

Are People Just Animals?

As time has gone by I've noticed more and more people referring to humans as “just another animal.” What they mean by this is that the life of a human being is no more important than the life of any other living creature. If it is wrong to kill a man then it is also wrong to kill a squirrel. Some people refer to Thanksgiving as “Turkey Murder Day” and speak of the “execution” of thousands of turkeys as if it was some sort of modern holocaust. These people see no distinction between human beings and the animal kingdom. “We're all just animals!” is their battle cry.

While the world may not see a difference between people and porcupines, the Bible presents a very different view of creation. It teaches that mankind is entirely different from any animal. This can be seen right from the very first chapter in the Bible. In Genesis 1 we find this account of God's creation of the animal kingdom:

Genesis 1:20: “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.

21 And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his 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 fowl multiply in the earth.

23 And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

24 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.

25 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.”

This passage recounts God's creation of aquatic life, birds, insects, and land animals – but it does not mention mankind. Humans were formed in a separate act of creation:

Genesis 1:26: “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.

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28 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.”

Here we learn several remarkable things. First, man and man *alone* was created in the image of God. No animals, birds, or insects can make this claim. There is something unique about us; we are like God in a way that separates us from all animal life. Second, God gave mankind dominion over all forms of life on Earth. Not only is mankind not “just another life form”, but we also have authority over all other living creatures.

This authority even extends to the point of being allowed to eat animals. Some people claim that

it is immoral to eat meat because that requires the death of an animal. They say that people should be vegetarians because that is more humane. However, *God* is the one who gave mankind the right to eat meat. He did this right after the Flood:

Genesis 9:3: "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.
4 But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat."

As we can see, God placed just one restriction on this: men were not allowed to consume blood. (Incidentally, this verse is not related to blood transfusions in *any way*. Receiving a transfusion of blood is not even *remotely* similar to "eating" blood.) *God does not condemn eating meat* or criticize that practice in any way. Instead He explicitly tells people that it is their right to eat meat if they so choose. People who condemn others for eating meat are going beyond anything that God Himself commands.

Nor has God changed His mind on this issue. In the New Testament we find that Jesus Himself talked about this, and He did *not* believe that animals were as valuable as people. In fact, He thought that the life of a human being was *far more valuable* than the life of an animal. Look at what He said in the book of Matthew:

Matthew 10:29: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.
30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.
31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows."

Do you see what verse 31 says? Christ did *not* tell His disciples "The life of a bird is just as important as your own life". Instead He taught that men were more valuable than *many* sparrows! In His eyes the value of a human being was far greater than the life of any animal. We can also see this taught in the sacrificial system, which required the death of *countless* animals. That system was instituted by God Himself.

Now, it's not that God doesn't care about animals; He clearly does. As Matthew 10:29 says, God notices every sparrow that falls. When the entire world was destroyed by water the Lord had Noah build an ark and bring *animals* into it, thus saving countless species. Proverbs tells us that the righteous are concerned about the lives of their animals and take care of them. The real issue is that animals are *not* more valuable than people. This means that it is *not* acceptable to murder people in order to save the lives of a few laboratory animals (and yes, there are groups that actually do that).

I could go on but I think I have made my point. The Bible does *not* teach that people are just another kind of animal. After all, it was people, *not* animals, who were made in the image of God. The Lord gave mankind sovereignty over animals and He also gave us the right to eat meat. Jesus Himself said that the life of a person was worth more than the lives of many animals.

I'm sure that some of you are thinking that this is obvious, but it is not obvious to the world. They don't seem to have a problem with putting human lives in danger in order to spare the habitat of an endangered species, or of dooming hundreds of thousands of people to painful deaths rather than use a pesticide that might endanger some birds. If the life of an endangered snail is as valuable as the life of a person then why not put human lives in danger in order to save that snail? After all, there are billions of people; what does it matter if some of them have to be killed in order to save a rare insect?

To God it matters a great deal. People were made in His image, and endangering men in order to protect wildlife is a horrible thing to do. The world may shower praise upon people who think it is wrong to cut down trees but right to kill the unborn, but to God it is an abomination. He will judge those who have endangered so many innocent lives, and when that day comes no amount of politically correct arguments is going to help.