

CHAPTER 8

Animals

Did you know that animals are mentioned in the Bible even before people are mentioned? In the first chapter of the Bible we learn about the creation of the animals and the creation of man (Genesis 1):

On what day were the fish and sea creatures created?

On what day were the birds of the air created? _____

On what day were the land animals created? _____

On what day was **man** created? _____

In the last chapter of the Bible (Revelation 22) we also find the names of animals. We read about the LAMB (God's Lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ) in verses 1 and 3. We also read about D_____ in verse 15 (those unclean and filthy people who will not be allowed to enter heaven).

Satan made use of an animal when he tempted Eve (Genesis 3:1). God used animal skins to cover Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:21). Animals filled the ark which Noah built (Genesis 7). An animal was put to death instead of Isaac (Genesis 22:13). Jacob used the skins of animals to deceive his father (Genesis 27:16); later he himself was deceived by the blood of an animal which he thought was the blood of his son Joseph (Genesis 37:31-33). Many of the plagues which God put upon the land of Egypt involved animals (Exodus chapters 8-9). Saul once went looking for some lost animals (1 Samuel 9:3) and he met Samuel and was anointed as king of Israel. The Lord Jesus was born and lay in a place where food is usually put for animals (Luke 2:7). During His temptation Jesus was with the wild _____ (Mark 1:13). When Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem before His death, He rode upon an animal (Mark 11:7). When Peter denied the Lord an animal cried out (Luke 22:60). Later the Lord used animals to teach Peter an important lesson (Acts 10:9-16). When the Lord Jesus Christ comes to the earth with His armies, animals are mentioned (Revelation 19:11,14). During the thousand year kingdom, animals will live together peacefully and will not harm man (Isaiah 11:6-9). Yes, the Bible has much to say about animals!

According to 1 Timothy 6:8, what are two things that man needs to live and survive on this earth (the word "raiment" means "clothing")? 1. _____ 2. _____ Can you think of some of the ways animals provide food for people? What kind of animals are needed for the kinds of food sold at a fast food restaurant? How do animals provide clothing for people? Are you wearing anything right now that has come from an animal? Providing food and clothing are just two of the ways animals help men. The Creator knew what He was doing when He made the animals!

In this chapter we do not have enough space to talk about all of the animals mentioned in the Bible. We will discuss some of the important mammals which are mentioned frequently in the Bible. If you want to learn more about some of the other animals mentioned in the Bible, you can look in a good Bible dictionary.

Sacrificial Animals

Often in the Bible we read about animals being sacrificed. This is something that we do not do today. We slaughter animals and prepare them for eating, but we do not kill them for sacrifice. Even the Jews do not have animal sacrifices today. The Jewish altar of sacrifice was located at the temple and today the Jewish people do not have a temple. The Jewish temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D. Therefore today the children of Israel are "without a S_____ " (Hosea 3:4).

The following animals were used in sacrifice:

1) Cattle The bull (male) The cow (female) The calf (young cow or bull)	2) Goats The he-goat (male) The she-goat (female) The kid (young goat)
3) Sheep The ram (male sheep) The ewe (female sheep, pronounced like our word "YOU") The lamb (young sheep)	

If people could not afford these larger animals, they could offer turtledoves or pigeons instead (see Leviticus 5:7,11).

The very first animals that died were killed as a sacrifice because of man's sin. We read about this in Genesis 3:21. If coats were made from the skins of these animals, what must have happened to the animals? _____ When we think about animal sacrifices, there are three things that we should always remember:

1. A sacrifice was needed because of man's sin.
2. The sacrifice involved the shedding of blood (the animal died).
3. Instead of the sinner dying, the innocent animal died in his place as his SUBSTITUTE.

In Old Testament times thousands and thousands and thousands of animals were sacrificed. According to 1 Kings 8:63, how many oxen (male cattle) were sacrificed? _____
 How many sheep were sacrificed? _____

All of these sacrifices pointed to a greater sacrifice: the sacrifice of Jesus Christ who is called the L_____ of God (John 1:29). This sacrifice took place when Jesus died on the cross.

Did the thousands of animal sacrifices really take away man's sin (Hebrews 10:4,11)? _____
 Did the one, perfect sacrifice of Christ take away man's sin (John 1:29; Hebrews 10:14,17-18)? _____

The animal sacrifices were just the S_____ (Hebrews 10:1) of something that was to come (the perfect sacrifice of Christ). Which would you rather have, the shadow of a twenty dollar bill or the real thing? Would you rather eat the shadow of an ice cream cone or would you rather eat the real thing? The shadow does not do anything for you, but it does tell you that there

is something real which is making the shadow. If there were no ice cream cone, could you have the shadow of an ice cream cone? _____ The animal sacrifices carried this message: "SOMEDAY GOD'S SON WILL BE THE PERFECT SACRIFICE FOR MAN'S SIN!" As we think about the sacrifice of Christ, the same three things are true:

1. The sacrifice of Christ was needed because of man's sin. He died to put away _____ (Hebrews 9:26).
2. The sacrifice of Christ involved the shedding of blood (Hebrews 9:22) as the Saviour paid the death penalty for man's sin.
3. Instead of the sinner dying, Jesus died in his place as his SUBSTITUTE (Romans 5:8; 6:23).

Do you really believe that Christ did this for you? Have your sins been put away and forgiven? God does not want us to offer animal sacrifices any more. However, what does God want us to do in order to remember Christ's great sacrifice (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)?

BEASTS OF BURDEN

The Ass

Today when we need to move things from one place to another we pack them in the trunk of our car or in the back of a truck. In Bible times people would load up an ass or donkey. This animal is sure-footed and can carry a heavy load. The donkey can give people a ride too (see Judges 10:4). According to Zechariah 9:9 and Matthew 21:1-11, who once rode into the city of Jerusalem on a donkey? _____ Probably the most famous donkey in the Bible is the one Balaam rode on. What was so unusual about this donkey (Numbers 22:21-31)?

_____ Who had more sense, the donkey or the rider? _____

The Camel

This beast of burden is perfectly designed for desert travel. Here are five reasons why:

1) The camel is able to store water in its body so that it can travel for days without drinking. It needs water just like any other animal, but God has given it the remarkable ability to store water. A camel can consume over 15 gallons of water at a single drink and this water will last for several days.

2) The camel has a broad foot which enables it to walk over sandy areas without sinking deeply beneath the surface. Also its feet are tough enough to stand the burning hot sand.

3) The camel can live off coarse and bitter desert plants and can even take thorns into its mouth and grind them up with its powerful teeth. The camel has been known to travel 20 days without receiving anything as food except what it discovered for itself along the way.

4) The camel is strong and able to carry a burden of 400 or 500 pounds and plod through the hottest desert. It can cover about 30 miles a day.

5) The camel is very large and sometimes reaches eight feet or more in height. How can such a large and tall animal be loaded? The camel is able to kneel down so that it can be loaded as easily as an ass (Genesis 24:11). This makes it much easier for men to climb up on too.

The camel was very useful and valuable. How many did Job have (Job 1:3; 42:12)?

_____ God wonderfully designed each animal He created to be able to live where it is found. What we find is not animals struggling to survive (as evolution teaches), but animals that have been made to survive **from the beginning** because the Creator designed them that way!

The Lord Jesus used the large size of the camel to teach two important lessons. The first is found in Matthew 19:24. How easy is it for a large camel to go through the tiny eye of a needle?

_____ Is this possible or impossible? _____ How easy is it for *sinful* men to enter a *sinless* heaven (see Matthew 19:25-26)? _____ Can a sinful person save himself? Is this possible or impossible? _____ What are some of the things that people do to try to get saved, even though it is not possible to enter heaven by doing these things?

Is salvation possible with God (Matthew 19:26)? _____ Can He make it possible for a *sinful* person to enter a *sinless* heaven? _____ What did God do to make the impossible possible (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9-10)? _____

The second lesson in which Jesus used the camel is found in Matthew 23:24. Sometimes little tiny insects would find their way into a drink, and the Pharisees were very careful to strain out these tiny gnats before drinking. Have you ever had a bug in your juice? If you were to accidentally swallow one, do you think it would kill you? Jesus was saying to these Jews, "You are very careful not to ever swallow a tiny insect, but then you go and swallow a camel!" Have you ever had a camel in your juice? If you were to swallow a camel, would this be more serious than swallowing a gnat?

Jesus knew that people did not really swallow camels, but He used this silly illustration to teach a powerful lesson. These Jews were very concerned about the little things, but they were not concerned about the big and important things such as "judgment, mercy and faith" (verse 23). These people followed all kinds of religious rules and regulations, and thought that they were very righteous in doing so, but when God's Son came along THEY CRUCIFIED HIM!

Suppose your teacher said, "This test has eleven questions. The first ten are very important. The last question is not very important and will not count very much." You then spend all of your time working on the last question and no time on the ten important questions. Would you flunk the test? _____ When it came to being right with God, the Pharisees flunked. They concentrated on minor things and neglected the major things.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS GOD WANTS YOU TO DO?

HORSES AND DOGS

Horses

Today horses are used primarily for riding and racing. In Bible times the main purpose for horses was FOR WAR! Why were the children of Israel afraid of Pharaoh and his army (see Exodus 14:9)? _____ Horses would pull chariots and the chariots would hold the soldiers. An army with horses and chariots was mighty and greatly to be feared!

Did the Lord want the children of Israel to trust in horses for victory (Psalm 33:16-17)? _____ Do some trust in horses and chariots (Psalm 20:7)? _____ Who should we trust in to give us victory and to fight our battles (Psalm 20:7)? _____

Christ's first mission to earth was one of peace and He came riding a donkey (Matthew 21:5-7). Christ's next mission to earth will be one of war and He will come riding on a white _____ (Revelation 19:11)!

Dogs

Today when we think of a dog we think of "man's best friend." We think of these nice household pets. In our day, dogs are looked upon favorably by most people.

This was not so in Bible times. In those days dogs were looked down upon as unclean and filthy animals. Dogs would eat garbage, dead animals and even human flesh and blood (1 Kings 14:11; 22:38). They even had the disgusting habit of eating their own vomit (Proverbs 26:11; 2 Peter 2:22). The only good thing said about dogs in the Bible is that they would sometimes watch the flock (Job 30:1).

In Revelation 22:15 the word "dogs" is used to describe people who are not allowed to enter the holy city. This means that these people are filthy and unclean and impure. They have no concern about a holy God. There will be no "dogs" in heaven!

WILD BEASTS

The Lion

The lion was probably the most feared animal in Bible times. Lions no longer live in Palestine today, but in Bible times many lions roamed this area. The word "lion" is found in 31 books of the Bible.

Why is Satan compared to a lion (1 Peter 5:8)?

Why is the Lord Jesus compared to a lion (Revelation 5:5)?

Why are believers compared to a lion (Proverbs 28:1; remember, lions are not very bashful and are not usually afraid to approach someone)?

_____ In what ways should believers be BOLD?

The Wolf

The wolf is another wild animal which once roamed Palestine (and there are still some wolves there today). The wolf is a fierce and cruel enemy, and a real danger, especially to sheep. The wolf is light-colored and resembles a large dog. The Lord Jesus spoke of people who pretend to be sheep (true believers) but were really _____ or false prophets (Matthew 7:15). See also Acts 20:29 where wolves describe false teachers who try to destroy believers.

These wild animals will not be wild forever. See Isaiah 11:6-9. The Prince of Peace will rule even over the animal kingdom! In what ways will these animals be different?

Let us thank God for animals and for how they help us in so many ways and for the way they provide us with food (1 Timothy 4:4). Let us be careful not to worship animals or let them take the place of God or persons (Romans 1:22-25). 3) Let us use our mind to pay attention to God and learn about Him and from Him. Sometimes we act like animals (see Psalm 73:22). Instead of thinking in the right way, using the mind God has given us, it is possible for a person to act like a beast.

Why Were Animals Created?

The Bible gives many reasons, among the following:

1. For limited but inadequate companionship (Genesis 2:18-22 and **see 2 Samuel 12:3**). A dog may provide enjoyment and may walk at a man's side, but the dog was never intended to be "man's best friend." God intended a much better helper for man (Genesis 2:20-22). Indeed, man's greatest and best Companion is the Lord Himself.
2. For food (Genesis 9:2-3)
3. For clothing (Matthew 3:4)
4. For transportation (Genesis 22:3)
5. For sacrifice, in order to point to the one great Sacrifice and to illustrate that salvation is only possible by way of the shedding of blood (Gen. 4:4; Lev. 1:3)
6. For judgment of sinful men (Exodus chapter 8; 2 Kings 2:23-24)
7. To serve man in a multitude of ways (Gen. 8:7-8; and compare some amazing uses of animals today, such as "seeing eye dogs" for the blind, animals used in experimentation so as to develop new drugs and medical procedures, etc.)
8. To teach men spiritual lessons (Proverbs 6:6)
9. To teach men of God's care (Matthew 6:26)
10. To give enjoyment to children (Isaiah 11:6,8)
11. To carry out orders from their Creator (1 Kings 17:6; Matthew 17:27)
12. To illustrate that "the Hand that made us is Divine" (every creature demonstrates that it was remarkably designed by the Creator and could never have evolved by chance). Every animal made by God is indisputable proof against the theory of evolution