

verses are saying that Man is to rule over all God created. However, if the previous terms in Genesis are really taxonomic, why don't they appear here? If the terms are more general, and fish of the sea is a general way of referring to aquatic life, then there is no problem. If fish of the sea is considered a taxonomic term which is a subset of the *remes* created on Day 5 (as Pfeffer suggests), then this contradicts the idea that Man is to rule over all the Day 5 *remes*. Man would *only* rule over the fish; other *remes* and the 'great sea creatures' would be excluded since they are not mentioned.

The appearance of 'beasts of the earth' in the Syriac (Genesis 1:26) is interesting, but does not rescue the hypothesis that these are taxonomic terms. Pfeffer retains the assumption of taxonomic terms despite the obvious variability in how these words are used. Creatures are also mentioned 'according to their kinds' in the Flood narrative (Genesis 6:20; 7:14), but the terms are not identical to Genesis 1. Specifically in the latter, *chay-ah*, which Pfeffer recognizes as a general reference to all animals, appears in place of *chayat ha-aretz*.

Klenck appeared to recognize the connection between the verb *ramas* and the related noun *remes* when he discussed the overlap in usage between *remes* and *seres*. I further expounded in my paper: *ramas* is what *remes* do (Gen 1:26); *saras* is what *seres* do (Gen 7:21; Lev 11:41). And yes, for variety, things can be mixed up a little (Gen 1:20, 21). In addition to the variable pattern of usage, the fact that there is overlap between two different words related to motion should be a clue these are not taxonomic terms. Further, the fact that they can be used for creatures created on entirely different days is still stronger evidence. The Hebrew in Genesis 7:8 suggests that the verb *ramas* can be applied to clean and unclean *behemah* and flyers (*op*). It is used of all the beasts of the forest

in Psalm 104:20. I could give similar examples with the verb *saras*.

In my paper I regarded *seres ha op* as part of *op* because 1) they have wings and fly, and 2) insects are listed under the definition of *op* in some Hebrew lexicons and dictionaries. Details regarding the translation of *seres ha op*, a noun-noun construct phrase (i.e. a construct noun followed by an absolute noun) for which English has no equivalent, are discussed in my responses to Klenck and Levy. I also refer to the logical divisions of Leviticus 11 in my response to Levy.

Words which have a range or variety of meanings are typical in languages. Sometimes this can cause confusion. However, they are important in allowing language to be rich and expressive. I believe the Bible is best understood when we guard against carrying in unnecessary assumptions. When I removed the assumption that the Bible gives us taxonomic terms, I found the various passages I have analyzed were no longer confusing.

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References

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2. Klenck, J.D., Major terrestrial animal taxonomic classifications as defined by God, *Journal of Creation* 23(2):118–123, 2009.

Hebrew scriptures as an aid to developing a creationist taxonomy (2)

Lightner's article is incongruous with Scripture. Lightner attempts to form a 'straw man' argument by stating

that "*Taxonomic terms have a single invariable meaning which applies to a specific object or group*" (p. 77). She should know that taxonomy is merely the practice and science of classification and taxonomic terms do not require a 'single invariable meaning'. She disingenuously states that her article "is not intended to be the final word on the subject" despite that in other venues she firmly states the Bible has no taxonomic system. In addition, Lightner tries to muddy what is a clear biblical classification system with regard to terrestrial animals. It does not take a Hebrew linguist to realize that God in Genesis is mentioning animal groups, each possessing their own kinds.

Gen 1:21—"every winged bird [*ohf*] according to its kind"

Gen 1:25—"beast of the earth [*chayat ha'aretz*] according to its kind"

Gen 1:25—"the *cattle* [*behemah*] according to its kind"

Gen 1:25—"all creepers [*remes*] of the ground according to its kind"

Hence, each of the groups *ohf*, *chayat ha'aretz*, *behemah*, and *remes* have 'kinds' or *min* associated with them. In addition, Lightner denies that the term creepers or *remes* (Genesis 8:17–19; Leviticus 11:44; 20:25) is used interchangeably with swarms or *sheretz* (Leviticus 11:21,23,29,41–46) despite robust biblical references. The idea of God giving names to groups of animals is continued in Genesis 2.

Gen 2:19—"... Lord God formed every beast of the field [*chayat ha'sadeh*],

Gen 2:19—"... and every bird [*ohf*] of the heavens...

Gen 2:20—"And the man called names to all the *cattle* [*behemah*], and to the bird [*ohf*] of the heavens, and to every animal of the field [*chayat ha'sadeh*]."

Again we have a very clear indication that God is referring to groups of animal in that Adam provides names to *all* or *every* kind belonging to these groups. That the terms *ohf*, *chayat ha'aretz*, *chayat ha'sadeh*, *behemah*, and *remes/sheretz*

are groups of animals acquires even greater support in Leviticus 11, Deuteronomy 14, and other Hebrew passages.¹ In Leviticus 11:2–8, God mentions the *behemah* that are clean (e.g. wholly cloven-footed, bringing up the cud—sheep, cattle) and unclean (e.g. camel, hare, rock badger, swine). In Leviticus 11:13–19, God describes unclean *ohf* (e.g. eagle, vulture, ostrich, and bat). In Leviticus 11:20–25; 29–31; 42–44 God describes clean and unclean swarms including those that fly, jump, crawl on the ground, and have many legs (e.g. locust, lizard, mouse, and millipede). This pattern is also repeated in Deuteronomy 14 and other biblical passages. Hence, we have a two-tier classification system where God is providing names to groups of animals in Genesis 1 and 2, and in Leviticus 11 is ascribing kinds of clean and unclean animals to these groups.

Tier 1—The groups of animals that God created (e.g. Genesis 1:21, 25)

Tier 2—The kinds of animals that God states belong to each created group (e.g. Leviticus 11).

These classifications do not represent a ‘modern bias’ or a Linnaean taxonomy (p. 77). Rather, this is a classification system directly from God, who in Leviticus 11 ascribes individual animal kinds to created animal groups, which He first mentions in Genesis 1 and 2.

Lightner argues that since all groups of animals are not mentioned in various verses, they are not classifications (pp. 78, 79). This reasoning is poor as God and other biblical authors describe these groups with 1) their own kinds, and 2) as having clean and unclean kinds belonging to each group. She also argues that since *chayah* is a general term to describe animals, living things, or beasts, the term *chayat ha’sadeh* (beast of the field) or *chayat ha’aretz* (beast of the earth) cannot be used to describe groups of animals (p. 79). It is linguistically obvious that *chayah* by itself is different from *chayat ha’sadeh* (beast of the field) or *chayat ha’aretz* (beast of the earth). It should be clear to Lightner that *chayah* is a

general term to describe life while *chayat ha’sadeh* and *chayat ha’aretz* are specific terms to describe a group of animals. Furthermore, God Himself refutes Lightner’s argument when He describes these groups with 1) their own kinds, or 2) having multiple kinds (see Genesis 1:25; 2:19–20). Lightner then commits a serious error by stating that because *ohf* is in *sheretz ha’ohf* in Leviticus 11:20, that this must be a bird (p. 80). However, this phrase is in a ‘construct state’ where *ohf* or *winged* is used to describe *sheretz* (swarmer) and is the beginning of a long passage about different swarms. This is elementary Hebrew. That Lightner makes this error confirms she has little knowledge of Hebrew. That her reviewers missed this error suggests they were not paying attention.

Finally, Lightner states that we should use the ‘standard’ [Linnaean] definition of ‘insects’ and assign all insects to *ohf* or birds, whether or not they are flying, despite that her notion runs contrary to Leviticus 11:20–25 and 11:41–44, where insects are assigned to *sheretz* or swarms (p. 80). After debasing a biblical classification system that is clear, Lightner now sets her own classification standard above that of the Bible.

Lightner’s article is also plagued by errors. She mentions that Hebrew study tools such as BibleWorks v. 7.0 (an old version compared to v.8.0) is superior to the use of Strong’s Concordance, without realizing that Strong’s numbers are used as the common reference system to study Hebrew in a variety of programs including NETBible, ScriptureText and Biblos. She mentions that unclean animals are listed in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 (p. 77), when the passages denote both clean and unclean animals belonging to defined groups. Despite her alleged use of BibleWorks v. 7.0, Lightner misspells both *degat* (fish of), *ha’shamayim* (the heavens) in the same sentence (p. 78). Furthermore, after degrading the use of Strong’s Concordance as a “presumptuous methodology” (p. 77), she uses Strong’s in her own Hebrew ‘analysis’ several pages later

(p. 79–80). This begs the question: Can only Lightner use Strong’s Concordance without being *presumptuous*?

I am disappointed by Lightner’s article, analysis and scholarship. I hope other readers of *Journal of Creation*, who value the primacy of God’s Word, feel the same way.

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1. Klenck, J.D., Major terrestrial animal taxonomic classifications as defined by God, *Journal of Creation* 23(2):118–123, 2009.

Response to Joel Klenck’s comments

No straw man here. Taxonomic terms are meant to have a single invariable meaning which applies to a specific group. Latin, a dead language, was specifically chosen for taxonomy because words in ‘living’ languages vary in meaning and can apply to different groups depending on various factors. When Klenck analyzes the Hebrew words he believes are taxonomic, he assumes that no such variation exists as he never considers the effect that different time periods or authors might have on usage. There is one exception I noticed: on page 122 of his paper he suggests that the ‘beasts of the earth’ mentioned in Genesis 9:2 and 10 are somehow different than previous because it is modified by the Hebrew word *col* meaning ‘all’ or ‘every’.¹ This is unfounded since this same common word is applied to this phrase previously in Scripture (Genesis 1:30) and is applied at various places to the other terms he considers taxonomic. His thinking is more fully expounded in a recent *CRSQ* article where Klenck uses his taxonomic classification system to argue that ‘beasts of the earth’ had significantly declined prior to the Flood.² He minimizes the mention of the beasts of the earth post-Flood in Genesis 9 by noting the use of *col*.

Klenck nicely lays out the verses in Genesis 1 that mention groups of

creatures God created. At one time I, too, had looked at these verses and thought they might give us taxonomic terms. However, the pattern changes somewhat during the account surrounding the Flood.

Genesis 6:20,

“the birds [*ohf*] according to their kinds”

“the animals [*behemah*] according to their kinds”

“every creeping thing [*remes*] of the ground, according to its kind”.

Notice something is missing here, the ‘beasts of the earth’ or *chayat ha’aretz*.

Genesis 7:14,

“every beast [*chayah*], according to its kind”

“all the livestock [*behemah*], according to their kinds”

“every creeping thing [*remes*] that creeps on the earth, according to its kind”

“every bird [*ohf*], according to its kind, every winged creature”.

Here we have almost the same groupings as Genesis 1, but *chayah*, which Klenck acknowledges is a very general term, appears in place of *chayat ha’aretz*. Apparently the qualifier ‘according to its kind’ does not signal the use of a taxonomic term.

Klenck also nicely lists the groupings found in Genesis 2 where Adam names the animals. It is similar to Genesis 1, but the phrase *chayat ha’aretz* does not appear in this chapter. In fact, after it is used repeatedly in Genesis 1, this phrase does not appear again until Genesis 9. A similar phrase, *chayat ha’sadeh* or beasts of the field, is used in Chapters 2 and 3. This variability is typical of normal language usage. In contrast, in taxonomy specific groups have a single term which identifies them consistently at any given taxonomic level.

When I wrote my paper, I suggested a genitive translation of the noun-noun construct phrase *sheretz ha’ohf* (i.e. the swarmers of the flyers) which was consistent with what I had learned in studying Hebrew. Since translation of these phrases was taught the same

way in several elementary Hebrew materials I had used, I saw no reason to reference it. Surprised at Klenck’s insistence that only an attributive translation was possible (i.e. the flying swarmers), I consulted the elementary Hebrew grammar Klenck referenced in both his papers. Weingreen only discusses the genitive translation of construct phrases; the same one I offered in my paper! Having said that, I point out that the specific phrase *sheretz ha’ohf* was not directly mentioned in any of these resources. Recently, a friend with advanced knowledge in Hebrew pointed out that the translation of construct phrases can be quite complex. Either translation might be possible; it depends on the lexical meaning of *ohf*.

Klenck misunderstood my reasons for identifying *sheretz ha’ohf* with the *ohf* created on Day 5. It does not depend on the translation of the construct phrase, but on the fact that they have wings and fly. I mention that within some insect kinds wings may have been lost. I never state or imply that all insects would be included in *sheretz ha’ohf*.

I am a bit bewildered at the words and thoughts attributed to me by Klenck regarding Hebrew study tools. I did mention the Strong’s briefly in an early part of my paper. This is an excellent study tool that I have used many times over the years. I have also used reference texts and Bible software programs which use the Strong’s numbering system. All references have their limitations, and mentioning this should not imply that they are being degraded. The common pitfall I described where the Strong’s is sometimes misused was not intended to relate directly to the Klenck article.

Klenck claims I am in error by not stating that clean animals are listed in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. The context of my comment should have made it apparent that I was referring to those listed ‘according to their kinds’ and only some of members of the unclean *ohf* are mentioned that way in both places. Additionally, the works I

cite in that paragraph, by authors with a significantly greater understanding of Hebrew than Klenck or I, discuss the problems with assuming that baramins (kinds) are specifically identified in these passages.

The Hebrew for *degat* was not misspelled, though I admit the sheva was blurred in my print copy. The Hebrew for *ha’shamayim* was incorrect. The vowel and dagesh moved to a separate space next to the letter with which they should have appeared. It was the only error I noted in the proof PDF that did not get corrected before it went to print. So congratulations to Klenck; he did find one error. Hebrew fonts are very difficult to work with and errors commonly show up when WORD documents are converted over in preparation for printing. I often have a lot of corrections and the diligent staff of CMI work very hard to fix them. This was indeed a rare find.

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2. Klenck, J.D., Genesis and the demise of the dinosaurs, *CRSQ* 46(3):159–166, 2010.

Hebrew scriptures as an aid to developing a creationist taxonomy (3)

I read Jean Lightner’s ‘Hebrew Scriptures as an aid to developing a creationist taxonomy’ in *Journal of Creation* 24(1):77–81. I was surprised by her little knowledge of Hebrew.

Lightner’s big mistake is that she tries to combine *seres* or swarmers with the birds or *oph* in Vayikra (Leviticus) 11:20. This is a big problem and she quotes other authors, apparently those who did not study Hebrew, that support