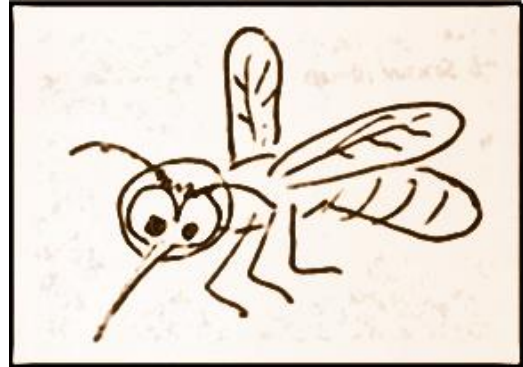


Why Did God Create the Mosquito?

By Alfred B. Davis
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There's nothing finer than sitting outside on a cool summer evening, enjoying a good book or conversation with family and friends. That is, until you hear the high-pitched whine of a mosquito buzzing around your ear. Now, I know it says in Genesis 1:31, "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was very good.*" But that mosquito buzzing around your ear? Really?



Really.

The key to understanding why God could say that creating the mosquito is not only good, but very good can be found in Genesis 1:29-31:

²⁹And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. ³⁰And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. ³¹And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

In this passage we learn that human beings were originally given "every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed...for meat." Meaning, we were originally created as vegetarians. Furthermore, all the animals were "given every green herb for meat" as well. Consequently, all animals – including mosquitoes – were created originally as vegetarians, too.

Wait a minute, didn't we learn in biology that human beings and many animals are omnivores, eating both meat and plants, and that other animals are either carnivores, eating primarily meat, or herbivores (vegetarians) with a plant-based diet? Clearly this contradicts what the Bible says in Genesis 1:29-31, doesn't it?

Actually, no. According to the Bible, in the original state of creation all human beings and animals were created as herbivores, not omnivores or carnivores. Meat eating and animal-based diets came along after the Fall when God placed a curse upon the world. Things that God had created as good became twisted and perverse. Thorns and thistles began to spring forth and some animals began preying on other animals.

To better understand how this could be, we need to take a look at the basic digestive systems, dental structures, and other physical attributes of various animals in relation to their diets. Herbivores, for instance, generally possess flat teeth for grinding vegetation and complex digestive systems, like cattle, goats, and sheep, or other adaptations and behaviors, as in horses and rabbits, to enable them to break down tough grasses. Carnivores typically have sharp, pointed teeth and simple

digestive systems, like dogs and cats. Omnivores generally have teeth and digestive systems somewhere between those of herbivores and carnivores, like people and monkeys.

However, in order to see how carnivores and omnivores could have developed after God cursed the earth, let's take a look at some specialized herbivores called frugivores. Frugivores are animals that primarily eat fruits. Because fruits are typically more nutrient dense and easier to digest than leaves and grasses, frugivores tend to have simpler digestive systems than other herbivores. They also tend to have sharp claws that can grab onto a fruit and rip into it and more pointed snouts and sharp teeth for tearing out chunks of fruit while they eat.

A good example of frugivores are the Samoan flying fox (*Pteropus samoensis*) and the White-necked or Tongan fruit bat (*Pteropus tonganus*). While planting a church in American Samoa as missionaries in the 1990's, my wife and I lived in a small house on CanCo Hill in Pava'ia'i. Just outside our backyard, just before the hill dropped away steeply, we had several papaya trees growing. One night, we heard something in the trees and went out to see what was going on. Shining a flashlight up in the trees we saw what looked like foxes hanging upside down in the trees eating papayas. They had pointy muzzles and teeth and forward-facing eyes just like real foxes. They had sharp claws on their feet to hang onto the tree and claws on their wings to help grab the fruits. If I did not know that they were fruit bats, I could have easily been convinced that they were carnivores based on their appearance.

The very characteristics that made some animals suitable for a diet of primarily fruits, i.e. pointy snouts and sharp teeth for reaching into the fruit and tearing off chunks of it, along with sharp claws for grabbing onto fruits and tearing through tough rinds and coverings, and simpler digestive systems are the very characteristics that enabled them after the curse of Genesis chapter 3 to become carnivorous. Likewise, some animals that were designed to eat a variety of fruits, nuts, seeds, leaves, stems, and roots would have had the same characteristics as omnivores, such as a mix of sharp and flat teeth.

But, getting back to the mosquito, what possible diet could they have had before the curse of Genesis 3 that would account for their blood-thirsty ways? Short answer: their current diet. Minus the blood-sucking part, of course.

Here is what I mean. The life cycle of the mosquito has four stages: egg, larva, pupa, adult. After the eggs are laid, they hatch into larvae within a few days to a few months, depending on environmental conditions. The larval stage lasts about 4-14 days, depending on species and environmental conditions. During the larval stage mosquitos mostly feed by filtering micro-organisms like bacteria, protozoa, and fungi, and organic matter like decaying leaves while excreting nitrogen and other nutrients that encourage plant growth. After the larval stage, mosquitos cease eating and develop into pupae. Generally, the pupal stage only lasts 2-3 days before the pupa metamorphosizes into an adult mosquito. Male mosquitos usually emerge first and only live for about a week or so. Female mosquitos, on the other hand may live for several months.

Once the adult mosquitos emerge, they begin one of their most important roles as pollinators. Yes, pollinators. They feed on nectar from flowers, picking up pollen and transferring it from flower to flower (and you thought only bees did that!). This was their intended role. However, after the curse of Genesis 3, a change took place. The female mosquito now requires blood in order to lay eggs. Presumably, before the curse, female mosquitos were able to get the needed nutrients, namely iron, proteins, and other amino acids, from their plant-based diet. Consequently, the female mosquito,

not the male, now seeks out animal or human blood in order to reproduce. The rest of the time, like the males, female mosquitos continue to function much like they did before the curse, drinking nectar and pollinating flowers as God intended.

Knowing why God created mosquitos and how they came to be the pests they are is one thing, but dealing with them is another thing entirely. They are more than annoying, they spread malaria, dengue fever, Zika virus, West Nile virus, and other diseases, even death. In fact, mosquitos are probably responsible for more human deaths than any other creature. However, the Bible offers hope that one day the natural order will be restored to that prior to the curse. Consider, for instance, Isaiah 11:6-9:

⁶The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. ⁷And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. ⁹They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

This passage in Isaiah describes the Millennial Reign of Christ, the time after the coming seven year Tribulation period and the second coming of Jesus to set up His Kingdom on earth. One of the conditions of the Millenium appears to be a restoration of peace and order to the natural realm including the removal of predation and the dangers of poisonous snakes. Consequently, it seems likely that the necessity of female mosquitos needing a blood meal in order to lay eggs might be removed as well. But, if there is any doubt, we can rest assured that in the new earth, following the Millennial Kingdom, we will be absolutely free from mosquito bites. After all, Revelation 22:3 tells us that “there shall be no more curse”.

Of course, the only way to enjoy this world without the curse, is by putting your faith in Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour in order to be free from your personal curse of sin. And, free from the curse of sin and no longer prey to that mosquito buzzing around our ear, while sitting outside on a cool summer evening, enjoying a good book or conversation with family and friends, we will agree with Genesis 1:31, “And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was very good.*”

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