

The beasts of the earth: (Rev 6:8)

What can we make about this curious expression? And how, in our “modern” world, could this in any sense become a reality?

Let's look at a few possible scenarios – some, all, or none of which may have some relevance to this concept. My goal here, is simply to encourage the reader to consider a variety of possibilities.

The Birds, by Alfred Hitchcock:

Now well over fifty years old, this film still evokes striking images for those of my generation, as normally harmless members of the animal world, “our feathered friends,” turn on humankind with a vengeance. Massive, organized flocks of attacking birds, swooping down on unsuspecting men, women and children, intentionally and with malice. Of course, even at the time of its release it was lampooned for this very premise (in addition to Rod Taylor's exceptionally wooden performance), that being the natural order turned upset down. Let's briefly consider the spiritual dimensions behind this concept, though, and see if it is really so far-fetched.

First, we have been informed that at this time the entire creation will be in a state of dramatic upheaval, for even *the powers of the heavens will be shaken*; this unprecedented chaos in the spiritual world may, as a consequence, become reflected in the natural world: Mankind, having abrogated his placeholder in the natural order, will, instead of subduing the creation, now be subject to its unrestrained passions, and as God's unfaithful representative will become an object of scorn, and thus, in a very real sense, 'prey.' The animal kingdom, sensing this breakdown, will become much more aggressive, and attacks on humans will become much more widespread and even commonplace; moreover, due to the many concurrent disasters, animals may be deprived of their normal food sources, making humans an obvious alternative.

Second - and this is not just hyperbole - but Christians really were at one time fed to the lions in ancient Rome, and there is no reason to assume that this could not take place again under the banner of the Beast-empire, who will pursue with dogged determination the persecution of Christians and Jews. We have witnessed in recent years the extreme brutality of the Islamic State, in that not only were people savagely beheaded, but were tortured to death (remember the tragic scenes of the young man burnt alive in a cage, for instance) and oddly enough, I would suggest this could become commonplace again. Thus, public executions of people for their religious faith – perhaps through predatory beasts – may not be as far-fetched as it first seems.

Third, is zoos. Both public and private zoos represent a not insignificant threat to the population at large, and the deliberate release of many dangerous animals, especially when coordinated, into urban areas could create real dangers for many peoples. Do not forget that what little security forces, if they are in functioning at all, will be completely overwhelmed by other more urgent needs and may not be able to respond appropriately, if at all; additionally, many, if not most people will find it next to impossible to obtain any adequate weapons of self defense. This scenario could, furthermore, be exacerbated by the deliberate introduction of large numbers of highly venomous and aggressive species by nefarious forces attempting to destabilize a population.

And lastly, let's look at a few examples of how wild animals have, indirectly, contributed to the deaths of multitudes of people:

Plague. We've all heard of the black death, the dreaded bubonic plague, as this was one of the

greatest killers of mass numbers of people in recorded human history; A bacterium, *Yersinia Pestis*, carried by fleas, which were transported on rats, when passed to humans resulted in the deaths of more than a quarter of the population in many cities during the middle ages. This disease is still present in the wild, and a source of constant consternation among epidemiologists and public health officials.

HIV. In the past decades, the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) has resulted in the deaths of an estimated 32 million people, and, though having fallen off the front pages, is still endemic in many places, especially Africa, with over forty million people infected worldwide as of 2020. The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is believed to have originated in monkeys who carried the simian immunodeficiency virus (SIV) which was transmitted to humans through close contact with their bodily fluids, mutating into the HIV we know today.

More recently, in early 2020, we have seen a coronavirus outbreak postulated by some to be linked to the consumption of wild animals (snakes and bats are frequently mentioned) originating in the Wuhan region of China and spreading rapidly throughout all corners of the globe, thereby providing another example of how the deaths of many humans could occur through the wild animals; other, less widely-publicized reports have suggested that this outbreak is more closely linked to biologically enhanced agents. Many predictive models have forecasted the potential number of victims of similar aggressive infectious pandemics in the tens, or even hundreds of millions.

We have not even mentioned how, for example, common house-pets could become vectors for deadly biological agents, especially when developed and utilized by hostile entities.

These are only a few examples of many potential threats to humans through animal borne diseases. Additional candidates would include rabies, malaria, tularemia, brucellosis, and mad cow disease, the latter resulting in the forced culling of tens of millions of livestock in herds within Europe alone.