

Animals in the Bible

*Are They Intelligent and
Relational Beings?*

Central Highlands Congregation of God

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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 incapable of 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. But 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:

Gen 1:20 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."

Gen 1:21 God created great sea dragons¹ and every living soul that

¹ From the Hebrew תנינין *tanniyn*, usually meaning large reptiles, including creatures archaically known as dragons and dinosaurs.

moves,² 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*.

Gen 1:22 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.”

Gen 1:23 And there was evening and there was morning: Fifth Day.

Gen 1:24 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.

Gen 1:25 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.

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.

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 that relates to having a soul:

Lev 17:10 ‘And whatever man of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who sojourn among you, who eats any blood, I will set My

² This is an accurate translation of soul from the Hebrew נֶפֶשׁ *nephesh*. God tells us that all creatures capable of moving have souls. Ecclesiastes 3:21 also tells us that all animals have spirits. But it also confirms that mankind’s spirit is different to that of the animals, as our spirits go to God when we die, but the animals’ spirits go into the earth.

face against that soul who eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people.

Lev 17:11 ‘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.’

Lev 17:12 “Therefore I said to the children of Israel, ‘No soul among you shall eat blood, nor shall any stranger who sojourns among you eat blood.’

Lev 17:13 “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 shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust;

Lev 17:14 “for the soul of all flesh *is* its blood.³ It is one with its soul. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, ‘You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the soul of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off.’⁴

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.⁵

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

³ Gen 9:4

⁴ Act 15:20

⁵ 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 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.

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 3:21 tells us that all animals have spirits:

Ecc 3:18 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."

Ecc 3:19 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.

Ecc 3:20 All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust.

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

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

Now He, the God of Peace, shall make you completely holy; all of your spirit and your soul and your body whole. He shall 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:

Mat 8:31 So these demons begged Him, saying, "If You cast us out, allow us to go into the herd of pigs."

Mat 8:32 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

⁶ Heb 13:20-21

and fell into the sea, and they died in the sea.

So these demons, who are fallen angels, 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 us.

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 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:

Gen 1:26 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.”

Gen 1:27 So God created man in His image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.⁷

Gen 1:28 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.”⁸

So we see that we are unique in being made in God’s image and

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

⁸ 1Co 15:38-39, Heb 2:7-8, Psa 8:4-6

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 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 Kingdom.

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

Gen 2:19 Out of the earth Jehovah God *had* formed every beast of the field and every flying creature of heaven. He brought them to Adam⁹ to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living soul, that was its name.

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

So Adam's first task was to become familiar with all of the animals that

⁹ Adam אָדָם is the Hebrew word for man. Adam אָדָם means dust.

God had formed. In the process, he was given the joy and responsibility of naming them. Though he would have only met with 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:

Gen 1:29 And God said, “See, I have given *to* you every plant that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; it shall be for food for you.

Gen 1:30 “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.

Gen 1:31 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.

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.

Gen 9:1 So God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.

Gen 9:2 “And the fear of you and the dread of you shall 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.

Gen 9:3 “Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs.

Gen 9:4 “But you shall not eat flesh with its soul, that is, its blood.

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

Isa 11:1 There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots.

Isa 11:2 The Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him,¹⁰ the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah.

Isa 11:3 His delight is in the fear of Jehovah, and He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, nor decide by the hearing of His ears;

Isa 11:4 but with righteousness He shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the gentle of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked.¹¹

Isa 11:5 Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, and faithfulness the belt of His waist.¹²

Isa 11:6 “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

Isa 11:7 The cow and the bear shall graze; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

Isa 11:8 The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole, and the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den.

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

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

¹⁰ 1Pe 4:14

¹¹ 2Th 2:8, Rev 19:21

¹² Eph 6:14

reason to think that this promise does not include the animals.

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 dingoes 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:

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

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:

Gen 9:8 Then God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying:

Gen 9:9 “And as for Me, behold, I establish My covenant with you and with your descendants after you,

Gen 9:10 “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.

Gen 9:11 “Thus I establish My covenant with you: Never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of the flood; never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

Gen 9:12 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:

Gen 9:13 “I set My rainbow in the cloud, and it shall be for the sign of the covenant between Me and the earth.

Gen 9:14 “It shall be, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the rainbow shall be seen in the cloud;

Gen 9:15 “and I will remember My covenant which is between Me and you and every living soul of all flesh; the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh.

Gen 9:16 “The rainbow shall 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.”

Gen 9:17 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.”

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:

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

Luk 12:22 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.

Luk 12:23 "For the soul is more than food, and the body *is more* than clothing.

Luk 12:24 "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?

Psa 145:14 Jehovah upholds all who fall, and raises up all those who are bowed down.

Psa 145:15 The eyes of all look expectantly to You, and You give them their food in due season.

Psa 145:16 You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

Psa 145:17 Jehovah is righteous in all His ways, gracious in all His works.

Psa 147:7 Sing to Jehovah with thanksgiving; sing praises on the harp to our God,

Psa 147:8 Who covers the heavens with clouds, Who prepares rain

for the earth, Who makes grass to grow on the mountains.

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

Job 38:39 “Can you hunt the prey for the lion, or satisfy the appetite of the young lions,

Job 38:40 when they crouch in their dens, or lurk in their booths to lie in wait?

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

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

God Provides for His Animals, and is Proud of Them

Pro 30:24 There are four things which are little on the earth, but they are exceedingly wise:

Pro 30:25 the ants are a people not strong, yet they prepare their food in the summer;

Pro 30:26 the rock badgers are a feeble folk, yet they make their homes in the crags;

Pro 30:27 the locusts have no king, yet they all advance in ranks;

Pro 30:28 the spider skilfully grasps with its hands, and it is in kings' palaces.

Pro 30:29 There are three things which are majestic in pace, yes, four which are stately in walk:

Pro 30:30 a lion, which is mighty among beasts and does not turn away from any;

Pro 30:31 a greyhound, a male goat also, and a king whose troops are with him.

Job 40:15 “Now look at the behemoth,¹³ which I made along with you; he eats grass like an ox.

Job 40:16 See now, his strength is in his loins, and his power is in the muscles of his abdomen.

Job 40:17 He moves his tail like a cedar; the sinews of his thighs are knit together.

Job 40:18 His bones are like channels of bronze, his ribs like bars of iron.

Job 40:19 He is the first of the ways of God; his Maker brings near His sword.

Job 40:20 Surely the mountains yield food for him, and all the beasts of the field play there.

Job 40:21 He lies under the shady trees, in a covering of reeds. And the marsh

Job 40:22 covers him, and the shady trees with their shadows; the willows by the river surround him.

Job 40:23 Indeed the flood may oppress, yet he does not run away; he is confident, even if the Jordan gushes into his mouth.

Job 40:24 Shall anyone take him in his eyes, or pierce his nose with a snare?

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:

Mat 12:11 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?”

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

In Luke, Jeshua takes this concept even farther:

Luk 14:5 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

¹³ This fits the description of a sauropod dinosaur.

out?”

Luk 14:6 And they were not able to answer Him regarding this.

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

Exo 20:8 “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Exo 20:9 “Six days you shall labour and do all your work,

Exo 20:10 “but the seventh day is the Sabbath of Jehovah your God. You shall 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.

Exo 20:11 “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.¹⁴

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:

Deu 25:4 “You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.¹⁵

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.

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

Gen 6:12 So God looked upon the earth, and indeed it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth.

¹⁴ Gen 1:1-2:3, Exo 31:12-17, Mat 12:8, 2Th 3:10-12

¹⁵ 1Co 9:9, 1Ti 5:18

Gen 6:13 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.

All flesh was corrupt. Like man, the animals had also embraced violence.¹⁶ 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:

Gen 3:14 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 shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life.

Gen 3:15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”

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:

Gen 9:5 “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.

Gen 9:6 “Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for man is made in the image of God.

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

¹⁶ 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.

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:

Gen 6:18 “But I will establish My covenant with you; and you shall go into the ark; you, your sons, your wife, and your sons’ wives with you.

Gen 6:19 “And of every living thing of all flesh you shall bring two of every sort into the ark, to keep them alive with you; they shall be male and female.

Gen 6:20 “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.

Gen 6:21 “And you shall take for yourself of all food that is eaten, and you shall gather it to yourself; and it shall be food for you and for them.”

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

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:

1Ki 17:2 Then the word of Jehovah came to him, saying,

1Ki 17:3 “Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan.

1Ki 17:4 “And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.”

1Ki 17:5 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.

1Ki 17:6 The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook.

Dan 6:16 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.”

Dan 6:17 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.

Dan 6:18 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.

Dan 6:19 Then the king arose very early in the morning and went in trembling haste to the den of lions.

Dan 6:20 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?”

Dan 6:21 Then Daniel said to the king, “O king, live forever!

Dan 6:22 “My God sent His angel 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.”

Jon 1:17 Now Jehovah had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Jon 2:1 Then Jonah prayed to Jehovah his God from the fish’s belly.

Jon 2:2 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.

Jon 2:3 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.

Jon 2:4 Then I said, ‘I have been cast out of Your sight; yet I will look again toward Your holy Palace.’

Jon 2:5 The waters encompassed me, even to my soul; the deep closed around me; the end bound up my head.

Jon 2:6 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.

Jon 2:7 “When my soul fainted within me, I remembered Jehovah;

and my prayer went up to You, into Your holy Palace.

Jon 2:8 “Those who regard worthless idols forsake their own Mercy.

Jon 2:9 But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of Jehovah.”

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

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 They Obey Him?

Gen 8:7 Then he [Noah] sent out a raven, which kept going to and fro until the waters had dried up from the earth.

Gen 8:8 He also sent out from himself a dove, to see if the waters had receded from the face of the ground.

Gen 8:9 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.

Gen 8:10 And he waited yet another seven days, and again he sent the dove out from the ark.

Gen 8:11 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.

2Ki 2:23 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!”

2Ki 2:24 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.

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

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

Can Animals Show Love for Others?

Mat 23:37 "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!

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

2Sa 17:8 "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.

Isa 34:14 The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the jackals, and the wild goat shall call to its companion; also the night creature shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest.

Isa 34:15 There the arrow snake shall make her nest and lay eggs and split and gather them under her shadow; there also shall the hawks be gathered, every one with her mate.

Isa 34:16 "Search from the book of Jehovah, and read: not one of these shall fail; not one shall lack her mate. For My mouth has commanded it, and His Spirit has gathered them.

Isa 34:17 He has cast the lot for them, and His hand has divided it among them with a measuring line. they shall possess it forever; from generation to generation they shall dwell in it."

Isa 35:1 The wilderness and the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert plain shall rejoice and blossom as the rose;

Isa 35:2 It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice, even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the excellence of

Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of Jehovah, the excellency of our God.

Luk 16:20 “And there was a certain poor man named Lazar, and he would lay at the gate of the rich man, afflicted with sores,
 Luk 16:21 “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.

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 have been having in Australia this summer (2019-20), wombats have been seen allowing other animals into their burrows as the fire-front approaches, sharing their deep and almost fire-proof homes with them.

Animals in God’s Kingdom

We have already seen in Isaiah 11 (pg 7) 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:

Eze 1:4 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.

Eze 1:5 Also from within it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man.

Eze 1:6 Each one had four faces, and each one had four wings.

Eze 1:7 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.

Eze 1:8 They had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and each of the four had faces and wings.

Eze 1:9 Their wings touched one another. The creatures did not turn when they went, but each one went straight forward.

Eze 1:10 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.

Eze 1:11 Thus were their faces. Their wings were stretched upward; two wings of each one touched one another, and two covered their bodies.

Eze 1:12 And each one went straight forward; they went wherever the spirit wanted to go, and they did not turn when they went.

Eze 1:13 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.

Eze 1:14 And the living creatures ran back and forth, in appearance like a flash of lightning.

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 Eze 10:14, similar cherubim are described, but these ones have the ox's face replaced with that of a cherub. So the cherubim represent the angels, humans, animals and birds that Jehovah God has created.

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

Rom 8:19 For the entire creation hopes for and expects the revelation

of the children of God.¹⁷

Rom 8:20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope;

Rom 8:21 because that creation will also be set free from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

Rom 8:22 For we know that all of creation groans and is in labour until today.¹⁸

Rom 8:23 And not only them, but also we who have the firstfruits of the Spirit in us.

Conclusion

So, the faithful animals were preserved through the Great Flood, are present during the Millennium of Peace, are represented in Heaven, and are eagerly awaiting the freedom from corruption when God's Kingdom comes. Is that not 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 it will bring them, us and God joy.

May Jehovah's Kingdom come soon!

¹⁷ 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 does not exclude the animals from being part of God's Kingdom.

¹⁸ Gen 3:14-19

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PO Box 236, Creswick, Vic 3363 Australia
Email info@chcpublications.net
Web Page <http://www.chcpublications.net>

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