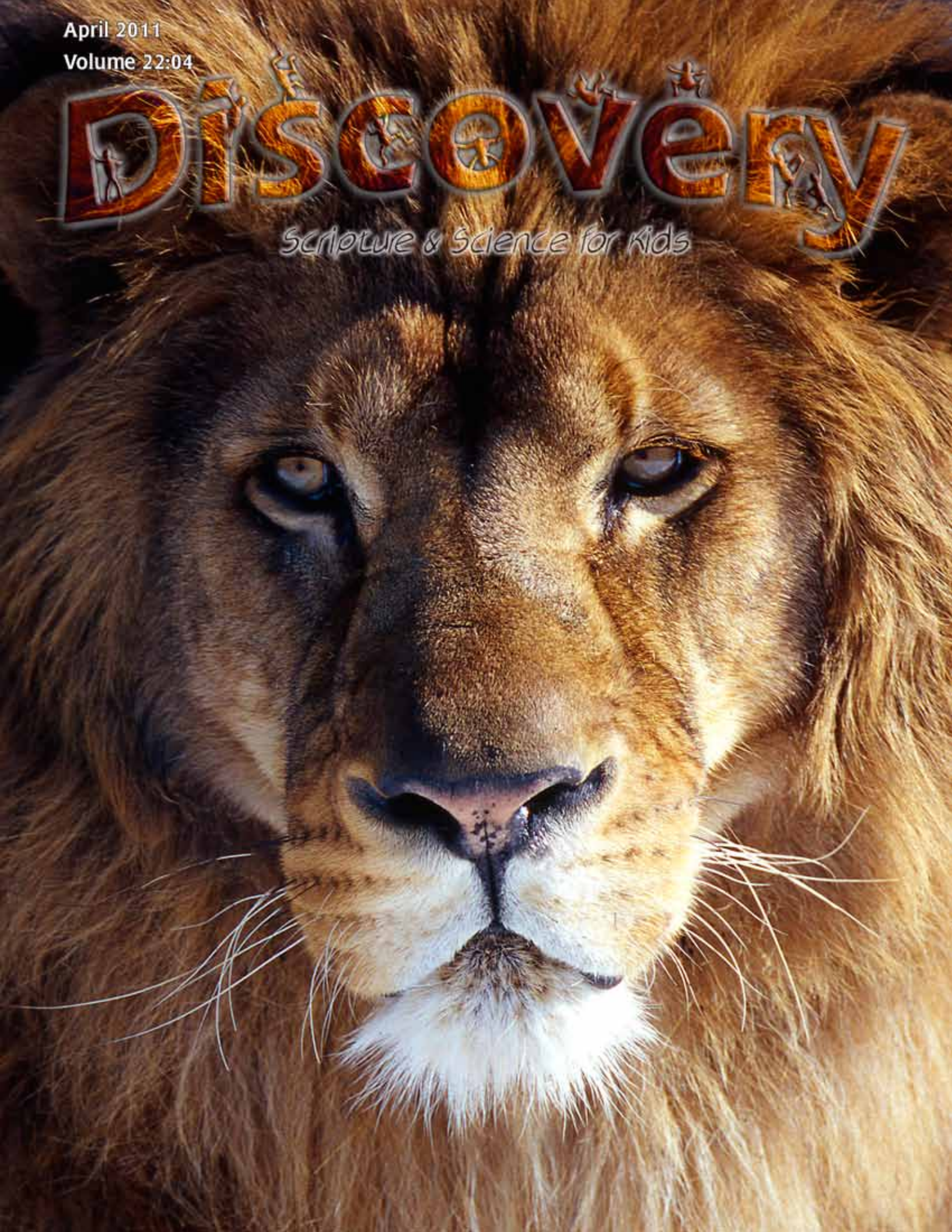


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Discovery

Scripture & Science for Kids



Wonders of GOD'S Creation

ERIC LYONS

I am so thankful that God made animals, aren't you? Aside from liking the way that many of them taste (chicken, for example), I just enjoy observing animals. I love to see an eagle soar through the sky on a clear day. I enjoy watching monkeys hang from branches with one arm while making their funny "ooohhh-ooohhh aaahhh-aaahhh" sounds. I like to see lightning bugs glow on a dark summer night. And I love to hear the spine-tingling roar of the lion at the zoo.

Although animals are certainly not the main theme of Scripture (that honor belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ), the Bible does have a lot to say about them. For example, eight of the first nine chapters of the Bible mention animals. You can read about their creation in Genesis 1-2. Satan, the snake, as well as animal skins are mentioned in Genesis 3. Moses wrote about Abel's sheep in chapter four, while penning much about animals in the account of Noah and the Flood in Genesis 6-9. From locusts to lions to Leviathan, the Bible talks about a lot of different animals.

Consider the climax of the book of Job, when God speaks to Job out of a whirlwind. Instead of informing Job of the exact reasons for his serious suffering, God spoke to him about His Creation. Beginning in Job 38:39 and going through chapters 39, 40, and 41, God spoke to Job about several different animals, including the lion, the hawk, the behemoth, and Leviathan. Of all of the things God could have said to Job, He spent some **77 verses** talking about a variety of **animals**. He chose to teach Job about His [God's] all-powerful, all-knowing, supreme nature by describing some of His magnificent animal creation.

The fact is, we can learn a lot about God, the Creator and Sustainer of life, by studying the many kinds of creatures He made on days five and six of Creation. The super shock absorber between the beak and skull of the woodpecker could not have just evolved by time and chance. The lightning bug's ability to mix the proper chemicals and light up its

backend is not the result of mindless evolution. The amazing abilities of these (and all other) animals testify to an infinitely intelligent Creator.

Since the time of Job, Noah, and going as far back as Adam, man has learned some wonderful things about

God by studying His amazing creation. In fact, 2,000 years ago, the apostle Paul wrote the following words to Christians living in Rome: "Since the creation of the world His [God's] invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood [by man] **by the things that are made** [example: **animals**], even His eternal power and Godhead" (Romans 1:20).

The prophet Isaiah once wrote about being allowed to see a vision of the throne of God. In the Lord's presence were angelic beings crying out one to another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6:3). What is the basis of this praise? What is one reason we should be driven to worship God?

Isaiah revealed one of the pillars of God's praise in the very next line: "**The whole earth is full of His [God's] glory**" (6:3).

The beauty, splendor, and design of God's creation (including His animal creation) should drive us closer to the Creator. God's "fingerprints" (creations) should make us stand in awe of Him. They should drive us to our knees in worship to Him. And, they should compel us to tell others about Him. As the psalmist sang, we should "declare

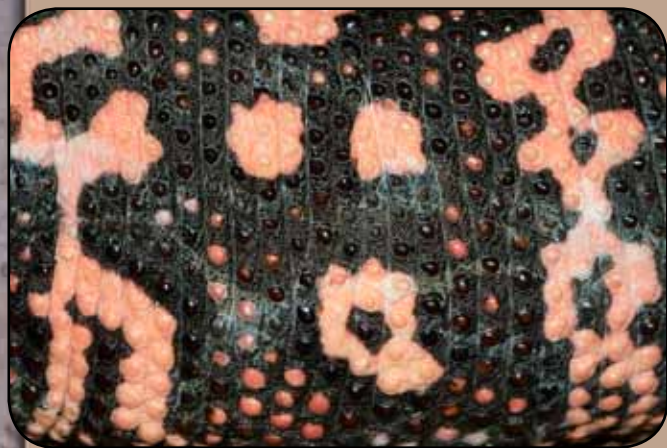
His glory among the nations, **His wonders** among all peoples. For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised" (96:3-4).



THE GILA MONSTER

DAVE MILLER

Growing up in the Arizona desert made me very aware of an amazing creature that many people seemed to view with mystery and superstition: the Gila (pronounced HEE-luh) Monster. This reptile lives in the Mojave (mo-HAH-vee), Sonoran (suh-NOR-un), and Chihuahuan (chee-WAH-won) deserts. It is the largest lizard native to the U.S. and can be found in the southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico. It was rare to see Gila Monsters out in the open, since they tend to stay hidden under rocks, in burrows of other animals, and in holes they dig for themselves. In fact, more than 99% of the Gila's life is spent inactive and underground.



These striking, even eerie, lizards have short limbs and a stout, elongated body that grows up to two feet long. Its face is black, and its body has black, orange, pink, or yellow broken blotches, bars, and spots,

with bands extending onto its blunt tail. Its skin consists of small, rounded, raised, bead-like scales. Embedded within the scales are osteoderms (AH-stee-o-derms), small bony plates, apparently just like the protective "bony skin" that was fairly common in dinosaurs. Gilas are one of the few living reptiles that are covered with this type of armor.

While Gila Monsters tend to move very slowly, they have strong jaws that latch onto prey, making it difficult to get them to turn loose. Their teeth have two grooves that serve as channels through which venom passes from glands in the lower jaw. Since the Gila Monster's nerve-toxin venom is not injected like that of the snake, this reptile must chew on its victim to allow the venom to flow into the wound. The toxin overpowers the animals it attacks. Such venomous poison could not have evolved! It had to have been created by the Creator who equipped the Gila Monster with both the ability to produce the venom as well as a way to inject it into its prey.

During the summer, the Gila Monster feeds at night on small mammals, birds, and eggs. God designed Gila monsters to eat as few as four (large) meals each year. So, during

the winter, a Gila depends on large amounts of fat stored in its specially designed tail and abdomen. Since God planned for these creatures to specialize in feeding on the young and eggs, He made their main active period match the availability of their primary food source—quail and desert cottontail that nest during the Spring months of April and May.

Scientists have learned another amazing thing about Gila Monsters that shows they were created by God. Right after eating, a hormone-like molecule called Exendin-4 comes into the Gila's saliva and circulates in the Gila's blood, preparing it to receive incoming nutrients. This chemical in the Gila's spit "wakes up" the pancreas and causes important body functions to occur. Unlike most other hypoglycaemic (hi-poe-gly-SEE-mic) medicines which only do one thing (control blood

sugar), Exendin-4 does several things: it causes the release of insulin, lowers blood glucose produced by the liver, and slows the emptying of the stomach, decreasing appetite and helping with weight loss. This discovery is very important for people who have diabetes. Chemists have developed a manmade version of the chemical found in the Gila Monster's saliva that is now being used to treat diabetes.

Can you believe it? Intelligent scientists turn to God's specially designed animals to copy their amazing characteristics in order to help people. Since God is the Creator, since He specifically designed all of His creatures, and since animals did not come into being through evolution, it follows that we humans have much to learn about God's designs that can be beneficial for solving many problems. Listen to the wise Solomon and Isaiah: "He has made everything beautiful in its time" (Ecclesiastes 3:11). "Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable" (Isaiah 40:28).



ACTIVITY PAGES



TRUE OR FALSE

1. Animals are the main theme of Scripture.
2. Animals are a waste of time to discuss.
3. Animals are rarely mentioned in the Bible.
4. The Betta is a Siamese Fighting Fish.
5. More than 99% of a Gila Monster's life is spent inactive and underground.
6. In the climax of the book of Job, God spoke with Job about several animals.
7. God equipped the Gila Monster with both the ability to produce venom as well as a way to inject it into its prey.
8. Animals are mentioned in eight out of the first nine chapters of the Bible.
9. Fighting Fish are actually very friendly fish and never attack other fish.
10. The Gila Monster can store large amounts of fat in its specially designed tail and abdomen.



COMPLETE THE BIBLE VERSES

(NKJV)

1. "For _____ the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly _____, being understood by the things that are _____, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20).
2. God "has made everything _____ in its _____" (Ecclesiastes 3:11).
3. "Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting _____, the LORD, the _____ of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is weary. His understanding is unsearchable" (Isaiah 40:28).
4. "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole _____ is full of His _____" (Isaiah 6:3).
5. "Declare His [God's] _____ among the nations, His _____ among all peoples" (Psalm 96:3).



MATCHING



- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| A. Isaiah | E. Mojave |
| B. Woodpecker | F. Osteoderms |
| C. Job | G. Gila Monster |
| D. God | H. Betta |

1. _____ A fish with a special "lung" that allows it to survive in water that contains little oxygen
2. _____ Chemists have developed a manmade version of the chemical found in this animal's saliva to treat diabetes
3. _____ Small bony plates (apparently like the protective "bony skin" that was fairly common in dinosaurs)
4. _____ Desert in which the Gila Monster is found
5. _____ The Creator of all things
6. _____ Book of the Bible in which God speaks to Job about animals
7. _____ Has a super shock absorber between its beak and skull
8. _____ Book of the Bible in which the words "the whole Earth is full of His [God's] glory" is found



Dear Digger Doug,

Jesus came for the remission of our sins so that we could go to Heaven. Does that mean that all sinners before Christ were lost?
—Sean

Dear Sean,

That is a great question, and the answer is, "No." The Old Testament is full of faithful men and women who lived faithful lives and will be in heaven. Even in the New Testament, before Christ's death, we read the story of Lazarus, who died and was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:22).

If our sins are only forgiven through the blood of Jesus, how were sins forgiven before Jesus' blood was shed? Before Jesus died, people offered animal sacrifices. The blood of these animals was atonement for their souls (Leviticus 17:11). However, this was not enough to get rid of their sins. It was only to remind them of their sins, for the blood of animals could never take their sins away (Hebrews 10:4). They did this while they waited for the ultimate sacrifice, which was Jesus. When Jesus died on the cross, His blood covered our sins (if we obey Him), and the sins of the faithful followers of God who lived before He came to Earth.

Imagine you are in line at a buffet. When it is time for you to pay, you tell the cashier, "My friend who is behind me is going to pay for me." As your friend comes up to the cashier he says, "Yes, I am going to pay for my friend who is in front of me as well as for my two friends behind me." Just as the friend took care of those who were in front of him and behind him, Jesus also took care of those who came before His death on the cross, and after it.





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Editor: Kyle Butt, M.A.
 Associate Editor: Eric Lyons, M.Min.
 Layout and Design: Rob Baker, M.Ed.

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FISH THAT FIGHT TO THE DEATH



JEFF MILLER

“In this corner, from southeast Asia, measuring 2½ inches in length...Betta, the Siamese Fighting Fish!” These amazing creatures are becoming quite popular as an alternative to goldfish as pets for the home aquarium. But in some countries, this species of fish is used in fish fighting for money. Although the female Betta is quite peaceful, it is unwise to put two male Fighting Fish in the same fish tank without some kind of barrier between them. They are territorial and will fight fish that look similar (like the dwarf gourami and paradise fish) to the death. When this fish gets angry and wants to show it, he glows metallic green and red, and flares. Flaring is the term used to describe how Bettas spread their gill covers and fins in a show of aggression. During the fight, the fish will ram each other, slit each other’s skin with their teeth, and rub scales off of each other.

As you might expect from such aggressive little fish, they are carnivorous. They eat meat, such as bloodworms. Also, God gave these amazing fish a special “lung,” that allows them to survive in water that contains very little oxygen (like stagnant ponds and slow-moving streams), since they can come to the surface from time to time to breathe in more oxygen. [This means that they can survive if you forget to clean the fish tank for a while!] Many fish need fresh water to survive. However, God knew that there needed to be fish in areas where the water is not always fresh and is sometimes polluted. God designed these fish to be able to fill that niche.

Isn’t it amazing that God made such neat creatures for us to look at and study? Isn’t it amazing that God made them to fit in perfectly with His creation? And isn’t it great that God left evidence of His existence all over the world through the things that He made?

ANSWERS

MATCHING: 1. H (Betta); 2. G (Gila Monster); 3. F (Osteoderms); 4. E (Mojave); 5. D (God); 6. C (Job); 7. B (Woodpecker); 8. A (Isaiah).
 COMPLETE THE BIBLE VERSES: 1. since; 2. beautiful; 3. God; 4. Creator; 5. glory; 6. glory; 7. wonders.
 TRUE OR FALSE: 1-F; 2-F; 3-F; 4-T; 5-T; 6-T; 7-T; 8-T; 9-F; 10-T.
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