

WEIRD AND WONDERFUL

The Marsupial Mole

THE Marsupial Mole was only discovered about 100 years ago. These unusual animals are only found in Australia, where they spend most of their lives underground, burrowing just a few inches below the surface. They are specially designed for burrowing. Their head is cone-shaped with a leathery shield over the nose. Their front feet have two large flat claws which they use to dig their way forward. Their back feet are flat, and used to push the soil behind them as they dig. They don't leave tunnels — the soil and sand fills the burrow as they move forward.



A marsupial mole

Wikipedia photo by Kret Workowaty

Marsupial moles are blind, as their eyes are covered with skin. They don't need to see underground, and if they had normal eyes they would be injured by sand and soil. They also have no visible ears, just two tiny holes hidden in their fur. Like all marsupial animals, baby marsupial moles are born only partly developed, and spend time in their mother's pouch before they are strong enough to look after themselves. Unlike most marsupials, the Marsupial Mole's pouch faces backwards. This stops sand from filling it as the animal burrows in the ground. Evolutionists

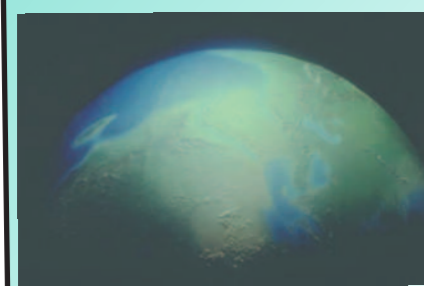
believe that their pouch changed from facing forwards to backwards, but how could this have happened gradually?

The oldest fossils of a marsupial mole are claimed to be "15–20 million years old". We don't believe they are as old as that, but the fossils reveal that these animals have not evolved from anything else. We believe they were created by God for the life they live.

LOST WORLD — NEW WORLD

The lost world that existed before the flood was quite different from the one we know. That world was destroyed by the flood because people rebelled against God. But although the world changed after the flood, it was still dependable. God promised: "As long as the world continues, there will be planting and harvest. Cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will not stop." (*Genesis 8: 22*), and God gave the rainbow as a sign that he would keep His promise.

The Bible tells us that the world we now live in is a "lost world"! God created us to live close to him, but the wrong things we do separated us from Him, and without God we are lost. Jesus, God's Son, came to earth "to find lost people and save them." (*Luke 19: 10*). By dying on the cross and then rising again, Jesus made a way for us to be found, and come back to God.



God has promised to create a new world in the future, where all the things that spoil our world now will have vanished. This is how the Bible describes it: "There will be no more death, sadness, crying or pain. All the old ways are gone." (*Revelation 21: 4*). And Jesus will reign as King for ever! If we want to be part of that new world, we need to ask Jesus to save us now.



PUZZLE ANSWERS

Frogs quiz:
 Numbers 2 and 8 are the same.
Odd one out:
 1. whale - not a fish. 2. Badger - not a farm animal. 3. Frog - not a reptile. 4. Ostrich - can't fly. 5. Squirrel - not an ape. 6. Fox - not a marsupial. 7. Spider - not an insect. 8. Hedgehog - not a pet. 9. Octopus - not a fish. 10. Mouse - doesn't lay eggs. 11. Mole - lives underground. 12. Bat - not a bird.

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The real LOST WORLD

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Long ago there were giant animals and plants, and lush forests grew where there is now only snow and ice.

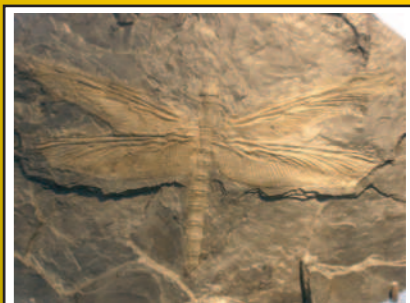


In 1912 Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote *The Lost World*. It was the story of some explorers who discovered a 'lost world' in South America, where there were dinosaurs and other creatures not living on earth today. Of course, that story was only make-believe, but there really was a time when

the world was very different. Fossils reveal a very green, wet world, teeming with animals and plants. Large trees and plants grew near the North and South Poles, and there were lakes and rivers where there are now deserts. What happened to this 'lost world'? Creation scientists believe that the world-wide flood of Noah's time was followed by an Ice Age, and after this the climate became much like it is today.

GIANT INSECTS

Most living insects are quite small, but the fossils show that many insects were once gigantic. The largest living dragonflies measure 100mm (4 inches) from wing-tip to wing-tip — although most are smaller. But fossils show that in the past they measured 75cm (30 ins.)!



This fossil dragonfly measured 75 cm. (30ins.) across its wings

Most cockroaches (below left) are no more than 40mm (1½ ins.) long, but some fossil cockroaches were 90mm. (4 ins.) long! There are other examples of giant fossil insects, showing that they lived in a very different world.



Living for more than 900 years!

The Bible tells us that, before the flood, people regularly lived for more than 900 years. The book of Genesis carefully records people's ages, beginning with Adam who lived to be 930. The oldest person was Methuselah, who lived to be 969! Did they really live that long? Some people believe the years were really months, but when we study the Bible record we can see that this idea must be wrong. For example, Genesis chapter 5 tells us that Adam's third son, Seth, was born when Adam was 130. If the years were months, Adam would have been only 11 when Seth was born!



After the flood people's lives gradually became shorter, until the normal age of death was around 70. There must have been something about the world before the flood that enabled people to live longer, but everything had changed when Noah and his family came out of the ark.

Fossils show that coral once grew near the North Pole, where there is now only snow and ice. It must have been much warmer there in the past.



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Rivers in the desert!

The Sahara Desert in Africa (right) covers 9,000 sq. km. — as large as the continental United States. It is a very dry, hot place, with little rain, and temperatures sometimes reach 57 C. (135 F). However, thousands of years ago it was a much wetter place. Thousands of cave paintings — drawn by people who once lived there — and fossils, show that elephants, rhinos, hippos, crocodiles and several kinds of dinosaur once inhabited the desert. There were lush plants, forests, and large rivers and lakes with many kinds of fish. Where there is now only sand there were swamps and green pastures. Farmers kept sheep and grew corn. Other deserts, including the Kalahari in Namibia, were also much wetter in the past.

So what happened to the deserts? The Bible tells us that during the time of Noah the whole earth was covered with water for just over a year. After the flood, as the waters evaporated, the earth would have slowly become drier, and weather patterns would have changed. Deserts like the Sahara had less and less rain, rivers and lakes dried up, and today the only plants and animals that live there are those which can survive the heat and dryness. There are no hippos or crocodiles, and hardly any trees or plants, except around oases (left). As always the Bible's history fits the facts!



Hippos (above) and crocodiles (below) once lived in what is now the Sahara Desert



Wikipedia photo by Sfvat

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NATURE NOTES by the editor



Cacti are plants specially designed to survive heat and drought. Some desert cacti grow to 20 m (66 ft) tall, while others are 1 cm. or less. Instead of leaves, which would lose moisture in hot sun, they have sharp spines. Some cactus spines are 15 cm (6 ins.) long. The spines deter animals which might be tempted eat the plant. Cactus stems are very thick and filled with spongy tissue. This acts as a water storage chamber, and also sends water down to the plant's roots. There have been cases where people's lives have been saved by drinking the liquid stored in a cactus stem.

All cactus plants have very large roots which help them to absorb every bit of moisture and minerals from the ground. All cacti produce flowers (centre right), which are often very beautiful. Many are pollinated by bees, others by hummingbirds and even bats. They are rewarded by the nectar produced by the cactus.

Evolutionists believe cacti evolved from some other kind of plant, but the oldest fossil — of a Prickly Pear Cactus — is like those living today (lower right). The best explanation is that God created cacti much as they are today.



Wikipedia photo by John Sullivan.

—Geoff Chapman

Close-up of cactus spines

FROM TREES TO COAL

PEOPLE have been digging coal out of the earth for centuries. Yet there is still believed to be enough left to last for another 130 years. Most people know that coal was made from trees that were buried in the earth. If all the forests on earth today were buried, they would only make a fraction of the world's coal. So how could there have been enough trees to make the huge, deep coal beds found around the world, and how did they turn into coal?

Many scientists believe that coal formed very slowly as trees sank into swamps, and that over millions of years other forests grew, which also sank into the swamp, making many different layers of coal.

However, there is lots of evidence that the layers formed very quickly. Before the great flood the world was very different. Fossil leaves and trees, and rich layers of coal, have even been found near the North and South Poles. In 1985 the remains of a giant redwood forest were discovered in Axel Heiberg Island in the Canadian Arctic. The tree stumps, which were up to 2 meters (6 feet) thick, had not even turned to stone, and could actually be burned. The only trees growing there now are 20mm-high dwarf willows. Fossils of alligators and turtles were also found there.

The waters of the flood would have torn many forests up, roots and all, and some may have floated long distances before being buried. Heat and pressure than turned them into coal. Millions of years aren't needed to make coal. In the laboratory scientists have turned plant material into coal in just a few weeks!



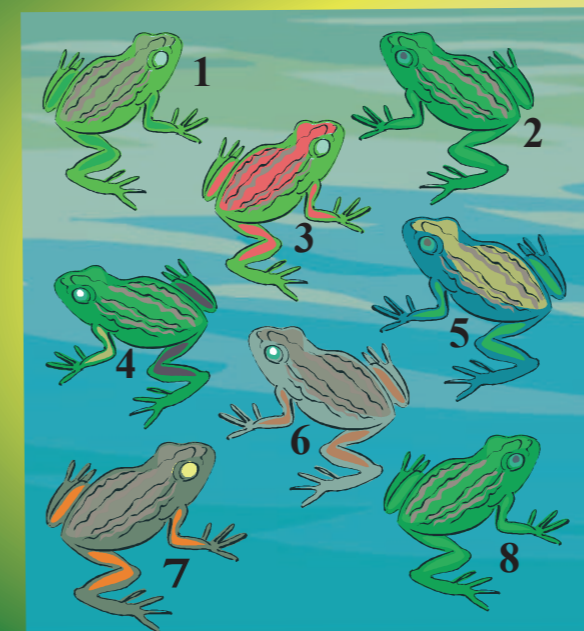
A giant redwood. Trees like this once grew in the Arctic. It must have been much warmer then.



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Miners often discover fossil tree trunks standing up through as much as 13 meters (40 feet) of coal and rock (above left). Many have no roots, proving they did not grow where they are found. If the layers had formed slowly, over thousands or millions of years, the trunks would have rotted long before they were buried. Coal layers are often found sandwiched between layers of rock (above right).

PUZZLE CORNER



Which two frogs are alike?

ODD ONE OUT PUZZLE

Which creature in each list is the odd one out — and why?

1. Shark, trout, whale, swordfish.
2. Cow, badger, horse, goat.
3. Crocodile, tortoise, frog, iguana.
4. Eagle, ostrich, swallow, seagull.
5. Squirrel, chimpanzee, gorilla, orangutan.
6. Kangaroo, koala, fox, wallaby.
7. Flea, cockroach, spider, moth.
8. Dog, hamster, hedgehog, cat.
9. Salmon, octopus, cod, tuna.
10. Frog, chicken, butterfly, mouse.
11. Seal, walrus, beaver, mole.
12. Sparrow, bullfinch, bat, robin.



(Answers on the next page)

