

A Master of Disguise

Many plants and animals disguise themselves as something they are not in the hope of protecting themselves. However, a true master of disguise must have many disguises. The tiger swallowtail offers no less than three disguises as it grows through its various stages toward adulthood.

The newly hatched larva looks for all the world like a bird dropping. This appearance makes the larva of no interest to birds that might otherwise eat it. Three molts later the caterpillar has turned green to match the leaves on which it feeds. In case he is spotted by some birds looking for a nice fat caterpillar for lunch, the caterpillar also has two large spots on its head that look like the eyes of a snake. Birds who are interested in caterpillars usually try to stay as far from snakes as possible. Finally, in the pupal stage, the tiger swallowtail has again radically altered its appearance. The pupa now looks like nothing more than just another broken twig on a tree trunk.

The immature tiger swallowtail's bag of disguises reflects a great deal of knowledge about the behavior of those creatures that threaten it. Each of its three disguises uses a different method to fool those birds that would be interested in the larva. Each disguise has the same specific goal. This master of disguise is no accident of biology.

Our Creator's purpose in making Himself evident in the creation is ultimately aimed at bringing each of us into a relationship with Himself. That relationship is based on the forgiveness of our sin through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Romans 1:18-19

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed [it] unto them."

Prayer: I thank You, Lord, that You seek us so that we may not remain in our sin. Assure me of Your forgiving love and grant me Your peace through the forgiveness of sins. Amen.

Ref: "A one-bug virtuoso starring in three roles." *National Geographic*.