (1), eared owl (1).
Lev	11	18	התנשמת	ha'tinshemet [8580]	Swan (2), white owl (1).
Lev	11	18	הקאת	ha'ka'at [6893]	Pelican (3), cormorant (2), desert owl (1).
Lev	11	18	הרחם	ha'racham [7360]	Gier eagle (2), owl vulture (1), osprey (1), carrion-vulture (1).
Lev	11	19	החסידה	ha'chasidah [2624]	Stork (5), heron (1), ostrich (1).
Lev	11	19	האנפה	ha'anafah [601]	Heron (2)
Lev	11	19	הדוכיפת	ha'dukiphat [1744]	Lapwing (2), hoopoe (1).
Lev	11	19	העטלף	ha'atalef [5847]	Bat (2), bats (1).
Deut	14	13	הראה	ha'ra'ah [7201]	Glede (1), red kite (1), hawk (1).

6. Every beast of the field [השדה
היה] (Gen 2:19)
היה 2416
שדה 7704

Birds, or *ohf*, were the first group of terrestrial animals that God formed during the fifth day of creation (Table I). This taxon comprised most likely both flying and flightless birds, due to the possible attribution of *ya'annah* to ostrich. Most translations of Lamentations 4:3 translate *ya'annah* as ostrich, which has continued into Modern Hebrew. The description of both flying and flightless birds as *ohf* generally corresponds to the Linnaean class *Aves*. In addition, the bat, or *atalef*, is included in the group *ohf*. The translation of *atalef* as a bat is uniform throughout the Bible, and in Modern Hebrew, the word *atalef* continues to be translated as bat.

On the sixth day of creation week, God created the terrestrial creepers and swarmers. The Genesis accounts use the word *remes* as the primary designator of these creeping animals; however, in Genesis 7:22, *sheretz* is used. God first uses these words to describe marine animals, which He created on the fifth day (Genesis 1:21–22). These verses show the interchangeability of *remes* and *sheretz* and how the root word transitions from nouns to verbs to describe this taxon of creepers / swarmers. In Genesis 1:22, the taxon is described as *שרצו המים* or “that is creeping which swarmed the waters.” *Romeset* is an active participle and *shertzu* is a plural third-person perfect verb. This phrase in Genesis 1:21 reflects the creative directive by God in Genesis 1:20: “God said *let swarm the waters swarmers*” or *ישרצו המים שרץ*. Here, *sheretz* is an imperfect verb and a noun. To reiterate in less wooden English, God declares “*let the waters swarm with swarmers*” in 1:20, and in 1:21 God creates each “*living soul that is creeping which swarmed the waters*.” Both the mechanics of 1:21 and the context of 1:20–21 exhibit how *שרץ*

(swarmer) and *רמש* (creeper) are used interchangeably, and their descriptions *creep* literally from nouns to different verb tenses. The terrestrial animals that comprise this group make it the most diverse of the major classifications. Leviticus 11:21–22 mentions *remes* that fly and lists four “clean” creepers, which are translated as species of locusts, crickets, or both. Leviticus 11:42 notes that this group comprises animals that crawl on their belly and have many feet.

In Leviticus 11:20–23 the word *ohf* also is used with *sheretz*. However, *ohf* can be translated as bird, flying, or flieth. Here, *שרץ העוף* is literally *swarmer the flying or swarming thing which flies*. Only those unfamiliar with Hebrew grammar would state that Leviticus 11:20–23 refers

to birds since the phrase *שרץ העוף* exhibits clearly *העוף* is the genitive as shown by the article *ה* and describes *שרץ*, which is in the construct state (Weingreen, 1959, pp. 43–47). Hence, the swarmer is being described as flying. *Ha'ohf* or *העוף* describes the swarmer and is not the object of description. If the verse read *עוף השרץ* then the text could be translated as “bird which is swarming” or “swarming bird,” which would indicate that insects are part of *ohf*. However, the passage clearly indicates that *שרץ* is in the construct state and is described by *העוף* and hence, is correctly translated in every Hebrew translation of the text as “swarming thing which flies” or “flying swarmer.”

Leviticus 11:29 broadens the taxonomic group of *remes / sheretz* to

Table II. The animal kinds attributed by God to *remes* or *sheretz* (creepers or swarmers).

Creeper or swarmer, רמש או שרץ, <i>remes</i> or <i>sheretz</i> , 7430 or 8313					
Book	Chapter	Verse	Hebrew	English Pronunciation	English Translation
Lev	11	22	הסלעם	ha'salam [5556]	Bald locust (1), katydid (1).
Lev	11	22	ההרגל	ha'hargol [2728]	Long horned grasshopper (1), cricket (1), locust (1), beetle (1).
Lev	11	22	החגב	ha'chagav [2284]	Grasshopper (1), locust (1), short horned grasshopper (1).
Lev	11	29	החלד	ha'heled [2467]	Weasel (1), mole (1), rat (1).
Lev	11	29	העכבר	ha'akbar [5909]	Mice (4), mouse (2), jerboa (1), jumping rat (1).
Lev	11	29	הצב	ha'tzav [6632]	Lizard (1), tortoise (1), great lizard (1).
Lev	11	29	האנקה	ha'anakah [604]	Ferret (1), gecko (1).
Lev	11	29	הכח	ha'kuach [3581]	Chameleon (1), monitor lizard (1), any kind of lizard (1).
Lev	11	29	הלטאה	ha'leta'ah [3911]	Lizard (1), wall lizard (1), gecko (1).
Lev	11	29	החמט	ha'chumet [2546]	Snail (1), skink (1), sand lizard (1).
Lev	11	29	התנשמת	ha'tinshamet [8580]	Mole (1), chameleon (1).

Table III. The animal kinds attributed to *behemah*, which includes medium to large mammals.

"Cattle," בהמה, <i>behemah</i> , 929					
Book	Chapter	Verse	Hebrew	English Pronunciation	English Translation
Lev	11	4	הגמל	ha'gamal [1581]	Camels (45), camel (5), camels' (3), camel's (1).
Lev	11	5	השפן	ha'shafan [8227]	Shaphan (30), conies (2), coney (1), cony (1), rock badger (1).
Lev	11	6	הארנבת	ha'arnevet [768]	Hare (2), rabbit (1).
Lev	11	7	החזיר	ha'chazir [2386]	Swine's (4), swine (2), boar (1), pig (1)
Deut	14	4	שור	shur [7794]	Ox (54), bullock (11), oxen (8), cow (2), bullocks (1), bull (1).
Deut	14	4	כשבים	kesavim [3775]	Sheep (8), lamb (3), lambs (1), ram-lamb (1), young sheep (1).
Deut	14	4	עזים	ezim [5795]	Goats (40), goats' (10), kid (7), goat (5)
Deut	14	5	איל	ayal [354]	Hart (9), harts (2), deer (1), young stag (1).
Deut	14	5	צבי	tzevi [6643]	Roe (8), roebuck (4), gazelle (3), roes (3), roebucks (1).
Deut	14	5	יהמור	yach'mur [3180]	Fallow deer (2), roebuck (1), roe deer (1).
Deut	14	5	זמר	zamer [2169]	Mouflon (1), chamois (1), mountain sheep (1), gazelle (1).
Prov	30	30	ליש	layish [3918]	Old lion (2), lion (1).
Ec	3	18	אדם	adam [120]	Man (390), men (109), Adam (20), man's (16)
Zec	14	15	הסוס	ha'sus [5483]	Horses (97), horse (35), horseback (2), on horseback (2)
Zec	14	15	הפרד	ha'pfered [6505]	Mules (8), mule (6), mules' (1).
Zec	14	15	הגמל	ha'gamal [1581]	Camels (45), camel (5), camels' (3), camel's (1).
Zec	14	15	ההמור	ha'chamor [2543]	Donkey (55), donkeys (39), donkey's (1), male donkey (1).
Jer	15	3	כלבים	ha'kelevim [3611]	Dogs (16), dog (14), dog's (2).

include small mammals such as *heled* and *akbar*, the weasel and mouse, respectively. Also, *chumet*, which is commonly translated as snail also belongs to *remes*. Furthermore, God assigns *tzav*, *anakah*, and *leta'ah*, which are

translated as lizards and turtles, to this group. Hence, *remes / sheretz* is the broadest taxonomic group created by God, comprising insects, arachnids, snails, small reptiles, and small mammals (Table II).

God created the *behemah* on the sixth day, a word commonly translated as "cattle." However, a comparison of Biblical passages shows that God includes a wide array of terrestrial animals in this group including the camel, rock badger, hare, swine, sheep, goat, oxen, deer, and ibex (Table III). Zechariah 14:15 notes that horses, mules, camels, and donkeys belong to this group. Deuteronomy 28:26 and 1 Samuel 17:44 notes that *behemah* comprise non-avian carnivorous animals that consume the remains of humans. Proverbs 30:30 notes that the lion is from the *behemah*. To reiterate, while God associates small mammals with *remes* (Leviticus 11:29), He attributes mammals that are equal to or larger in size than hares to the *behemah* group (Leviticus 11:3–7; Deuteronomy 14:4–5).

Of all the created animal groups, the beasts of the earth are the most enigmatic with regard to Scripture. Although mentioned during the Creation week, very few references after Creation are associated with this taxonomic classification. These mostly comprise prophetic passages without associations with specific animals. Thallon (1984) adroitly suggests that beasts of the earth were a large taxonomic grouping that comprised the beasts of the field, a smaller array of created kinds. Hence, specific animals associated with beasts of the field also belong to the more inclusive category of beasts of the earth.

Another association is found in Job 40:15–24, which describes the "Behemoth." Behemoth should not be confused with *behemah*. The former refers to a specific animal kind and the latter, a taxonomic group (Leviticus 11:3–7; 11:26–27; Deuteronomy 14:4–5). In addition to the differences in Hebrew spelling there is the pronounced divergence in the description of Behemoth compared to other animal kinds which God associates with the *behemah* taxon. The description of Behemoth resembles that of a large herbivorous sauropod,

Table IV. The animal kinds attributed to the beasts of the field or *chayat ha'sadeh*.

Beast of the field, חית השדה, <i>chayat ha'sadeh</i> , 2416 & 7704					
Book	Chapter	Verse	Hebrew	English Pronunciation	English Translation
Gen	3	1	נחש	nachash [5175]	Serpent (25), serpents (4), serpent's (2)
Is	43	20	תנין	tannin [8577]	Dragons (16), dragon (6), serpent (2), serpents (1).

such as an *Apatosaurus*, in that its tail is described as hanging “like a cedar” (Job 40:17) and its enormity blocks the flow of rivers (Job 40:22). Furthermore, the Behemoth is associated with the beasts of the field (Job 40:20) and is described as “the first in the ways of God” (Job 40:19). In Genesis 1:25–26, God first created the beasts of the earth. Since Job 40:19 describes Behemoth as first in the ways of God and Genesis 1:25 notes that God first created the beasts of the earth on the sixth day of creation, it appears that the Behemoth should be associated with the beasts of the earth.

The last major taxonomic group created by God was the beasts of the

field. Biblical passages note that these animals prefer desolate land, carnivory, and are associated with hell (2 Samuel 21:10; Ezekiel 31:13, 39:17; Jeremiah 12:9). Beasts of the field are noted in prophetic passages but are not associated with specific animal kinds, with two noted exceptions (Table IV). Genesis 3:1 describes the serpent or *nachash*, as being the wisest of all the beasts of the field. After the Fall, God cursed the serpent stating that it would in the future move on its belly and eat dust all the days of its life (Genesis 3:14). The verse suggests that before the Fall, the serpent must have stood upright and was not near the ground. After the Fall, the term

nachash is mostly associated with snakes, specifically vipers or *sh'feefone* (Genesis 49:17; Psalms 140:3; Isaiah 14:29). That *nachash* usually refers to snakes is evidenced by other Biblical references that cite their venomous qualities (Numbers 21:6; Psalms 58:4); habitat on rocks, in walls, and in the desert (Proverbs 30:19; Ecclesiastes 10:8; Amos 5:19; Deuteronomy 8:15); aptitude for biting (Numbers 21:9; Proverbs 23:32); ability to be charmed (Ecclesiastes 10:11; Jeremiah 8:17); and their mode of travel by crawling on the ground and licking the dust (Micah 7:17). However, Isaiah 43:20 associates beasts of the field with *tannin*. In several Biblical passages, *tannin* is portrayed as a terrestrial animal and is translated as dragon, serpent, or monster (Psalm 91:13; Isaiah 34:13; 35:7; Jeremiah 49:33; 51:37). In Genesis 1:22 *tannin* denotes a sea monster. The association between *nachash* and *tannin* is further clarified in Isaiah 27:1. In this verse, both *nachash* (serpent) and *tannin* (dragon or monster) are used to describe Leviathan, which in Job 41 depicts a very large animal with terrible teeth (v. 14),

Table V. Comparison between major terrestrial faunal groupings from Scripture and Linnaean classifications.

Major Taxa Defined by God	Common Translation	Proposed Linnaean Classifications
Behemah	Cattle	Class: Mammalia larger than or equal to the size of hares.
Remes / Sheretz	Creeper / Swarmer	Class: Mammalia smaller in size than hares. Phylum: Arthropoda (insects, spiders, lice) Class: Gastropoda (land snails and slugs) Reptilia Order Squamata, Suborders Lacertilia (lizards) Class: Reptilia, Orders Sphenodontia and Testudines (turtles and tortoises)
Ohf	Bird	Class: Aves Mammalian Order: Chiroptera (bats)
Chayat Ha'Aretz	Beast of the Earth	Supraorder: Dinosauria, Order: Ornithischia Supraorder: Dinosauria, Order: Saurischia, Suborder: Sauropodomorpha
Chayat Ha'Sadeh	Beast of the Field	Supraorder: Dinosauria, Order: Saurischia, Suborder: Theropoda Reptilia Order Crocodylia (crocodiles and alligators) Reptilia Order Squamata, Suborders Serpentes and Amphisbaenia (snakes and worm lizards)

Table VI. A numerical comparison of mentions of *behemah*, beasts of the earth, and beasts of the field from Genesis through Deuteronomy.

Books in the Bible	Behemah	% Behemah	Beasts of the Earth & Field	% Beasts of the Earth & Field
From Creation to the Fall (Genesis 1:1 to 3:24)	5	41.7%	7	58.3%
After the Fall and throughout the Flood (Genesis 4:1 to 9:29)	13	81.3%	3	18.8%
After the Flood to Joshua (Genesis 10:1 through Deuteronomy)	85	96.6%	3	3.4%

scales (v. 15), moving in the deep sea (v. 31), whose exterior cannot be penetrated by spears, arrows, or swords (v. 26–29). Hence, the totality of Biblical passages suggests that *nachash* can describe both smaller snakes and much larger dragons or monsters with reptilian attributes. Furthermore, that God describes small reptiles such as lizards and turtles as being part of *remes*, strongly indicates that the beasts of the field comprised larger reptiles. To sum, the beasts of the field taxon included dragons and legged serpents, and incorporated large carnivorous reptiles that moved above the ground. These descriptions of beasts of the field suggest a correlation with sauropods, especially theropods.

Table V compares the major terrestrial faunal groupings created by God with the more familiar Linnaean classification scheme. When God created *ohf*, these comprised all birds and bats. God created *behemah*, which included mammals with sizes equal to or larger than hares. God created *remes*, a broad group that included small mammals, small reptiles, terrestrial snails and slugs, and the entirety of the Linnaean phylum *Arthropoda*: insects, arachnids, millipedes, and similar fauna. Finally, God created the beasts of the earth and field: the river-stopping behemoth, legged serpents, and dragons, which included the supraorder *Dinosauria*.

Demise of the Beasts of the Earth and Field

There is a trend in the Biblical citation of major terrestrial taxonomic groups. From Creation to the Fall (Genesis 1:1–3:24), there is much mention of the beasts of the earth and field. After the Fall and throughout the rest of the Pentateuch (Genesis 10 through Deuteronomy), the beasts of the earth and field are largely absent from any narrative (Table VI).

The decline of Biblical references to the beasts of the earth and field after the Fall is striking in several respects. At Creation and in Eden prior to the Fall, the beasts of the earth and field are given primacy by God. On Day 6, God *first* created the beasts of the earth, before any other animal group (Genesis 1:25). In Eden, God *first* mentions the beasts of the field and brings these kinds to Adam to be named (Genesis 2:19). The serpent was *more* cunning [ערום] than all [מכל] the beasts of the field (Genesis 3:1).

Despite the early prominence of the beasts of the earth and field, they are hardly mentioned after the Fall, as shown by the following texts.

1. Genesis 6:7. When God contemplates the destruction of all terrestrial animals before the Flood, He plans to destroy men, *behemah*, *remes*, and birds. The

beasts of the earth or field are not mentioned.

2. Genesis 6:18–20. God orders Noah to take the following groups onto the ark: Noah's family, *behemah*, *remes*, and birds. Again, the text does not mention the beasts of the earth or field.
3. Genesis 7:2–3. God commands Noah to put seven of every clean *behemah* and bird and two of every unclean *behemah* on the ark. Again, the beasts of the earth and field are excluded.
4. Genesis 7:7–8, 13–14. When Noah enters the ark, he enters the ark with his family, *behemah*, *remes*, and birds. The beasts of the earth or field are not mentioned.
5. Genesis 7:21, 23. When all terrestrial life is destroyed by the Flood, the following animal groups are mentioned: birds, *sheretz* (creepers), *behemah*, and men. Here, God notes that animals [חיה] died, but again no mention is made of the beasts of the earth or field.
6. Genesis 8:16–19. When Noah and the animals leave the ark, the following groups are mentioned: birds, *remes*, *behemah*, and Noah's family. Neither the beasts of the field nor the beasts

of the earth are included in the debarkation description.

7. Genesis 9:2, 9–10. Only after the Flood, when God states that all animals will fear man and establishes a covenant with Noah, is there mention of the beasts of earth. However, in these passages the grouping is mentioned with the prefix *col* or “all” [כל-הית הארץ], which might infer a general statement about all the terrestrial animals on earth. No mention is made about the beasts of the field.

After the Pentateuch, beasts of the earth and field are noted in mostly prophetic texts associated with the destruction of the enemies of God, divine punishment, and hell. These passages discuss spiritual and symbolic animals and rarely mention the beasts of the earth or field as actual earthly animals.

Also, after the Fall, the phrases “beast of the earth” and “beast of the field” change. Before the Fall, beasts of the earth and field appear as *chayat ha’aretz* and *chayat ha’sadeh*. After the Fall, the phrase at times changes to *behemat ha’aretz* (Deuteronomy 28:26, Jeremiah 15:3; 16:4) and *behemat ha’sadeh* (1 Samuel 17:44), again reflecting the rise of the taxon associated with mammalian fauna.

Ham (2006, pp. 135, 143) notes passages about terrestrial dragons after the Fall (Psalm 91:13; Isaiah 34:13; 35:7; Jeremiah 49:33; 51:37; Ezekiel 29:3; 32:2; Malachi 1:8 [sic—Micah]). However, some of these references could be translated as crocodile (Ezekiel 29:3). The mention of Behemoth, the river-blocking sauropod in Job 40:15, occurs only in this passage. Also, legends concerning the slaying of dragons or dinosaur-like creatures after the Flood are relatively few in number but widely promulgated. Saint George slew one dragon and Beowulf dispatched one Grendel, yet the iconography and retelling of these two events permeate Western culture even

today (Cooper, 1995). Assuming their earthly existence, the concern is that the notoriety given to the hunters of these rare creatures, after the Fall, makes dragons appear more numerous than they actually were. Furthermore, mentions of terrestrial dragons and Behemoth in the Bible are dwarfed by references to other taxonomic groups. For example, in the Old Testament, sheep are mentioned in 145 verses.

The Impact of the Fall

That the Fall had a tremendous negative impact on flora and fauna is attested to in other Biblical passages. After the Fall, God cursed the ground (Genesis 3:17). God allowed thistles and thorns to spread throughout the earth (Genesis 3:18). Sin and death entered the world (Genesis 3:19; 4:8; I Corinthians 15:22; Romans 5:12, 14). Romans 8:22 describes all creation as groaning because of the Fall. Genesis 6:10–13 states that all flesh became corrupted, and the earth was filled with violence. Finally, after the Fall, carnivory began (Genesis 1:29–30; 9:3–4).

God also cursed the serpent. The serpent is described as the wisest of the beasts of the field (Genesis 3:1). God cursed the serpent with future-tense verbs: “You shall go on your belly, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life” (Genesis 3:14). These verbs strongly suggest that, before God cursed the serpent, it was *not* crawling on its belly or eating the dust of the earth.

There are two ways to interpret this curse. God may have: (1) cursed only this serpent, which Satan had possessed, or (2) this curse extended to all the beasts of the field and earth. In light of the sharp proportional decline of references to these taxa after the Fall, I suggest the latter.

There are two methods by which God could have exacted His curse. (1) He could have changed the individual serpent, or (2) He could have allowed

most beasts of the field and earth to go extinct, with the exception of the kinds that crawled on the ground and ate the dust of the earth. The latter would continue to survive as viable populations. Again, in lieu of the marked decline of mentions of beasts of the field and earth after the Fall, the latter method seems more likely.

Possible Causes for the Decline of the Beasts of the Earth and Field after the Fall

Genesis 3 provides an indication as to why God allowed the destruction of the beasts of the field and earth after the Fall. If Satan could possess the serpent, he and his minions would presumably be able to possess other beasts of the field and earth. After the Fall, with sin permeating the earth, the ability of evil spirits to possess beasts of the field and earth may have been augmented. The only other time in the Bible where evil spirits possessed animals occurred when Jesus cast a legion of demons into a herd of pigs, an animal kind belonging to the *behemah* (Mark 5:8–13). After He did so, the pigs panicked, ran into the sea, and died. Conversely, when Satan possessed the serpent, a kind belonging to the beasts of the field, its abilities were seemingly augmented as it proceeded to communicate with and tempt Eve (Genesis 3:1–5). Furthermore, it is possible that the beasts of the field had better communication ability and were perhaps more intelligent than other taxonomic groups, especially in their ability to collaboratively hunt in packs (Diegert and Williamson, 1998; Carpenter, 1998). Lastly, it is obvious the physical danger that the beasts of the field and earth would have posed for men, whether or not they were possessed, given the size, speed, and protective armor of *Dinosauria* species, if God had allowed them to thrive intact, as they did at creation and before the Fall.

To sum, it is suggested that God dispatched the beasts of the field and

earth because they could be more readily possessed by evil spirits, these possessions would augment their abilities, and because their physical size, speed, cunning, and communication ability would have jeopardized the survival of Adam and his descendants.

Summary

From the Biblical passages, several conclusions can be made. Comparing the proportion of Biblical references between the beasts of the earth / field and the *behemoth*, we see a marked decrease of references to the former after Genesis 3. It is significant that the proportional decline in references to the beasts of the earth and field occurs *before* and not after the Flood. Conversely, the proportional increase in references about the *behemoth*, the taxon comprising mammals with sizes equal to or larger than hares, occurs before the Flood. Although some beasts of the earth and field survived the Fall and Flood, they continued to exist on earth in markedly diminished numbers, were rarely mentioned, and were largely inconsequential to human and other animal populations. Their continued earthly existence today is questionable since Biblical authors, mostly prophets, refer to these animals in spiritual and symbolic terms, often as instruments of God's judgment, not as earthly animals.

The rapid decline of references to the beasts of the earth and field in Biblical passages, after the Fall and before the Flood, supports the notion of a decline of these taxonomic groups during this antediluvian period. This textual support is in addition to other Biblical passages which describe the impact of the Fall, namely that God cursed the serpent and the ground, creation groaned, sin and death entered the world, and carnivory began.

We have a tendency to focus on the effects of the Fall on Adam and his descendants and not recognize the im-

port of this event on animal kinds. The totality of Biblical evidence suggests that the Fall, as well as the Flood, severely affected animal and human life on earth.

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