

THE SALVATION OF ANIMALS : FACT OR FICTION?

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Dedicated To Animal Lovers And Vegetarians

Some time ago, one of the members of our now-defunct EDGE mailing list made the following short comment:

----- Begin Quote -----

"True, but there is a big difference between humans with a spirit and plants and animals without."

----- End Of Quote -----

Although brief, the above remark immediately caught my attention. I have never really given much thought to the spiritual nature of or salvation of animals, but I have always assumed that there will be animals in Heaven. After all, there is extensive mention of animals throughout the Bible. Of course, some of it is symbolic in nature. For example, we have Pharaoh, king of Egypt, being referred to as a dragon. We have Satan being referred to as a dragon and a serpent. In the prophecies of Daniel we find kings and empires being represented by a lion, a bear, a leopard, a ram and a he-goat.

Likewise, in the Gospels Jesus refers to King Herod as a fox. We also find Him accusing the Jewish religious elders of being a generation of vipers. Jesus also told us that He is our Shepherd and that we are His sheep. He likewise warned His disciples to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves because He was sending them forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. When Jesus received the baptism of John, it was also reported that the Spirit descended upon Him like a dove. Jesus also warned us not to give that which is holy unto dogs or to cast our pearls before swine. John the Baptist referred to Jesus as the Lamb of God, the same title used by John in the book of Revelation.

In the book of Revelation, we find the Beast and the False Prophet also being represented by two great horned beasts which rise up out of the Earth and sea. And of course we have the four beasts which surround the Throne of God as well as the visions of the prophet Ezekiel. Jesus is also referred to as the root of the Lion of Judah. In the six chapter of Revelation we find the four horses which represent different spiritual forces working on the Earth. These are just some of the many examples of animal symbolism used throughout the Bible.

However, in addition to the above, there are also examples here and there which imply that there will be animals in Heaven; that is, animals which will likewise have spiritual

resurrected bodies similar to our own. Consider for example the Prophet Elijah's last minutes on Earth:

"And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried, My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more: and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces."
2 Kings 2:11-12, KJV

Was this just a figure of speech, or perhaps the author's best attempt at describing something he was totally unfamiliar with? It certainly doesn't sound like it. Some have considered that this might be a reference to some type of celestial craft, what are commonly known as UFO's. While this is possible, the writer's description does sound quite literal. This is not the only place in the Bible where we find the mention of celestial horses. In the book of Revelation, we find that just as Elijah was taken up by a chariot and horses of fire, so too, when Jesus returns with the Host of Heaven for the battle of Armageddon, they will be riding their trusty white steeds:

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean."
Revelation 19:11-14, KJV

How similar this sounds to other ancient legends of mighty godlike beings who rode upon winged horses. Even in the field of astronomy, one constellation has been given the name of Pegasus. Are these accounts in the Bible -- as well as other ancient myths -- just highly exaggerated stories of something more mundane; or is it possible that the authors described and wrote exactly what they saw? If these things be true, then what an encouragement they should be for those of us who have lost pets due to old age or other tragedies. After all, if there are horses in Heaven, why can't there be other creatures as well? Perhaps someday we will meet our beloved pets again, either in the Halls Of Heaven, or on the surface of the New Earth, or maybe romping in the streets of the New Jerusalem. But let's back up a minute to the beginning of our story. From what I understand from the Scriptures, animals have spirits just as much as we humans do. Stop and think about this for a minute: The Lord made Adam from the dust of the Earth. When he was first created, Adam was just a lifeless mass of flesh:

"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."
Genesis 2:7, KJV

Adam didn't become a living soul, a living container, until

God breathed into him His life-giving Spirit, His life force, a spark of energy from the Eternal. It is then that Adam became a self-aware, conscious, thinking, fully-functioning, living being. Now let's consider the creation of other animals. First, it is important to note that they were made before man. This tells us something interesting: When God formed Adam from the ground, just like from a mold, He must have been repeating a process and method which He had already used previously to create animal life. If not from the ground, then from where else did animal life originate? The Lord didn't just zap them into existence. They came from the very same place as Adam; they came forth from the ground. Everything was made from the minerals of the Earth:

"And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so."

Genesis 1:11, KJV

"And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven."

Genesis 1:20, KJV

"And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so."

Genesis 1:24, KJV

"And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof."

Genesis 2:19, KJV

Everything, both man and beast, came forth, was created from, the ground. In that respect, they are equal. In the case of marine life, perhaps they were formed from the mud in the bottom of the worldwide ocean. Of course, being God, He could also have created them on dry land and then transported them, still unconscious, to the water where He then proceeded to breath the Spirit of life into them. The exact step-by-step mechanics is not important. What is important is the overall process; and that is that similar to Adam, the animals must have likewise had God's life force, His Spirit, placed in them in order to make them alive. So then, what we have seen is that inasmuch as creation itself is concerned, man and beast are equals because they were created by the very same process and originated from the very same place, the ground.

Therefore, based upon the manner of creation, man is no better than animals. In fact, he was the very last thing created; and as I will explain shortly, I believe the Lord may have had a good reason for doing things that way. If we really stop to think about it, in a physical sense, the animal kingdom outdoes man in many regards: in speed, in the ability to jump, or to swim, or to fly, in strength, in natural defense mechanisms, in beauty, in the ability to camouflage, in navigational systems, in sensual perception,

in reproduction, etc.

The truth is, that in order to match or better any of these qualities that we find in the animal kingdom, man has had to resort upon his intelligence and artificial means, without which, he really isn't such a fantastic being after all. That can be quite a blow to our human pride and vanity? I will be delving deeper into this point momentarily.

Just think for a moment of what the world must have been like many years ago before we had all of our modern technology. As a matter of fact, go all the way back to Eden and consider some of the impressions and ideas which may have passed through Adam's mind and heart when the Lord first made him a conscious being. Naturally, he must have been overwhelmed with the beauty of the place: the vibrant life, the wonderful colors, the peace, the love he must have felt from and towards his Creator. It must have been a very powerful experience for him. Undoubtedly, it will be much the same for us when we finally meet the Lord face to face and see the beautiful Heavenly City, New Jerusalem, which He has prepared for us. We will be breathless! We will be speechless! We will be totally floored! We will be awed out of our wits!

Sometime after God had created Adam, He gave him the responsibility of naming all of the animals. Think for a minute on what Adam may have experienced as he explored this wonderful new world and gazed upon the myriad of lifeforms which the Lord brought to him to name. Aside from the wonder of it all, is it possible that Adam may have begun to realize his own human limitations? As he gazed upon the eagle soaring way above his head in the clouds, is it possible that he thought to himself, "Wow, I wish I could fly like that!"? Or when he saw the male peacock, or the beautiful butterflies, "Gee, I wish I had colors like that!"? Or when he saw the speed and grace of the gazelle, or the cheetah, "Oh, if only I could run like that!"?

With each new animal, it seems likely that he may have discovered a new limitation of his own. Perhaps he began to become conscious of his own shortcomings as a human being. Maybe he began to see his own lacks and needs. Surely he must have begun to realize that he was not the strongest or the most powerful of God's creatures. He knew that there were many things which the other creatures could do which he could not do. It is my belief that this may be part of the reason why the Lord made Adam last and then brought all of the other creatures to him. He wanted Adam to understand his rightful place in this new world. He wanted to make sure that Adam had the proper attitude and respect for the rest of creation, that is, a humble attitude. As Peter tells us:

Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."
1 Peter 5:3, KJV

While the above verse applies to shepherds and their spiritual flocks, I believe it can also be applied to the kind of relationship that the Lord wanted Adam, and wants us, to have with His other creations. In our day and age we have such a high and mighty opinion of ourselves, it is

really sickening. But take away all of our false trappings of modern technology, and we become rather weak and helpless. We like to think we are so much better than the rest of creation because of our intelligence, but are we really? A brief look at our history of wars, at our destruction of the environment, and at worldwide poverty and famine due to greed and unscrupulous politics, will quickly confirm to any open-minded individual that we are the most violence-prone, destructive, wasteful creatures upon the face of the planet! If it were not for the fact that we are made in God's image, that is, with two arms, two legs, a head, a torso, two feet, etc., plus a higher intelligence, we would be exactly the same as the rest of creation. Just like them, we eat, we sleep, we play, we fight, we kill, we teach and protect our young, and we live socially. At least some of us do! In fact, we are learning more each day how each animal species has a language of its own with which it communicates with its peers. We are also learning how some of these creatures are much more intelligent than we at first realized. They learn from their experiences. They know how to make decisions. They have emotions. Whether we be human, or other mammal, reptile, fish, or amphibian, we all share some of these same common traits. Even the insect world shares many of these characteristics. We are all part of the same vast web of life; and just as a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, so too, the web of life is only as strong as its weakest strand. Could it be that we are that weak strand, the one chosen by God to support and dominate the entire web?

In spite of the fact that Adam was created by the very hands of God, we know that he was every bit as human as the rest of us today. He possessed the same pride and self image that we all possess. I wonder if things would have been any different if the Lord had created Adam BEFORE all of the other animals? So then, after allowing Adam's pride and vanity to be humbled a bit by the greatness and beauty of the other creatures, after Adam had come to understand his own true nature, that is when we are told that the Lord made Eve. As we read in Genesis:

"And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."
Genesis 2:20-23, KJV

Adam must have been a bit depressed after having come to the realization that, up until that point, he was the only one of his kind. There was no other creature exactly like him in the entire Garden. Everyone had a mate but him. Coupled with the realization of his own limitations compared to the abilities of some of the rest of the creatures, the Lord must have gotten him in the right frame of mind so that when Eve was finally presented to him, he must have been extremely overjoyed and appreciative.

Imagine the thoughts that may have run through Adam's head: "Wow! She looks just like me! Well, almost! Man is she gorgeous! What a knockout!" Please notice also that Eve was made from Adam's side, to be an equal, a co-partner in creation, and not someone over whom he was to be a lord. She wasn't made from an arm, or a leg, or a foot bone, but rather from a rib near to his heart. We are then told that the Lord made Adam and Eve to have dominion over the rest His creation, as we see by these verses:

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."
Genesis 1:26-28, KJV

After having made Adam aware of his proper relationship with his fellow creatures, the Lord made him and Eve the stewards of creation. As the above verses indicate, even before He had actually created them, the Lord knew exactly what He had planned for them. In spite of the fact that they weren't the biggest, or the fastest, or the most powerful, the Lord chose them from before the foundation of the world to become the dominant species on this planet; to rule over the rest of His creatures. Adam and Eve were ordained by the Lord to be the King and Queen of the first creation. However, as I have already pointed out, they were both human, and not gods. They had the ability to choose between good and evil; and I don't doubt that evil was working in their hearts way before their fateful encounter with Satan.

As I said earlier, I believe that it is possible that Adam's pride and vanity were already working against him the minute he came into contact with the other creatures and saw that they could do things which he couldn't. Considering the apparent size of the Garden of Eden, doesn't it make you wonder how it just so happened that Adam and Eve were near to the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil on that fateful day? By this time, Satan had apparently already accomplished his rebellion against God and was already at work to foil the plans of creation. In Genesis chapter three we read:

"Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"
Genesis 3:1, KJV

And there comes the first part of his attack, causing Eve to doubt God's Word. Satan already knew the answer to the question, but he had to begin slowly by making Eve stop to think on her own, instead of continuing to trust in the Lord. As Paul wrote to the Romans:

"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."
Romans 8:7, KJV

Instead of just ignoring Satan, and running the other way, Eve invited him to "pull up a chair" and have a conversation with her, as we see here:

"And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die."
Genesis 3:2-3, KJV

So once Eve had explained what Satan already knew in the first place, Satan then tells her an outright lie:

"And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil."
Genesis 3:4-5, KJV

And there it is, a direct hit on Eve's womanly pride and vanity. "Hey Eve, baby! You won't die, honey! You will be just like Him! You'll be a goddess!" Maybe the conversation is a bit imaginative here, but Satan must have really been lusting after her. After all, having been made by the very hands of God, maybe even modelled after one of His angelic entities, Eve must have been a dream! She must have made ole Satan's heart go pitter-patter. And there are those who actually believe that there is much more to the seduction story than what we currently find in our Bibles! Some of the angelic beings definitely longed for human women as is related a bit later in this article, as well as in my articles regarding the book of Enoch. But to continue, doesn't it seem strange that this is all it took, only three verses in the whole Bible, and Adam and Eve succumbed to Satan's lies? The very next verse tells us:

"And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat."
Genesis 3:6, KJV

Without a second thought, Eve, and then Adam -- who just happened to be right next to her -- took of the forbidden fruit and caused the downfall of man. Due to their pride and vanity, which must have been steeping for some time prior to the event, they ignored the Lord's warning and turned their backs on the wonderful relationship they had with Him, and the blessing of living in the Garden of Eden. Towards the very end of the Bible, the Apostle John tells us exactly what Adam and Eve fell for:

"For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."
1 John 2:16, KJV

Notice how similar the above verse is to Genesis 3:6. The exact same three elements are present in both verses: the lust of the flesh -- "the tree was good for food" -- the lust of the eyes -- "it was pleasant to the eyes" -- and the pride of life -- "a tree to be desired to make one wise". Satan knew exactly how to lead Adam and Eve into sin, breaking God's law, His Word.

What is important to our discussion regarding the salvation of animals, is that The Fall didn't just affect Adam and Eve; it affected all of creation including the animal kingdom. It threw everything out of balance. For example, prior to The Fall, Genesis indicates that both man and beast were vegetarians:

"And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so."
Genesis 1:29-30, KJV

Animals did not kill each other for food, and man did not kill animals for food. As explained in another one of my articles, the first clear reference we find where the Lord permits the eating of meat, is after the Great Deluge which occurred in Noah's day. Some Bible students, such as myself, believe that it was the removal of the aqueous canopy around the Earth which contributed to the acceleration of the aging process due to the sudden increase in intensity of ultraviolet rays upon the world. It seems that it thus became necessary for our bodies to absorb more protein in order to counteract this harmful affect upon our frail human flesh. Following the Flood, we find the Lord saying to Noah:

"And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat. And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."
Genesis 9:1-6, KJV

Notice that it is at this point that animals first become afraid of man because the Lord lets them know that they are now fair game to be caught, killed and eaten by humankind. Before The Fall, this was not so. Adam and Eve lived in communion with the animals. They were friends. Who knows, maybe they could even talk to each other! Is that too wild of a speculation for you? Well, what if that serpent in the Garden really was a serpent and not symbolic of something

else as some of us like to think? The main point to consider here is that the disobedience by Adam and Eve caused a major breach in Creation. They totally upset the applecart. They threw things off balance; and the Lord has been working ever since to repair the damage.

Notice that in the above pronouncement to Noah and his family, the Lord sets three conditions: First, they must remove the blood from the meat before consuming it. Second, any animal which kills a human will be held accountable by God. Third, any man who kills another man will be held accountable by God. So again, because of the original transgression which had been committed by Adam and Eve due to their pride and vanity, all of Creation has been put at our mercy. All animals have been and will remain under our subjection until God grants them freedom from bondage and their full salvation, just as He will do with us. Until then, we will continue to go to the grocery store without a second thought or feeling of guilt and buy our pound of ground beef, or our hot dogs, or our roasted chicken, or our steak, or our spare ribs, or whatever it is that appeals to our taste. One thing we all need to remember, whether we be meat eaters or vegetarians, is that God receives us all by our faith in His Son, and not by what we put into our mouths. As Jesus said:

"There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man . . . Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? . . . That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man."
Mark 7:15, 18-23, KJV

The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the disciples at Rome also expounded upon this topic. In Romans chapter fourteen, Paul says in part:

"For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him . . . Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind . . . Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean . . . Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."
Romans 14:2-3, 5b, 13-14, 22-23, KJV

Returning to the Garden of Eden, not only was the animal kingdom affected by The Fall, but we are even told that the plant kingdom suffered as the Lord cursed the ground and caused thorns and thistles to grow, which is evidence of something possibly being created after the original creation and been finished. It could also be that the seeds were already in the ground, but that the Lord just hadn't permitted them to grow yet:

"And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;"

Genesis 3:17-18, KJV

Notice that at this point, the Lord is still indicating that man will only eat herbs and not meat. The only difference after The Fall is that man would now have to grow them for himself in an unyielding soil. One school of thought also suggests that through their act of disobedience, the Lord was forced to kill His own creation in order to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve:

"Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them."

Genesis 3:21, KJV

It could be that the Lord did this for shock value to show Adam and Eve exactly how serious their sin was. Imagine, they had never seen anything killed before. The horror of having to wear the coat or skin of another animal must have really shaken them up. Perhaps this is similar to when the Lord would later put a mark on Cain after he had slain his brother Abel. Adam and Eve would be constantly reminded of their transgression and of how they had upset God's entire plan. Not only that, because of the extended life span in those days, they would watch as their descendants grew up suffering and toiling because of their mistake.

So, as we can see, all of creation was affected, and not just humankind. The web of life was forever altered. From that point on, death and violence and wickedness entered the world as was manifested some time later beginning with the story of Cain and Abel. A few short chapters later in Genesis chapter six, we are told that Satan launched a second major attack against the Lord's creation. In that incident, as confirmed by the book of Enoch, the rebellious angelic sons of Gods, known as the Nephilim or Watchers, led by Azazel, Semjase, and others, had sexual intercourse with human women. Things became even worse as evil hybrid giants were spawned from these illicit unions of beings of flesh and beings of spirit. For more info on this, please refer to my articles on the Nephilim and the book of Enoch. As we know from the Biblical record, the Lord finally repented Himself of ever even having created humankind:

"And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth;

both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them."
Genesis 6:6-7, KJV

Thus in the Great Flood during Noah's days, we find the destruction of all land-based creatures except for those rescued by Noah and his family.

One thing I have pointed out in a number of my articles, is that the entire Bible is interconnected like a big jigsaw puzzle. Being as the Bible is the Word of God, you might wish to refer to it more as a crossword puzzle. After all, the Bible is the Word, and its main message is the Cross of Salvation! We just have to follow the hints in order to figure out where each of the words goes so we can make some sense out of it all. As we connect one word or one verse with another, everything begins to fall into place. In this way, central themes are carried throughout the entire Bible from beginning to end.

Having now established the common creation of man and animal, the downfall of both through the sin of Adam and Eve, and their subsequent destruction, let's move up to the book of Ecclesiastes where we find other verses which share this theme on creation. Most folks don't read the following verses correctly. They usually pick out just the last verse, and ignore the ones before it so they can support their own personal interpretation. Not only that, but they fail to recognize that the final verse has a question mark at the end of it rather than a period. The writer is not making a statement of fact; he is speaking in a rhetorical sense:

"I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts. For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?"
Ecclesiastes 3:18-21, KJV

Notice, first of all, that he says that both man and beast follow the same fate; that is, we all die and return to the ground. Death is inevitable for all of us. But then he tells us "yea, they have all one breath." We all share the same Spirit or life force from God. We each have a Spirit. When that Spirit or spark of Divine Energy departs from each of us, whether we be man or beast, we die. But then notice what he says. ". . . man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity." What does he mean by that? Well, I believe it may mean he is saying, just as I pointed out earlier, that we are no better than the beasts of the Earth. We all suffer the same fate. To think otherwise is vanity. It is vain for us to think that we are better than God's other creations. He made us all, so why should they be considered any less than we? After all, we all die and return to the ground.

As stated earlier, perhaps this is partially what led to the

downfall of Adam and Eve. Beginning with Adam first, they realized that they lacked certain of the abilities of some of the other creatures. They couldn't fly up into the sky. They couldn't swim under water. They couldn't run as fast as a deer. And some of those animals sure had beautiful colors! So in their own pride, Adam and Eve exalted themselves in their hearts above everything else to heal their own hurt, their own wounded pride. Yes, the Lord had given them dominion over the rest of creation, that is, to take care of it, but they weren't satisfied, they wanted more, and Satan knew it. So, he looked for the weakest chink in their armour, and he found it. It was the same thing which had caused his own downfall, his pride and vanity in wanting more, his dissatisfaction with the job and responsibilities that God had given him to do. So Satan used these very same things and attacked them in their thoughts:

"Hey guys, I know you aren't satisfied with just being the keepers of God's creation. You can't even do everything that they can do. So, being as I am your good buddy, I will let you both in on a little secret: God lied to you! Yep . . . He sure did; because He doesn't want you to be as powerful as He is. You see that tree over that? Yeah, that one you've eyeballing for a while now. Hey, don't worry; I know you've been hanging around this part of the Garden for a reason. So listen "friends", if you really want the power of the gods, just take a bite out of that fruit and wallah! You will be just like Him! All-powerful! You'll be the absolute tops in creation! I guarantee it!"

As I explained in a number of other articles, that is what is meant by not being ignorant of Satan's devices, the lies and doubts he speaks to our minds which cause us to question God and finally rebel against Him. The writer of Ecclesiastes, who is commonly believed to be King Solomon, then repeats himself by saying that we all die and return to the Earth. And then he pops his heavy question. It isn't so much of a question as it is a challenge to those reading his words: How do you know that our spirits go up -- to heaven -- while the spirits of animals go down to the Earth? In essence, he is rebuking humanity for their haughtiness and thinking they are any better, or that they deserve a better fate than the animal kingdom. Remember, Solomon had been around for a while. Being so rich and famous, he must have entertained a lot of men of stature from foreign lands. The Lord had likewise granted him the gift of wisdom far above his peers. He knew what was in the vain hearts of man. Consider what the prophet Jeremiah said regarding this:

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"
Jeremiah 17:9, KJV

So, it appears that Solomon was aware of some deep spiritual truths which he tried to share through his writings. Moving up to the New Testament, we find some additional verses which deal with the Creation of man and animals, The Fall, the effect of The Fall on man and beast, and the final hope of both. In his epistle to the Romans, Paul tells us:

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be

revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."
Romans 8:18-23, KJV

That is pretty heavy stuff! Paul is making a clear distinction between human life and animal life in these verses. Notice that he says the creature -- which I suspect really means animals -- is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. You can interpret this in two ways: First, just like us, the animal kingdom is waiting for the Lord to return with His Angelic Host -- that is, the sons of God -- at the Second Coming so that they can be delivered from the corruption of sin and death, so that they too can put on immortal bodies! It is also possible that the phrase "sons of God" refers to us, God's saved children on Earth. In other words, they -- the creatures -- know that when we are delivered, they will likewise be delivered as well. Paul makes this very clear when he says "also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption". In other words, "in addition to humankind." He is trying to show us that he is talking about salvation and deliverance for two separate parties here: humankind and animal kind. This is further confirmed when he uses the phrase "And not only they, but ourselves also."

And notice what Paul says right before that regarding how the animal kingdom has been placed in subjection due to the vanity of man: "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope . . ." As we know from the verses in Genesis, the Lord gave Adam and Eve dominion over the plant and animal kingdom. The animals didn't ask for this, it wasn't their idea. As this verse states, in spite of the vanity which God already knew existed in the hearts of Adam and Eve, He did it hoping that Adam and Eve would be good keepers over the plant and animal kingdoms and do the right thing, that they would maintain the correct attitude toward their fellow creation and take proper care of them.

I am even wondering if perhaps God didn't purposely do this to try to appease their vanity, just like when we sometimes spoil our children with certain things. As said previously, after seeing all of those wonderful animals, Adam and Eve must have become aware of their own physical shortcomings, so maybe they felt a little intimidated, a little humiliated. So, in their pride and vanity, which the Lord foresaw even before He had created them, they asked God to put them in charge of everything. The Lord knew from the beginning how things would turn out, so this could be why we find Him counseling with His Father, or whoever else was present saying:

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our

likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."
Genesis 1:26, KJV

As explained earlier, this subjection to humanity became even more drastic after The Flood when the Lord made it permissible to eat meat. Since that time, all of Creation has groaned in the spirit waiting for their deliverance from the atrocities committed by humankind. Paul makes it clear that he is talking about the salvation of both man and animals when he says the following: "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also . . ." And what is it that both we and animal life are waiting for? As Paul continues to say, "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

In short, what we are discussing here is what some people refer to as "Universal Reconciliation". The Bible indicates that God's plan of Restoration and Salvation will not be complete until everything He has created on Earth, both human and animal, has been reconciled to Himself as much as possible. In fact, not just here on Earth in the physical plane, but in the spiritual plane as well; and if He created life on other planets -- a topic which I amply discuss in such articles "Alien Life, Extrasolar Planets and Universal Atonement" -- then there as well. Anything short of that, and God will have failed in some degree in His plan and purpose. Of course, we must remember to that we are all free moral agents. We must each choose salvation of our own free accord.

To conclude this article, let us take the above verses, and all of the verses I have shared thus far, and apply them to our current time. As we approach the end of the twentieth century, if there is one thing of which we can be certain, it is that humankind has not been a faithful steward over the rest of creation which has been placed in subjection to him. As I stated at the beginning of this article, not only have we consistently destroyed ourselves through our many wars, but we have also destroyed, and continue to destroy what is left of our fragile environment. We have polluted skies, polluted oceans, polluted streams, rivers and lakes, and polluted land.

Furthermore we have literally thousands of manmade devices such as satellites and other junk orbiting in our upper atmosphere. We have left junk on the moon and other worlds beyond. We have a depleted ozone layer. We have acid rain which is destroying our forests. We have had countless oil spills in our oceans. We have worldwide air pollution due to a variety of motor vehicles and other devices which utilize fossil fuels, even though it has been said that free energy could be made available to all. The Gulf War oilfield fires also left their mark on our environment. We have toxic fluids and radioactive materials stored or dumped all over the world, some in our oceans, as well as some on and in the land. We continue to destroy our forests, particularly the tropical rain forests at an alarming rate due to the expansion of farmlands and our need for paper and other wood

products.

All of this is not only affecting humankind, but it is also radically affecting both the plant and animal kingdoms. Many environments, terrestrial as well as aquatic have been destroyed or at least drastically altered forcing many animal species to seek new habitats. In many areas the food chain has been broken threatening some species with possible extinction. We have over hunted certain animals for sport, for trophies, for financial gain, for food or because they are a nuisance like the buffalo, the elephant, the wolf, the rhinoceros, the fur seal, the whale, and the tuna to name a few.

In the process of capturing food from the oceans of the world, thousands of other valuable species -- such as the dolphin -- are needlessly caught in our nets and destroyed. Other animals are maimed or killed due to our aquatic pleasure craft conflicting with their environment like the Florida Manatee which now faces almost certain extinction in the foreseeable future. Yes folks, as the Apostle Paul said, ". . . the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." The animal kingdom truly groans and waits to be delivered from the corrupt destructive egotistical ways of humankind, the very ones who are supposed to be caring for them.

Someday soon, the Lord will return to offer full salvation to both man and beast. In that day, all of Creation will be brought back into perfect harmony and restitution with God and with each other, and then we will all praise the Lord together. All of Creation, both physical and spiritual, will be brought back into subjection to Him Who is all in all by the hand of His Son Jesus Christ. And then, even Jesus Christ will submit Himself unto His Father's will. For as we are told in His Word:

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."
Isaiah 11:6-9, KJV

"The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD."
Isaiah 65:25, KJV

". . . the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world

began."
Acts 3:19b-21, KJV

"For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."
1 Corinthians 15:27-28, KJV

"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:"
Ephesians 1:10-11, KJV

"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;"
Philippians 2:10, KJV

"Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."
Philippians 3:21, KJV

"For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."
Colossians 1:19-20, KJV

"Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him."
Hebrews 2:8, KJV

"Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."
Revelation 4:11, KJV

"And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."
Revelation 5:13, KJV

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there

shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."
Revelation 21:1-5, KJV

With these exciting verses concerning our bright future, we bring another lesson to a close. It won't be long folks! Until that great and glorious day comes, just keep your eyes on Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, for He truly will bring all things to a close and to their final conclusion in His perfect time!

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