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Editor: Paul McDorman

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Post Office Box 292 Columbus, Ohio 43216-0292 Phone: (614) 837-3097 WWW.WORLDBYDESIGN.ORG

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THE NAME GAME

A simplified definition for "species" in the glossary of an old biology textbook says: Species: (Latin: kind, sort); A group of organisms that actually (or potentially) interbreed and are reproductively isolated from all other such groups.

Sounds pretty clear-cut, but today there is no consensus on the definition of "species" among scientists. For example, the Black Capped Chickadee and Carolina Chickadee have different songs and live in largely different areas of the United States, and they look almost identical. However, they can and do interbreed where their geographical areas overlap. Ornithologists, nonetheless, have given them different species names (*Parus atricapillus* and *Parus carolinensis* respectively). In this case, the fact that they can interbreed was not the defining factor.

TO SPLIT OR NOT TO SPLIT

Taxonomists (People who classify plants and animals) themselves seem to come in two species: the - "lumpers" and "splitters". The "splitters" have a propensity to make a new species out of any plant or animal that shows a slight variation in some trait; while "lumpers" tend to group things together.

Sometimes there is a clash when the splitters and lumpers can't agree to split

species or lump them together. For years the several different varieties of Northern Oriole have been alternatively lumped and split. Presently the "lumpers" have the upper hand; but who knows what tomorrow will bring?.

SPECIES AND KIND

The general public's understanding of the term "species" seems to reflect the confusion that scientists have in using that name. In order to sort out these problems, people need to learn how scientists use the term, as well as their purpose in doing so. And, to bring light to the whole problem, people also need to know about the biblical term, "kind", (Hebrew: min). By doing so it would help resolve much of the confusion that people have in their understanding of Creation and the Flood.

For example, how many times have we heard skeptics say that the Noah's ark story could not be true because there could not possibly be enough room to put 1.24 million "species" of animals on the boat that the Bible describes (We won't address their misunderstanding that over 90% of these "species" consist of plants, insects, bacteria, worms, fish, and other kinds of living organisms that would not have been brought aboard the ark).

Also, we often hear evolutionists remark that evolution is an obvious fact because we can observe many examples of new "species" evolving today. They may point to new varieties of plants, insects, fish birds, and other animals that have come into existence in the last 100 years or so.

Both of the above misleading statements are widely used and they have both come about because of the misunderstanding of what a "species" is and how the Bible defines groups of animals. The tragic end result is that this one word has kept some people from believing the word of God.

Creationist, biologist, and paleontologist, Kurt Wise, points out that today we have over 7000 species of swans, geese, and ducks. But yet, every one of them can interbreed. From a biblical perspective, this



fact would qualify them as being one "kind" of animal.



This is because Genesis 1 repeatedly says that God created the different animals after their "kind", indicating a reproductive barrier that can't be crossed.

HOW SUBSPECIES ARE MADE

We can assume that God did not create all of the millions of subspecies, or varieties, of animals and plants. Instead, they came about naturally (or artificially by man's intervention) from the vast storehouse of genetic information that had been put into each original kind of plant or animal during the Creation week. Much of this genetic information is "recessive" which means that it is not expressed outwardly, but it has the potential of being expressed in future generations given the right conditions.



For example, a trait for being tall may be passed on to a child in a gene of a parent, even though both parents are short. Or, as we sometimes see in pets, a male and female dog can be the same solid color, but they may have pups that are spotted and even a different color. All of this is explained because the genes for these traits were there all of the time in one or both of the parents. But, they were not expressed because they were recessive in each of the parents.

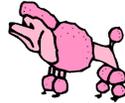
When these different varieties of animals and plants become isolated from others of

their kind by water, mountains, climate or other natural barriers – such as the much touted “Darwin’s finches” on the different Galapagos Islands – then the differences can in time become the dominant trait and the norm for that particular geographic area. It is here that taxonomists will step in and assign new species names to those animals and plants – even though they can still interbreed!



A common example of this is the wolf and the dog.

Although both will mate with each other, the wolf has been given the name



Canis lupis, while all domestic dogs have been grouped together and given the name Canis familiaris. The variations that are produced artificially by man (as in the different types of dogs) are called “varieties” or “breeds” and are not usually thought of as evolution.



SUBSPECIES NOT EVOLUTION

However, if nature produces the variation, it is usually described by scientists as “evolution”. This is how the variation between the wolf, coyote, hyena, dingo, and hyena is viewed. This inconsistency is unjustified however, since nothing new evolved inasmuch as the genetic information for these varieties was already present in the parent population

As everyone is aware, dog breeders for centuries have produced so-called “purebred” dogs that can be quite striking in their differences. For example, what scientist from 2000 years in the future, would correctly identify a fossil of a Chihuahua and a Great Dane as being the same species?

WHY THE VARIATION?

Some people ask why God would allow for so much variation in living things. Most variation that we see in plants and animals are small and seemingly trivial. But often these small variations work together for that species survival. God did not make animals and plants so rigid that

they would die out entirely if the climate were to change. There needs to be some flexibility that would allow some of the varieties of the different kinds of plants and animals to be hardy enough to survive moderate to severe changes in the environment.

For example, an extra cold winter may cause some animals to die because they did not have a thick coat of fur. But the natural variation that God gave to His creatures would cause others of the same species to have thick coats of fur – thereby guaranteeing the survival of the species during a harsh winter.

Two big changes to the environment and climate took place after the Fall in the Garden of Eden, and after the Flood. The genetic variation that was present in the genes no doubt played a significant role in the survival of many species.

Another possibility for the reason for built-in genetic variability is to ensure a food source for all animals under most environmental conditions. There is some evidence for a pattern of increased genetic variability in plants and animals that are at the lower level in the food chain. For example, most plants and insects seem to have a tremendous amount of genetic variability than do the “higher” animals. This turns out to be beneficial to those animals which depend on plants and other animals for sustenance.

VARIATION NOT UNLIMITED

Another misconception that people seem to have concerning genetic variation is that it is open-ended. In other words, variation can not continue indefinitely in one direction even if given limitless time. For example, there is a limit as to how small a dog can be “miniaturized”, or how much milk a cow can be made to produce.

Additionally, as selective breeding experiments show, genetic variation can proceed only so far before important genetic information is “bred out” of the organism and the creature becomes susceptible to disease and environmental changes. For example, purebred dogs are generally less hardy than “mutts”, and sheep that have been bred for wool, would soon die out if man was not around to

protect them from predators and other natural hazards.

SURPRISING VARIATION

Sometimes however, we are still surprised at the large amount of variation that can take place in a created kind.



Some striking examples of this are the llama and the camel, the lion and the tiger, and cows and buffalos. All these

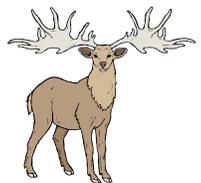


pairs and many more can breed and produce viable offspring. (For other examples see <http://www.bryancore.org/hdb> or <http://www.greenapple.com/~jorp/amzanim/ind exa.htm>).

LOST INFORMATION

Sometimes genetic information is lost and can never be regained by mating with its own subspecies. It would have to first “get back” some of the genetic information by breeding with another subspecies. Thus, one could never get a Irish wolfhound back from trying to breed two Chihuahuas together. The genes for the traits for a wolfhound would have been lost in that breed. But, by breeding a Chihuahua with other types of dogs, one could theoretically eventually get a wolfhound back again.

Sometimes some genetic information has been totally lost from a species. For example, the huge rack of the extinct Irish Elk could probably never be recovered again by artificially breeding different varieties of elk or deer that are living today. The tremendous size of the now defunct



giant ground sloth would also no doubt be an impossibility to bring back today. Other interesting possibilities, however, may or may not be recoverable. The passenger pigeon, the mammoth, and the belodon (crocodile) are some of the animals that could theoretically make a comeback if the genetic information in living variations could be successfully manipulated by man.

Today, the extinction of a species is a real concern for those plants and animals that can truly be called a species. However, the

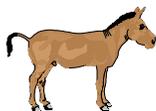
misuse of the word "species" is prevalent in the environmental movement where we hear its proponents claim that thousands of species of animals are going extinct every year.

While mankind is certainly required to take care of God's creation, such overstatement is unwarranted in light of a correct understanding of what a species is and isn't. When one realizes that most of the "endangered" species that they are really talking about are only one of several varieties of a created kind, and that they could probably be brought back even if one variety did become "extinct", then the problem is not as big as it is made out to be.

MUTATIONS

Sometimes, different varieties of a species can not produce offspring (or viable offspring) because there has been a mutation that has caused a loss of information in the genes of one of them. So even though a group of subspecies might have originally been one created "kind", they are now reproductively isolated by their genes.

One example of this is the horse and donkey which almost always produces a sterile mule. Another example might be the different species of orangutan that live in Sumatra and Java and are now unable to interbreed. However, this can not be considered "evolution" since there is a loss of genetic information rather than a gain of information.



The subject of created kinds and the variation that is possible is certainly more vast and complicated than can be covered in this short article. This science of baraminology is currently being studied by many creation scientists in order to learn more about the living things that God created. The reader is also encouraged to learn more so that the truth, "God created", can be proclaimed to the world.

WHIMSICAL NAMES

When someone "discovers" a new "species", he or she has the privilege of naming it by using certain established international guidelines. These rules also

require that a taxonomist validate a new name by presenting it and certain basic information about the new species in a publication that will be available in public institutions. As can be seen in the following names, some people seem to try to go out of their way to lighten up what one would assume to be a dignified and sober task.

- 1) Mozartella beethoveni Girault (wasp)
- 2) Abra cadabra Eames (bivalve)
- 3) Ba humbugi Solem (snail)
- 4) Gluteus minimus Davis (fossil)
- 5) Heerz tooya Marsh (wasp)
- 6) La cucaracha Blesynski (pyralid)
- 7) Omyomymar Schauff (mymarid wasp)
- 8) Oops Agassiz (arachnid)

- 10) Vini vidivici (parrot)
- 11) Ytu brutus Spangler (beetle)
- 12) Heerzz lukenatcha (fly)
- 13) Iyaiyai (fly)
- 14) Petula Clark (tineid)
- 15) Polemistus chewbacca Menke (wasp)
- 16) Stupidogobius Aurich (fish)
- 17) Arfia Van Valen (fossil hyaenodont resembling a dog)
- 18) Trombicula doremi Brennan (chigger)
- 19) Trombicula fasola Beck (chigger)
- 20) Apopyllus now Platnick (spider)
- 21) Serendipitae (fly)
- 22) Tabanus rhizonshine Philip (horse fly)
- 23) Tabanus nippontucki Philip (horse fly)

Letters to the Editor::

The Sep.-Oct. 2001 WBD newsletter had an article by Frank Vosler entitled, "Stem Cell Wars," that made some misleading remarks that merit attention. Vosler intimates the dehumanization of the blastocyst when he writes:

"Louis M. Guenin, who teaches ethics at Harvard Medical School, has pointed out that, since a blastocyst can become a twin, it cannot yet be an individual identity."

A. A. Howsepian, in *Review of Metaphysics* 45, 483 (1992) shows that by this argument, one can conclude that Guenin is not human. If one's criteria for personhood is some pre-twinable state, then ALL "people" are non-persons because it is theoretically conceivable that a person can later be asexually reproduced similar to the twinning process (either via cloning or parthenogenesis). Vosler also writes, "Exodus 21:22 suggests

that a wrongfully caused miscarriage is a less serious crime than the murder of a born baby or older person." However a closer examination seems to reveal the opposite. Normal Geisler, in *Christian Ethics* (Baker, 1989) p. 145 writes:

Exodus 21 does not teach that a fetus is a potential human. Neither can this be legitimately inferred from the passage. The Hebrew word for "come forth" is *yahtzah*, which means "to give birth." It is the Hebrew word regularly used for live birth in the Old Testament. Hence, in this passage it refers to a live premature birth, not a miscarriage. The separate Hebrew word for miscarriage, *shakol*, is not used here. The word used for the mother's offspring here is *yeled*, which means "child." It is the same word used of babies and young children (Gen. 21:8, Exod. 2:3). If any harm came to either the mother or the child, the same punishment was given, "life for life" (v. 23). This reveals that the unborn was considered of equal value with the mother.

It seems that the effect of Vosler's article is to place "Right-to-Lifers," as a fringe political entity who are out of touch with Scripture and science. Vosler's posing of the question, "At what time does God assign an embryo or fetus (i.e. post blastocyst entities-P.B.) to be the temporal abode of a waiting human spirit?" intimates that such a time occurs after conception. Perhaps these Right-to-Lifers--stigmatized by both Vosler and the dominant media--are the only ones who think clearly on the issue.

Dr. Pieder Beeli
Research Associate, University of Houston
Texas Center for Superconductivity

Mr. Vosler responds:

My article was not intended to be a polemic but simply an educational piece. I could see that the cloning issue was destined to get a lot of attention in the Christian community, and that it is necessary for Christians, first of all, to know the bare biological facts in order to think knowledgeably about the issue. So I presented those facts in a matter-of-fact and as balanced a way as I could and left it to the reader to design his own polemics.

To engage in argument before one looks at the facts generates more heat than light. I hope I have rendered a service for those Christians who had not previously devoted much attention to the subject of cloning.

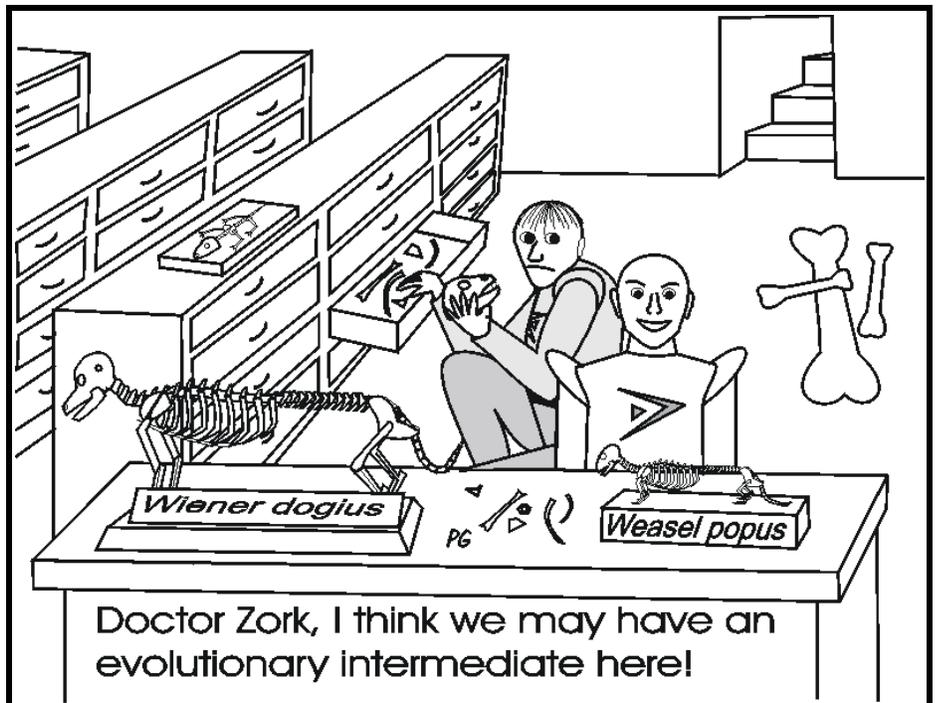
I wandered into no-man's land wearing my little neutrality hat, but right-to-lifers may not recognize that uniform.

Dr. Beeli addresses the question, at what time in gestation does personhood, which I would define as the impartation of the human spirit, commence? But I think that Dr. Guenin would ask which half of the twinning blastocyst retains the "old" spirit and which half gets a new spirit? Guenin's question has merit.

In the case of cloning, brought out by Howsepian, the adult DNA donor is unquestionably already a "person" and his clone will be a separate person with a new spirit. But this throws no light on when personhood takes place in gestation. Parthenogenesis (human?!) is a kind of cloning of a mother. The Right-to-Life people may be right about the spirit joining the body at conception, but I don't think they have nailed that down yet by either Scripture or biology.

On the interpretation of Ex. 21:22,23, I am not a Hebrew scholar, but I concede that "departing fruit" means live birth. It appears to me though that this would have been a fetus and not an embryo which would not have been recognizable to the ancients. I am not sure that "mischief" (and

PALEOZOO



2000 years from now, in the basement of the New York Museum of Natural History, two scientists go through the fossils of extinct species.

penalties) refers to the newborn or just to the mother.

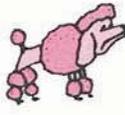
I appreciate feedback and learn from corrections.

Sincerely,
Frank Vosler

“All creationists admitted that species often differentiated into mildly distinct forms in situations, as on island chains and

archipelagoes, where populations could become isolated in different circumstances of ecology and climate. These local races were called varieties, and they did not threaten the created and immutable character of a species ‘essence.’”

Gould, Stephen Jay, “Darwin at Sea,” **Natural History**, vol. 92 (September 1983), p. 15.



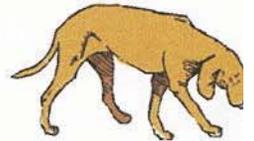
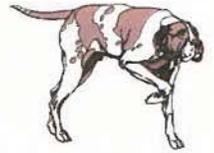
There are many variations within a kind. See if you can name the different types of dogs, then try to find them in the word search below.

Read Genesis 1:24 “And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creation after his _____”

Read Genesis 7: 14 “They, and every beast after his _____”

God allowed dogs to have differences. So we have many variations today, but all are still just dogs.

How many dogs were on the ark? _____



DOGS

S P A N I E L D O O P U L N
 N E I L L O C B Y R U B A A
 A U H A U H I H C I G J B H
 I M G H Y E N A D T A E R G
 N D A S H H O U N D M L A F
 A R G R E Y H O U N D G D A
 R E I R R E T X O F O A O Y
 E H H E I T L E H S B E R K
 M P C I H D R A N R E B T S
 O E O R S S R A O S R O E U
 P H Y R K N U L O P M G F H
 N S O E R M U R C I A N L H
 E I T T O C S R E T N I O P
 R D E D Y T F T J Z T D W F

AFGHAN
 BEAGLE
 CHIHUAHUA
 COLLIE
 COONHOUND
 COYOTE
 DASHHOUND
 DINGO
 DOBERMAN
 FOXTERRIER
 GREATDANE
 GREYHOUND
 HUSKY
 HYENA

LABRADOR
 POINTER
 POMERANIANS
 POODLE
 PUG
 SCOTTIE
 SHELTYE
 SHEPHERD
 SPANIEL
 SPITZ
 STBERNARD
 TERRIER
 WOLF
 YORKSHIRE