

## AGC.....The Ancient Beetles

No, we are not talking about the “Lads from Liverpool” in later life, but the hard shelled, creepy crawly, and for some gross “bugs.” Beetles, the Order Coleoptera comprise the largest order of any of all of the animals in God’s creation. There are 300,000 currently known beetles with some estimates of as many as 4-5 million unnamed species still to be discovered around the world. Some zoologists feel that the beetles may make up over half of all animals on earth so they are very important in natural world. Scientists are making news with some interpretations about the beetles that they had not predicted when looked at from the view of a gradual evolution of life. Of course as creationists who know that the creation of all living things occurred during the week long creation event with all of the other life forms that have been discovered to date. Let’s take a general look at the beetles to see where the atheistic scientists of the world have erred in their interpretations.

The Order Coleoptera was named by Aristotle and means “sheath-winged” which refers to part of the hard covering over the wings which are part of the exoskeleton insects have. Beetles are insects as they have the characteristic six jointed legs of all animals in this group. As with many insects, beetles have complete metamorphoses, going through the egg-larva (several immature phases called-instars)-pupa- and finally the adult stage.

Research into the beetles using fossils and DNA evidence of living has led the atheistic worldview to now feel that the beetles are millions of years older than the dinosaurs. This changed the view of beetles from recent newcomers 140 million years ago, to 70 million years before the T. rex at supposedly 300 million years ago says a new report published in the December 21, 2007 journal Science. As Dave Mosher of LiveScience says “New research hints that modern-day versions of the insects are far older than any tyrannosaur that trod the Earth.” So again, the assumptions of the gradual changes of living things over millions and millions of years by evolution appear not to be supported by the evidence. The beetles that appear in the fossil record fully formed, modern appearing with have no evidence of what they evolved from. As Dave Mosher says, “The new genetic maps suggest that a common ancestor to beetles crept up well before its descendants showed up in the fossil record.” Maybe that is because there were no ancestors for them! God created them fully formed with the plants that they need to live and that they benefit.

Beetles provide food for many animals, a role which they share with most other insects, but the beetles play other important roles in the environment. Many are pollinators helping to provide our food. Dung beetles, feed on and reproduce in the dung of herbivores, thereby removing millions of tons of dung that would accumulate and destroy valuable pastureland. Burying beetles enter dead animal carcasses which are then used as food by the adults and their growing offspring. This helps to get rid of carcasses that would otherwise contaminate and foul the environment. Various nest-dwellers and fur external parasites rid their bird and mammal hosts of parasitic insects, such as fleas, bed bugs, and lice. Some beetles are effective as biological control agents such as the ladybug beetles which feed on aphids. Carabid beetles, such as the “caterpillar-hunters” are often helpful in reducing populations of harmful caterpillars, such as gypsy moth caterpillars

and Firefly larvae called glowworms, eat slugs and snails which damage such crops as tomatoes and lettuce. These are just a few examples of the beneficial aspects of beetles, in addition to the delight we can find in their beauty and remarkable diversity!

Beetles show tremendous strategies of defense using camouflage, mimicry, toxicity, and even active mechanisms which God created in them which are so complex as to cause many scientists to scratch their heads with wonder. So as we observe the creation of the “creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.” Genesis 1:24 let us always praise the creator for His marvelous works.