

Clarification on carnivory

I am open to the possibility that carnivory may have begun either soon after the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, or not until after the Flood.¹ Recently, David Larsen has written a rather speculative article in which he suggests that carnivory did not begin until after the Flood.²

To begin with, the fossil evidence for carnivory is much stronger than Larsen relates. Any paleoecology book can be consulted to verify the fact that such things as predator-punctured shells (and not only predator-scarred bones) are common throughout the fossil record. So, if the fossil record dates from the Flood, then pre-Flood carnivory is a virtual certainty. The only way around this would be to suggest that the entire fossil record is post-Flood, which is an ultra neo-Cuvierist view that I consider nonsensical.

Larsen unfortunately misrepresents my work on the logistics of the Ark and the release of animals from it. He at first correctly points out³ that I allow for dried meats to be stored in order to feed the carnivores on the Ark (which I assume existed in order to make the Ark-logistics problem more difficult than it would have been had all the Ark animals been able to subsist solely on vegetation). (Add to that the fact that other suggested sources of meat on the Ark included large fodder tortoises, aestivating fish and amphibians, etc.⁴). Larsen then completely departs from the reality of my book when he asserts that such a solution would be inadequate for the post-Flood world because the carnivores would eat the Ark-released herbivores, thereby causing extinction. It does not appear that Larsen has read my book, because I had expended a fair amount of detail in order to solve this apparent problem. There would certainly have been no need to store such things as dried meat for the post-Flood world in the event of the existence of Ark-released carnivores!

As I have shown,⁵ the oft-repeated Ark-carnivores-will-consume-Ark-herbivores canard does not stand up to critical examination. It would **only** be true if the Ark-released carnivores had no flesh to eat except the Ark-released herbivores. The fact is, however, that the post-Flood world was teeming with alternative sources of meat: the carrion from pre-Flood animals, fish and amphibians stranded on land, etc. Hence the Ark-released carnivores did not have to eat Ark-released herbivores for a long time after the Flood owing to the profusion of these alternative-meat sources. Furthermore, as I have documented,⁶ carnivores will much rather eat even putrescent carrion than exert themselves in catching and killing live prey.

As a result of all this, the Ark-released herbivore populations were naturally protected for a considerable period of time after their, and the carnivores', release from the Ark, by these buffers. By the time that these alternative meat sources had been largely exhausted, the herbivore populations would have grown to large sizes, thus minimizing the danger of extinction once individual herbivores were eaten by the carnivores. This is not to say that post-Flood carnivory did not cause any extinction of herbivores. In fact, from knowledge of the fossil record, I estimate that over 75% of the animals which were released off the Ark are now extinct for one reason or other.

What about Genesis 9:2–3? At one time, I also had believed that this indicated the origins of carnivory after the Flood. But, as I discuss in some detail,⁷ Genesis 9:2–3 has a much more prosaic explanation. It is this: when large carnivores such as lions are cared for by humans, they no longer have any fear of humans. As a result of this, and upon being released into the wild, they often turn to cattle-eating or even man-eating. So putting (actually, re-establishing) the fear of humans into the carnivores (Genesis 9:2–3) was probably done in order to erase the familiarity the carnivores had developed towards humans, thereby preventing lions from resorting to man-eating.

Putting the fear of humans into the animals also must have helped sever the dependency relationship which the Ark animals had developed towards humans. Consequently, the Ark-released animals would have now started fending for food themselves instead of constantly returning to the humans for food handouts, to which they had of course been accustomed at least throughout their yearlong stay on the Ark.

In conclusion, whatever the precise time that carnivory first appeared on this Earth, there is no problem at all with some animals being carnivorous on the Ark, nor with carnivory existing immediately after the disembarkation of animals off the Ark. There are many more details about this subject discussed in my book, to which I refer the interested reader.

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References

1. Woodmorappe, J., *Noah's Ark: a Feasibility Study*, Institute for Creation Research, El Cajon, p. 99, 1996.
2. Larsen, D., The Scriptural advent of carnivory, *TJ* 15(1)69–75, 2001
3. Larsen, Ref. 2, p. 71.
4. Woodmorappe, Ref. 1, pp. 99–101.
5. Woodmorappe, Ref. 1, pp. 167–170.
6. Woodmorappe, Ref. 1, p. 169.
7. Woodmorappe, Ref. 1, p. 164.



David Larsen replies:

It almost seemed from the tone of Woodmorappe's response to my article, that he was offended at my reference to his book, *Noah's Ark: A Feasibility Study*, because of his perception that I somehow misrepresented his analysis. If so, for the record, I would like to state that I have read his book thoroughly and I greatly appreciate both the thoroughness of his analysis and the quality of his work. I did not intend to slight him or his work in the least! Neither did I intend to imply that Woodmorappe himself had no explanation of how carnivores survived after the Flood with their main food source (cured meat stores provided by Noah on the Ark) now removed. For one thing, article length limitations precluded touching upon every detail, and I simply wanted readers to know why I did not find this explanation adequate. Secondly, in reading his book, I had the impression that he was offering **suggestions** for explaining how it **might** have been possible to keep carnivores fed (**if** they were carnivores), both on the Ark and immediately after the flood, strictly for the sake of forestalling any potential critics. If he is now insisting that Noah **must** have spent years killing animals and curing the meats to use as food for carnivores on the Ark, I find this suggestion to be completely unsupported by Scripture—and **unsupportable**—and I would insist it violates God's pre-Flood laws and order for all the reasons I already outlined in my article.

In response to some of the particulars raised in Woodmorappe's letter, I would first point out that the title of my article was *The Scriptural advent of animal carnivory*. Unfortunately, his letter deals primarily with 'fossil evidence', or his own speculations, while ignoring **most** of the salient Scriptural points raised in the article. I would be delighted to submit an article dealing with the so-called fossil 'evidence' for carnivorousness (and perhaps Mr Woodmorappe would like to do the same), but it was simply not possible to adequately deal with both aspects in one article. The fossil 'evidence' points that I did raise were intended

primarily as illustrations of how such evidence has been manipulated and slanted.

As I attempted to illustrate in the article, it is essential to establish the **Biblical** position on carnivory **without** a human interpretation of the fossil record. It is **not** the interpretation of the fossil record that enables the average geologist to understand that there was a global flood; it is only knowing there **was** a global flood that enables the fossil record to be understood. And that knowledge comes through revelation in Scripture. Find even one current university geology textbook that teaches the fossil record as evidence of a global flood and maybe I'll equivocate, but until then, Woodmorappe's insistence that the fossil evidence for carnivorousness is 'compelling' must be taken with a grain of salt. I know of **no** compelling evidence for widespread and/or worldwide carnivorous activity in the fossil record. The very paucity of the record—given the billions of animals entombed in rock—should itself be quite revealing.

Furthermore, the nature of the evidence should be—but never is—associated with the nature of the event that caused the fossils in the first place; a cataclysmic, Earth-destroying flood that lasted for many months. If there is evidence from 'predator-punctured shells' (which, by the way, are not 'air-breathing, land animals' and therefore do not even necessarily constitute carnivory) as Woodmorappe states, this could easily be interpreted to be a necessity of the Flood itself! The waters rose for five months, and many animals clearly survived the precipitating events of the Flood in numerous places throughout the world (thus the many footprints of animals—including dinosaurs—preserved in rock layers that must have been buried very soon after the footprint formation in order to preserve them at all). With much of their food supplies destroyed, and rising waters forcing them together in terrible conditions, undoubtedly many animals were now forced to eat shells, other dead animals, or even, on some occasions, to kill each other. Thus, evidence amongst a few fossils for

possible carnivorous activity has no bearing on whether animals in general were carnivorous before the Flood. So far, to my knowledge, no air-breathing, land animals have been found fossilized with the remains of other animals in their digestive system. Yet, recently, a fossilized **crocodile** was uncovered with stomach contents preserved—it ate **only hay and grasses**. This was clearly an animal buried in the Flood, so at least **one** crocodile was still eating only hay up until the time of Noah.

Furthermore, Woodmorappe's contention that the post-Flood world was 'teeming with alternative meat sources' does not withstand Biblical scrutiny. The Ark came to rest on the 150th day, but Noah and his family and the animals waited for over **7 months** for the waters to recede, the world to dry up, and plants to begin growing again. Any carrion left by receding Floodwaters would have been rotted away **months** before Noah and the animals left the Ark. Even if Woodmorappe were to contend that the receding waters in some areas managed to quickly subside just a few days before the animals left the Ark, the dead and rotting fish (etc.) would clearly not be available for even months, let alone the **years** required for the growth of adequate animal populations to support the many carnivores.

There were many other Scriptures cited and dealt with in my article other than Genesis 9:2-3, (the only ones referred to by Woodmorappe) and the latter were mainly the frosting on the cake. His interpretation of Genesis 9:2-3 is clearly an 'after-the-fact-rationalization' and not the clearest, straightforward meaning. God 'put' the fear of man upon the animals—He did not 're-install' something that had already been there earlier. Furthermore, if this was simply a 'putting back' of the fear that Noah was already familiar with before the flood, there was no reason for God to inform Noah of it, or explain it to him. Any response to my article needs to seriously deal with the **Biblical account**, and not merely the appearance of, or the **interpretation of**, the fossil record. My article contends that Scripture

gives us no reason to believe that carnivory began (**as the norm**) before the Flood, and many compelling reasons to believe that it did **not** do so. I see nothing in Woodmorrappé's letter that clearly alters—or even adequately addresses—this position.

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Distant starlight and Genesis: conclusions incorrect

While Robert Newton¹ has some interesting and seemingly logical arguments for distinguishing between observed time and measured time concepts, I am of the opinion that, although the premise may be true as to proper interpretation of relative time, the conclusions are incorrect. The reasons that I have this conclusion are based on the following:

The first problem is that Genesis 1:1 uses the Hebrew word '*bereshith*' or Greek '*en arche*', for our English interpretation 'in the beginning', which (although I am not an expert in Biblical Hebrew) I understand from several commentators (Henry Morris being one of them) has the force of meaning that it refers to the absolute beginning of time, space, and matter. If the conclusion of the author is to be considered, then this word has to be translated the way more liberal scholars would have it mean, namely that this is when God began His creating. But I would prefer the more conservative and more exacting translation as the absolute beginning of everything no matter what time reference is used to start with. The author would have God create out at the ends of the universe and work His way inward slowly. Since God spoke everything into existence that first day, and especially since the text strongly implies that the Earth itself was created first and then

the heavens, it doesn't make sense to have the galaxies and stars created first in calculated time to correspond with an observed time that is simultaneous with everything else on the first day.

The second problem is that God in many Scripture places (Isaiah 34–51 in particular) mentions that He stretched out the expanse or the firmament sometime during the 2nd to 4th days of Creation week. This again strongly implies that the space for the complete universe started on the first day to be not much larger than the Earth itself and empty. God then expanded the space-time-matter continuum by the fourth day and placed in it all the stars and what not after calling them into existence. The straightforward reading of the text for the events of the fourth day sounds like He made stars and such near the Earth and then moved them into positions with rotational velocities in the expanding expanse.

It may seem good to have an alternate explanation to previous scholarly attempts that seems logical to explain how the light from distant heavenly objects reached Adam and Eve on the sixth day, but it is really not necessary. In spite of all the explanations presented over the years, it still seems to me that Russ Humphreys' proposal seems the best explanation at this present time that considers all the Biblical implications. The only problems that I have seen with Russ's theory is that the liberal and evolutionary minded folks don't buy into it. Not a technical objection, but a political one. I can appreciate the suggestion that the author presents about how time is determined, when the Long Day of Joshua is considered. We more or less all agree that it was not the sun that stood still, it was the Earth given the language of relative reference. (Another example is that we still say the sun rises and sets, but we recognize that we are using an observational reference frame.) But to have God creating constantly over billions of years just doesn't sit well. When he says that everything was done in 6 days, what reference time frame makes sense and is consistent with all of Scripture? No one was there to observe in any time frame, so what

other conclusion would there be than to accept an absolute and try to find the truth on that basis? Why does the author say that 'in the beginning' **must be observed** time? The conclusion does not prove the original premise.

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Billions of years??!!

I don't mean to be 'splitting hairs' but in his article Robert Newton says 'first, God creates the most distant sections of "space". **This occurs billions of years ago.** About four days later, stars are created in those areas of space.' You often mention how the little things in life can do the greatest damage.

Newton seems rather steadfast on this idea of 'billions of years' because he mentions it a number of times. Since he carries some heavy credentials by worldly standards, I believe that this needs some looking into. Oh! By the way, I enjoyed the rest of his article.

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The paradox of light travel

I am indebted to the thinking of Robert Newton and the insight he offers in his paper, *Distant starlight and Genesis: conventions of time measurement*. It has been my view for sometime that Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity gives a clue to the paradoxical nature of time, and when applied to the question of starlight travel that a more consistent understanding of the Creation process can be rendered. Newton has aided in this regard, but he has missed a key point in coming to grips with the recent creation of the universe. A proper