

Q 2.1 How did nature get the way it is if predation wasn't God's design?

It was never God's intention for any of His creatures to kill each other. The world fell from its state of peace when we stopped following God's instructions to properly steward His created world and instead began corrupting the animals and their habitats, under the influence of evil spiritual powers. The world will be restored again to what it was meant to be when we turn away from evil and go back to leading all creation in God's way of love and peace.

Predation as Corruption of God's Good Design

Animals were created as herbivores: "*And to every beast of the earth and every bird of the air and every creature that crawls upon the earth—everything that has the breath of life in it—I have given every green plant for food.*' And it was so" (Genesis 1:30, NIV). Many human-contrived philosophies reject the Biblical account of God creating all animals as herbivores and for the purpose of living together in peace and harmony. Such philosophies attempt to persuade that predation is the way the world has always been and that it is natural and good¹, instead of seeing it as a product of human corruption of God's good design. The Bible warns about such philosophies that deviate from the Word of God: "*See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which*

¹ Such human philosophies date as far back as Herodotus in Ancient Greece (See Simberloff, Daniel. "The 'Balance of Nature'—Evolution of a Panchreston." PLoS Biol 12(10): e1001963, 2014. <<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.1001963>>).

depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ" (Colossians 2:8, NIV).

Corrupting Animal Habitats

The Bible says that God put humans in charge of taking care of the earth: "*The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it*" (Genesis 2:15, NIV). God also put humans in charge of taking care of the animals: "*God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every creature that crawls upon the earth.'*" (Genesis 1:28, BSB). By neglecting our divinely ordained responsibility of earthly stewardship, we destroyed the habitat God created for the animals as well as many of their natural plant-based food sources they were designed to eat.

Corrupting the Animals

Humans also began breeding animals to serve our own misguided interests. We taught cats and dogs to help us hunt; we bred cows to have giant udders to be our milk machines; we bred hens to lay tons of eggs to serve the appetites of our flesh, and sheep to be giant wool machines. We corrupted animals in so many ways, by rebelliously following our own evil imaginations². And we continue to do so today, killing and destroying God's creation instead of faithfully and righteously³ providing the necessities for abundant and joyful life: "*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the*

² "Now therefore say to the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem, 'This is what the LORD says: 'Look! I am preparing a disaster for you and devising a plan against you. So turn from your evil ways, each one of you, and reform your ways and your actions.' But they will reply, 'It's no use. We will continue with our own plans; we will all follow the stubbornness of our evil hearts.'" (Jeremiah 18:11-12, NIV).

³ "The righteous care for the needs of their animals, but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel" (Proverbs 12:10, NIV).

full" (John 10:10, NIV). Genesis 30 gives an account of humans selectively breeding animals for profit: "*Whenever the stronger females were in heat, Jacob would place the branches in the troughs in front of the animals so they would mate near the branches, but if the animals were weak, he would not place them there. So the weak animals went to Laban and the strong ones to Jacob. In this way the man grew exceedingly prosperous and came to own large flocks, and female and male servants, and camels and donkeys*" (Genesis 30:41-43, NIV). This means we've been corrupting the very good design of God's creatures for thousands of years.

Dark Spiritual Influences

Predation is a form of violence. The Bible teaches that God hates violence,⁴ and that the way of violence is the way of the world in its fallen, corrupted state: "*Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight and was full of violence*" (Genesis 6:11, NIV). The world got to this state because fallen angels corrupted the world to reflect their own violent, rebellious ways: "*Now the giants were upon the earth in those days; and after that when the sons of God were wont to go in to the daughters of men, they bore children to them, those were the giants of old, the men of renown*" (Genesis 6:4, BST). Enoch elaborates further on how these giants spread violence throughout the earth: "*The giants consumed all the work and toil of men. And when men could no longer sustain them, the giants turned against them and devoured mankind. And they began to sin against birds, and beasts, and reptiles, and fish, and to devour one another's flesh, and drank the blood*" (1 Enoch 7:4-5).⁵ After the giants died off, their half-dead evil spirits (demons) continue to wreak havoc upon the earth: "*And the spirits of the giants afflict,*

⁴ "The LORD tests the righteous, But the wicked and the one who loves violence His soul hates" (Proverbs 11:5, NKJV).

⁵ Lumpkin, Joseph B. *The Books of Enoch: The Angels, The Watchers, and The Nephilim*, 2nd ed. Blountsville, AL: Fifth Estate Publishers, 2011, page 31. See also *Jubilees* 7:24.

oppress, destroy, attack, do battle, and work destruction on the earth, and cause trouble” (1 Enoch 15:11).⁶

Continuing in the Way of Violence

The world remains this way⁷ because we as humans stubbornly live according to our own misguided and destructive imaginations: “*The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time*” (Genesis 6:5, NIV). As we look around at the world today, we see humans cutting down rainforests to farm cattle so we can eat their flesh. We separate calves from their mothers so we can drink the milk intended for their babies. Even the animals that aren’t raised specifically for the purpose of serving our misguided evil desires are left out in the wilderness to fend for themselves.

Fallen Nature Reflecting the Evil Heart of Fallen Man

As a result of this human violence and negligence, we see prey animals living in fear⁸ and predatory animals killing to survive. Animals that were biologically designed by God to be at peace and to thrive off plants have had their genetic makeup so corrupted, and their appropriate habitats so destroyed, that they cannot even survive in the existing ecosystems of the world without killing and

⁶ The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament. R.H. Charles Oxford: The Clarendon Press.

⁷ According to the story recorded in Matthew 8, Mark 5, and Luke 8, a herd of pigs became demon-possessed. If pigs can become demon-possessed, that means it is likely also possible that other animals could become demon-possessed. Thus violent behavior in animals could at least partially have its origin in demonic possession.

⁸ “For the violence done to Lebanon will cover you, And the plunder of beasts which made them afraid, Because of men’s blood And the violence of the land and the city, And of all who dwell in it” (Habakkuk 2:17, NKJV); “The fear of you and the terror of you will be on every animal of the earth and on every bird of the sky; on everything that crawls on the ground, and on all the fish of the sea. They are handed over to you” (Genesis 9:2, NASB).

eating other animals. Nature has truly become a reflection of the evil desires of the human heart rather than the image of our loving Creator. The good news is that God did not create the world this way⁹, nor is it destined to remain this way: *“And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away”* (Revelation 21:4, NKJV).

The Way Out of Predation

Our part in ending this fallen state of violence and predation starts with earnestly asking and praying for God’s kingdom of love and kindness to reign upon the whole earth.¹⁰ We must also not doubt that He will bring it about¹¹. Next, it involves embodying God’s Holy Spirit as peacemakers: *“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God”* (Matthew 5:9, NIV). As it pertains to animals, this means leading the animals in the way of peace, as children¹² of God: *“The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the cobra’s den, and the young child will put its hand into the viper’s nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea”* (Isaiah 11:6-9, NIV).

⁹ “And God looked upon all that He had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day” (Genesis 1:31, BSB).

¹⁰ “Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10, BSB).

¹¹ “But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind” (James 1:6, NIV).

¹² “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3, NIV).

The Whole Creation Awaits the End of Predation

The whole creation eagerly awaits humanity stepping into this role that God designed us for since the beginning, and hopes for all to be liberated from the bondage of corruption: *“For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time”* (Romans 8:19-22, NIV). As Matthew Scully, in his book *Dominion*, puts it, *“Predation itself, the intrinsic evil in nature’s design of creatures devouring and absorbing one another to survive, is among the hardest of all things to fathom. One falls back in the end on the idea that it was not God’s design at all, that there lies a hope and expectation beyond creation’s ‘groan of travail,’ as we are promised, not only mankind but all creatures delivered from our ‘bondage to decay.’”* (Scully, 318)¹³.

Our Creator is Ready to End Predation

God is likewise patiently waiting for us¹⁴ to return to our divinely inspired image of love¹⁵. God wants us to return to the first works¹⁶ of peaceful dominion¹⁷ that He

¹³ Scully, Matthew. *Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy*. New York: Saint Martin’s Press, 2002.

¹⁴ “The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise as some understand slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish but everyone to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9, BSB).

¹⁵ “And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them” (1 John 4:16, NIV).

¹⁶ “Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent” (Revelation 2:5, NKJV).

¹⁷ “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over

gave us to do in the beginning, wholeheartedly living a life of compassion, kindness, and humility¹⁸ toward all of God's creation. This includes ceasing to arrogantly perceive ourselves as superior to creation¹⁹ or justifying our acts of cruelty²⁰ by appealing to the authority God gave us over creation. It centrally involves embodying the Spirit of God and bearing its fruit toward every creature: *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law"* (Galatians 5:22-23, BSB).

A Return to the Way Things Were Meant to Be

God is ready to restore creation to its proper state of love, joy, and peace if only we repent of our violent and destructive ways and turn our hearts back to God²¹. Humans claim to be the apex predators of the whole world, but that is nothing to be proud of, since predation is reflecting the image of the principalities of darkness²² rather than that of the prince of peace.²³ When we return to God by

all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." (Genesis 1:26, NKJV).

¹⁸ "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience" (Colossians 3:12, NIV).

¹⁹ "A man's pride will bring him low, but a humble spirit will obtain honor" (Proverbs 29:23, BSB).

²⁰ "The righteous care for the needs of their animals, but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel" (Proverbs 12:10, NIV).

²¹ "Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign LORD. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?" (Ezekiel 18:23, NIV).

²² "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12, NKJV).

²³ "For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6, NKJV).

wholeheartedly living in Christ²⁴, then we will live by love in everything we do²⁵. As Scully states: “*And sometimes, like Isaiah with his visions of peace, it is only when we have grown sick of our own predations, sick of our own killings, sick of our own wars and acts of violence and cruelties to one another that we begin to look with gentleness upon the animal world, to see things in the light of grace and truth, things as they are and were meant to be*” (Scully, 94)²⁶. When we return to our divinely ordained role of properly taking care of the whole earth and all of its inhabitants²⁷, then God will restore the earth to the way it was before we corrupted and destroyed it: “*if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land*” (2 Chronicles 7:14, NKJV).

Is the End of Predation Believable?

Perhaps the most common objection to this biblical conception of predation, as being a temporary fallen state of the world, is that it is simply unbelievable. People have been so indoctrinated into worldly thinking and so accustomed to living by sight instead of by faith²⁸ that hope in God's promises sounds ridiculous. But if we think realistically about the matter, consider the things man is able to do today that would have been unthinkable even a couple hundred years ago. Imagine telling a world that is sending hand-written telegrams that you'll have a face-to-face conversation in real time with people from all over the world on a

²⁴ “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20, NKJV).

²⁵ “Let all that you do be done with love” (1 Corinthians 16:14, NKJV).

²⁶ Scully, Matthew. *Dominion: The Power of Man, the Suffering of Animals, and the Call to Mercy*. New York: Saint Martin's Press, 2002.

²⁷ “The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it” (Genesis 2:15, NIV).

²⁸ “For we live by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7, NIV).

video call together. Or that you'll fly thousands of feet in the sky in a giant metal flying boat and land on the other side of the world by this time tomorrow, while everyone else is using horse-drawn wagons. If humans can do these unthinkable miracles through their own ingenuity, consider how much more the Creator of this world can do when we collectively turn our hearts back to Him and say, "*Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven*" (Matthew 6:10, BSB).