

*In search of...*



# Truth & Right

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## Man and Beast

In view of modern "animal rights" activism, it is appropriate to consider the proper relationship of man to beast.

### **Animals are Inferior to Man**

On the sixth day God created the animals and declared His creation "good" (Genesis 1:25), but that same day "God created man in His own image" (Genesis 1:27). God's plan in making man according to His own image and likeness was to give him dominion over every animal (Genesis 1:26).

**Animals are Suitable for Clothing**

Once Adam and Eve became aware of their nakedness, "the Lord God made tunics of skin, and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21). It is altogether appropriate for animals to die so that men and women will be adequately covered. John, the messenger who prepared the way for Christ, "was clothed with camel's hair and a leather belt" (Mark 1:6). While in Joppa, the apostle Peter stayed in the home of a disciple named Simon, who made his living as a tanner (Acts 9:43; 10:6, 32). Fur was once fashionable and those who have transformed it into a social

taboo will not rest until they have achieved the same with leather and wool.

### **Animals are Suitable for Consumption**

As Noah's family emerged from the ark, God informed them, "Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs" (Genesis 9:3). In the New Testament, Paul wrote, "For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving" (1 Timothy 4:4). Some extremists have boldly asserted that Jesus was a vegetarian, but the scriptures teach otherwise. Between two distinct miracles, Jesus fed no less than nine thousand people with the meat of fish (Mark 6:35-44; 8:1-9). On one occasion He is seen having cooked fish for His apostles (John 21:9), and on another He is seen receiving fish from them to eat (Luke 24:42).

### **Dangerous Animals are to be Put to Death**

Prior to the law, God said, "Surely for your lifeblood I will demand a reckoning; from the hand of every beast I will require it ..." (Genesis 9:5). Within the Law of Moses, the Lord reaffirmed this teaching (Exodus 21:28), adding the penalty of death to the animal's owner if he failed to restrain the beast after a prior bad act (Exodus 21:29). Penalties were also in place for animals that harmed other animals (Exodus

21:35-36).

### **Animals are Not to be Treated Cruelly**

The dominion of man over beast is not a license for mistreatment. It is written, "A righteous man regards the life of his animal, but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel" (Proverbs 12:10). Under the Old Covenant, animals were protected by labor laws: "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain" (Deuteronomy 25:4). Yet, even this precept held a deeper meaning for men. Arguing that "the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:14), Paul wrote, "... Does not the law say the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, 'You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain.' Is it oxen God is concerned about? Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written" (1 Corinthians 9:8-10). As explained by the apostle, the regulations governing man's treatment of animals were set in place not because God is concerned with animals, but to teach men to be fair to one another. The man who treated his own ox harshly could hardly be expected to treat his fellow man with respect and compassion.

### **Animals are Suitable for Companionship**

In his famous "You are the man!" speech, in which he convicted King David of

committing adultery with Bathsheba, Nathan the prophet used an interesting analogy. He compared David's sin to that of a rich man who stole a poor man's precious pet, describing the relationship in these words: "But the poor man had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom; and it was like a daughter to him" (II Samuel 12:3). In contrast to such affection, notice what P.E.T.A., People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, says about animal companionship: "... we believe that it would have been in the animals' best interests if the institution of 'pet keeping' ... never existed ... This selfish desire to possess animals and receive love from them causes immeasurable suffering". Domesticating wild animals is not a harmful endeavor. The Scriptures refer to the practice in quite innocuous terms: "For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind" (James 3:7). This is in harmony with the law of human dominion (Genesis 1:26).

Although pet keeping is an approved activity, it must be kept in proper perspective. "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs ... yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs" (Mark 7:27-28). Human welfare must always take precedence over that of animals. Some people so adore

their pets, they bedeck them in jewelry and groom them lavishly, all of which is wasteful because animals have no appreciation for fine things (Proverbs 11:22; Matthew 7:6; II Peter 2:22).

### **Animals are Unsuitable for Sexual Fulfillment**

Obvious as this may seem, until recent decades it was also a foregone conclusion that homosexuality is an abomination. Since we must now argue that homosexual activity is indeed perversion it won't be long before we will be forced to convince people that the same is true of bestiality. God implicitly forbade such contact between man and beast at the beginning. In the search for a suitable mate, Adam was presented with every animal, but among them "there was not found a helper comparable to him" (Genesis 2:18-20). Within the Law of Moses, God, having condemned homosexuality, went on to say, "Nor shall you mate with any animal, to defile yourself with it. Nor shall any woman stand before an animal to mate with it. It is perversion" (Leviticus 18:23). Under the Old Law, the penalty for zoophilia was death (Leviticus 20:15-16).

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# The Areopagus

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All of these are found in Acts 17, when Paul was in Athens

- Paul's spirit was provoked because of all the idols
- Both Epicurean and Stoic philosophers were there
- Many of them called Paul a babbler
- They were only interested in hearing or telling something new
- Paul said he could see they were very religious
- The Athenians had an altar to "the unknown god"
- A poet was quoted that we are God's offspring
- Past times of ignorance God overlooked
- He has fixed a day on which He will judge the world
- Hearing of the resurrection from the dead, some mocked
- But others joined him and believed