

Day 5, 6, and The Animal Kingdom

²⁰ Then God said, "Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens." ²¹ So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that *it was* good. ²² And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." ²³ So the evening and the morning were the fifth day. ²⁴ Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, *each* according to its kind"; and it was so. ²⁵ And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that *it was* good. (Genesis 1:20–25)

I don't know that I have ever met the sad soul with no interest in animals. Most people have pets at some point. Even those who don't are usually fascinated to watch animals at a distance, learn about them, view them at a zoo, or park, or even visit a museum to learn of them. Animals are a perpetual source of fascination for us.

For believers they have deep theological meaning. Not only do they serve as analogies and metaphors for spiritual truths, but their very existence tells us very deep truths about God, about man's status and mission in the world, and about God's plan for creation.

Genesis 1:20-25 gives us the creation of the animal kingdom, and with it we can learn of the creation of animals, the creed or theology of animals, and the confusion about animals.

I. The Creation of Animals

There is a beautiful artistry and symmetry in the creation account. On day 1, 2, and 3, God created the realms and the spaces. The heavens and the earth, the waters above and the waters below, the sea and the dry land. On days 4, 5, and 6, he populates those realms with inhabitants and rulers. So on day 1, God created the heavens – on day 4, He places the sun, moon and stars in the heavens. On day 2, he created the atmosphere, the waters above, and the waters below, on day 5, He will create the inhabitants of sky and sea: birds and sea creatures. On day 3, He created the dry land and its vegetation. On day 6, He creates the inhabitants of the dry land, the wild and domestic animals, reptiles and insects.

Day 5

Day 5 is a momentous day, because it is the creation of life with breath in it. Plant life is made on day 3, but day 5 is the emergence of life with its own soul – *nephesh* – begins on Day 5. As we saw last week, the emergence of life is either a supernatural miracle, or through the impossible mechanism of spontaneous abiogenesis.

And it is significant, that of the two Hebrew words for create, *bara*, and *asah*, here the word *bara* is used. Both are used in this chapter: *asah* means to make, but *bara* means to make out of nothing. It seems that here when life is made, it is truly a creation out of nothing.

The first living creatures created are creatures that live in the water. "So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind."

Significantly, the word translated *great sea creatures* is *tannim*, which is most often translated dragons. It is likely a reference to what are today called dinosaurs, as well as the largest of the sea

animals.

The Bible's classification of animals is not whether the creature is warm or cold-blooded, whether it gives birth to live young or eggs, whether it is vertebrate or invertebrate, whether the young are nourished with milk or not. Those are useful divisions, as are the many other kinds used in modern biology: domain, kingdom, phyla, class, order, family, genus. But the Bible's classification is based on the realms which the creatures occupy: sky, sea or land. Again, we see the important words "according to their kind". God creates variety, but also boundaries between the variety. Just as we saw that in miracles, God often takes a natural process and accelerates it, it may be that as God is creating creatures, He is allowing some creatures to branch off from others, within their kinds. You might have seen first two sharks, but then a similar but different kind branching off from those two, and again. But it must have been a marvelous sight to see the waters go from uninhabited to simply teeming and filling the seas.

The same thing happens for flying and winged creatures. "let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens". Again, we can picture some initial creations, and then birds coming out of birds according to their kinds, a kind of highly accelerated micro-evolution.

Once again, God beholds the works of His hands and delights in it. He sees that it is good. Importantly, God gives His first blessing of Genesis 1 to the sea and air creatures, and encourages their abundance, their proliferation. "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth."

This is quite different from the worldly idea that life needs to be kept to a minimum, and strictly limited, because we don't want too much life. God's world, and God's creation is one of abundance.

This completes the fifth day.

Day 6

²⁴ Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, *each* according to its kind"; and it was so. ²⁵ And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that *it was good*.

Land animals, divided into the domesticated, the wild, as well as reptilian and insectoid kinds of animals are made on day 6, according to their kind.

Now day 6 is not yet over, but yet God does His pronouncement right here. He looks at his completed animal kingdom and delights in its fulness, its beauty, its glory. Now how should we think about animals and animal life?

II. A Creed About Animals

We need to know this because there are actually several false teachings and dangerous ideas related to the animals which can end up contradicting the gospel itself. On the one extreme we have pantheism, and on the other extreme, we have Darwinism.

Pantheism teaches that all living creatures are manifestations of the divine and of God. God is the world and the world is God. All of nature is a living organism, all life contributes to the 'Life-force' of the universe. All living things share in this kind of divine spirit, or universal life-force. Humans and animals are equals, fellow creatures bound together by the same energy. In fact, when any

creature dies, the soul of the living thing either joins the energy of the universe, or it is reincarnated. To attack or kill animals is to attack the spirit that binds us together. We are part of nature, but not leaders or rulers over it. We must try to live in harmony with it, and not disturb it.

Darwinism teaches that humans are animals. We are more similar than we are different. Humans and animals can both solve problems, so our rationality is not of a different kind. Humans and animals exhibit social behaviour. Really, the differences are just differences by degree, not in kind. There is really no such thing as the immaterial soul, therefore, humans and animals are just material creatures sharing the same world. But this is error on both sides. What does the Bible teach about animals?

First, God loves animals as His creatures. God made the animals to inhabit the world and to share it with us. He may actually have modelled them on other spiritual creatures. We read in Ezekiel and in Revelation of angelic creatures with the face of an ox, of a lion, of an eagle, of others that appear to be as a dragon. We often think that God made these spiritual creatures in imitation of the earthly animals, but as we have seen, it is likely that God made the spirit world, the heavens, before He made the living creatures of Earth. In that case, earthly animals were modelled on spiritual creatures, not the other way around.

God clearly delights in them for their own sake, and fills large sections of biblical poetry reciting their beauty, their strength, their speed, their diversity, their wonders. And God delights for us to learn and discover the many wonders of the animal kingdom. The reason we love to visit places with wildlife, or do birdwatching or scuba, or do it by proxy by reading on them, looking at pictures, watching documentaries is because of the glory of the animal kingdom. They are living works of art that show forth not only God's boundless creativity and genius, but they also show forth God's playfulness, humour, love of contrasts.

Second, animals are different from humans in that only humans are said to be in God's image. What this refers to is disputed by theologians: rationality, personhood, will and emotion, conscience, creativity, or the combination of them all. Whatever it is, animals do not share it. C. S. Lewis suggested that as we are made in God's image, so animals are made in man's image. We understand what he means, because animals often have traits that remind us of human personalities, or human quirks. Cats are proud and can be embarrassed. Dogs are loyal, and can be guilty. Donkeys are stubborn. Bulls are angry. Dolphins are playful. We find those things amusing and endearing, precisely because we know they are not rational and sentient in the way we are. They reflect us in partial ways. And in a sense, when we tame animals, we further "humanise" them and make them into our image.

3. Animals are not said to have immortal souls. Whereas God breathed into Adam something which gave him this self-consciousness and God-consciousness, and put eternity into his heart, no such thing is said of animals. Ecclesiastes tells us that at death, two different things happen to animals and humans.²¹ Who knows the spirit of the sons of men, which goes upward, and the spirit of the animal, which goes down to the earth? (Ecclesiastes 3:21)

Both animals and humans are mortal, but humans have been given an immortal soul. Humans clearly exist consciously even after the body dies and awaits resurrection. An animal's soul is its life; so it does not have existence after bodily death. Of course, God could choose to resurrect some of them in the future, but we don't have any evidence of animals having conscious existence after death. This is also why we can't speak of animal rights, as if they are moral creatures. We can speak of the right treatment of animals, but again, they are not sentient beings. This is also likely why they served as sacrifices in the Old Testament. Animals are the closest thing to an innocent substitute.

The animal has not done right or wrong, because it cannot. It is a living thing, but it cannot be evil. Therefore, animals served as a picture of the one who would finally die for us and be morally innocent.

4. The kingdom of animals is meant to be ruled by man. They are not equal to us in rank or dignity, but this world is also their home. When Adam gets to name the animals, God is giving him the same authority when God named the Light, the Day, the Night, the Sea, the Land. As we'll see next time, man is given the right to rule and steward the animal kingdom both before the Fall and after it. That means man can lawfully and rightfully tame them, farm them, and hunt them. Lewis suggests that if we had not fallen, perhaps we would have eventually tamed all animals, and that the tame animal actually reflects animals as they should have been, which is the opposite of Darwinistic thought which says that wild is natural, and the wilder the better. Certainly in the Millennium, and possibly in the eternal state, the animals appears all have been tamed, whether that happens miraculously, or through human ingenuity isn't said.

Of course, the way man rules the animals is a reflection of his heart. ¹⁰ A righteous *man* regards the life of his animal, But the tender mercies of the wicked *are* cruel. (Proverbs 12:10)

God told Israel: ⁴ “You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out *the grain*. (Deuteronomy 25:4)

When his heart is evil, man inflicts great cruelty upon animals, destroys them wantonly, and harms them with his own lusts and greed. Poor, lazy or greedy management of the land, brings damage and pain to animals. If man's heart is right, either through common grace or special grace, then he will tame, cull, and use animals as is best for man and good for them. Man has been granted the right to eat meat, and God has declared that it is not unclean. Again, we are not fellow-citizens. They inhabit the world that was made for man. Animals can and must be used by humans. They are not to be misused or abused. It is possible to sin against God in our treatment of animals. We are meant to rule and manage them well, but we are not meant to idolise them. To love them more than people is easy enough, but it is still inordinate love, misplaced love, even idolatrous love.

5. The fall radically affected the animal kingdom. Now whether this was Adam's Fall or Satan's fall or both is debated by some. Some theologians point out that Satan's use of the serpent points to some corrupting of the animal kingdom even before Adam and Eve fell. Paul in Romans 8 says that the creation groans and travails in pain right now, waiting for the resurrection of God's human children, at which time creation will be freed from bondage to the curse. So it is likely that it was when Adam fell that the curse of death, and of animals preying on one another began. Scripture recognises that the creation is fallen, “ I will rid the land of evil beasts” (Leviticus 26:6). They are not morally evil, but they bring terror and calamity into life because of their fallen condition.

It is important to understand this, because as you watch nature documentaries today, you see both the good and evil all collapsed into one, and called “natural”. So you can see the beauty of small animals, delightful nurture, ingenious industry and pleasant places, and then see the horror of how some animals prey on their young, maim and destroy each other, poison and inflict unimaginable pain on each other, and think that it is all one thing. But it is not. Can you imagine a scene of a pack of wolves chasing down a deer pregnant with young, bringing it down, and then savagely eating it and its unborn young, and the Bible then saying, and God saw that it was good. No, this is not good. This is the curse, it is corruption, it is disorder, it is an animal metaphor for moral evil: destruction, death, pain, cruelty, savagery and chaos. Yes, it is a stable order right now of predator and prey, but it is not some beautiful, harmonious circle of life, that Mufasa tells Simba about in warm and husky tones.

III. The Confusion About Animals

What about so-called “prehistoric” animals and the fossil record? Within the fossil record, there are thousands of land, sea and air animals that no longer exist. The most famous of these are dinosaurs, but there are plenty of creatures besides those that are found in the fossil record, and are not around today. Many of these creatures are found in similar rock layers. That has led geologists and palaeontologists to speculate on multiple ages of life on Earth. These are going from the earliest to the latest: the Hadean, the Archean, the Proterozoic (the 3 subdivided era), the Phanerozoic (also 3 sub-eras – Paleozoic, Mesozoic, and Cenozoic), and these have their sub-sub divisions, where you will hear some of the more well-known terms of Cambrian, Triassic, Jurassic, Cretaceous subdivisions.

So what should we do with all these creatures that we no longer have? Well, we know the answer of evolutionists and Old-Age creationists. These just reflect millions of years of steady evolution until the recent past when man emerged. But we find that answer unacceptable because it means there were millions of years of animal death and suffering long before man sinned. It means it was a horrific world of predation, disease, pain, suffering and death, long before Adam.

Instead, we believe the Earth was created with accelerated formation processes in the recent past, and when the animals were created, their state was good, without death and corruption. So there are several answers.

First, there is no problem for YEC with animals that are related to the animals we have today, that went extinct either before or during the Flood. Those are not prehistoric animals; they are parents and cousins of existing creatures. Not every creature created initially on Day 5 and 6 was still alive in its original form by the time of Noah's Flood. Of those that were, it is likely that Noah took representatives of the kinds, not a specimen of every diversified animal that had already branched off from the kinds. Noah would have known that if he took the kinds aboard, that there would again be the same diversity within a few generations. The rest perished in the Flood.

Second, the fossil record actually argues against evolution and pre-historic ages, not for it. The fossil record shows an almost complete absence of creatures halfway between one species and another, what we call intermediate forms. There should be thousands among the 250 000 fossil species, and yet there is scarcely one, and the candidates are not clearly intermediate. The fossil record simply demonstrates the sudden appearance of distinct species and groups. Instead of providing links for the gaps between species, it creates the impression that all the animals that have ever existed have existed fully formed as they are, and not through a slow and steady evolutionary process.

Third, we believe most of the fossil record can be explained by the universal Flood of Noah's day. Fossils are mostly found in sedimentary rock, which is laid by water, and compacts the animal and preserves it in stone, before the natural elements and other creatures destroy the carcass. Dinosaurs left to die in the open don't become fossils, they become food for other creatures. Dinosaurs covered in tonnes of mud and sediment become fossils. This also explains why the fossil record often contains what are almost fossil graveyards: thousands of dinosaurs in one place. It is not as if dinosaurs would go and die in one place. But it is likely that herds, troops and flocks of dinosaurs could have been in one place when suddenly buried by a tsunami of silt, mud and water. The Karoo formation contains an estimated 800 billion vertebrate animals. Fossilised sea shells are found on the tops of some of Earth's highest mountains.

Now one of the problems with evolutionary theory is just this: fossils are dated by rocks and rocks are dated by fossils. So, a certain kind of fossil is often found in a certain kind of rock layer. How old is that rock layer? They use what they call an index fossil – a creature from say the Cambrian period is found in it, a Trilobite, and that is supposed to be 500 million years ago. So the rocks must then be 500 million years old. But how do we know a Trilobite is 500 million years old? Well, because it is found in Cambrian rock, you see. So fossils are dated by rocks, and rocks by fossils, which means it is a circular, and irrefutable dating system. Furthermore, often the supposedly older organisms are found in layers above where they should be. When that happens, evolutionists and some geologists propose that the earth vaulted older rock layers above the newer ones.

Instead, many of the creatures found in different layers can be far more plausibly explained to be in those layers due to their density within water, with the kind of sorting that water and silt and mud would do to different creatures with different bone structures, exoskeletons, body weight and so forth.

Finally, it is possible, though not certain, that a small section of creatures were deliberately corrupted by Satan, turned into killers and destroyers, and possibly for that reason were not taken aboard the Ark. Their uncorrupted kinds would have been taken aboard.

So, how do we explain the pre-historic animals? They were not pre-historic. They were created on Day 5 and 6. The ones in the fossil record were almost all drowned and ossified during a worldwide Flood. Forms of their kinds were taken aboard the Ark, as long as they were true creations of God, and not perversions.

It is not even certain that all the creatures that are said to be pre-historic and extinct are actually extinct. Enough anecdotal evidence exists for a few scattered survivors of creatures that were supposed to have lived millions of years ago. A famous example is the coelocanth, which was caught off the coast of South Africa, and was supposed to be have been destroyed during the Cretaceous period along with the dinosaurs. Instead, beginning in 1938, a healthy population off our coast was found to exist. Similarly, enough cultures have accounts of large sea creatures, so-called lake monsters, or other creatures that match the description of land or sea dinosaurs existing down to the present day. All the stories and tales of dragons cannot be put down to myth and childish folklore. A good portion of them surely refer to actual struggles that various cultures had with predatory reptiles. Picture combining an elephant with a black mamba, and you have an idea of a very dangerous creature, that only the bravest would have taken on.

Finally, we should close with God's promise that His goodness and redemption extends to the animal kingdom:

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. ⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. ⁹ 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)

God loves these creatures, and made them for His glory, and for our enjoyment. A large part of our mission is to bring God's order to this world and to the animal kingdom, and it is likely that this will continue into eternity.