

Does God Care About Your Pet?

Proverbs 12:10



Let's start with a prayer. Thank you LORD for the opportunity to gather to read and learn about Your living Word. Guide our hearts and minds as we consider what you have for us today. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Friday, March 12th, was a bad day. That was the day I had to put down our cat, Velcro. She was very ill, but it broke my heart to lose her.

Thanks to COVID, the vet only allowed curbside service. This meant that I was not allowed to be with Velcro until the end. They gave her a sedative, and I sat in my car with her until she fell asleep. While I sat weeping with Velcro a lady from another car came over and prayed for me. That was a gift from the LORD.

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When Pastor Bob asked me to give today's message, I immediately thought about Velcro and giving a message about how the LORD feels about animals.

I have been asked before if the LORD cares about our pets.

Will they be in Heaven with us?

Do animals have souls?

In the Rapture, will our pets be raptured with us?

In this message I will do my best to answer these questions from scripture. However, as always, don't just believe what I say. Do your own study to confirm or not what I will tell you.

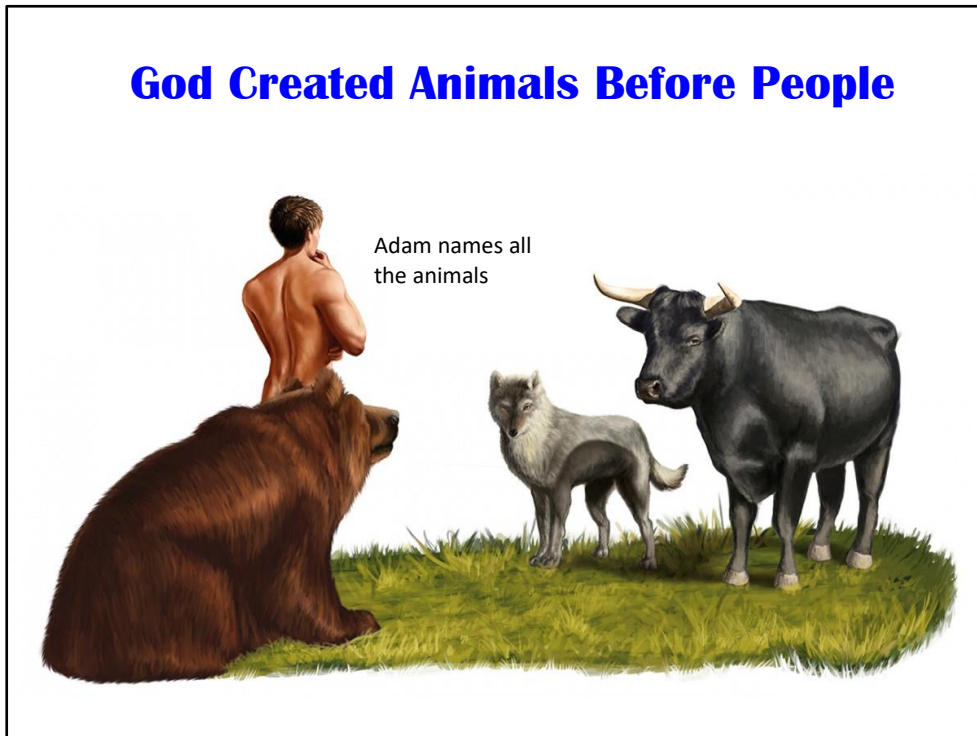
Now let me say up front that I am not trying to turn you into vegetarians. What you eat is your business.

Everyone does not feel the same way about animals. And the Bible is very clear that the LORD cares much more for people than for animals. Christ died for you, not for your pet.

Nevertheless, you may find that there is much more in the Bible about animals than you realized.

So, let's examine what the Word says about animals, starting all the way back in the beginning.
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God Created Animals Before People



On the sixth day of creation God created the animals. In Gen 1:25 it says

So God made the wildlife of the earth according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and creatures that crawl on the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

After making the animals, which the LORD said was good, He made people. God made Adam first as it says in Gen 2:7

Then the LORD God formed the man out of the dust from the ground and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, and the man became a living being.

In Hebrew, the term “living being” is chay neph’esh. This basically means a living soul, or living breathing entity.

The LORD then brings the animals that He has made to Adam to name. We see this in Gen 2:19

So the LORD God formed out of the ground every wild animal and every bird of the sky, and brought each to the man to see what he would call it. And whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name.

The LORD had Adam view all of the animals of the earth and sky, and Adam gave them their names. Why?

I believe that the LORD was giving Adam an appreciation for God’s creation and a connection to all of the creatures that Adam would have dominion over. As God cared for His creation, so He wanted Adam to care also.

These verses also answer the question, “Do animals have souls?”

As I mentioned before, Adam was a chay nephesh, a living soul. Well, the Hebrew in Gen 2:19 for “living creature” is the same, chay neph’esh. So people and animals have souls. However, animals are not created in the image of God, and they do not have the Spirit of the LORD.

This does not appear to include fish and insects. These are not considered “living” in the same way.

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Balaam's Donkey



Next we come to an amazing story in the book of Numbers. This is the story of Balaam or Bil'am in Hebrew. The story is found in Numbers 22 – 24.

Briefly. After the Jewish people failed to enter the Promised Land, their wandering led them to camp in the land of the Moabites.

Balak, the king of the Moabites, was terrified by the large Jewish encampment in His land. So, Balak sent men to call Balaam to come and curse the Jewish people.

Balaam was a gentile, who was also a prophet of God. The name Balaam means “not of the people” or “foreigner”.

The LORD tells Balaam not to go with the men or curse the people because they are blessed. Balaam tells the men to leave.

So, Balak sends a second group offering more to Balaam. This time the LORD lets Balaam go. And the next morning, Balaam saddles his donkey and leaves with the men.

However, the LORD is angry with Balaam, and the Angel of the LORD bars Balaam's way intending to kill him. Balaam can't see the Angel of the LORD, but his donkey can. Twice the donkey saves Balaam by turning away from the Angel of the LORD. Each time the donkey is hit by Balaam. The third time she sits down when there is no place to turn. An enraged Balaam beats her with his stick.

The LORD then opens the donkey's mouth and she has a conversation with Balaam. She asks why he is beating her, and says she has always been a good donkey. Balaam says he wants to kill her for making him look foolish. The Angel of the LORD then appears to Balaam and takes the donkey's side and says he intended to kill Balaam and save the donkey. A contrite Balaam is told to continue, taking care to only say what the LORD tells him.

If the donkey was made able to speak, then she did so out of her own thinking, and she had a relationship to and an understanding of Balaam that he was unaware of. If the donkey was only funneling what the LORD said through her, then the LORD showed His concern for the proper treatment of the donkey.

Now we don't know, if the donkey continued to be able to speak. Perhaps she was like Francis the talking mule or Mr. Ed. Gorsh Balaam! (NEXT SLIDE)

Do not muzzle an ox ...



Our next stop is in the book of Deuteronomy. The book of Deuteronomy takes place on the eastern side of the Jordan river in the Arabah Valley in the land of Moab. This is across the river from Jericho. The Jewish people have traveled for 40 total years in the wilderness to come once more to the entry to the Promised Land

Deuteronomy means “second law”. Moses, rehearses for the Jewish people all the LORD has done for them, gives them the law again, and admonishes the people to worship, trust, and obey the LORD.

Chapter 25 includes Moses telling the people about judging disputes and the appropriate punishment for those found guilty. It includes a discussion of how to handle a husband dying without having had children. It talks about using honest weights and measures. And it speaks of destroying the Amalekites for their awful treatment of the Jewish people during their time in the wilderness.

Yet, in Deut 25:4, the LORD gives a very different command

Do not muzzle an ox while it treads out grain.

So, the farmer is to allow his oxen to eat the grain while they are threshing it. God has concern for the well-being of the oxen which are doing the hard labor of threshing the grain.

Paul in 1 Cor 9:9-11 says that this command from the LORD was meant for believers. Paul used the verse to say that church leaders were worthy of being supported by their congregations.

Nevertheless, the double meaning of this command was a blessing to hard working farm animals.

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The righteous care for
the needs of their animals.
Proverbs 12:10

The book of Proverbs is all about wisdom, and we are told in Prov 9:10

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

So, we should pay attention to the wisdom that is imparted to us from the various proverbs. And we should not be surprised to find that the LORD has something to say to us about animals in proverbs as well.

Proverbs 12:10 tells us that

The righteous care for the needs of their animals; ...

Therefore, those who live right lives are people who care about their animals, whether or not they are pets.

Proverbs 27:23 says

Know well the condition of your flock, and pay attention to your herds,

A wise rancher or shepherd pays attention to their animals. They are their livelihood.

Proverbs mentions more than ten types of animals. There are seven proverbs alone that mention lions.

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Animal Sacrifices



This brings us to the question of animal sacrifice. If God cares about animals, then why does He require animal sacrifice in the Old Testament?

It is precisely because the LORD cares for His creation that these sacrifices were both necessary, costly, and to a degree ghastly. Sin is horrible to God, and seeing the cost in the death of the sacrifices demonstrated how serious sin is. In fact, Heb 9:22 states

... without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.

So the death of the animal was not only a sign for the seriousness of sin, it was also a covering for the sin of the human. The LORD forgave the sin because of the substitutionary death of the animal. The animal took the penalty the human deserved.

This was not because the LORD enjoyed the sacrifice of animals. In Isa 1:11 the LORD states *"What are all your sacrifices to Me?" asks the LORD. "I have had enough of burnt offerings and rams and the fat of well-fed cattle; I have no desire for the blood of bulls, lambs, or male goats.*

However, a sacrifice is only a sacrifice because it is costly. There was a cost to each person who brought a sacrifice. King David said that he would not offer to the LORD what cost David nothing.

Ultimately, all of these sacrifices could only cover sin, not remove it. Animal sacrifices could not provide atonement for sin. As Heb 10:4 says

For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

All of these sacrifices pointed the way to the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ our LORD,

which brought atonement for our sins. (NEXT SLIDE)

Animal Imagery in the Bible



We have already seen a number of instances where animals are mentioned in the Bible. In fact there are hundreds of references to animals throughout the Bible.

- 193 verses mention sheep
- 91 verses mention goats
- 83 verses mention donkeys
- 81 verses mention lions
- 109 verses mention bears
- 111 verses mention flocks
- 85 verses mention cattle

And there are many other animals mentioned in the Bible as well.

Animals are used as similes such as Isa 40:31

but those who trust in the LORD will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not faint.

And Ps 42:1

As a deer longs for streams of water, so I long for You, God.

Animals play significant roles in many stories like character actors in movies. Do you remember that ravens brought food to Elijah? Do you remember the significance of the lion in the story of Sampson? How about the rooster crowing during Jesus' trial?

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Jesus Rides a Young Donkey



One of the most significant Bible stories that involves an animal is the story of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

Before the events of Palm Sunday, Jesus told His disciples not to tell people that He was the Christ (that is the Messiah). However, on Palm Sunday, Jesus not only accepted the praise and worship of Him as the Messiah; He orchestrated it!

As we have been going through the Gospel of Mark, let's look at Mark's description in Mark 11:1-7

When they approached Jerusalem, at Bethphage and Bethany near the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples

and told them, "Go into the village ahead of you. As soon as you enter it, you will find a young donkey tied there, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it here.

If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs it and will send it back here right away.'"

So they went and found a young donkey outside in the street, tied by a door. They untied it,

and some of those standing there said to them, "What are you doing, untying the donkey?"

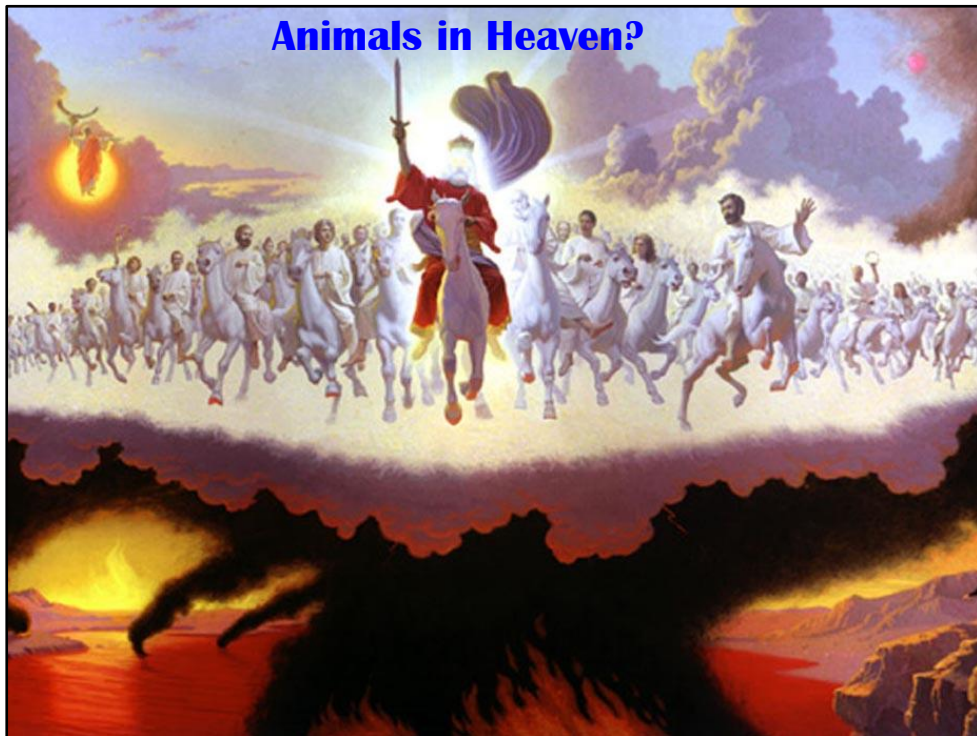
They answered them just as Jesus had said, so they let them go.

Then they brought the donkey to Jesus and threw their robes on it, and He sat on it.

Jesus was only willing to be recognized on that particular day. Even how Jesus was revealed was significant. He rode into Jerusalem on this young donkey, fulfilling the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

It is difficult to think of a more honored animal than this colt who carried Jesus into Jerusalem that day.

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You may still be asking, “Are there animals in Heaven?”

The answer is yes!

The book of Revelation describes the second coming of Jesus in chapter 19. Here are verses 11 – 14.

¹¹Then I saw heaven opened, and there was a white horse. Its rider is called Faithful and True, and He judges and makes war in righteousness.

¹²His eyes were like a fiery flame, and many crowns were on His head. He had a name written that no one knows except Himself.

¹³He wore a robe stained with blood, and His name is the Word of God.

¹⁴The armies that were in heaven followed Him on white horses, wearing pure white linen.

So, there are definitely horses in Heaven, and we will ride them in our return to earth with Jesus.

We know that the cherubim have four faces that include a lion, a calf, and an eagle.

We also know that Jesus appears in Heaven to John as a lamb that was slain in Rev 5:6.

None of this says that there are other animals in Heaven. But, it doesn’t mean that there are not other animals in Heaven. We are not told all that Heaven holds for us, and if we know some animals are there, then there may be others also.

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We do know that after Jesus returns, the world will be very different. This will also extend to the lives of animals.

Isa 11:6-9 describes the changes that will occur when the Messiah, Jesus, returns

The wolf will live with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the goat. The calf, the young lion, and the fatling will be together, and a 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.

An infant will play beside the cobra's pit, and a toddler will put his hand into a snake's den.

None will harm or destroy another on My entire holy mountain, for the land will be as full of the knowledge of the LORD as the sea is filled with water.

Traditional predators will no longer be predators. And the cycle of death will be at an end.

The Word seems to indicate that there will be a restoration of the former nature of animals that existed at the first, before the fall.

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What About Our Pets?



We are left with a final question. What happens to our pets?

This is really two questions: Will they be with us in Heaven? Will they be raptured with us, if we are raptured?

It pains me to say that I don't know with certainty. There is no definitive scripture that states this. In movies about the Rapture, they always show scenes with pets left behind. I am not convinced that this is true, but I have no scripture to support otherwise.

I do know that God cares about animals, and in Matt 10:29 it says

Aren't two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's consent.

So, the LORD is concerned even about small birds. And the LORD is much more concerned about us. He knows our concern for our pets. So my hope and prayer is that He will care for the souls of our pets, and that we will see them again or know that they are well with Him.

Our God is good and loving. I rest in that.

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Are you ready? Are you prepared to meet the LORD?

Rom 12:1 says, *"Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."*

If you are already a believer, then you should know what to do. Read the Word, pray, and tell others the good news of Jesus Christ our LORD.

If you are not a believer, then now is the time! The Bible says that you must turn from your sins. Then it says "if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."

Don't wait.

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Let's pray

Thank you Father for revealing your great love for us in your Word. Thank you for the salvation that we have through Jesus Christ. Thank you that you do care for your creation and for the pets that you have given us. Give us hearts that yearn to reach the lost, and grant that we will stay ready for your return.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen.



**The LORD bless
you, and keep you;**

יְבָרֶכֶךָ יְהוָה וַיִּשְׁמְרֶכָּ:

The LORD bless you, and keep you;

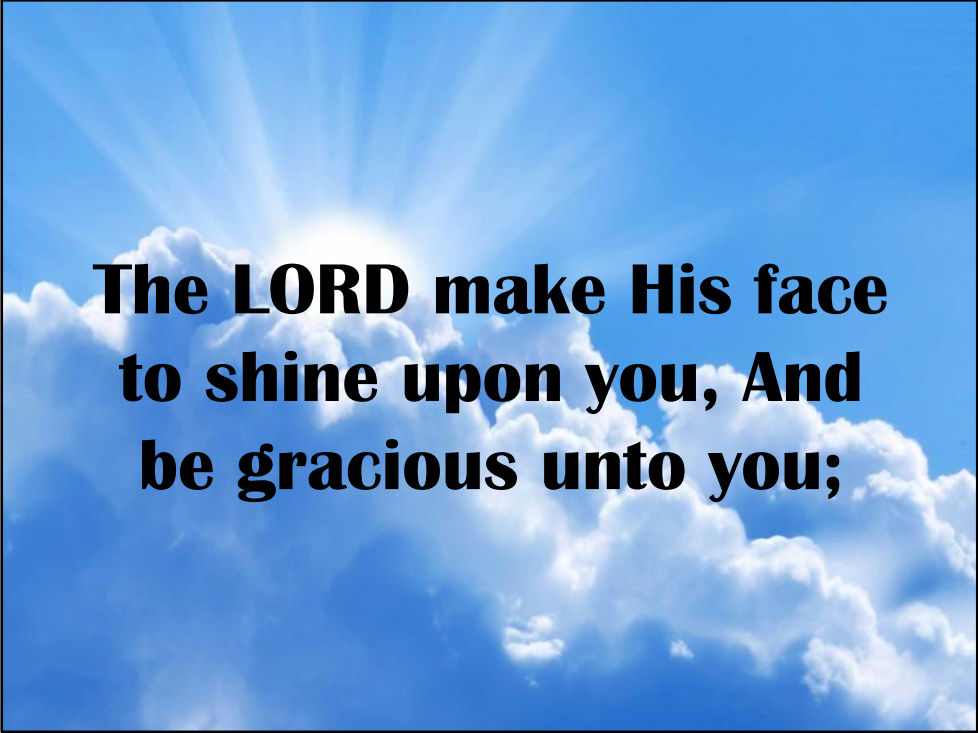
יְאֵר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיַּחֲנֹךְ:

The LORD make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you;

יִשָּׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ וַיִּשֶׂם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם:

The LORD lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace.

Numbers 6:24-26



**The LORD make His face
to shine upon you, And
be gracious unto you;**



**The LORD lift up His
countenance upon you,
And give you peace.**

