

Animals in the Bible

*Are They Intelligent
and Relational Beings?*

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***The eyes of all look expectantly to You,
and You give them their food in due season.
You open Your hand and satisfy the desire
of every living thing.
Jehovah is righteous in all His ways,
gracious in all His works.
Psalm 145:15 to 17***

Introduction

There is a widespread belief among many Christians that animals do not have souls and spirits as we humans do. They often give this as the reason that we are superior to them and can rule over them ruthlessly, as animals without a soul or spirit are incapable of feeling or thinking deeply. This also means that they are not truly intelligent and therefore are incapable of having real relationships.

However, that is not what the Bible teaches. Instead, it teaches that animals also have bodies, souls and spirits like us, and so are capable of feeling and thinking. We need to think about this clearly. The same God, assisted by His Son, who made us also made all of the animals. Why would God make them only mediocre? Surely He would put a great deal of thought, love and care into designing and making each one of them. After all, God tells us at the end of creating all the animals that they were “good” (Genesis 1:25), thus far more than “adequate”.

However, the Bible also teaches that we are indeed different from the animals. It teaches that the difference between us and the animals is that we are made in the Image of God, and are able to have God’s Spirit dwell within us.

This article will examine the Scriptures and document what they really teach about animals.

Do Animals Have Souls?

The belief that animals do not have souls and spirits are largely based on inaccurate translations of the Bible into English from the original Hebrew and Aramaic (and Greek). We will use the Central Highlands Congregation of God translation throughout as it is the most accurate and readable English translation we know of.

Jehovah God, our Creator, actually informs us in His account of Creation Week that He created the animals with souls:

Then God said, “Let the waters swarm with swarms of living souls, and let flying creatures fly above the earth across the face of the expanse of the heavens.”

God created great sea dragons¹ and every living soul that moves, which the waters swarmed with, according to their kind, and every winged flying creature according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and become many, and fill the waters in the seas, and let the flying creatures multiply on the earth.”

And there was evening and there was morning: Fifth Day.

Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth live souls, each after its kind: livestock and creeping things and its beasts of the earth, each after its kind.” And it was so. So God made the beasts of the earth after their kinds, livestock after their kinds, and everything that creeps on the earth after their kinds. And God saw that it was good. Genesis 1:20 to 25

In the above passage, God clearly says three times that the living creatures He created had souls. In each instance, this is an accurate translation of soul from the Hebrew נֶפֶשׁ *nephesh*. God tells us that all creatures capable of moving in water, in the air and on land all have souls.

¹ From the Hebrew תַּנִּינִים *taninym*, usually meaning large reptiles, but including whales and creatures once known as dragons, but called dinosaurs today.

Proverbs 12:10 confirms that animals have souls, and that we are to treat them well: “A righteous man regards the soul of his animal, but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.”

Another way of confirming that animals have souls is that they, like us, have hearts and blood. Let us see how Leviticus relates that to having a soul:

‘And whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who sojourn among you, who eats any blood, I will set My face against that soul who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the soul of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood which atones for the soul.’

“Therefore I said to the children of Israel, ‘No soul among you will eat blood, nor will any stranger who sojourns among you eat blood.’

“And whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who sojourn among you, who hunts and catches any animal or flying creature that may be eaten, he will pour out its blood and cover it with dust; for the soul of all flesh is its blood.² It is one with its soul. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, ‘You will not eat the blood of any flesh, for the soul of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it will be cut off.’³ Leviticus 17:10 to 14

So, our souls are in our blood, and the blood, and thus the souls, of the animals must be drained out before we are allowed to eat their flesh.⁴

² Gen 9:4

³ Act 15:20

⁴ All vertebrates have hearts and blood that transfers oxygen and nutrients throughout the body and transfers the resulting carbon dioxide and waste to organs where they can be expelled. It is similar for insects, but their small

In Genesis 1:22, quoted above, God speaks to the animals, giving them instructions and blessing them. This clearly shows that the animals are sentient, or God would not bother communicating with them. It also shows that they are capable of having meaningful relationships, or again God would not bother giving them instructions and blessing them. We will see many other examples of God's relationship with animals are recorded in the Bible as we continue.

Do Animals Have Spirits?

But do the animals have spirits? Ecclesiastes tells us that all animals have spirits:

I said in my heart, "Concerning the estate of the sons of men, God tests them, that they may see that they themselves are like beasts. For what happens to the sons of men also happens to beasts; one thing befalls them: as one dies, so the other dies. Surely, they all have one breath; man has no advantage over beasts, for all is vanity.

All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust.

Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit of the beast, which goes down to the earth? Ecclesiastes 3:18 to 21

So we see that the Bible teaches that animals are triune creatures, just as we are:⁵

bodies allow them to transfer their oxygen and CO₂ via tracheal tubes. Instead of red blood, they have hemolymph which their heart pumps around their body without the need for arteries and veins. This is why their "blood" is often clear, yellow or green.

⁵ Read [*Spirit, Soul and Body*](#) and [*Jeshua, Son of God*](#) for details on this.

Now He, the God of Peace, will make you completely holy; all of your spirit and your soul and your body whole. He will keep you faultless for the coming of our Anointed Lord Jeshua.⁶ 1 Thessalonians 5:23

This passage in Matthew confirms that animals have a spirit aspect to their natures:

So these demons begged Him, saying, “If You cast us out, allow us to go into the herd of pigs.”

Jeshua said to them, “Go.” And they came out at once, and they went into the pigs. And the whole herd ran straight over a cliff and fell into the sea, and they died in the sea. Matthew 8:31 & 22

So these demons, who are fallen envoys,⁷ and thus spirit beings, came out of the man and entered into the pigs. They could only do so if the pigs also have a spirit component of their being like ours.

How Are Humans and Animals Different?

However, Ecclesiastes 3:21, quoted above, reveals that mankind’s spirit is different from that of the animals, as our spirits go up to God when we die, but the animals’ spirits go down into the earth.

The Bible says that even our bodies are different from those of the other creatures:

“But every body is not equal to another, for there is the body of a son of man, and another of beasts, and

⁶ Heb 13:20-21

⁷ Envoy is the translation from the Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. Angel is merely a transliteration from the Greek.

another of birds, and another of fish.” 1 Corinthians
15:39

The Creation Week account also goes on to confirm that we are different from the animals:

Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea, over the flying creatures of the heavens, and over the livestock, and over all the earth and over all the creeping things that creep on the earth.”

So God created man in His image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.⁸

Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; rule over the fish of the sea, and over the flying creatures of the heaven, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”⁹ Genesis 1:26 to 28

So we see that we are unique in being made in God’s image and likeness. This means that, like God, we are capable of complex speech and able to understand symbolic representations of words, music and mathematics. We are also able to conceive of original solutions to complex problems and implement those solutions. Results of these abilities can be seen in our making and using musical instruments, ceramics and metals. Only humans bury their dead. And we are also unique in the command given to us to subdue the earth and rule over all of the other creatures.

To Subdue and to Rule

But this is another place where the difference between us and the animals is often distorted. We are to subdue the earth, but only to

⁸ Mat 19:4, Mar 10:6, 1Co 11:7, Col 3:10, Jac 3:9

⁹ 1Co 15:38-39, Heb 2:7-8, Psa 8:4-6

rule over the animals. There is an immense difference between subduing something and ruling over someone.

For example, in a war one attempts to subdue their opponent by destroying their ability to wage war against you. It is a destructive activity. But ruling should be a constructive activity. A good ruler searches for the best way to lead those under their authority. They try to find the methods and techniques that will result in optimum prosperity and happiness for as many as possible in their country.

Let us see the first task that Adam undertook as ruler over the animals:

Out of the earth Jehovah God had formed every beast of the field and every flying creature of heaven. He brought them to Adam¹⁰ to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living soul, that was its name.

So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the flying creatures of the heavens, and to every beast of the field.
Genesis 2:19 & 20

So Adam's first task was to become familiar with all of the animals that God had created. In the process, he was given the joy and responsibility of naming them. Though he would have only met a male and female representative of each kind of animal that day, he would have formed some understanding of each kind and its needs.

It is also important to remember that Adam and Eve (Chavvah in the Hebrew) were vegans, and ruling over the animals did not include killing them and eating them:

And God said, "See, I have given to you every plant that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and

¹⁰ *Adam* אָדָם is the Hebrew word for man. Adam means dust.

every tree whose fruit yields seed; it will be for food for you.

“Also, to every beast of the earth, to every flying creature of the heavens, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so.

Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning: The Sixth Day. Genesis 1:29 to 31

And as you can see, even all of the animals were created as vegans. People were only given authority to eat animals after the Great Flood, and even then we were still supposed to have a mostly nurturing role, as Noah and his family demonstrated by caring for all of the animals while they were on the Ark:

So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you will be on every beast of the earth, on every flying creature of heaven, on all that moves on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand.

“Every moving thing that lives will be food for you.¹¹ I have given you all things, even as the green herbs.

“But you will not eat flesh with its soul, that is, its blood.” Genesis 9:1 to 4

But this change to allowing meat as part of the human diet had a negative effect on the relationships between humans and animals: now the animals would live in fear and dread of us. Sadly, this is still the system that we are living under. But when the Kingdom of God

¹¹ Leviticus chapter 11 makes it clear that only clean animals are acceptable as food. Our [*Unclean Animals and Food*](#) article explores this issue.

is reigning on earth, we will return to a system based on love and trust:

There will come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch will grow out of his roots. The Spirit of Jehovah will rest upon Him,¹² the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah.

His delight is in the fear of Jehovah, and He will not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears; but with righteousness He will judge the poor, and decide with equity for the gentle of the earth; He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked.¹³

Righteousness will be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist.¹⁴

“The wolf also will dwell with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow and the bear will graze; their young ones will lie down together; and the lion will eat straw like the ox.

The nursing child will play by the cobra’s hole, and the weaned child will put his hand in the viper’s den.

They will not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea. Isaiah 11:1 to 9

What a joy it will be to live in this world! And note that verse 9 says it will be like this because everyone will know Jehovah. We are given no reason to think that this promise does not include the animals.

¹² 1Pe 4:14

¹³ 2Th 2:8, Rev 19:21

¹⁴ Eph 6:14

Animals as Creative Beings

Though the Bible does not teach extensively about the creativity of animals, the world around us indicates the intelligence that God has given to them. It takes intelligence for beavers to select a good place to build a dam and then construct it in such a way that it can withstand the spring floods and also provide a safe, secure and dry lodge for them to raise their young in. The same can be said for the ingenious nests that many birds make and the burrows of underground-dwelling animals.

Birds know when to migrate, and God says that in this they are wiser than many humans:

“Even the stork in the heavens knows her appointed times; and the turtledove, the swift, and the swallow observe the time of their coming. But My people do not know the judgement of Jehovah. How can you say, ‘We are wise, and the Instructions of Jehovah are with us’? Jeremiah 8:7-8

Wolves hunt in packs, and use complex strategies to confuse and surprise their prey. Observation of dingos in Australia has shown that much of this hunting behaviour is not instinctive, but is actually taught to the younger animals by the adults.

Many animals use simple tools, such as sea otters using rocks to break open shellfish. Ravens, dolphins, elephants, octopus and gorillas have all been observed using tools.

Humans also train animals, which shows that they are intelligent and able to learn new behaviours:

For the nature of all beasts and birds, and creatures of the sea and land are tamed by the nature of mankind.

Jacob (James) 3:7

And stories of domestic animals helping and protecting their humans abound. Indeed, my older sister is likely only alive because the farm dog was wise enough to stand between her and the dam and bark until help came when she was a toddler.

Yes, animals are given wonderful instinctive behaviours, but many things that they do go beyond mere instincts.

But What About Our Current World?

What promises did God make to all of us after the Great Flood?

Jehovah made His covenant with the animals as well as with Noah and his family:

Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying:

“And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you, and with every living soul that is with you: the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you, of all that go out of the ark, every beast of the earth.

“Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again will all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

And God said: “This is the sign of the covenant which I make between Me and you, and every living soul that is with you, for perpetual generations: I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it will be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. It will be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow will be seen in the cloud; and I will remember My covenant which is

between Me and you and every living soul of all flesh; the waters will never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.

“The rainbow will be in the cloud, and I will look on it to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living soul of all flesh that is on the earth.”

And God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant which I have established between Me and all flesh that is on the earth.” Genesis 9:8 to 17

God’s Covenant was that He would never again send a worldwide flood that would destroy the earth. This is a promise that He has kept. But who did he make it with? With Noah, his sons and with every living creature on the earth, and Jehovah God repeats that combination three times in the quote above.

So we again see God addressing not just us humans, but also all of the animals that we share our planet with.

Does God Really Care About the Animals?

There are many Scriptures that make it clear that He does:

“Are five sparrows not sold for two coins? And yet not one of them is lost before God. Luke 12:6

And He said to His disciples, “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your soul, what you will eat; nor about your body, what you will wear. For the soul is more than food, and the body is more than clothing.

“Consider the ravens, they do not sow nor do they reap, and they have no storehouse nor barn; and God provides for them. So, how much more valuable are you than the birds? Luke 12:22 to 24

Jehovah upholds all who fall, and raises up all those who are bowed down.

The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food in due season. You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

Jehovah is righteous in all His ways, gracious in all His works. Psalm 145:14 to 17

Sing to Jehovah with thanksgiving; sing praises on the harp to our God, who covers the heavens with clouds, who prepares rain for the earth, who makes grass to grow on the mountains.

He gives to the beast its food, and to the young ravens that cry. Psalm 147:7 to 9

These [creatures] all wait for You, that You may give them their food in due season. What You give them they gather in; You open Your hand, they are filled with good.

You hide Your face, they are troubled; You take away their breath, they expire and return to their dust.

You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; and You renew the face of the earth. Psalm 104:27-30

“Can you hunt the prey for the lion, or satisfy the appetite of the young lions, when they crouch in their dens, or lurk in their booths to lie in wait?

Who provides food for the raven, when its young ones cry to God, and wander about for lack of food?” Job 38:39 to 41

“Behold the birds in heaven; they do not sow nor reap and they do not gather into barns; yet your Father who is in heaven feeds them.” Matthew 6:26

And why does Jehovah do this? Because He is their Creator, and they ALL belong to Him:

I will not take a bull from your house, nor goats out of your folds. For every animal of the forest is Mine, and the cattle on a thousand hills. I know all the flying creatures of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are Mine.

If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is Mine and all its fullness. Psalm 50:9-12

Please think about this in the other direction too. Aren't the ravens who are crying out to God also praying to Him and asking Him for help? And why wouldn't the lions that have been satisfied by God be praising Him? Isn't it likely that when the birds and the whales are singing, they are singing praises to God?

God Provides for His Animals, and is Proud of Them

There are four things which are little on the earth, but they are exceedingly wise: the ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their food in the summer; the rock badgers are a feeble folk, yet they make their homes in the crags; the locusts have no king, yet they all advance in ranks; the spider skilfully grasps with its hands, and it is in kings' palaces.

There are three things which are majestic in pace, yes, four which are stately in walk: a lion, which is mighty among beasts and does not turn away from any; a greyhound, a male goat also, and a king whose troops are with him. Proverbs 30:24 to 31

“Now look at the behemoth,¹⁵ which I made along with you; he eats grass like an ox. See now, his strength

¹⁵ This fits the description of a sauropod dinosaur.

is in his loins, and his power is in the muscles of his abdomen. He moves his tail like a cedar; the sinews of his thighs are knit together. His bones are like channels of bronze, his ribs like bars of iron.

He is the first of the ways of God; his Maker brings near His sword. Surely the mountains yield food for him, and all the beasts of the field play there. He lies under the shady trees, in a covering of reeds. And the marsh covers him, and the shady trees with their shadows; the willows by the river surround him.

Indeed the flood may oppress, yet he does not run away; he is confident, even if the Jordan gushes into his mouth. Shall anyone take him in his eyes, or pierce his nose with a snare? Job 40:15 to 24

Indeed, it is our God who has carefully designed all the interactions in this world in such a way that His animals can be fed and provided for throughout the year. Jeshua says that we too are expected to care for the animals:

Then He said to them, “Who is there among you who has a certain sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath day, will not grab it and lift it out?”

“Now, how much more important is a person than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbaths.” Matthew 12:11 & 12

In Luke, Jeshua takes this concept even farther:

And He said to them, “Who among you, if his son or his ox falls into a well on the Sabbath day, does not immediately pull him out?”

And they were not able to answer Him regarding this. Luke 14:5 & 6

Jehovah God's concern for animals is so strong that He even includes them in His Ten Commandments:

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you will labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of Jehovah your God. You will do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your livestock, nor your stranger who is within your gates.

“For in six days Jehovah made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore Jehovah blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it.¹⁶ Exodus 20:8 to 11

As Verse 10 says, even our livestock are to be given the Sabbath Day to rest each week.

And while they are working during the week, they are to be treated with care:

“You will not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.¹⁷ Deuteronomy 25:4

Sadly, our selfish and often thoughtless meddling in God's integrated environment has broken many of these interactions, resulting in widespread animal misery and numerous extinctions of God's plants and animals.

¹⁶ Gen 1:1-2:3, Exo 31:12-17, Mat 12:8, 2Th 3:10-12

¹⁷ 1Co 9:9, 1Ti 5:18

Why Did God Destroy the Animals as Well as the Humans in the Great Flood?

So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.

And God said to Noah, “The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the earth.
Genesis 6:12 &13

All flesh was corrupt. Like man, the animals had also embraced violence.¹⁸ And if they could become corrupt, it means that they too could choose between what was right and wrong for them. Let us look at some examples:

So Jehovah God said to the serpent: “Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you will go, and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He will bruise your head, and you will bruise His heel.” Genesis 3:14 & 15

This serpent agreed to be a host for Satan in the deception of Eve. This was an incorrect moral choice, for which the serpent, and its descendants, were punished. But let us see a more general example:

“Surely the blood of your soul I will seek. From the hand of every beast I will seek it, and from the hand of man. From the hand of every man’s brother I will seek the soul of man. Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his

¹⁸ Though all flesh, and thus even the animals were corrupt themselves, the animals were also under the authority of humanity, and as the humans were corrupt, the animals were also condemned in a similar manner as the citizens of a corrupt country.

blood will be shed; for man is made in the image of God.
Genesis 9:5 & 6

These verses were part of Jehovah's message to Noah's family and the animals when they left the Ark. God makes it clear that if an animal decides to kill a human, God will destroy it, though often by the agency of mankind as verse 6 shows. As God holds them responsible for their choice, they must know the difference between what is right and what is wrong.

God personally selected the animals to be on the ark and sent them to Noah:

“But I will establish My covenant with you; and you will go into the ark; you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you.

“And of every living thing of all flesh you will bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they will be male and female. Of the birds after their kind, of animals after their kind, and of every creeping thing of the earth after its kind, two of every kind will come to you to keep them alive.

“And you will take for yourself of all food that is eaten, and you will gather it to yourself; and it will be food for you and for them.”

Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him, so he did. Genesis 6:18 to 22

Can God Command the Animals and They Obey Him?

God commands the ravens to feed Elijah. They obey, even though it is during a drought:

Then the word of Jehovah came to him, saying, “Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. And it will be that you will drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.”

So he went and did according to the word of Jehovah, for he went and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook. 1 Kings 17:2 to 6

Even lions, the king of beasts, obey Him:

So the king gave the command, and they brought Daniel and cast him into the den of lions. But the king spoke, saying to Daniel, “Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you.”

Then a stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring and with the signets of his lords, that the purpose concerning Daniel might not be changed. Now the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; and no musicians were brought before him. Also his sleep went from him.

Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in trembling haste to the den of lions. And when he came to the den, he cried out with a lamenting voice to Daniel. The king spoke, saying to Daniel, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?”

Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever! My God sent His envoy and shut the lions’ mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you.” Daniel 6:16 to 22

Marine animals also obey God:

Now Jehovah had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Then Jonah prayed to Jehovah his God from the fish's belly. And he said: "I cried out to Jehovah because of my affliction, and He answered me. Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and You heard my voice. For You cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the floods surrounded me; all Your billows and Your waves passed over me.

Then I said, 'I have been cast out of Your sight; yet I will look again toward Your holy Palace.' The waters encompassed me, even to my soul; the deep closed around me; the end bound up my head. I went down to the base of the mountains; the earth closed its bars behind me forever. Yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O Jehovah, my God.

"When my soul fainted within me, I remembered Jehovah; and my prayer went up to You, into Your holy Palace.

"Those who regard worthless idols forsake their own Mercy. But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of Jehovah."

So Jehovah spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land. Jonah 1:17 to 2:10

Clearly, God can command His animals, and they obey Him. This means that they are able to communicate with God, and can understand what He wants them to do, and they then do it for Him. Is this not proof that they are sentient creatures who are capable of understanding who God is and having a relationship with Him?

Can God's Servants Command the Animals?

And Will They Obey Them?

A dove returns to Noah, giving him the answer he needs:

Then he [Noah] sent out a raven, which kept going to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth. He also sent out from himself a dove, to see if the waters had receded from the face of the ground.

But the dove found no resting place for the sole of her foot, and she returned into the ark to him, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took her, and drew her into the ark to himself.

And he waited yet another seven days, and again he sent the dove out from the ark. Then the dove came to him in the evening, and behold, a freshly plucked olive leaf was in her mouth; and Noah knew that the waters had receded from the earth. Genesis 8:7 to 11

Bears come to Elijah's aid:

And he [Elijah] went up from there to Bethel; and as he was going up the road, some youths came from the city and mocked him, and said to him, "Go up, you baldhead! Go up, you baldhead!"

So he turned around and looked at them, and pronounced a curse on them in the name of Jehovah. And two female bears came out of the woods and split open forty-two of the youths. 2 Kings 2:23 & 24

Eliphaz tells us this:

For you will have a covenant with the stones of the field, and the wild animals will be at peace with you.
Job 5:23

And can we tame animals, who then obey us?

For the nature of all beasts and birds, and creatures of the sea and land are tamed by the nature of mankind.
Jacob (James) 3:7

So we see that we can command the animals, especially if they are asked to do God's will. But does the Bible teach that animals care for each other?

Do Animals Show Love for Others?

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, murderer of the prophets and stoner of those who are sent to her! How often I desired to gather your children, like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you did not desire it! Matthew 23:37

And so we have Jeshua describing how a hen loves and protects her chicks. Let's read some other examples:

“For,” said Hushai, “you know your father and his men, that they are mighty men, and they are enraged in their souls, like a bear robbed of her cubs in the field; and your father is a man of war, and will not camp with the people. 2 Samuel 17:8

The wild beasts of the desert will also meet with the jackals, and the wild goat will call to its companion; also the night creature will rest there, and find for herself a place of rest. There the arrow snake will make her nest

and lay eggs and split and gather them under her shadow; there also will the hawks be gathered, every one with her mate.

“Search from the book of Jehovah, and read: not one of these will fail; not one will lack her mate. For My mouth has commanded it, and His Spirit has gathered them. He has cast the lot for them, and His hand has divided it among them with a measuring line. They will possess it forever; from generation to generation they will dwell in it.”

The wilderness and the wasteland will be glad for them, and the desert plain will rejoice and blossom as the rose; it will blossom abundantly and rejoice, even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the excellence of Carmel and Sharon. They will see the glory of Jehovah, the excellency of our God. Isaiah 34:14 to 35:2

“And there was a certain poor man named Lazar, and he would lay at the gate of the rich man, afflicted with sores, and he would long to fill his belly with the crumbs that fell from that rich man’s table. But just the dogs came and would lick his sores. Luke 16:20 & 21

We see these animals caring about their young and their partners. In the case of Lazarus in Luke 16, we even see that the dogs try to care for Lazarus, cleaning his sores. Are these not relationships?

And on a non-Biblical example of animals caring for each other, during the horrendous bush fires we had in Australia during the summer of 2019-20, wombats were seen allowing other animals into their burrows as the fire-front approached, sharing their deep and almost fire-proof homes with them.

Animals in God's Kingdom

We have already seen in Isaiah 11 (pg 8) that God will have animals in the Millennium of Peace, and they will be restored to how they were before Adam and Chavvah fell. And as we have seen, there is no doubt that they are both sentient and relational beings. But are the animals represented in Heaven? Let us see:

Then I looked, and behold, a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness was all around it and radiating out of its midst like the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire. Also from within it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man. Each one had four faces, and each one had four wings. Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the soles of calves' feet. They sparkled like the colour of burnished bronze.

They had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and each of the four had faces and wings. Their wings touched one another. The creatures did not turn when they went, but each one went straight forward.

As for the likeness of their faces, each had the face of a man, each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an eagle. Thus were their faces. Their wings were stretched upward; two wings of each one touched one another, and two covered their bodies.

And each one went straight forward; they went wherever the spirit wanted to go, and they did not turn when they went.

As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of torches. Fire was going back and forth among the living creatures; the fire was bright, and out of

the fire went lightning. And the living creatures ran back and forth, in appearance like a flash of lightning. Ezekiel 1:4 to 14

Have you grasped this? These astounding creatures who live with God before His Throne are partly human, but they are also partly animal. They have hands like a human, but also wings like eagles and feet like an ox, and the faces of a human, a lion, an ox and an eagle, so they represent four aspects of God's creatures on earth. In Ezekiel 10:14, similar cherubim are described, but these ones have the ox's face replaced with that of a cherub. So these cherubim represent the envoys, humans, animals and birds that Jehovah God has created. Also, in Revelation 5:8, we have these Beasts fall before God and worship Him, demonstrating that they indeed worship Jehovah. In Revelation 5:13 we are told that ALL creatures on the earth and in the seas will praise and worship God. In Revelation 15:7, we see one of the beasts has the essential role of providing the seven vessels of the Wrath of God to the envoys.

And in Revelation 19:11, we learn that Jeshua will come from heaven mounted on a white horse, and in 19:14, His entire army will also be mounted on white horses in heaven, ready to return to earth to fight Satan's armies. So there can be no doubt that there are, or will be, horses in heaven.

In Romans we learn that the animals, like us, are waiting eagerly for the coming redemption:

For the entire creation hopes for and expects the revelation of the children of God.¹⁹ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because that creation will also

¹⁹ Though it is us humans who have been created in the Image of God and will become the Children of God (John 1:12), this passage includes the animals as becoming part of God's Kingdom.

be set free from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

For we know that all of creation groans and is in labour until today.²⁰ And not only them, but also we who have the firstfruits of the Spirit in us. Romans 8:19 to 23

Conclusion

So the marvellous and faithful animals were created by our God, preserved through the Great Flood, will be present during the Millennium of Peace, are represented in Heaven, worship God and are eagerly awaiting the freedom from corruption when Jehovah God's Kingdom comes. Surely these are enough reasons to believe they will also be present on the New Earth when God's City of Peace comes down to Earth (Revelation chapters 21 & 22). Though the Bible does not clearly say so, I think they will be there, as they attest to Jehovah's wonderful creativity and their presence will bring them, us and God joy.

May Jehovah's Kingdom come soon!

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²⁰ Gen 3:14-19

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