



Evolution or Creation: Survival Of The Fittest?

By Grace

18 years old

Michigan

Home schooled

Senior High Level

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Introduction

“SCIENTISTS REVEAL 1 MILLION SPECIES AT RISK OF EXTINCTION”!¹

“FROM CORAL REEFS FLICKERING OUT BENEATH THE OCEANS TO RAIN FORESTS DESICCATING INTO SAVANNAS, NATURE IS BEING DESTROYED AT A RATE TENS TO HUNDREDS OF TIMES HIGHER THAN THE AVERAGE OVER THE PAST 10 MILLION YEARS”!²

“THE BIOMASS OF WILD ANIMALS HAS FALLEN 82%”!³

“MAMMALS WILL STILL BE RECOVERING FROM HUMAN DESTRUCTION LONG AFTER WE’RE GONE”!⁴

News headlines today scream about the extinction of species in modern times. Scientists predict it will take millions of years to “re-evolve” the biological diversity that is currently being lost through extinction.⁵

¹ Jonathan WaEs, “Human society under urgent threat from loss of Earth’s natural life,” <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/may/06/human-society-under-urgent-threat-loss-earth-natural-life-un-report> (Accessed March 13, 2020).

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Dominique Mosbergen, “Mammals Will Still Be Recovering From Human Destruction Long After We’re Gone,” https://www.huffpost.com/entry/mammal-diversity-extinction-study_n_5bc59f68e4b055bc94796ecf (Accessed March 13, 2020).

However, while they urge the public to reduce their supposed carbon footprint and help save endangered species, evolutionary scientists silently ignore the fact that extinction is a vital part of the hypothesis of evolution as explained in the concepts of survival of the fittest and natural selection. This essay will review the evolutionary ideas of survival of the fittest and natural selection, as well as how evolutionary scientists ignore these fundamentals of their worldview. It will then examine the concern over modern extinction in the light of the Bible and finally conclude which of the two world views, evolution or creation, provides a stronger rationale for caring for the earth.

The Principle of Extinction

When Charles Darwin first developed his evolutionary ideas, he did not have the term “survival of the fittest” to call his hypothesis on why some species thrive and others die out.⁶ He used the term “natural selection,” but this expression was imperfect, as it caused some to think that Darwin was unnecessarily personifying nature.⁷ When Herbert Spencer, an English philosopher and sociologist, read Darwin’s works, he suggested the term “survival of the fittest” and Darwin immediately adopted it.⁸ Darwin wrote in the introduction of the fifth edition of *On The Origin of Species* (the first of his books to use the new term): “*I have called this principle, by which each slight variation, if useful, is preserved, by the term Natural Selection, in order to mark its relation to man’s power of selection. But the expression often used by Mr. Herbert Spencer, of the Survival of the Fittest, is more accurate, and is sometimes equally convenient.*”⁹

Although Darwin used the terms “survival of the fittest” and “natural selection” almost interchangeably, evolutionary scientists today give them separate, though very similar, meanings. The English Cambridge

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MaE Davis, Søren Faurby, and Jens-Christian Svenning, “Mammal diversity will take millions of years to recover from the current biodiversity crisis,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 115(44) (October 30, 2018):11262-11267.

⁶ Conor Cunningham, “Survival of the fittest,” <https://www.britannica.com/science/survival-of-the-fittest> (Accessed April 4, 2020).

⁷ Alfred Russel Wallace to Charles Darwin, July 2, 1866, <https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/letter/DCP-LETT-5140.xml> (Accessed April 30, 2020).

⁸ Charles Darwin to Alfred Russel Wallace, July 5, 1866, <https://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/letter/DCP-LETT-5145.xml> (Accessed April 30, 2020).

⁹ Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*, 5th edition, 1869, D. Appleton and Company, p. 61.

Dictionary defines them this way: “*Survival of the fittest: The principle that animals and plants suited to the conditions they live in are more likely to stay alive and produce other animals and plants than those that are not suited.*”¹⁰ “*Natural selection: The process that results in the continued existence of only the types of animals and plants that are best able to produce young or new plants in the conditions in which they live.*”¹¹ However, some scientists prefer to use only “natural selection” because they believe the term “survival of the fittest” is misleading in that survival is not the only, nor the most important, facet of the process of natural selection.¹² As evolutionary scientist Heather Scoville states, “*Natural selection is the idea that species that acquire adaptations favorable for their environment will pass those adaptations to their offspring. Eventually, only individuals with those favorable adaptations will survive, which is how the species changes over time or evolves through speciation.*”¹³

Why evolutionists should embrace extinctions

According to the evolutionary world view, extinction has always been a part of life. As defined by evolutionary scientist, J. David Archibald, extinction “... *occurs when all the individuals possessing a very similar but variable genome disappear.*”¹⁴ Besides the extinctions of one or a few species, evolutionary scientists believe that there have been five “mass extinctions” in the globe’s history.¹⁵ According to evolutionary definitions, a “mass extinction” is when a large amount of genetic biodiversity disappears from the fossil record in a relatively short period of time.¹⁶ Some scientists define “mass extinction” as when 75% or more species die out

¹⁰ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/natural-selection> (Accessed April 4, 2020).

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Chris Colby, “Introduction to Evolutionary Biology: Version 2,” <http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/faq-intro-to-biology.html> (Accessed April 30, 2020).

¹³ Heather Scoville, “Survival of the Fittest vs. Natural Selection,” www.thoughtco.com/survival-of-the-fittest-1224578 (Accessed April 4, 2020).

¹⁴ J. David Archibald, “Extinction, Cretaceous,” in Philip J. Currie & Kevin Padian, *Encyclopedia of Dinosaurs*, 1997, Academic Press, p. 222.

¹⁵ Gerardo Ceballos, Paul R. Ehrlich, Anthony D. Barnosky, Andrés García, Robert M. Pringle, & Todd M. Palmer, “Accelerated modern human-induced species losses: Entering the sixth mass extinction,” *Science Advances* 1(5) (June 5, 2015):e1400253.

¹⁶ Amber Pariona, “Timeline of Mass Extinction Events on Earth,” www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-timeline-of-the-mass-extinction-events-on-earth.html (Accessed April 30, 2020).

in a given time period.¹⁷ As mentioned before, it is conjectured by evolutionary scientists that there have been five mass extinction events in earth's history, the first of which, termed the End-Ordovician era extinction, is claimed to have occurred approximately 444 million years ago.¹⁸ It is supposed that 86% of all life then on earth went extinct during that event.¹⁹ Evolutionary scientists are not certain what caused any of the mass extinctions to occur, as Rolf Schmidt, an evolutionary paleontologist, admits: "*We don't always know what caused them, but most had something to do with rapid climate change.*"²⁰ In the case of the first mass extinction, it has been proposed that a harsh, though short, ice age was the leading cause.²¹

The second mass extinction, called the Late Devonian era extinction, supposedly occurred around 375 million years ago.²² The assumed cause of this extinction event was the sudden increase of large land plants.²³

According to evolutionary scientists, the plant roots disturbed the soil, which allowed nutrients to be released into the oceans. This purportedly caused a rapid increase in oceanic algae resulting in a decrease of the oxygen content of the water, suffocating most of the ocean's inhabitants, which represented the bulk of animal life on the planet at that time.²⁴ It is estimated that 75% of species died out in this extinction event.²⁵

The third mass extinction, known as the End Permian era extinction, supposedly occurred 251 million years ago.²⁶ It is said to have caused the demise of an astonishing 96% of all species then living.²⁷ The cause of this catastrophic extinction is assumed to have been a mixture of things. Some evolutionary scientists suppose that a

¹⁷ "The big five mass extinctions," <https://cosmosmagazine.com/palaeontology/big-five-extinctions> (Accessed April 30, 2020).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Amber Pariona, "Timeline of Mass Extinction Events on Earth," www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-timeline-of-the-mass-extinction-events-on-earth.html (Accessed April 30, 2020).

²⁰ "The big five mass extinctions," <https://cosmosmagazine.com/palaeontology/big-five-extinctions> (Accessed April 30, 2020).

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Michael Greshko & National Geographic Staff, "What are mass extinctions, and what causes them?," <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/prehistoric-world/mass-extinction/> (Accessed April 29, 2020).

²³ Amber Pariona, "Timeline of Mass Extinction Events on Earth," www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-timeline-of-the-mass-extinction-events-on-earth.html (Accessed April 30, 2020).

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Michael Greshko & National Geographic Staff, "What are mass extinctions, and what causes them?," <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/prehistoric-world/mass-extinction/> (Accessed April 29, 2020).

²⁶ "The big five mass extinctions," <https://cosmosmagazine.com/palaeontology/big-five-extinctions> (Accessed April 30, 2020).

²⁷ Wikipedia, "Extinction event," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extinction_event (Accessed April 30, 2020).

Siberian volcanic eruption filled the atmosphere with an unusually high amount of CO₂.²⁸ At the same time, growing bacteria produced large amounts of methane, thereby raising the earth's temperatures to an intolerably high degree. Evolutionary scientists also suppose that stagnation and acidification of the oceans caused them to release hydrogen sulfide, a poisonous gas, into the atmosphere.²⁹

The fourth mass extinction event is said to have taken place 200 million years ago and is called the End Triassic era extinction. It is assumed that 80% of the species on earth died out during this period, however evolutionary scientists have not been able to agree on a cause for this extinction.³⁰

The fifth mass extinction is perhaps the best-known of all the evolutionary timeline's extinctions, as it is supposed that during this event, the dinosaurs met their demise. Called the End Cretaceous era extinction, it has been estimated to have taken place 66 million years ago. Not only the non-avian dinosaurs, but 75% of all species living upon earth at that time went extinct.³¹ The most popular suggestion as to the cause of this extinction event is that an asteroid hit the earth triggering the die-out.³² Each of these extinction events is said to have occurred at the end of a given "period" (for example the End Cretaceous era extinction took place at the end of the Cretaceous Period), so as each massive die off came to an end, supposedly a new evolutionary period was beginning. According to evolutionary scientists, each new evolutionary era showed a burst of new biodiversity "evolving" from the few species that survived the latest mass extinction.³³

Evolutionary scientists believe that the earth is currently experiencing its sixth mass extinction,³⁴ named the Anthropocene Extinction, so-called because humans are allegedly causing it.³⁵ Evolutionary scientists today are

²⁸ "The big five mass extinctions," <https://cosmosmagazine.com/palaeontology/big-five-extinctions> (Accessed April 30, 2020).

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Wikipedia, "Extinction event," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extinction_event (Accessed April 30, 2020).

³² "The big five mass extinctions," <https://cosmosmagazine.com/palaeontology/big-five-extinctions> (Accessed April 30, 2020).

³³ "Life: Evolution and Extinction," <http://www.scienceforthepublic.org/things-to-know/life/life-evolution-and-extinction/> (Accessed April 30, 2020).

³⁴ Gerardo Ceballos, Paul R. Ehrlich, & Rodolfo Dirzo, "Biological annihilation via the ongoing sixth mass extinction signaled by vertebrate population losses and declines," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (published online July 10, 2017):E6089-E6096.

³⁵ Dominique Mosbergen, "Mammals Will Still Be Recovering From Human Destruction Long After We're Gone," https://www.huffpost.com/entry/mammal-diversity-extinction-study_n_5bc59f68e4b055bc94796ecf (Accessed March 13, 2020).

very concerned over this extinction. They loudly call for a reduction of the human footprint on the earth.³⁶

Matthew Davis, a paleontologist at Aarhus University in Denmark, published a study on modern extinction and says: *“It’s a pretty scary situation we’ve created. We are starting to cut down the whole tree [of life] including the branch [humans] are sitting on right now.”*³⁷ He also comments, *“It is much easier to save biodiversity now than to re-evolve it later.”*³⁸ The Committee on Recently Extinct Organisms stated *“Extinctions are irreversible changes in global biodiversity—therefore we are very concerned about measuring them accurately. Surveys describing the numbers and patterns of recent extinctions help scientists better understand the processes that cause these events. These surveys are also used by conservation biologists and policy-makers to provide measurements of negative impacts on biodiversity.”*³⁹ In Matthew Davis’ study he said, *“Humans have helped propel the extinction of more than 300 mammal species – equaling a staggering loss of 2.5 billion years’ worth of unique evolutionary history.”*⁴⁰

Why should these evolutionary scientists be so concerned about the natural out-working of their scientific concepts and hypothesis? One of their fundamental ideas, natural selection/survival of the fittest, clearly states that some species will just not be able to make it and will die out, leaving room for those who are more able. Evolutionary scientists today should be in favor of letting natural selection/survival of the fittest take its own course. The definition of the evolutionary process of natural selection is to promote those species that are more fit for the unique challenges of living and propagating their own species in their natural habitats and to weed out those species that are not advanced enough to be able to cope with the rigors of their surroundings. For example, take the Cretaceous era extinction which, according to evolutionary scientists, is the fifth mass extinction this globe has experienced. In this extinction, it is presumed that most, if not all, of the non-avian dinosaurs died out; additionally, scientists approximate that 75% of all species that lived on the earth at that

³⁶ Carl Safina, “In Defense of Biodiversity: Why Protecting Species from Extinction Matters,” <https://e360.yale.edu/features/in-defense-of-biodiversity-why-protecting-species-from-extinction-matters> (Accessed April 30, 2020).

³⁷ Dominique Mosbergen, “Mammals Will Still Be Recovering From Human Destruction Long After We’re Gone,” https://www.huffpost.com/entry/mammal-diversity-extinction-study_n_5bc59f68e4b055bc94796ecf (Accessed March 13, 2020).

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ “Why Care About Species That Have Gone Extinct?,” <http://creo.amnh.org/care.html> (Accessed April 30, 2020).

⁴⁰ Dominique Mosbergen, “Mammals Will Still Be Recovering From Human Destruction Long After We’re Gone,” https://www.huffpost.com/entry/mammal-diversity-extinction-study_n_5bc59f68e4b055bc94796ecf (Accessed March 13, 2020).

time disappeared. One evolutionist, referring to the End Cretaceous era extinction, admits, “... *the extinction of the dinosaurs presented an evolutionary opportunity to the tiny mammals that co-existed with the giant creatures. The mammals, previously insignificant, developed from a relatively few groups to a huge variety of species that filled the many niches that were suddenly - in geological terms - available...*”⁴¹ In the first mass extinction, which is supposed to have taken place during the late Ordovician time frame, an estimated 85% of the earth’s living organisms went extinct. In fact, scientists estimate that an astonishing 99% of all species that have ever inhabited planet earth have gone extinct.⁴² However, to the evolutionist, this should not be considered a totally bad thing. As evolutionist Michael Greshko states, “*Though mass extinctions are deadly events, they open up the planet for new forms of life to emerge.*”⁴³ Referring to our first example, the Cretaceous era extinction, which is claimed to have killed off the dinosaurs, Mr. Greshko admits, “. . . *[It] made room for mammals and birds to rapidly diversify and evolve.*”⁴⁴ In the words of another evolutionist, “*life always seems to rebound, and so far each rebound has brought significant increase in biological complexity and diversity.*”⁴⁵

Why should evolutionary scientists want humans to forcibly interrupt this process by coddling weaker species which are clearly not evolving new methods of survival on their own? Evolutionary scientists should be in favor of just standing back and letting natural selection/survival of the fittest take its course. For the most part, it seems these evolutionary scientists are ignoring this fundamental component of Darwinian evolutionism and are instead promoting the urgent need to stop this supposedly evolutionary process from killing off more species. When these scientists are discussing current extinction and the state of the globe, they never mention that it is completely consistent with their hypothesis. If they truly believed and embraced their Darwinian worldview, they would just step back and let “evolution” run its course.

⁴¹ “Life: Evolution and Extinction on,” <http://www.scienceforthepeople.org/things-to-know/life/life-evolution-and-extinction/> (Accessed April 30, 2020).

⁴² Michael Greshko & National Geographic Staff, “What are mass extinctions, and what causes them?,” <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/prehistoric-world/mass-extinction/> (Accessed April 29, 2020).

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ “Life: Evolution and Extinction on,” <http://www.scienceforthepeople.org/things-to-know/life/life-evolution-and-extinction/> (Accessed April 30, 2020).

Why creationists benefit the earth

In the Bible, the Creator of the Universe commanded Adam, the first man that He created in His image, to “*Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth*” (Genesis 1:28). Subdue here does not mean that man may wantonly destroy the earth or use it only with our gain in mind, but instead informs us of the responsibility we have to care for it. In fact, in Revelation 11:18 we are told that God will “*destroy them which destroy the earth.*” Therefore, we should be good stewards of the earth and the resources that God has given us so that when Jesus Christ comes to judge the quick and the dead, we will be able to give a good account of how we cared for and used the resources we were entrusted with. We also show reverence to the Creator by caring for His Creation and look forward to the time when He will come again to take us to live on a new, glorious, and perfect earth, which will never decay and nothing will ever die, for “*there shall be no more curse*” (Revelation 22:3). We are told in Genesis 1 that God created the earth and all living creatures in six literal days, not over millions of years of evolution. Species that have lived on earth gone extinct as a result of Adam and Eve’s sin have experienced the consequences of the curse placed upon all living things as a result of that sin.

As believers in the Bible, we do not ignore the decay of the earth and the extinction of species, but rather see it in the light of the Bible as a natural result of the sin of man, and a careless selfish use of the earth, not because there are too many people on the earth, or the consequence of some supposed evolutionary theory.

Conclusion

This essay has reviewed the evolutionary concepts of survival of the fittest/natural selection and how modern extinctions should be seen as a natural outworking of this view. It has also shown how evolutionary scientists ignore this facet of their hypothesis and how in the light of the Bible, and by the command of our Creator, we

should care for the earth until He comes again. *“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city”* (Revelation 22:14).

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