

THIS WEEK'S CREATION MOMENT

Synchronized Fireflies



"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" - Matthew 5:16

Fireflies in southeast Asia regularly put on a show. These fireflies have an ability found only among humans.

As the evening darkness deepens along a riverbank, fireflies in the trees over the riverbank begin to flash. At first the flashing is familiar to anyone who has ever seen fireflies anywhere in the world. Flashes come randomly from different parts of the tree. Within a few minutes, something strange begins to happen. Instead of the flashes appearing randomly, they now appear in groups. Fireflies in one part of the tree flash in unison, then a group in another part of the tree flashes. In less than half an hour, the entire swarm, which may extend over more than one tree, is flashing once per second in perfect unison. This ability to pick up a rhythm to synchronize actions is found otherwise only in human beings.

Scientists report that different species have different rates at which they synchronize. They have also discovered that fireflies of one species ignore the synchronized flashing of other species. Some firefly swarms even flash in waves, creating an especially eerie sight along riverbanks.

One scientist, who has been trying to understand how fireflies do this, said that this behavior is so complex he has no idea how it works. Whether or not these scientists believe in the Creator, their wonderment is a tribute to His unsurpassed handiwork, even in the lowly firefly.

REF.: Ivars Peterson. "Step in time." Science News, Vol. 140. pp. 136-137.
Photo: Photinus pyralis, common eastern USA firefly by PhotoFramer CC BY SA 2.0. Photo: Firefly (photinus lucifescens) on glass, Envato.



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