

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD? : A THEOLOGY OF ANIMALS AND A CHRISTIAN  
RESPONSE

by

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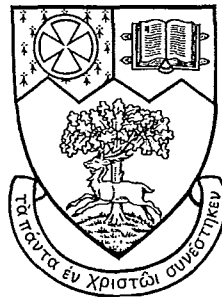
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## ABSTRACT

“To Kill A Mockingbird? : A Theology of Animals and a Christian Response”

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This thesis commends an understanding of animals as creatures of inherent value, based on the care which God has for them. In support of this understanding, this thesis first examines the history of animals in the Christian tradition suggesting a minor but consistent place for them. Next the nature of animals in Scripture is examined, and in addition to support for God’s care for creatures, human dominion, the image of God, and the possession of a soul by animals are also examined. Following this the use of animals in Scripture is studied including food and sacrificial uses, involving discussion on the fallen way now allowed by God, and the high value of life. Finally eschatological images involving animals found in Genesis, Isaiah, and Revelation are examined and the possibility of animal salvation is examined. Based on the idea of animals as creatures of value, an ethical examination of factory farming is undertaken, and the practice is rejected due to the excessive harm it bears upon animals.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Christian tradition is awash with topics for study with many having taken centre stage for the majority of Christian history, while others have taken a backseat. One such topic is animals, and their place within a Christian theology. Questions such as the nature of animals or how humans are to treat animals are increasingly being asked in our society as whole, as well as by well-meaning Christians. There is an increasing interest, and thus an increasing need, for a continued effort towards having a proper Christian theology with regards to animals, and the proper human response to them.

The topic proposed for this thesis is a theology of animal life and its ethical implications. More specifically, this thesis commends a view of animals as morally relevant creatures that possess inherent subjective value due to God's care for them.<sup>1</sup> This view will be supported by examining a theology of animals that includes a biblical examination of who and what animals are, uses of animals in Scripture, and eschatological images of animals. In addition to this, this thesis will examine a few examples of the ethical implications of understanding animals as creatures with inherent value (i.e., avoidance of factory farming and promotion of vegetarianism).

### *Importance of topic*

A theology of animals is important for a number of reasons. First, if animals are of moral importance, then necessarily, how we choose to respond to animals is of Christian significance. This is emphasized by the very fact that humans use literally billions of animals for such things

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this thesis, the terms 'subjective' and 'objective' are used in ways that are slightly different from common use whereby 'subjective' refers to the nature of a subject or individual, and 'objective' refers to the nature of an object, or thing.



as food, clothing, medications, etc.<sup>2</sup> The presence of animals and animal products inundates our society such that nearly every aspect of our lives entails the use of animals and their by-products. Thus, an understanding of animals as creatures of moral significance inevitably suggests that our decisions and choices as Christians will necessarily have very real impacts. This is not a hypothetical situation, such as pondering which of two imaginary situations one might choose if forced. The reality of Christian existence means that our choices have influences on creatures, which this thesis holds to be of moral significance.

Secondly, in addition to the notion of animals as creatures of moral relevance and an ethical system built upon this, comes the recognition that Christians have a calling as stewards over creation. Thus the way in which we rule over (or have dominion over) the rest of creation is of importance. Knowing the place of animals within creation assists us in better understanding the nature of our role as ruling over them, and so a Christian theology of animals in part allows for us to better be who we are called by God to be.

Finally, having a sufficient understanding of the place of animals within Christian theology enables Christians to more effectively engage with the increasing numbers of people who are not Christian but care for animals. This is evidenced by the fact that People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals within the United States has over 2 million members,<sup>3</sup> and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has over 1 million members.<sup>4</sup> This is also shown in the sizable number of vegetarians, around 4% within Canada,<sup>5</sup> many of whom choose a vegetarian lifestyle out of concern for animal welfare. Such numbers suggest that there

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<sup>2</sup> For example, the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations estimated that in 2002 there were nearly 16 billion chickens, 1 billion pigs, 1.4 billion cattle grown worldwide.

<sup>3</sup> PETA, "About", [1–5].

<sup>4</sup> ASPCA, "About Us", [13].

<sup>5</sup> "Iron for Health", 11.

is a legitimate concern that exists within many people regarding animals, and having a Christian understanding towards animals can assist in expressing one's faith to them. Many people have negative views towards the Christian Church, and some of these people are those who care for animals and conceive of the Christian Church as uncaring towards what they highly value.<sup>6</sup> By having an understanding of the position of animals within Christian theology, Christians can more effectively and efficiently speak to the large number of people who care a great deal for animal life.

### *Methodology*

This thesis will develop a theology of animal life primarily on the basis of the method of biblical theology. In addition to this, this thesis will utilize historical theology in beginning with a survey of the place of animals in the Christian tradition. The review of biblical material will be organized around three thematic topics that arise from the biblical texts. The first set of passages shows the nature of animal life. The second group describes the roles and uses of animals in God's creation. The third group details the eschatological place of animals. The scope of the biblical survey will include passages from both the Old and the New Testament. Various scriptural sources will be utilized such as biblical commentaries, articles, and books to provide a biblical theology. Based on the biblical theology of animal life, the thesis will draw out ethical implications for contemporary Christian animal ethics. These will then be used to present a case for how we should live today.

### *History of Animals within the Christian Tradition*

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<sup>6</sup> Scully, *Dominion*, 20.

The first section of this thesis examines the presence of animals within the history of the Christian tradition. While never a main focus, the theological identity of animals, and a resulting ethics is seen throughout Christian history. In the first few centuries following Christ, stories of saints living in the wilderness at peace with animals abound, in part describing the partial fulfilment of the cosmic peace attained on the cross. Such stories continue well into the Middle Ages, and throughout this time, the peaceful relation between humans and animals is continually seen as possible only for the spiritual elite. With the reintroduction of Aristotelian philosophy in the Middle Ages, an understanding of animals as morally unimportant became quite widespread. Later philosophers such as Descartes and Kant reduced animals to physical machines without feeling or importance beyond what they could give their human owners. Throughout these centuries, though the majority understood animals in neutral or negative terms, there was a continually stream of Christian thought which understood animals as morally important. Following the Renaissance and Enlightenment, an increase in concern for the welfare of animals can be seen both within Christianity as well as society as a whole. During these centuries, and into the present day, such increased concern and thought to the place of animals within Christian theology and ethics has resulted in Christian groups dedicated to caring for animal welfare, as well as Christian theologians focusing their studies on the place of animals within Christianity.

### *The Nature of Animals*

Following the brief examination of animals within the Christian tradition, this thesis next turns to a biblical examination of the nature of animals. In doing so, it builds a case for animals as creatures with inherent value, based on the care that God has for them, rather than a simple objective value based on their utility for human use. In order to demonstrate a biblical view of

animal life, this section examines the covenant that God makes with both humans and animals following the flood, repeated Old Testament expressions of God's care for the wellbeing of animals, and affirmation within the New Testament of the continued care by God towards animals. In going through such sources of information, loaded terms such as 'image of God' and 'dominion' are examined and given contextual meaning, which emphasizes an understanding of right relationship with animals and our responsibility to act as stewards over creation for God, rather than abusing such power. The great similarity within Scripture between humans and animals, based on the commonality between both possessing flesh and souls, shows the possibility of such relationship. These similarities allow for a kinship model of relating, which enables humans to be the pinnacle of creation, while recognizing that this relationship only emphasizes the need to care for those over whom they serve as stewards, as God's dominion would call for.

### *Uses Within Scripture*

Following the scriptural case made for the inherent value of animals, this thesis next moves onto the uses of animals within Scripture, which may be taken to limit the inherent value of creatures. The first case examined is God's allowance for humans to eat animals following the flood. This situation is examined within its context, and seen as a compromise on the part of God due to human sin, and not anything inherently desired by God. Next, the limitation concerning the consumption of blood is examined, and is shown to be an attempt by God to limit the mistreatment that may arise. God achieves this by reminding humanity that all life belongs to Him, and that blood, as the visual representation of life, is not to be consumed. Finally, the sacrificial system is examined and is shown to both allow for the use of animals by humans due

to their sin, while at the same time holding up the value of life, even the life of an animal. These three examples from Scripture are used to demonstrate that although Scripture does allow for humans to use animals for the benefit of humanity, such use was inherently designed by God to emphasize the value of the animals being used and reinforce that all life belongs to God alone.

### *Eschatological Images*

With an understanding of animals as valued creatures of God, and God's attempt to retain such value even when being used by humans, this thesis next turns to eschatological pictures found in Scripture which include animals. The thrust of this section shows that based on such images as seen in Genesis, Isaiah, and Revelation, animals are repeatedly shown living in the next age with humans. Such a state will be inherently peaceful, where death and harm no longer exist, and all creation lives in a state of harmony. This condition is the result of both the incarnation of Christ in taking on flesh, as well as the atoning work of Christ that is shown to be not simply redemptive for humans, but cosmically, for all creation. The question of animals within the next age is examined in more depth by looking at a number of views that discuss how it is that animals will be brought to the next age, be it through a cosmic resurrection of all creaturely life, or through existence in the Godhead. Through this examination of eschatology and animals, it is shown that the presence of animals in the next life seems assured, and that the possibility of creaturely resurrection exists for those creatures who would benefit from it.

### *Ethical Section*

The final section of this paper is an ethical section that examines factory farming based on the understanding of animals as creatures of God with inherent value. Three examples of

factory farming are examined, chickens, veal calves, and hogs. Each of these illustrates that the conditions in which animals are placed in unnecessarily results in suffering and unnaturally early death. That such situations can exist, is due in part to viewing animals as mere objects, rather than as loved creatures of God. Through the understanding that all creatures have inherent value, and that humans have a calling to treat animals with care and wellbeing, this paper condemns the practices common in factory farming as incoherent within a Christian understanding of the relationship between humans and animals. In addition, the prospect of vegetarianism is examined, and the understanding that while not all Christians may feel called to become vegetarian, the case for becoming vegetarian based on scriptural sources can be made. In either case, the care for animals and their wellbeing while they are living is shown to be a Christian concern, and those that choose to eat animal flesh should attempt to ensure that those creatures they eat have been well provided for during their lives.

## **CHAPTER ONE: ANIMALS AND THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION**

Over the nearly two thousand years of Christian history the recognized place of animals has shifted a great deal. The following section provides a brief overview of Christian response towards animals from the period ranging from 200–2000. Following this, a quick glance at the role which vegetarianism has played in the Christian tradition is also examined.

### *Early Christianity*

Within the first few hundred years of Christianity there was a recognition that something was inherently wrong with killing animals, for animals were creatures of God. This is

demonstrated in the variety of stories which include Christian saints and wild animals. Some of the most colorful stories within Christianity with regards to animals are found in the early tales of the first desert monks. In *The Life of Paul of Thebes* by Jerome, Antony is led by animals to the dwelling place of Paul, and upon receiving entrance, both he and Paul received bread from a raven.<sup>1</sup> In addition, within the *Life of Antony* by Athanasius one finds Antony with such authority over animals that by simply asking them to stop eating his crops, they leave and never repeat their action.<sup>2</sup> Irrespective of the historicity of such events, what these writings show is an early appreciation that God created the world and loves His creation.<sup>3</sup> By fleeing into the desert the monks sought not only a solitary existence, but also a desire to reestablish a lost order, a reconciliation of all creation not seen since before the fall of Adam and Eve.<sup>4</sup> The recognition of a need for reconciliation comes not only from biographies of ancient monks by later writers, but also from Tertullian who in his *On Fasting* notes that humans were originally vegetarian and it was only following the fall that the consumption of flesh was conceded by God, and allowed for due to our weakness.<sup>5</sup> Saint Chrysostom even wrote that so gentle are the souls of the saints that they are kind not only to humans, but also to animals.<sup>6</sup> These examples provide an understanding that not only was there something inherently questionable about killing animals, but that ideally humans and animals were designed to live at peace with one another.

### *Fifth–Eighth Centuries*

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<sup>1</sup> Jerome, “Life of Paul of Thebes”, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Athanasius, “Life of Antony”, 50.

<sup>3</sup> Chrysavgis, *In the Heart of the Desert*, 87.

<sup>4</sup> Chrysavgis, *In the Heart of the Desert*, 87; Webb, *On God and Dogs*, 30; and Ruether, “Men, Women, and Beasts”, 17.

<sup>5</sup> Tertullian, “On Fasting” IV, 104.

<sup>6</sup> Chrysostom, *Homily XXIX*, 546.

In the fifth century and for a few centuries afterward, the lives of some saints continue to be interwoven with the lives of animals. Saint Mungo, the first bishop of Glasgow, proposed a theological basis for friendship with animals for those who lived saintly lives.<sup>7</sup> In the sixth century Saint Isaac the Syrian urged compassion towards animals,<sup>8</sup> and suggested that those with charitable hearts pray not only for humans, but also for animals.<sup>9</sup> In addition, fantastic stories exist of saints being at peace with wild animals,<sup>10</sup> as well as blessing,<sup>11</sup> speaking to and being understood by,<sup>12</sup> healing and assisting, and even changing the animal's very natures.<sup>13</sup> Such stories illustrate not only that such saints were attempting in their own way to live within the eschatological kingdom spoken of in Genesis and Isaiah, but also that they were concerned with living in peace with animals and reducing their suffering.<sup>14</sup> While living in such a state was generally reserved for the saints, and was not a widespread view, the idea that God cared for all His creatures and that humans and animals were meant to live in peace existed through this time and into the Middle Ages.

### *Ninth–Thirteenth Centuries*

In the Middle Ages, and with the ending of the Crusades, Christianity entered what would become a new age. With the reintroduction of Aristotelian philosophy (as opposed to the traditional Platonic philosophies that the church had used for the past thousand years),

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<sup>7</sup> Birch and Vischer, *Living with the Animals*, 27.

<sup>8</sup> Attfield, *The Ethics of Environmental Concern*, 35.

<sup>9</sup> Birch and Vischer, *Living with the Animals*, 59.

<sup>10</sup> Felix, *The Life of St. Guthlac*, 53.

<sup>11</sup> Waddell, *Beasts and Saints*, 49.

<sup>12</sup> Waddell, *Beasts and Saints*, 107–9.

<sup>13</sup> O'Hanlon, *Lives of the Irish Saints*, 41.

<sup>14</sup> Webb, *On God and Dogs*, 31.



philosophy and theology came to be increasingly used throughout Western Christianity.<sup>15</sup> With it, came new understandings of not only Christian faith in general, but of animals as well. Of all the writers of this time, Aquinas is thought to be the most significant,<sup>16</sup> and his thoughts on animals persisted for centuries afterwards. Using Aristotle's teachings that a lesser is created for a greater,<sup>17</sup> and that only the rational soul was immortal,<sup>18</sup> Aquinas stated that animals were irrational, possessed no mind, that they existed to serve human ends, and that they had no moral status in themselves.<sup>19</sup> With such statements, charity towards animals came to be understood as nonsense, for they were devoid of reason, and any negative action directed toward an animal was negative only in so far as it impacted another human.<sup>20</sup> And while Aquinas' views became popular, there were still Christian saints who found caring for animals, and living in peace with them to be callings. The well known life of Francis of Assisi, and St. Richard of Chichester are two examples of saints who are known for their care and compassion towards animals.<sup>21</sup> With the coming of the Renaissance and Enlightenment the general perception of animals was lowered further, but even here there were Christians calling for care towards God's creatures.

#### *Fourteenth–Eighteenth Centuries*

The Renaissance and Enlightenment periods were times of great philosophies which spread over Western Europe, and in doing so, impacted the ways in which people understood their relationship to animals. Within these periods, two of the greatest philosophical figures who wrote on humans and animals were Descartes and Kant. Descartes shared the view of Aquinas

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<sup>15</sup> Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 315–19.

<sup>16</sup> Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 319.

<sup>17</sup> Young, *Is God a Vegetarian*, 57.

<sup>18</sup> Young, *Is God a Vegetarian*, 24.

<sup>19</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, 13–14.

<sup>20</sup> Webb, *On God and Dogs*, 22; Ruether, "Men, Women, and Beasts", 17; and Linzey, *Animal Theology*, 14.

<sup>21</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, 136.

that animals were irrational creatures, and from this argued that animals are merely biological machines, unable to feel pain or experience emotion.<sup>22</sup> Kant likewise shared Aquinas' opinion on animal irrationality and used such an understanding of animals both to ensure that humans, due to their rationality, would not be considered mere objects, as well as assigning simple objective value to all non-rational creatures.<sup>23</sup> In doing so, he agreed with Aquinas and Descartes that humans have no direct moral duties towards animals, only indirectly when our actions may impact another person.<sup>24</sup> Such views of animals and their nature have lasted up until modern times,<sup>25</sup> though they were not without their opponents.

At the same time as animals were philosophically being reduced to mere machines, there were people and groups that sought to retain the value they saw in such creatures. Of these, perhaps the most famous Christian example is John Wesley. In his sermon, "The Great Deliverance", Wesley argues that God not only cares for His creatures,<sup>26</sup> but that they will one day be redeemed out of their present state.<sup>27</sup> In holding such a view, Wesley was among those who believed that animals had immortal souls that could be redeemed.<sup>28</sup> Living out his faith, Wesley chose a vegetarian lifestyle to match with his beliefs.<sup>29</sup> However, in addition to Wesley, other church leaders such as Rev. Richard Amner also saw concern for animals to be a Christian calling, and preached such messages to their congregations.<sup>30</sup> As well, Anglican Bishop Joseph Butler was among those who thought that animal immortality was in the very least a good

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<sup>22</sup> Greenway, "Animals and the Love of God", 680 and Ruether, "Men, Women, and Beasts", 17.

<sup>23</sup> Northcott, "They Shall Not Hurt or Destroy", 239.

<sup>24</sup> Northcott, "They Shall Not Hurt or Destroy", 239.

<sup>25</sup> Northcott, "They Shall Not Hurt or Destroy", 239 and Schweitzer, *Civilization and Ethics*, 229.

<sup>26</sup> Wesley, "The Great Deliverance", 189.

<sup>27</sup> Wesley, "The Great Deliverance", 198.

<sup>28</sup> Ruether, "Men, Women, and Beasts", 19.

<sup>29</sup> Webb, *On God and Dogs*, 33.

<sup>30</sup> Smith, *A Scriptural and Moral Catechism*, xviii.

possibility.<sup>31</sup> Although such views were hardly in the majority, their persistence through centuries eventually led to a greater concern for animal welfare in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

### *Nineteenth–Twenty-first Centuries*

Within the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there was an increase in concern for animal well-being in society in general, and among Christians as well. An Anglican priest, William Cowherd founded the Bible Christian Church in 1809, and based on Genesis 1, required members to be vegetarian.<sup>32</sup> A sister church with the same views was founded in 1917 in Philadelphia by William Metcalfe.<sup>33</sup> Even within churches not focused on animal care, sermons calling for a reduction in the cruelty to God’s creatures continued to be preached such as one by Rev. John Hill in 1833.<sup>34</sup> Outside of churches, there were groups of Christians who gathered together to promote the welfare and care of animals. Rev. J Todd Ferrier in 1907 founded the Order of the Cross, which was a vegetarian Christian society based on the theme of animal compassion.<sup>35</sup> As well, of those who took part in anti–vivisectionist movements, and animal rights in general, many were Christians who followed their sense of compassion.<sup>36</sup> Such movements were still the exception to the rule. However, over the past century, in addition to such social groups and churches, the topic of animals and their place within creation has been increasingly brought forward even within Christian scholarly work.

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<sup>31</sup> Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 140.

<sup>32</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, 136.

<sup>33</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, 136 and Webb, *On God and Dogs*, 33–34.

<sup>34</sup> Smith, *A Scriptural and Moral Catechism*, xviii–xix.

<sup>35</sup> Webb, *On God and Dogs*, 34.

<sup>36</sup> Webb, *On God and Dogs*, 113.

During the 20th and 21st centuries, there has been an increase in the discussion on the place of animals within Christian theology, and the responsibilities of humans towards them. Perhaps the most famous Christian theologian of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to write on all living things is Albert Schweitzer. In his *Civilization and Ethics*, Schweitzer comes up with an ethical system that was based on giving the same reverence to other creatures' will-to-live as one does one's own.<sup>37</sup> This universal principle was to be applied to all that lived, from humans to animals and even to plants.<sup>38</sup> In addition to such philosophical studies, there have been many theologians in the 20th century who have not only discussed animals in their general theologies, but have focused on animals.<sup>39</sup> Of all of these, perhaps none has done more for the cause than Andrew Linzey, who currently teaches for Oxford University and has written over 20 books and dozens of articles on the place of animals within Christian theology and the proper human response.<sup>40</sup> Beyond individuals, there has been an increase in concern for animals, based on the recognition that they are more than mere biological machines. A large number of churches such as the Church of England,<sup>41</sup> Church of Scotland,<sup>42</sup> Presbyterian Church in Ireland,<sup>43</sup> United Church of Canada,<sup>44</sup> and the Salvation Army<sup>45</sup> (to name a few) have made statements on the responsibility of humans to treat animals with care. In addition, such groups as the Christian Vegetarian Society exist to support and inform those who wish to live lives which are "Christ centered and God-honouring" and seeking to "participate in the 'reconciliation of Creation' that promises to

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<sup>37</sup> Schweitzer, *Civilization and Ethics*, 228–58.

<sup>38</sup> Schweitzer, *Civilization and Ethics*, 252.

<sup>39</sup> Of the many professors and theologians who have done work on animals and theology the following are but a sample: Andrew Linzey, Stephen Webb, Jay McDaniel, Charles Pinches, John Berkman, Christopher Southgate, Gary Comstock, and Richard Alan Young.

<sup>40</sup> For a useful list, see <http://www.oxfordanimaethics.com/who-we-are/director/>

<sup>41</sup> Linzey, *Animal Rights*, 81.

<sup>42</sup> Linzey, *Animal Rights*, 81.

<sup>43</sup> Linzey, *Animal Rights*, 81.

<sup>44</sup> Linzey, "United Church of Canada." [19–25].

<sup>45</sup> Linzey, "Salvation Army." [36–41].

result in the “Peaceable Kingdom” foreshadowed by Scripture”.<sup>46</sup> Each of these examples provides evidence of an increasing concern for the wellbeing of animals within the Christian tradition.

### *Vegetarianism*

Before ending this section, it is worth the time to briefly discuss the role that vegetarianism has played in the Christian tradition. While for many today vegetarianism is based on a concern for the welfare of animals, such was not always the case. Oftentimes, social and religious views towards vegetarianism have come about not through examining vegetarianism itself, but with what it has been associated. In the first few centuries of Christianity a vegetarian diet was taken for granted as an appropriate diet for holy men.<sup>47</sup> As discussed above, this was taken partially as the saints were seen to be living out the eschaton through their cohabitation with wild animals. In addition however, their choice of diet was also due to their asceticism.<sup>48</sup> Such it was that Eusebius reported that James, the brother of Jesus, “drank no wine or intoxicating liquor, and ate no animal food”.<sup>49</sup> It was the asceticism aspect of vegetarianism that became more closely associated with not eating meat, and it overshadowed the message of compassion for animals.<sup>50</sup> Such asceticism was taken up by many Gnostic groups, such as the Manicheans, and after Manichaeism was banned, vegetarianism became in part linked with dualism, heresy, and superstition.<sup>51</sup> So great in fact was this link that Timothy, Patriarch of Alexandria, instituted food tests among his clergy such that those who did not eat meat would be

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<sup>46</sup> Christian Vegetarian Association, “Our Mission” [paragraph 7].

<sup>47</sup> Webb, *On God and Dogs*, 31.

<sup>48</sup> Webb, *On God and Dogs*, 30.

<sup>49</sup> Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, 59.

<sup>50</sup> Webb, *On God and Dogs*, 31.

<sup>51</sup> Webb, *On God and Dogs*, 32.

interrogated.<sup>52</sup> Thus for many years vegetarianism was understood in various perspectives, depending on the social setting in which vegetarianism was practiced. Such culturally based views continued well into the next millennium where, by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, vegetarianism was still connected with movements unrelated directly to the value of animals.

### *Conclusion*

As demonstrated in this brief examination of Christian perceptions of animals over the past nearly two thousand years, there have been a variety of understandings. In the centuries following the life of Christ there are a number of stories which present saints living in peace with wild animals as a fulfillment, in part, of the coming cosmic peace. Such stories persist even centuries later, though the peaceful relation of human to animal is generally reserved for the righteous saints alone. During the Middle Ages, the rediscovery of Aristotle brought about great changes in theology, resulting in a wide understanding of animals as morally unimportant. While care and concern for animals persisted in the background, with the coming of such philosophers as Descartes and Kant, animals were reduced to physical machines. Following the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods, an increase in concern for animals by Christians (although still a minority number) is displayed in the creation of vegetarian Christian groups. In the 20th and 21st centuries this trend of concern increased, resulting in a growing discussion of the place of animals within Christian theology. Parallel to this entire process is the practice of Christian vegetarianism, which has taken many shapes and forms depending on the cultural context of the day. While the case could never be made for a central role of animals within the Christian

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<sup>52</sup> Spencer, *The Heretic's Feast*, 142.

tradition, its minority presence throughout suggests that it is a topic which can provide a level of depth to the Christian life in our present age.

## **CHAPTER TWO: THE NATURE OF ANIMALS IN SCRIPTURE**

In determining the value of something, and how one should interact with it, it is important to have an understanding of the nature of the object in question. Regarding the nature of animals, Christian theologians have traversed quite a plane of differing opinions, often fed or spurned by social philosophies of the day. While most Christians have moved beyond seeing animals as mere objects, there are still many who utilize Scripture in keeping such a thought alive.<sup>1</sup> The following examines the nature of animals, and illustrates, in four different examples, how they have their own intrinsic value, a value given to them not by humans but by God. Such a value will be shown to be not merely objective (the objective value the creature can provide), but subjective (a value based on the creature as a self, or subject). For example, while one may value a doctor for what they can do, one can also care for them as a person with inherent worth.<sup>2</sup> This section will show that God cares for each creature beyond what they can provide for His creation, and instead cares for them as individual creatures, each with their own worth.

The first confirmation that animals have inherent value is found in Genesis 9. While this chapter is often used as proof of humanity's right to consume animals, it also provides evidence

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<sup>1</sup> The Catholic Catechism (2415) states that people are to care for animals only in so far as their actions will impact other humans, and are equated through human dominion to inanimate material.

<sup>2</sup> Clearly one need not be a doctor to have value. The idea presented here is that there are multiple layers of value which we can attach to a person; what they are (people loved by God), and what they can do for us (acting as a doctor or taxi driver). When we ignore the first, and value only the second, we begin to objectify humans as merely things which give what we want, etc. The idea presented below is that just as humans have an inherent value stemming from God, so too do animals, and that to value them based solely on what we can get from them, is to miss their true value.

of how great God's care is for animals. The first covenant mentioned in Scripture between God and His creation is with not only Noah and his family, but is also *with the animals*.<sup>3</sup> The covenant that God made with humanity and animals is reiterated and mentioned six times between Genesis 9:8 and Genesis 9:17. God goes so far as to say that His covenant is with "all living creatures of every kind."<sup>4</sup> This broad reaching covenant shows that God does indeed care for more than just humanity on this earth, and that animals possess more than a purely objective value for one cannot make a covenant with an object.<sup>5</sup> Linzey notes that the Noahic covenant means that God 'elects' not only human beings, but all living things.<sup>6</sup> Gerhard Von Rad discusses how this covenant can be understood as election, for unlike other Old Testament covenants (such as with Abraham or on Sinai), this covenant is not dependent on any actions by humans, but is solely dependent on God.<sup>7</sup> Kent Hughes notes similar ideas in calling the Noahic covenant universal (involving all creation), unilateral (dependent entirely on God), and unconditional (there will never be another flood).<sup>8</sup> In the Noahic covenant, God's gracious will is made visible to all creation, and for all time.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to Genesis, other Old Testament examples show that God cares for and has direct involvement with animals. The Psalms host a large variety of verses which spell out God's active participation in caring for his creation, both humans and animals. He is shown not only to

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<sup>3</sup> McDaniel, "A God who Loves Animals", 89; Towner, *Genesis*, 96; Cotter, *Genesis*, 60; Calvin, *Genesis*, 91; and Kissling, *Genesis*, 327–28.

<sup>4</sup> Genesis 9:15.

<sup>5</sup> Leupold (*Genesis*, 337) makes the point that this valuation of animals must also have been apparent to Noah, for the amount of detail given in the pronouncement (the subdivisions under the general heading of 'living creatures') would make known God's concern for even the least of the creatures.

<sup>6</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, 69.

<sup>7</sup> Von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary*, 133–34.

<sup>8</sup> Hughes, *Genesis*, 147. The idea of the Noahic covenant as unilateral is also found in Kissling, *Genesis*, 328.

<sup>9</sup> Von Rad, *Genesis*, 134 and Hughes, *Genesis*, 147.



provide housing for His creatures,<sup>10</sup> but also providing food for them.<sup>11</sup> This idea is also seen in Job 38:39–41 where God questions Job’s abilities, and in God’s description of His authority and powers includes nourishing young animals. As well, in God’s critique of Jonah’s attitude in Jonah 4:11 we see that God was concerned not only for the 120,000 residents of Nineveh, but also for the many animals that lived within the environs of the city.<sup>12</sup> Throughout the Old Testament it is repeatedly demonstrated that animals are valued by God and that this value is independent of their use to humans.

In turning to the New Testament, one continues to find examples of animals’ worth in the sight of God. Perhaps the clearest scriptural support for this idea comes from the very words of Jesus found in Matthew 6:26/Luke 12:24. While it is easy to simply read in this verse how valuable humans are, such an *a fortiori* value is based on an *a forte* understanding of God’s value of birds.<sup>13</sup> These verses do not suggest that animals are not important to God, but that humans are valued so much more.<sup>14</sup> That God actively cares for the birds of the air by feeding them suggests that they are indeed valued by God. This idea is reiterated again in Jesus’ discussion of what is right to do on the Sabbath.<sup>15</sup> Once more this is another *a fortiori* argument that depends on *a forte*, where the value of a human is shown in relation to the value of an animal.<sup>16</sup> In both of these cases, it is quite clear that animals do have an inherent value and care from God, but that humans are valued even more.

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<sup>10</sup> Psalm 36:6; 104:17–18. Also see, Job 39:5–6.

<sup>11</sup> Psalm 36:6; 104:21, 27–28; 136:25; 145:15–16; and 147:9.

<sup>12</sup> Williams, *Man and Beast*, 16.

<sup>13</sup> Frear, “Caring for Animals”, 6–7 and Edwards, “Every Sparrow”, 103.

<sup>14</sup> Birch and Vischer, *Living with the Animals*, 51 and Patton, *Abrahamic Traditions*, 408.

<sup>15</sup> Matthew 12:11–12 and Luke 14:5–6.

<sup>16</sup> Frear, “Caring for Animals”, 7.

Before moving to the relationship of humans to animals, it is worth discussing quickly the primary purpose of animals within creation. What is generally recognized is that animals glorify their creator who made them through their very existence.<sup>17</sup> This idea is found in Scripture through the repeated reports of animals praising or glorifying their creator and provider.<sup>18</sup> Exactly how animals do this does not enter into the minds of the biblical authors, for they are simply commenting on the fact that all creation glorifies its Creator.<sup>19</sup> It is crucial to realize the implications of God's glorification through animals, for far too often Christians have acted as though all creation existed solely for the use by humanity. This is evidenced by the *Catholic Catechism's* somewhat confusing teaching that while animals are God's creatures and through their existence they bless Him, they exist purely for the benefit of humanity, and any moral concerns regarding them are due to the impact on humans, not on the animals themselves.<sup>20</sup> What the Psalms and other Scriptures suggest is that animals exist not primarily to serve us, but rather for God's own good pleasure.<sup>21</sup> This is not to deny that animals can also serve humanity, but that what is true of humans according to the first part of the Westminster Shorter Catechism "Man's chief end is to glorify God", is also true of animals.

#### *Animals and Humans – Dominion and the Image of God*

Given the understanding that God cares for animals and they have inherent value, questions naturally arise as to how we are related to animals, how we are to interact with them, and what are we to make of claims for dominion over them. While ethical suggestions will be

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<sup>17</sup> *Catholic Catechism*, 2416; Hauerwas, *Trinitarian Theology*, 69; McDaniel, *A God Who Loves Animals*, 91; Hauerwas, *Chief End of Flesh*, 207; and Williams, *Man and Beast*, 24 and 26.

<sup>18</sup> Ps. 148:7–10; 69:34; 98:7; 103:22; 150:6 from Frear, *Caring for Animals*, 6.

<sup>19</sup> For all creation glorifying God see Psalm 19:1–6;

<sup>20</sup> *Catholic Catechism*, 2415–6.

<sup>21</sup> Hauerwas and Berkman, *A Trinitarian Theology*, 69

examined more fully below, the following section will examine Scripture passages related to the dominion mandate and the image of God that have been used to justify treating animals as mere objects, or of claiming rights to deal with them how we see fit.

If we understand that animals are created beings, which share in our purpose to glorify God, the question arises as to how we relate to animals. With the rise of evolution has come the idea that humans are no different from animals, that we are merely a more intelligent animal. Indeed, with an increase in scientific knowledge comes the understanding that humans are biologically related to all living creatures. Many Christians have reacted strongly against such claims as historically seen in the Scopes Trial.<sup>22</sup> One special source for defense against equating humans and animals is found in Genesis 1:26–27, the well known passage that affirms that humans bear the *imago Dei*. What this rare term means<sup>23</sup> has been debated for some time and there are a number of views as to its proper meaning. Such views include sharing metaphysical characteristics and attributes with God (even physically), or referring to our reasoning ability, our initial righteousness, our relational ability to respond to God’s word, as well as representing God in creation.<sup>24</sup> While humans do appear to share characteristics with God, such as the capacity to love, the scriptural context seems to suggest more.<sup>25</sup> Following the resolution to make humanity “in the image” of God is the statement of purpose for humans; to have dominion over

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<sup>22</sup> Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity*, 373–74.

<sup>23</sup> Cunningham (“The Way of All Flesh”, 106) notes that the term ‘image of God’ is relatively rare in the Old Testament, and occurs only within Genesis 1, 5, and 9, and that we should thus be careful of giving it too much theological weight.

<sup>24</sup> Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 18–24.

<sup>25</sup> Hauerwas and Berkman (“A Trinitarian Theology, 64) as well as Cunningham (“The Way of All Flesh”, 101) suggest that views that the image of God is something ontological, rather than purposeful, seems to be artificially imposed, and is likely based in part on Cartesian presuppositions, rather than Christian theology.

creation.<sup>26</sup> Thus many hold that it is in their special purpose and capabilities, not for any great ontological division that humans are of the *imago Dei*.<sup>27</sup> David Clines puts it well:

That man is God's image means that he is the visible representative of the invisible, bodiless God; he is the representative rather than the representation. The image is to be understood not so much ontologically as existentially: it comes to expression not in the nature of man so much as in his activity and function. This function is to represent God's lordship to the lower orders of creation. The dominion of man over creation can hardly be excluded from the content of the image itself.<sup>28</sup>

This is not to deny that humans and animals are different from one another. Clearly they are. But it is to suggest that, though there are obvious differences between humans and animals, this does not necessarily give one value and exclude value from the other category of creature based on the image of God. As will be shown below, the similarities between humans and animals are perhaps far greater than their differences. However, in order to first establish a fuller understanding of the image of God, one must better understand the role that dominion was intended to take, for it is this dominion that forms the basis for humanity's image bearing.

Given that "dominion" can be understood in a variety of ways, the interpretation one chooses significantly impacts their actions. In understanding what dominion means within Genesis and Scripture as a whole, examining context is crucial. What is clear is that the original dominion that was granted to humans was done so in a peaceful (and vegetarian) context.<sup>29</sup> As noted above, humanity's "image of God" is directly connected with God's purpose for humans to have dominion over creation, for it is in this that humans are like God. The world belongs to the

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<sup>26</sup> Merrill, "Image of God", 444.

<sup>27</sup> Hauerwas, "A Trinitarian Theology", 70; Brueggemann, *Genesis*, 32; Turner, *Genesis*, 24; Hauerwas and Berkman, "Chief End of All Flesh", 199; Williams, "Man and Beast", 15; Schumaker, *Appreciating Our Good Earth*, 12; and Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 50–55. In addition, Gunnlaugur Jonsson in his book "The Image of God" (219–21), lists an additional 13 scholars who share this understanding of the 'image of God'.

<sup>28</sup> Clines, "The Image of God in Man", 101.

<sup>29</sup> Turner, *Genesis*, 52.

Creator God, and He has most generously allowed humans to assist with ruling over it. John Black, in his book *The Dominion of Man*, notes that any understanding of dominion as one which allowed for humans to do as they wished to creation was kept in check by an understanding that dominion entailed responsibility to God for their management of the earth.<sup>30</sup> We are thus called to be servants and delegates of God, ruling in His stead, as caretakers of the earth.<sup>31</sup> David Jobling states that human's rule over creation "is part of a universal divine hierarchy and harmony, people being charged with peaceful coexistence, and responsibility for nature".<sup>32</sup> This notion of dominion can modify common Christian assumptions about human-animal relationships. Any idea which suggests that humanity's dominion gives them the right to do whatever they wish with creation is in serious breach with the character of God, in whose name human beings are to rule.<sup>33</sup> Such an understanding of the 'image of God' better enables a proper means of living out this divine calling.

In addition to the use of the term 'image of God' to differentiate humans from animals, the claim has repeatedly been made that while humans possess a "soul", animals do not.<sup>34</sup> Such a view, however, seems to be based more on Aristotle's philosophies rather than on Scripture.<sup>35</sup> The Hebrew word *nephesh* denotes the "life", "will", or "soul" of both humans and animals, but often receives various translations. In the Genesis creation accounts (Gen 1:20, 21, 24, 30), it is

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<sup>30</sup> Black, *The Dominion of Man*, 46–50.

<sup>31</sup> Ruether, "Men, Women, and Beasts", 15; McDaniel, "A God Who Loves Animals", 89; Williams, "Man and Beast", 17; and Black, *The Dominion of Man*, 46–47.

<sup>32</sup> Jobling, "Dominion over Creation", 248.

<sup>33</sup> Millard Schumaker (*Appreciating Our Good Earth*, 12–13) makes the comment that understanding dominion in light of ruling for God helps to keep humans accountable. For those in the 20th (and now 21st) century, it is often difficult to distinguish between the dominion of a righteous person, and the domination of a tyrant, but these are clearly different concepts and result in very different outcomes.

<sup>34</sup> One famous and influential example of this can be seen in Thomas Aquinas, who declared that animals had no rights because they lacked rational souls.

<sup>35</sup> Ruether, "Men, Women, and Beasts", 17.

animals as well as humans that receive *nephesh*, and become “living beings”.<sup>36</sup> In addition, the Hebrew word *ruach* which is often translated “spirit” is the animating principle of both human and animal life.<sup>37</sup> The point of this is not to give a new definition to what a “soul” or “spirit” is, but to recognize that the division of humans and animals based on these two items is clearly a difficult one. What both seem to suggest is that rather than providing a division within creation, they provide an inclusive scheme of understanding the relationship between God’s gift of life to humans and animals. In respect to *nephesh*, Williams suggests that the “soul” is used in the Bible indiscriminately to identify the life of *both* animals and human beings, showing that all things are equal in their origin.<sup>38</sup> Such an understanding of dominion and *nephesh* has implications as to not only how we treat animals, but also how we are to relate to them.

#### *Animals and Their Relation to Humans*

Both humans and animals share in the fact that each are created beings, made by God for His good pleasure, and beyond sharing mere physicality, can be more accurately conceived of as sharing kinship. Rather than any great ontological division between humans and animals, a number of verses suggest that humans and animals are more closely related. Repeatedly it is revealed within the Bible that there is a kinship<sup>39</sup> that humans share with animals.<sup>40</sup> This is especially evident with the terms “flesh” and “all flesh” that are used to refer to both humans and

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<sup>36</sup> Leupold (*Genesis*, 98) points out that in Gen. 1:30 what we have is all living creatures summed up under the category of those “in which there is a living soul”.

<sup>37</sup> Ecclesiastes 3:19–21.

<sup>38</sup> Williams, “Man and Beast”, 15.

<sup>39</sup> L. Shannon Yung in his article “Animals in Christian Perspective” examines whether it is consistent with Christian moral tradition to view animals as strangers, friends, or kin, and suggests that humans and animals more strongly share kinship than any other relationship.

<sup>40</sup> Frear, “Caring for Animals”, 5. Williams (“Man and Beast”, 15) makes the same general point with stating that humans and animals both share “creaturehood”

animals.<sup>41</sup> David Cunningham in his article “The Way of All Flesh” proposes that “flesh” is the most important distinguishing term within the created order, and further suggests that the term “flesh” better matches the fluid boundaries often present in biblical narratives.<sup>42</sup> It is “all flesh” that would perish if God were to remove His spirit (Job 34:14–15), and God gives sustenance to “all flesh” (Ps 136:25). In Ecclesiastes 3:19, the author equates the life of humans and animals, suggesting each comes from the same place, and returns to the same place. This is of course not to suggest that all creatures are the same. A dog is not a cat is not a bird is not a human. But each of these shares commonality together, which is far greater than their differences.

When the idea of humans ruling over animals is combined with a kinship model of relation, there is a very real sense in which humans and animals are seen as existing together, and experiencing the same things. Repeatedly it is demonstrated that the fate of animals is bound with the fate of the humans who rule over them. In the flood narrative of Genesis 6:1–8, all creation is bound up in the acts of humans, and due to their sin, the vast majority of creation is destroyed.<sup>43</sup> Later, in Exodus 12:12–13 the plague passes or includes both humans as well as their animals. In Jonah 4:11, the welfare of all the animals is once again bound up with the decisive actions of the humans who are their caretakers. Finally, Hosea 4:1–3 indicates that it is the actions of humans, which have consequences not only for humans, but also for those creatures that are in their charge. These four examples show not only humanity’s dominion over creation, but also the consequences of poor dominion. In addition these verses show how the biblical authors care for “all flesh” for in each case God either saves animals, or the author

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<sup>41</sup> Gen 6:17; 9:11, 15, 18; Ps 136:25, are some examples. Cunningham (“The Way of All Flesh”, 115) makes the point that within the NRSV the term “all flesh” occurs 36 times, with a relatively stable meaning referring to all living creatures. Linzey (*Animal Theology*, 97–98) makes the same point that it is material substance, flesh and blood, which is shared by humans and animals, and which is included in the incarnation of Jesus.

<sup>42</sup> Cunningham, “The Way of All Flesh”, 115.

<sup>43</sup> Cunningham, “The Way of All Flesh”, 105.

laments their fate as living creatures suffering under unjust humans. It is interesting to note that God does not intercede for the animals, but accepts the dominion He has given humanity over them.

This section has attempted to build a case for animals as creatures with inherent subjective value based on the care that God has for them. Such care was shown by examining the covenant God made with both humans and animals following the flood, by other Old Testament expressions of God's care for his creatures such as providing food and shelter for them, as well as New Testament examples expressing the same care for creation. In addition, it was shown that the primary purpose for each of God's creatures rests not in the roles humans give them, but in their glorifying and praising the Lord. Subjects that are often used to devalue animal creation were also examined and used to show that such topics as the 'image of God', and human dominion over creation, provide a basis for creaturely care, rather than mistreatment of animals. As well, it was shown that there is greater similarity between humans and animals than is generally assumed, with both humans and animals possessing not only flesh, but also souls. Such a connection provides a basis for a kinship model of relation, and such an idea is further emphasized by the fact that the fate of animals is bound with the fate of humanity.

### **CHAPTER THREE: THE USE OF ANIMALS IN SCRIPTURE**

Having set up a theological foundation for the inherent value of animals, one is better prepared to examine some of the uses of animals that people refer to in defense of treating animals as mere objects. Two prime examples come from the allowance of meat eating in



Genesis 9:1–17, and the sacrificial system set up in Leviticus. While these passages may initially suggest that animals are merely commodities to be used by humans, a deeper examination into them reveals the very opposite. Indeed, the concession to eat meat was the result of a fall from grace, not a reward from God to sinful humanity. Likewise, the setup of a sacrificial system acted to preserve animal's worth and to operate as a constant reminder that these were valued creatures of God, and not mere possessions of humanity. Below we examine each of these in more detail, beginning with the fall from grace which the concession to eat meat belongs to.

### *Fall from Grace*

The concession to eat meat was a consequence of the fall, and not in line with the will of God. Genesis 8 discusses the salvation of humanity and animals from the flood through Noah's Ark, God's remembrance of them (both humans and animals) while they were on the arc, God's active receding of the water, and finally, God restoring both humans and animals to their place on earth. Following these glorious acts God once more speaks to humanity, and in so doing, both promises never again to flood the world, but also gives an altered set of instructions on how humanity is to live. Such alterations are not due to God rewarding humanity's greatness, or a higher moral code, but are instead the result of the sins of humanity.<sup>1</sup> Lawrence Turner notes how the three-fold imperative found in Genesis 1:28 (fill the earth, subdue the earth, rule over the earth) has been impacted; the first element is retained, the third modified, and the second passed over in silence.<sup>2</sup> In a similar way Leon Kass discusses a variety of differences between the creation story and Genesis 9, each of which suggests that Genesis 9 is less ideal than the

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<sup>1</sup> Richardson, *Genesis I–XI*, 107–8.

<sup>2</sup> Turner, *Genesis*, 52.

arrangement of things in Genesis 1.<sup>3</sup> Given the ideal system of Eden, this is clearly a falling away, a way of life that God has permitted not because it was better, but because humanity was sinful and fallen. It is in looking specifically at the permission to eat meat, that this is most clearly seen as a concession to the fallen nature of humanity, and not one which God desired for humans.<sup>4</sup> However, it is also in this that one can see most clearly how God is working to keep humans from falling even further into sin.

### *As Food*

The allowance to eat meat found in Genesis 9 can be seen as a falling away from a better way, due to the manner that humanity now relates to animals. The original harmonious relation whereby humanity ruled for the benefit of all creation is gone.<sup>5</sup> The role of humans now entails the extensive *use* of animals, rather than the *stewardship* of animals.<sup>6</sup> Human's dominion, rather than being a perfect image of God's, is now demonstrated by a fear and dread which animals have for humans, for the old relationship is no more.<sup>7</sup> However, though human sin led to a weakening of the relation between humans and animals, God was not content to leave humans to do as they wished. God's original value of creatures was to remain, and humans were still to respect those they ruled over. This can be seen in a powerful way, by God's covenant with both

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<sup>3</sup> This differences include a blessing for all creation, as opposed to only humans, human ruling over animals verses exploitation of them, and a new world order that seeks to restrict homicide, but assumes it cannot be avoided (Kass, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, 177).

<sup>4</sup> This point was recognized even within early Christianity, with Tertullian noting in his writing "On Fasting" that humans were originally created vegetarian, but following repeated sins, humans were allowed to eat meat. This is done, he suggests, due to the inability of man to follow the laws of God, for to limit what people could eat would be too great a burden ("On Fasting", 104).

<sup>5</sup> Kass, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, 178.

<sup>6</sup> Kass, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, 180.

<sup>7</sup> Richardson, *Genesis I-XI*, 107.

humans and animals following the flood.<sup>8</sup> God's covenantal promise following this allowance is God's unilateral commitment to life.<sup>9</sup> Though God allowed humans to use animals for food, they are still creatures for whom He cares. In addition to the covenant, God's concern for His creatures is also shown in a commandment from God that occurs in the very same passages as the covenant.

### *Blood*

Immediately following God's allowance for humans to eat animals are His strict commands regarding blood. This injunction is widespread and found not only here, but also in Leviticus 3:17; 6:30; 7:26–27; 17:10–14; Deuteronomy 12:16, 23, 24, 27; 15:23; and 1 Samuel 14:34 (as well as a reason for condemnation in Ezekiel 33:25).<sup>10</sup> William Gilders notes “that the eating of blood is a serious matter is indicated by the admonition to ‘take care’ (*hazaq*) and the fourfold iteration of the commandment not to eat the blood”.<sup>11</sup> Balentine likewise comments that the command in Leviticus 17:10–12 is the strongest of them all for every human being, not just Israel, is enjoined to obey this directive. Not even the Ten Commandments are so far-reaching, for they were given exclusively to Israel.<sup>12</sup> This repeated stress against the consumption of blood (and the strength of the directive) can be better understood by examining what blood stands for in Scripture.

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<sup>8</sup> Cunningham, “The Way of All Flesh”, 105; Greenway, “Animals and the Love of God”, 680; and Fortin, “The Bible Made Me Do It”, 200.

<sup>9</sup> Balentine, *Leviticus*, 24.

<sup>10</sup> Balentine, *Leviticus*, 146.

<sup>11</sup> Gilders, *Blood Ritual in the Hebrew Bible*, 16.

<sup>12</sup> Balentine, *Leviticus*, 146; Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1470; and Richardson, *Genesis I–XI*, 108.

Though recognized by many scholars,<sup>13</sup> Philip Budd puts it simply: “The blood is the animating life force (the *nephesh*) within the flesh, and by implication must be honoured and respected”.<sup>14</sup> It is life, not simply a red liquid inside of God’s creatures, which is focused upon so strongly by God, following his allowance to consume animal flesh. In his work *Leviticus 17–22*, Jacob Milgrom discusses the process likely taken whereby the word *nephesh* came to mean life. He suggests that it originally denoted “throat” (a meaning still found in Scripture in such verses as Isaiah 32:6; Jeremiah 4:10; Jonah 2:6), and as a result, came to mean “breath of life”.<sup>15</sup> Once life became associated with breath, it naturally became equated with a similar means to living – blood.<sup>16</sup> Some have taken such thoughts to imply that the blood is a metaphor for life.<sup>17</sup> Others, however, have taken a much more literal stance and suggest that within the Hebrew Scriptures blood not only referred to life, but *was* life.<sup>18</sup> Gilders puts it well:

Blood is not a symbol of life, if by symbol one means something that merely stands for its referent. Blood really is life. Both Deuteronomy and Gen. 9:4 attribute an inherent potency to blood by directly equating it with life.<sup>19</sup>

Such a connection, or rather, recognition of the nature of blood, suggests that God’s commandment not to eat blood was not intended as merely ceremonial, but instead as primarily moral.<sup>20</sup> In connecting this command to the eating of meat, one can conclude that God is highlighting two main points: that all life belongs to God, and all life is sacred.

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<sup>13</sup> Kass, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, 178; Northcott, “They Shall Not Hurt”, 235–36; Richardson, *Genesis I–XI*, 108; Greenway, “Animals and the Love of God”, 680; Balentine, *Leviticus*, 147; and Marshall, *Genesis*, 34.

<sup>14</sup> Budd, *Leviticus*, 248.

<sup>15</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1472.

<sup>16</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1472.

<sup>17</sup> Balentine, *Leviticus*, 147.

<sup>18</sup> Richardson, *Genesis I–XI*, 108.

<sup>19</sup> Gilder, *Blood Ritual in the Hebrew Bible*, 18.

<sup>20</sup> Richardson, *Genesis I–XI*, 108.

The first of these is that like everything, all living things belong to God. However, beyond mere material possession, life itself belongs solely to God and not to humans.<sup>21</sup> This is a reminder and warning, life belongs to God and the taking of it, either human *or* animal, moves one into the area of God's domain.<sup>22</sup> Milgrom notes that God is quite explicit on this point, for in Ezekiel 18:4 God states outright "All lives (*nepasot*) are mine".<sup>23</sup> Thus while humans are now allowed to consume an animal's flesh, they are not allowed to consume its blood, for its life belongs to God alone, and cannot be exploited for human use.<sup>24</sup> Based on this point, the second main idea that all life is sacred is derived, for life belongs to God.<sup>25</sup> This idea will be further developed later, but what is clear is that life is not something to play with, be it human or animal. Though bloodshed of animals is now tolerated (and bloodshed of humans expected), blood-lust is clearly not acceptable in the eyes of God. Though God gave permission for humans to eat animals, He did so with warnings and reminders; due to their fallen nature, humans may use animals and may eat them. But the lives of the creatures they once ruled over for God in Eden, are still valuable. That their blood must be taken out before the meat may be consumed acts as a reminder that this food did not come without a price, and that price was a life itself.<sup>26</sup> Balentine notes that when the blood is spilt (for humans) or consumed (for animals), God's creation is diminished by the loss of that life.<sup>27</sup> He likewise states that "neither a holy God nor a human

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<sup>21</sup> Balentine, *Leviticus*, 23–24 and Kass, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, 178.

<sup>22</sup> Balentine, *Leviticus*, 24.

<sup>23</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 17–22*, 1469.

<sup>24</sup> Budd, *Leviticus*, 248. The use of animals for such things as food is clearly allowed by God, but such uses are a direct consequence of the fall as shown above. While the consumption of animal flesh is allowed in this present age, it is clearly not ideal. Thus categorically, eating meat should not be considered 'sinful', but tied as it is with the Fall, and removed from the ideal found in Eden, it is at best a neutral activity. At worst, when the desire for meat overcomes the calls for mercy and compassion, gluttony results.

<sup>25</sup> Northcott, "They Shall Not Hurt", 235–36; Richardson, *Genesis I–XI*, 108; and Greenway, "Animals and the Love of God", 681.

<sup>26</sup> Kass, *The Beginning of Wisdom*, 179.

<sup>27</sup> Balentine, *Leviticus*, 147.

community seeking to image God's holiness will ever be unconcerned about the loss of life".<sup>28</sup>

Such value in the blood and creature is furthered expressed in the sacrificial system found in Leviticus, which though may initially seem to show a pure objectification of animals, in fact reveals that they are highly valued by God, and should be valued by the humans using them.

### *Sacrifice*

The sacrificial system is one which pervades most of the Bible, and mention of it (either in support or rejection of it) can be found in the five major divisions of the Old Testament (Pentateuch, History, Wisdom, Major Prophets, and Minor Prophets), as well as in the New Testament. While examples of sacrifice precede the sacrificial system given to the Israelites beginning in Leviticus 1, to gain a better understanding of the Jewish system of sacrifice, and the role which animals had to play in it, the system set up by God is the ideal place to start. Within the sacrificial system, which included a variety of sacrifices (generally recognized as the burnt offering, grain offering, peace offering, sin offering, and guilt offering),<sup>29</sup> burnt sacrifices are seen to be the most important atoning sacrifice,<sup>30</sup> and are one of the most attested sacrifices in the Old Testament.<sup>31</sup> The burnt sacrifice most clearly demonstrates the value of animals and the commonality between humans and animals.

Burnt sacrifices had three main aspects: the shedding of blood (Lev 17:11), the near complete burning of the sacrifice victim (Lev 1:6–9), and the laying on of hands (Lev 1:4). In each of these the nature of the sacrifice and the value of the animal is shown. That blood represented life has been discussed above. This life is given back to God, and the action of laying one's hands upon

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<sup>28</sup> Balentine, *Leviticus*, 147.

<sup>29</sup> Averbeck, "Sacrifices and Offerings", 712-22.

<sup>30</sup> Jenson, *The Levitical Sacrificial System*, 28.

<sup>31</sup> De Vaux, *Studies in Old Testament Sacrifice*, 27.

their sacrificial victim has been seen as identifying a substitute whose death took place instead of the sinner,<sup>32</sup> or of transferring sins over to the animal.<sup>33</sup> In either case, this is an expression of a profound unity that exists between humans and animals.<sup>34</sup> Finally, the near complete burning of the animal (only the skin was not burned) shows the reality of what occurred, for the flesh was unsuitable to be eaten.<sup>35</sup> Thus both through the giving of their blood, as well as their connection with the humans through the act of laying on of hands, animals were used by humans to deal with their sins. Though such actions used animals for the benefit of humans, it also suggests some very strong ways in which the sacrificial animals could be valued and respected.

Though the idea of sacrifice naturally suggests the objectification of animals, there are many ways in which sacrifice shows the value of the life of sacrificial creatures. By sacrificing, humans were acknowledging that everything with life belongs to God, even the animals that humans have dominion over.<sup>36</sup> It was these very animals that brought about reparation through their blood and purified the sinner.<sup>37</sup> That their blood could do this suggests that humans and animals share a very real similarity in constitution, for the animal was taking the place of the human.<sup>38</sup> It is precisely because the blood embodies the same *nephesh* (the animating life force) that it is able to purify or ransom *nephesh* (the lives of individuals and the community as a whole).<sup>39</sup> This spilling of blood was also a continual reminder of the value of life, and at the same time, the costs of sin.<sup>40</sup> Linzey suggests that Genesis 9 does not give humans the right to

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<sup>32</sup> Jenson, *The Levitical Sacrificial System*, 28.

<sup>33</sup> Ringgren, *Sacrifice in the Bible*, 30.

<sup>34</sup> Birch & Vischer, *Living with the Animals*, 19.

<sup>35</sup> Patrick, *Old Testament Law*, 105.

<sup>36</sup> Birch and Vischer, *Living with the Animals*, 17.

<sup>37</sup> Frear, "Caring for Animals", 7.

<sup>38</sup> Northcott, "They shall not hurt", 236.

<sup>39</sup> Budd, *Leviticus*, 248–49.

<sup>40</sup> Gane, *Leviticus*, 68.

kill, for properly speaking there is no right to kill.<sup>41</sup> Rather, God allows it under the conditions of necessity and only when one recognizes that the life you kill does not belong to them, but to God.<sup>42</sup> Each of these reasons suggests a value and respect that are due to animals because of their role within the sacrificial system. Thus rather than imply that animals are merely objects for human use, the sacrificial system provides another insight into their value.

Another point can be made concerning the nature of sacrifice with regards to the value of animals and their relationship with God. In *Animal Theology*, Linzey references the work of theologian Eric Mascall on sacrifices.<sup>43</sup> Mascall suggests that the idea of sacrifices as consisting in the destruction of some valuable object in order to honour or appease a deity is incorrect, though pervasive in theology.<sup>44</sup> Instead, it is the return of the creature back to its Creator; the creature is not destroyed, but accepted and transformed.<sup>45</sup> Linzey suggests that this is further evidence not only that animals are of value (which their use as sacrifices would necessitate), but that they belong to God and not to humans.<sup>46</sup> God's creatures are, and always will be His, and in sacrificing them humans are not only recognizing their sin, but recognizing that their sin results in them killing not their own personal property, but God's.

Before ending this section, it is worth noting a point that may be brought up regarding the value of animals within the sacrificial system. The very fact that they are being used as sacrifices seems to suggest that animals possess inherent value. Given this, questioning whether sacrifices deny value to animals would seem contradictory. What this section has attempted to prove is not

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<sup>41</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, 128.

<sup>42</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, 128.

<sup>43</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, 104–5.

<sup>44</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, 104.

<sup>45</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, 105.

<sup>46</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, 105.



merely that animals possess value, but also that their use within the sacrificial system suggests a specific type of value. This worth is not based on their monetary cost, as though they were equal to how much they cost their owner, but is based on the fact that they are living creatures of God. That the sacrificial system was set up to reinforce this has been shown above. However, that such an idea is easily (and repeatedly) missed is revealed in a variety of Old Testament sources. Isaiah 66 reads as follows:

But whoever sacrifices a bull is like one who kills a man, and whoever offers a lamb, like one who breaks a dog's neck; whoever makes a grain offering is like one who presents pig's blood, and whoever burns memorial incense, like one who worships an idol.

The main thrust of this verse is that where there is no recognition of the greatness of God, of the moral requirements of serving Him, or a humble attitude in approaching His alter, the sacrifices are meaningless.<sup>47</sup> Other such examples are found in Jeremiah 7 and Hosea 6. What these examples show is that humans all too easily recognize the material value of something (e.g. sacrificing a bull), but fail to recognize the inherent value within. The sacrificial system was brought in to assist humanity in their sinful state. Inherent within the sacrificial system was a means of repeatedly recognizing the costs of one's sin. Thus while their use within a sacrificial system does suggest that animals are of value, recognizing their true value is something that even followers of God have repeatedly failed to do.

The three examples within Scripture discussed above (eating animals, their blood, and the sacrificial system) provide yet another perspective into how animals are valuable by their very existence as God's creatures. While the first section of this paper examined the inherent value of animals, this section has shown how biblical allowances to use animals do not negate their prior

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<sup>47</sup> Webb, *The Message of Isaiah*, 247; Alexander, *The Prophecies of Isaiah*, 461; and Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 356.

value. If anything, they press the issue all the more. The fall from grace, which led to such concessions, is hardly an excuse one would wish to lean on, and an even less likely reason for justifying harsh treatment to animals. Through the repeated scriptural injunctions against consuming animal blood comes the recognition that animals and humans are both living creatures, and that the loss of life from either is a serious (though not equal) event. The sacrificial system, when it came, provided a means by which sinful humans could use animals while still reminding them of the costs and risks of doing so. Ultimately, life is in the hands of God, and to take such power from Him and cheapen it is something that the Scriptures clearly speak out against.

#### **CHAPTER FOUR: ESCHATOLOGICAL IMAGES INVOLVING ANIMALS**

Scripture contains several recurring eschatological images, such as the universal peace and presence of God, which include animals. From Genesis to Revelation, the whole of creation is included in eschatological images of the future. God and His prophets promise a time when the harmony of all creation shown in Genesis 1 and 2 will be restored, and the effects of sin are eradicated.<sup>1</sup> In such a renewed creation there is a restored community between humanity and other creatures, and the original absence of killing and predation is restored.<sup>2</sup> Such a restoration is required due to the present state of bondage that is throughout all creation. Creation must not be understood solely in terms of the Genesis creation narratives, but also in light of Romans 8,<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Birch and Vischer, *Living with the Animals*, 8; and Northcott, "They Shall Not Hurt", 246.

<sup>2</sup> Northcott, "They Shall Not Hurt", 246.

<sup>3</sup> Hauerwas and Berkman, "A Trinitarian Theology", 69.

for all creation is waiting to be liberated from its bondage to decay.<sup>4</sup> It is not simply humanity which yearns for deliverance, but all creation which is under the strains of sin. What the redeemed creation will look like is revealed in the eschatological pictures present in Genesis, Isaiah, and Revelation, and it is through Christ's redemptive work that such renewal will come about. The following section will examine the place of animals in a variety of eschatological passages found in Genesis, Isaiah, and Revelation, and show that the eschatological pictures presented include animals, that the atonement by Christ involves all creatures, and as a result, that in some manner, animals will be restored along with humans.

### *Genesis*

The Genesis eschatological promise sits in the context of humanity's fall into sin and the consequences that accrue to creation. As already noted, Genesis portrays the fall of creation due to the sin of humanity leading to a destruction of relationships: relationships between humans and God, humans and each other, and humans to all creation. Preceding this fall, however, is the image of the Garden of Eden which serves as a picture of God's original and ultimate plan.<sup>5</sup> While some may question the use of Genesis and specifically Eden as an eschatological image, the paradisiacal imaging found in Eden acts as a framing image for the total biblical story such that the Garden of Eden is replicated in the garden of Revelation 21-22.<sup>6</sup> A better understanding of the nature of the Garden of Eden provides additional support for why Eden acts as an eschatological image of the perfected time to come.

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<sup>4</sup> Romans 8:19-21.

<sup>5</sup> Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, 357.

<sup>6</sup> Morris and Sawyer, "Garden", 315.

The Garden of Eden is a defining eschatological image for a variety of reasons. First, the Garden acts as not simply a location, but as a way of life, and state of soul.<sup>7</sup> This is due to the presence of God within the Garden.<sup>8</sup> It is His presence, more than anything else, which makes the Garden of Eden all that it is, for it is from His presence that life flows.<sup>9</sup> So strong is this idea that it has been suggested that Eden would have been understood as the Holy of Holies, and that the later temple sanctuary was created with intentions of evoking the garden imagery.<sup>10</sup> In addition to the presence of God, Eden also puts forth an understanding of perfect harmony. This is established not only in God's relation to humans, but also in human's relation with each other, human's relation to the rest of creation, and even creation's relationship with itself.<sup>11</sup> The image created by Eden is one that shows the ideal of each thing; it "signals nature at its best, romantic love at its best, human well-being at its best, [and] spiritual reality at its best."<sup>12</sup> It is from this first image of universal peace that later eschatological images such as Isaiah 9 and Isaiah 65 draw their inspiration.<sup>13</sup> Before proceeding to the eschatological pictures found in Isaiah, it is worth noting one final aspect of the Garden of Eden that arises in its use as an eschatological image.

In looking at the Garden of Eden as an eschatological image, the nature of perfection within the Garden of Eden is brought into question. Two of the main viewpoints on this subject are that Eden should be understood as a perfected place of existence, or alternatively, as a place that was not perfect, but rather acted as an ideal place for growth and development. One of the

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<sup>7</sup> Morris and Sawyer, "Garden", 315.

<sup>8</sup> Walton, "Garden of Eden", 205.

<sup>9</sup> Walton, "Garden of Eden", 205.

<sup>10</sup> Walton, "Garden of Eden", 205.

<sup>11</sup> Morris and Sawyer, "Garden", 316; and Leupold, *Exposition of Genesis*, 98–99.

<sup>12</sup> Morris and Sawyer, "Garden", 317.

<sup>13</sup> Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 357.

most well known proponents of the first view is Augustine, who held that within the Garden of Eden everything was created wholly good and without flaw.<sup>14</sup> Irenaeus on the other hand, while agreeing that the Garden was without sin, suggested that humans were not fully developed, even to the point where they may have been children.<sup>15</sup> The Garden was seen as a place for growth, and for Irenaeus, humanity was not yet perfect, but would only achieve this through developing.<sup>16</sup> For the purposes of this thesis, whether one takes the Garden of Eden to be a place of perfection or merely an ideal existence which enables growth, the Garden of Eden is the choice image used to describe the future state. In either case, Eden is a place where God is present, and where the cosmos are at harmony. From this image, others such as those from Isaiah would find their inspiration and draw upon the same theme of universal peace and harmony. It is to these eschatological verses and their images that we turn to next.

### *Isaiah*

Isaiah 9 and 65 both provide eschatological prophecies of a future age. Though a great number of Christian writers in the past have viewed Isaiah's prophecy as merely metaphorical and descriptive of the peace to be enjoyed by God's people,<sup>17</sup> many modern writers understand Isaiah 11 and 65 to suggest a literal transformation that effects the whole of creation.<sup>18</sup> This change is in many cases seen to be the result of the coming of the Messianic figure seen in Isaiah

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<sup>14</sup> MacDonald, "Primal Sin", 110.

<sup>15</sup> Steenberg, *Irenaeus On Creation*, 141–42.

<sup>16</sup> Brown, "On the Necessary Imperfection of Creation", 19.

<sup>17</sup> Alexander (*The Prophecies of Isaiah*, 253) lists a variety of metaphorical views that have been held historically, but concludes that such exposition robs the verses of their beauty and hides the true meaning of the prophecy, which is rather a more literal understanding.

<sup>18</sup> Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1–39*, 101–3; Webb, *The Message of Isaiah*, 75, 244–45; Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 124–25, and 531; Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, 173–75; Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 355–57; and Alexander, *The Prophecies of Isaiah*, 253–58, and 455. For a perspective that understands Isaiah 11 and 65 to refer to human safety from predators, rather than a literal transformation of animals from their predatory nature, see Vantassel, *Dominion Over Wildlife*, 176, as quoted in Peterson, *Changing Human Nature*, 27.

11:1–5.<sup>19</sup> It is through this Messianic figure that peace and transformation comes about and is made possible, both for humans as well as for animals.<sup>20</sup> In addition to the change which the Messianic figure will bring about is the recognition that the effects and reign of the Messiah will be universal, spreading out from him to all creation.<sup>21</sup> So extensive is the peace between humanity and creation, and creation with itself, that Isaiah ends his thought with “They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea”.<sup>22</sup> Motyer suggests three main facets of the renewed creation brought about by the Messiah, which when combined present a full picture of the coming age,<sup>23</sup> and it is to these facets that we now turn.

Three of the main themes found within Isaiah’s eschatological prophecies are the removal of the curse given in Genesis 3:15, reconciliation among all of God’s creatures of the world, and a change in the natures of carnivores.<sup>24</sup> The eschatological promise of reconciliation presupposes the alienation of the relationship between God, human beings, and creation brought about by sin and the “curse.” The curse given to Adam and Eve following their sin in the Garden is negated,<sup>25</sup> and the enmity that existed between humans and animals following the flood (Gen. 9:1–3) is removed through the promise of reconciliation. Isaiah develops several images that portray the promised reconciliation and transformation of creation.

The verse in question comes from Isaiah 11:6–9 and reads (from the NIV) as follows:

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<sup>19</sup> Webb, *The Message of Isaiah*, 75; Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 124; Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, 175; and Alexander, *The Prophecies of Isaiah*, 258.

<sup>20</sup> Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 124; Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, 175; Alexander, *The Prophecies of Isaiah*, 258. Watts (*Isaiah 1–33*, 175) notes that the classic view of Zion’s king was such that the natural order, as much as the social and political order, depended on him for its existence.

<sup>21</sup> Webb, *The Message of Isaiah*, 75; Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 124.

<sup>22</sup> Isaiah 11:9.

<sup>23</sup> Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 124–25.

<sup>24</sup> Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 124.

<sup>25</sup> Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 124.

<sup>6</sup>The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. <sup>7</sup> The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. <sup>8</sup>The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. <sup>9</sup>They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

These few verses possess evidence of the three facets of renewed creation suggested by Motyer; removal of the curse given in Genesis 3:15, reconciliation among all of God's creatures of the world, and a very change over the natures of carnivores. The existence of the snake in Isaiah 11:8 is not vital to the peaceful image, but is instead present to produce wonder over the removal of God's curse upon creation.<sup>26</sup> With the removal of the curse, reconciliation is now possible throughout creation even for those who existed in strife since the original sin and consequent curse.<sup>27</sup> The image of a child (Isaiah 11:6) simply accents a world without harm or danger.<sup>28</sup> So secure is the reconciliation that a child is not only safe with the animals, but can exercise the dominion that was originally given to humanity.<sup>29</sup> Such reconciliation within creation does not simply happen, but is the result of a change in the very nature of creation, so that even those that are naturally predators will no longer kill to eat.<sup>30</sup> This look back towards the restored vegetarian diet of Eden is emphasized by the animals named by Isaiah.<sup>31</sup> The wolf is the natural enemy of the lamb, just as the leopard is of the kid, and the lion's eating straw implies not only cohabitation, but a change of the lion's carnivorous habits.<sup>32</sup> J. A. Alexander notes that the Hebrew word *guwr* used in 11:6 refers not simply to dwelling in general, but to sojourn as a

<sup>26</sup> Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 124.

<sup>27</sup> Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1–39*, 102.

<sup>28</sup> Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, 173.

<sup>29</sup> Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 124.

<sup>30</sup> Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 124.

<sup>31</sup> Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 124.

<sup>32</sup> Alexander, *The Prophecies of Isaiah*, 253 and 254.

guest, and implies that the lamb would, as it were, receive the wolf into its home.<sup>33</sup> The wonder is not simply that earlier enemies are now living aside one another, but that their very natures have been changed such that they are able to co-exist peacefully. It is when these three aspects are united together, negation of the curse, reconciliation, and a change of nature, that the complete picture of a whole and united creation is fully seen.

In highlighting the various aspects of the coming reign of the Messiah, Isaiah is presenting a picture of the perfect rule. The coming king will spread his rule not only over Jerusalem, but over the whole world, and in doing so will banish everything that is harmful forever.<sup>34</sup> The repeated presence of the once predator animals simply highlights how pervasive the effects of the Messiah shall be. Motyer notes that the verbs ‘harm’ and ‘destroy’ in Isaiah 11:9 are used absolutely, with no stated object.<sup>35</sup> In addition to banishing destructive forces, the coming reign brings with it unity, based upon the universal presence of God.<sup>36</sup> Eden is restored, and just as before there is peace throughout creation, and God is present among His creation.<sup>37</sup> Isaiah’s eschatological picture of the future is one which mirror’s Eden, where peace reigns throughout and animals are present and sharing in convivial experience with humanity.

### *Revelation*

Just as the Bible begins in Genesis with creation at peace and God among His creation (Gen 1–3), so too does the Bible end in Revelation with creation at peace once more and God among His creation (Rev 21:1–5). Like the eschatological images of Genesis and Isaiah, the ones

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<sup>33</sup> Alexander, *The Prophecies of Isaiah*, 253.

<sup>34</sup> Webb, *The Message of Isaiah*, 75, 244–45; and Watts, *Isaiah 1–33*, 173.

<sup>35</sup> Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 125.

<sup>36</sup> Webb, *The Message of Isaiah*, 75; and Motyer, *The Prophecy of Isaiah*, 125 and 531.

<sup>37</sup> Watts, *Isaiah 34–66*, 357; and Webb, *The Message of Isaiah*, 75.



of Revelation suggest the presence of animals in the coming age. Revelation 5 indicates just how substantial the presence of animals may be. Grant Osborne notes how πᾶν κτίσμα denotes not just intelligent creatures such as humans and angels participating in the glorification of God, but the entire animal kingdom.<sup>38</sup> He also notes that the added τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς πάντα stresses that every single creature in the cosmos participates, including such things as birds, animals, and fish.<sup>39</sup> In addition to Osborne, others such as Denis Edwards,<sup>40</sup> G. K. Beale,<sup>41</sup> Robert Mounce,<sup>42</sup> and Eugene Boring<sup>43</sup> also note the universal nature of the worship pictured. The universality of Christ's work calls for a universal response, which is precisely what occurs in Revelation 5,<sup>44</sup> and throughout the book of Revelation.<sup>45</sup> Such a show of worship and glorification is different from the more passive eschatological pictures of animals in Isaiah, but later chapters 21–22 of Revelation indicate what the next age will hold, and such an image once again echoes the images seen in Genesis 1–3 and Isaiah 11 and 65.

In continuity with Genesis 1:29–30, Isaiah 11:6–9, and Isaiah 65:25, Revelation 21–22 suggests through its eschatological imagery that the new age will be one where peace will exist throughout all creation. Mounce notes that Genesis 1–3 is the source for the imagery being used. He draws attention to the similarity between the Tree of Life found in Genesis and the river of life found in Revelation 22.<sup>46</sup> Beale points out that all the old forms of suffering that

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<sup>38</sup> Osborne, *Revelation*, 264.

<sup>39</sup> Osborne, *Revelation*, 264–65. Mounce also makes this comment regarding the Greek (*The Book of Revelation*, 138).

<sup>40</sup> Edwards, "The Redemption of Animals", 81.

<sup>41</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 365.

<sup>42</sup> Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 138.

<sup>43</sup> Boring, *Revelation*, 111–12.

<sup>44</sup> Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 138.

<sup>45</sup> Osborne, *Revelation*, 264–65.

<sup>46</sup> Mounce, *The Book of Revelation*, 379.

characterized the old creation are removed,<sup>47</sup> and Osborne notes that God removes all sin, and with it, all the sources of suffering.<sup>48</sup> All of the evil of the past age is removed. This image is in line with the original ordinance of God for universal vegetarianism and peace found in the Genesis 1:29–30, as well as the calls for a return to a universal peace, including even carnivorous animals found in Isaiah 11 and 65. The same creatures, angelic, human, and animal which praise and glorify God in Revelation 5 will live at peace with one another for the glory of God. The means by which God achieves this is found in the life and death of Jesus, through his incarnation and his crucifixion.

### *Jesus – The Incarnation*

While the majority of focus on the Incarnation has naturally been on how the eternal Son of God became human, it is crucial to realize that in doing so, the Son took on flesh. Though stated above it is worth repeating that flesh is the element of creation which Jesus shares not only with humans, but with all creatures of flesh and blood.<sup>49</sup> In doing so Jesus identifies not only with humanity, but with all creaturely life. Niels Gregersen referred to such a broad view of the incarnation as a “deep incarnation”, whereby the incarnation of Jesus is an incarnation into the very tissues of biological life.<sup>50</sup> Such an appreciation of the incarnation provides understanding into how Jesus acts to redeem creation as discussed above, for by taking on flesh God can redeem all flesh. Edwards references Athanasius, who in his letters to Serapion discusses that Jesus, through the Spirit, glorifies, divinizes, and adopts creation.<sup>51</sup> Creation, including every

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<sup>47</sup> Beale, *Revelation*, 1049.

<sup>48</sup> Osborne, *Revelation*, 735.

<sup>49</sup> Cunningham, “The Way of All Flesh”, 116; Edwards, “Every Sparrow That Falls to the Ground”, 108.

<sup>50</sup> Gregersen, “The Cross of Christ in an Evolutionary World”, 205.

<sup>51</sup> Edwards, “The Redemption of Animals”, 90; Athanasius, “Letters to Serapion”, 225.

human, hippo, and hummingbird, is included in this incarnation and is brought eschatologically to its right state through the redemptive act of God on the cross.

### *Jesus – The Cross*

That the eschatological images of Isaiah and Revelation point forward to a time of peace throughout creation has been shown above. In addition, it was shown that such peace will be the result of the coming messianic figure through whose rule peace will be enabled. The Christian tradition is founded upon the idea that Jesus was precisely the expected Messiah, as is evidenced by the use of the title “Christ” for Jesus throughout the Christian Scriptures. And while there is rightfully a great deal of emphasis and focus on the redemptive acts of Jesus for humanity, the redemptive acts of the coming Messiah hold a far greater reach than simply humanity. One of the places where this is shown strongly is in Mark 1, in which the coming Messiah lives out the prophecy of Isaiah 11 by being at peace with the wild animals in the desert.<sup>52</sup>

That Mark understands Jesus as the messianic figure is clear from his prologue and baptism of the Spirit.<sup>53</sup> Mark then proceeds to show proof of Jesus being the Messiah, both by defeating Satan’s attempts to test him, as well as by restoring the peace between humans and the rest of creation.<sup>54</sup> That this was a messianic expectation has already been shown through looking at the eschatological pictures Isaiah. However, it is perhaps worth stating again that one expectation of the Messiah was not simply that he would give sight to the blind and free the oppressed, but also that he would restore the lost peaceful relationship of humans with animals.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Birch and Vischer, *Living With the Animals*, 16; Bauckham, “Jesus and the Wild Animals”, 2–21; Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26*, 38–39.

<sup>53</sup> Bauckham, “Jesus and the Wild Animals”, 19–20.

<sup>54</sup> Bauckham, “Jesus and the Wild Animals”, 19.

<sup>55</sup> Bauckham, “Jesus and the Wild Animals”, 20.

Though there are various views on what the presence of animals in Mark 1:13 indicates,<sup>56</sup> the view that they are present to indicate Jesus as at peace with the wild animals generally holds majority support among exegetes.<sup>57</sup> Perhaps the strongest reason for holding this view is that the Greek which Mark uses, *ὁν μετὰ τὸν θηρίων*, suggests a positive, close, and friendly association with the animals.<sup>58</sup> Jesus' presence with the wild animals thus presents the coming age of salvation, with Jesus acting as the messianic precedent representatively establishing the peace that is to come in the new age.<sup>59</sup> That Jesus has an impact on animals as well as humans in bringing about the new age is shown through the various verses which speak of his salvific events in cosmic terms.

The restorative nature of Christ's death upon the cross is effective not simply for believing followers of Christ, but extends to the whole of creation. There is ample evidence throughout the New Testament that this is the case, ranging across a variety of authors and books including the Gospel of John, Romans, Colossians, Ephesians, Hebrews, and 2 Peter.<sup>60</sup> In these scriptural examples it is continually affirmed that salvation is a cosmic matter, for it is all creation which is in need of restoration.<sup>61</sup> That such cosmic restoration is needed is shown by

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<sup>56</sup> Bauckham ("Jesus and the Wild Animals", 5–6) and France (*Mark*, 86–87) note three general views held with regards to the animals: That they merely represent Jesus' solitariness, that they represent agents of Satan, and that they are used to show Jesus at peace with the animals.

<sup>57</sup> Bauckham, "Jesus and the Wild Animals", 7.

<sup>58</sup> Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26*, 39; Bauckham, "Jesus and the Wild Animals", 5. Bauckham goes on to give scriptural support for this position by examining the use of *ἐν τῷ μετὰ τινος* within the Gospels, Paul's writings, and even within Mark, to show that in each of these sources the idea of a close, friendly association is present, or even (in Mark's case) predominant ("Jesus and the Wild Animals", 5).

<sup>59</sup> Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26*, 39; Bauckham, "Jesus and the Wild Animals", 19.

<sup>60</sup> Edwards ("The Redemption of Animals", 81) lists the following verses in relation to the cosmic effects of Christ: Rom 8:18–25, Col 1:15–20, Eph 1:9–10, 20–23, Heb 1:2–3, and 2 Peter 3:13. In addition to these verses can be added John 3:16, which speaks of God sending his Son on account of his love not just for humanity, but for the world.

<sup>61</sup> Birch and Visser, *Living with the Animals*, 17; Edwards, "The Redemption of Animals", 92; Cunningham, "The Way of All Flesh", 117; Williams, "Man and Beast", 26; Hauerwas and Berkman, "The Chief End of All Flesh", 206; Southgate, *The Groaning of Creation*, 78.

Paul in Romans 8:20–21 when he speaks of creation being enslaved to corruption, and needing freedom. That this is accomplished in Christ is clearly shown in Colossians 1:20. These ideas follow naturally from the idea of the Messiah reigning over all creation presented in the Hebrew Scriptures, as well as God’s care for all creation as noted above. Christopher Southgate has suggested three reasons for believing in a redeemed creation beyond simply humanity. First, the scriptural support for such an idea is sufficient; second, that humanity is always envisioned with the rest of creation; and third that the goodness of God requires a doctrine of redemption for all his creatures.<sup>62</sup> Andrew Linzey puts this idea strongly in *Animal Theology*: “the self-emptying which the cross represents is the self-emptying for all creation”.<sup>63</sup> Thus, due to the love that God has for all creation, people and animals included, God acted to redeem it all. However, that Christ died for all creation has implications beyond merely its cosmic effect, which we shall turn to next.

If Christ died for all creation, and took upon himself the sins which are rampant throughout it, then in a very real way Christ takes upon himself the sin and suffering experienced by animals. Linzey notes that if God is the Creator and Sustainer of creation, then He is also a co-sufferer with creation, both human and non-human.<sup>64</sup> The idea of God co-suffering with all creation is also taken up by Southgate in his book *The Groaning of Creation*, where he states outright that “God suffers in the suffering of every creature”.<sup>65</sup> Jay McDaniel makes a similar point in noting that God’s immanence within creatures means that He is present in their lives and

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<sup>62</sup> Southgate, *The Groaning of Creation*, 82.

<sup>63</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, 25.

<sup>64</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, 50.

<sup>65</sup> Southgate, *The Groaning of Creation*, 56. See also 50–57 and 76–77.

experiences, and therefore, also in their sufferings.<sup>66</sup> What such immanent presence with animals means can only be hypothesized, but Southgate suggests that such presence may provide a sense of togetherness with the creature such that they are not suffering (or dying) alone.<sup>67</sup> That the suffering of animals is not only experienced by God, but brought to a point on the cross is further illustrated by Jürgen Moltmann's understanding of God's suffering. In his book *The Crucified God* Moltmann states that "there is no suffering which in this history of God is not God's suffering; no death which has not been God's death in the history of Golgotha".<sup>68</sup> What these various sources suggest is that each and every time a creature suffers, in a very real way God is suffering too. Such suffering is brought to a point on the cross when Christ took all sins and evils upon himself in order to redeem creation. Though it was through the cross where this was accomplished, it was initiated by God becoming human, or perhaps even more useful in our understanding of Jesus' incarnation, God being made flesh. The implications of such an understanding are quite significant, and various views have been put forward to try and understand what redemption of all creaturely life might entail.

### *Animals in Afterlife*

The recognition that Christ redeems all creation, including both humans and animals, has led to a variety of views as to how such an event will function. There are three main views that are proposed in an attempt to present what the future may hold, and these are: universal resurrection, objective immortality, and material inscription.<sup>69</sup> The first of these positions holds

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<sup>66</sup> McDaniel, *Of God and Pelicans*, 30. He also notes that if "God feels the feelings of suffering [animals], we are to assume that God wishes that the "best interests" of the [animal] could be realized, whatever those best interests are" (*Of God and Pelicans*, 30).

<sup>67</sup> Southgate, *The Groaning of Creation*, 52.

<sup>68</sup> Moltmann, *The Crucified God*, 246.

<sup>69</sup> Edwards, "Every Sparrow That Falls to the Ground", 115–7; Southgate, *The Groaning of Creation*, 87.

that there will be a literal awakening and resurrection for every creature that has ever existed.<sup>70</sup> This is the position of Moltmann who, in his book *The Way of Jesus*, puts it simply: “God forgets nothing He has created. Nothing is lost to Him. He will restore it all”.<sup>71</sup> Moltmann further suggests that this is required, for if it were merely humans that were restored, rather than all creation, such an existence would remain fragmentary.<sup>72</sup> This is also the view of John Wesley, who in his sermon “The Great Deliverance”, suggests that “the whole brute creation will then, undoubtedly, be restored”.<sup>73</sup> While such a view does justice to such verses as Colossians 1:15–20 and Ephesians 1:9–10, some suggest that a view that proposes a complete restoration and recreation negates the importance of caring for creation in the present.<sup>74</sup> Though this is certainly a concern, it is not inherent in the view for such criticisms seem to miss the point of human dominion. We are called to act as stewards over creation because God cares for it and anointed us with this special task. The fact that He will restore it in the future no more denies a current need to care for it than our receiving spiritual bodies in the future allows us to fill our current ones with harmful chemicals. David Fergusson makes a similar point in his chapter on eschatology: “The context of the New Testament teaching about the apocalypse is one in which the consolation of the future is never allowed to distract from the present”.<sup>75</sup> So while a view of restoration *may* lead to a lack of caring for creation currently, it is not inherent in the view but due to external factors.

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<sup>70</sup> Edwards, “Every Sparrow That Falls to the Ground”, 115.

<sup>71</sup> Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus*, 303.

<sup>72</sup> Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus*, 304–5.

<sup>73</sup> Wesley, “The Great Deliverance”, 198.

<sup>74</sup> Edwards, “Every Sparrow That Falls to the Ground”, 117.

<sup>75</sup> Fergusson, “Eschatology”, 239. See also Neff, “Second Coming Ecology”, 34–36.

The second approach, objective immortality, suggests that every event in creation is saved by being taken up into God.<sup>76</sup> Each creature therefore is taken up into God and its life is forever with God through their impact on the divine. While there are some who hold this view and hope for some sort of subjective experience on the part of the creature,<sup>77</sup> the theory as a whole negates the subjective experience and existence of the creature following its death. Though this view does well to stress the impact that each creature has on God, Edwards is probably correct in referring to it as minimalist,<sup>78</sup> due to the lack of redemption which it suggests is being achieved. In addition, it would seem to be based not on scriptural support, but more on a philosophy of who God is, and how He relates to His creation.

The final view is that of inscription, which suggests that all material things are not only held in the mind of God (such as the objective immortality view) but are also inscribed in the dimensions of time and space.<sup>79</sup> Because God holds all things, including time and space, whatever existed always exists, and through God it may be possible to experience such things once more.<sup>80</sup> Edwards has a nuanced view of this understanding, suggesting that the inscription occurs within the life-giving (and sustaining) Spirit of God, who by being with all living beings inscribes them into the divine life.<sup>81</sup> He suggests that just as humans are inscribed into the Book of Life, so too all creatures are inscribed into the life of God.<sup>82</sup> Such a view also calls for care for creation because it is the very creation we now experience which is inscribed into God.

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<sup>76</sup> Edwards, "Every Sparrow That Falls to the Ground", 116.

<sup>77</sup> Jay McDaniel (*Of God and Pelicans*, 47–48) is one who holds most strongly to an objective standpoint, but has hope for the individual creature's renewal after death.

<sup>78</sup> Edwards, "Every Sparrow That Falls to the Ground", 117.

<sup>79</sup> Edwards, "Every Sparrow That Falls to the Ground", 117.

<sup>80</sup> Edwards, "Every Sparrow That Falls to the Ground", 117.

<sup>81</sup> Edwards, "Every Sparrow That Falls to the Ground", 118.

<sup>82</sup> Edwards, "Every Sparrow That Falls to the Ground", 118.



Of these three views, perhaps the most useful is the inscription understanding with a strong push towards universal resurrection. At their very roots, both of these views claim the same thing, that all creation is redeemed and restored by God. The advantage of Edwards' presentation of the inscription view is that it allows for the possibility that a completely universal resurrection may not be meaningful for many of those raised to life once more. Edward notes that the subjective experience and relational ability of a bacterium is undoubtedly different from that of an ape.<sup>83</sup> C. S. Lewis makes the same point in his chapter on animal pain in *The Problem of Pain*, and suggests that without a consciousness, a resurrected life would be meaningless for the creature.<sup>84</sup> Thus what the inscription view allows for which the universal resurrection does not, is that God, in His omniscience, may choose to resurrect those who can relate and experience a future life, and may choose not to resurrect those for whom such an existence is not as appropriate.<sup>85</sup> However, the reason why the inscription view should lean towards, though not require, universal resurrection is the understanding of how little can be known of the next life. God may very well endow all his creatures, from human to mosquito, with the ability to reason and relate as he did to Balaam's donkey.<sup>86</sup> This was certainly the hope of Wesley, who suggested that not only would animals be redeemed, but that they might be restored "to a far higher degree . . . than they had ever enjoyed",<sup>87</sup> and will be "exulted and refined in a manner, which we ourselves are not now able to comprehend".<sup>88</sup> Such a view understands and trusts that ultimately God will do that which is best, for He fully cares for each of His many creatures.

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<sup>83</sup> Edwards, "Every Sparrow That Falls to the Ground", 119.

<sup>84</sup> Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, 140–42.

<sup>85</sup> Edwards, "Every Sparrow That Falls to the Ground", 119.

<sup>86</sup> Numbers 22:22–33.

<sup>87</sup> Wesley, "The Great Deliverance", 198.

<sup>88</sup> Wesley, "The Great Deliverance", 198.

The preceding section examined a variety of eschatological images within Scripture, and suggested that based on such images, that all creation will be restored, that animals are shown as present in this restored creation, and that creation is at such peace that even the very natures of animals are changed to accommodate their new state. In addition, this section examined the incarnation and death of Christ. Through his incarnation, Christ identified himself with all flesh, both human and animal, and on the cross redeemed all creation. Based on such a cosmic view of the atonement, the question of the redemption of animals was examined and a view which allows for the resurrection of all creatures, but recognizes that God will resurrect those creatures which can experience was proposed.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

This final section examines three cases of factory farming and details the ethical implications that result from them. In looking at the lives of chickens, veal calves, and hogs within factory farms, this section shows that their existence is one that involves suffering and poor treatment. Such treatment is shown to be due in part to viewing the animals as mere objects, or commodities, rather than as creatures loved by God. Due to the care which God has for each creature, and our calling to steward such creatures with their welfare in mind, the practice of factory farming is contrary to Christian ethics towards animals. An examination of two responses to the rejection of factory farming then follows. The first suggests that when humans care for creatures, and take their lives reverently, that taking the life of an animal can be seen as part of the Christian vocation. The second suggests that vegetarianism can in a very real way be a Christian response to participating in the next age of peace foretold by the eschatological pictures

examined above. Where both positions agree, however, is that the practices of factory farming cause serious concerns for Christian ethics due to their mistreatment of God's creatures.

### *Chickens*

The typical life of a chicken has changed radically in the past 80 years. Traditionally chickens were raised primarily for their eggs and were generally allowed to forage outside for grass and insects.<sup>1</sup> Chickens are observed to be highly social animals that develop a pecking order indicating their social standing and are able to maintain such pecking orders even up to 90 birds.<sup>2</sup> Following the 1930's chickens began to be raised for their meat and were genetically bred to produce the most meat on the smallest diet, in the smallest spaces.<sup>3</sup> Through increased focus on gaining the highest productivity at the lowest cost, factory farming was the natural result. However, the conditions that chickens were moved into were radically different from their more natural existence.

Factory farming brought with it not only cheaper costs, but also a significant increase in the amount of suffering for chickens. Such suffering comes about through a number of standard practices. The first of these is confinement, where chickens are kept in minimal spaces. In the US, it is not unusual to have 7 or 8 hens put into an 18 x 20 inch cage, even though the typical wing span for a hen is around 30 inches.<sup>4</sup> These cramped conditions obliterate the natural pecking order and sometimes lead to hens pecking each other to death.<sup>5</sup> Though it is recognized that such

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<sup>1</sup> Starke, *State of the World 2008*, 62.

<sup>2</sup> Duncan, "Can the Psychologist Measure Stress", 173–74.

<sup>3</sup> Starke, *State of the World 2008*, 62.

<sup>4</sup> Robbins, *The Food Revolution*, 190.

<sup>5</sup> Robbins, *The Food Revolution*, 191.

behaviour is due to the unnatural setting in which the chickens are placed,<sup>6</sup> it is more common to de-beak the animals (cutting off 1/3 of their beaks),<sup>7</sup> rather than provide the recommended suggestions of increased space, a balanced diet, and providing distractants (play things).<sup>8</sup> When egg production drops, a process referred to as forced molting is used whereby egg production is increased by starving the hens up to 2 weeks, and having them go without water for up to 3 days.<sup>9</sup> During such a process, weight reduction not exceeding up to 30% of the initial body weight is ideal, and some mortality is expected.<sup>10</sup> Such extreme egg productivity can lead to bone weakness (and brokenness) for the hens.<sup>11</sup> Though they naturally live for up to 10 years,<sup>12</sup> after 2 years the hens' productivity declines and they are viewed as less commercially viable, so they are taken without food or water to a slaughterhouse to be used for low grade meat.<sup>13</sup> In 2006 the Worldwatch Institute estimated that 74 percent of the world's poultry and 68% of the world's eggs were produced through factory farming methods.<sup>14</sup>

### *Veal*

Just like the chicken, the life of the typical cow has changed a great deal in the past 80 years. Previously, cattle were raised on an open range and were free to move about and eat a grass based diet.<sup>15</sup> While their natural life expectancy is over 20 years,<sup>16</sup> the vast majority are

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<sup>6</sup> Agriculture Canada, *Recommended Code of Practice*, 15.

<sup>7</sup> Robbins, *The Food Revolution*, 191; DeGrazia, "Animals for Food", 177.

<sup>8</sup> Agriculture Canada, *Recommended Code of Practice*, 15.

<sup>9</sup> Robbins, *The Food Revolution*, 192.

<sup>10</sup> Agriculture Canada, *Recommended Code of Practice*, 13.

<sup>11</sup> DeGrazia, "Animals for Food", 177.

<sup>12</sup> The Poultry Guide, "How Long Do Chickens Live?" [1]

<sup>13</sup> DeGrazia, "Animals for Food", 177.

<sup>14</sup> Worldwatch Institute, "State of the World 2006: Notable Trends", [Paragraph 6].

<sup>15</sup> Starke, *State of the World 2008*, 62.

<sup>16</sup> Farm Sanctuary, "The Welfare of Cattle in Dairy Production" [Paragraph 6].

killed long before they reach such an age (veal by 16 weeks,<sup>17</sup> dairy cows by 4 years<sup>18</sup>). Though cattle are used for a variety of products (milk, veal, and beef), and each case of factory farming has its own pressing issues, the case of the veal calf is particularly pointed in how the animal is treated.

The veal calf is generally taken from its mother after a single day and is placed into a crate ranging from 22 x 58 inches, to that recommended by the Canadian Agri-Food Research Council, 35 x 65 inches.<sup>19</sup> Such a size generally allows only a step or two forwards or backwards.<sup>20</sup> There are three veal varieties. The first of these is “bob” veal, which comes from calves slaughtered after they are a few days old, grain-fed veal, which comes from calves fed a variety of milk and solid food, and finally formula-fed veal, which comes from calves that receive no solid food, but a formula that allows a high-protein low-iron diet resulting in “gourmet” white meat.<sup>21</sup> Such white meat also comes about through restricting movement (through small cages), which reduces muscle tone.<sup>22</sup> It was once thought that a lack of sunlight would assist in keeping the meat lighter and so, even under the recommendations by the Canadian Agri-Food Research Council,<sup>23</sup> the calves spend two-thirds of their lives in darkness. Thus their short lives are generally spent in isolation and darkness, eating an anemic diet, unable to walk more than a pace or two, until they are grown enough to be killed for their “gourmet” meat before they reach the age of 16 weeks.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Lawlis, *Veal Calves*, 1.

<sup>18</sup> Robbins, *The Food Revolution*, 206.

<sup>19</sup> Lawlis, *Veal Calves*, 4.

<sup>20</sup> Canadian Coalition for Farm Animals, *Facts About Our Food*, 1.

<sup>21</sup> Lawlis, *Veal Calves*, 1.

<sup>22</sup> Robbins, *The Food Revolution*, 188.

<sup>23</sup> Lawlis, *Veal Calves*, 3.

<sup>24</sup> Lawlis, *Veal Calves*, 1.

## Hogs

Like the two preceding animals, the life of the common farm pig changed significantly with the introduction of factory farming. While they were once commonly enclosed in open air pens with sunlight and given sufficient space to nest and root,<sup>25</sup> the majority (over 80% in the United States)<sup>26</sup> live a very different life. Pigs are increasingly found to have a relatively high level of intelligence,<sup>27</sup> and are able to do tasks such as using mirrors to gain information, in a similar fashion to humans, primates, and dolphins.<sup>28</sup> In addition to being intelligent, pigs are also highly social creatures, which naturally share sleeping quarters.<sup>29</sup> Finally, they are highly active and have been observed to travel 48 kilometers in a single day.<sup>30</sup> For the majority of pigs today however, such natural experiences and social opportunities are completely missing.

Many pigs today spend 3–5 weeks with their mother before being moved into a separate pen.<sup>31</sup> Before changing locations, it is not uncommon for baby pigs to be castrated, as well as having their teeth and tails trimmed.<sup>32</sup> This trimming is done to stop pigs from chewing the tails off one another when they are put into individual crates. Such tail chewing is thought to occur due to stress and discomfort, as well as from dietary concerns.<sup>33</sup> Once they reach 18 kg they are taken to a ‘finishing’ pen, to be kept isolated from other pigs. Similar to veal calves, light is generally limited to 8 hours a day.<sup>34</sup> The individual cages that the animals are kept in are

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<sup>25</sup> Starke, *State of the World 2008*, 62.

<sup>26</sup> Scully, *Dominion*, 29.

<sup>27</sup> Pukite, *A Field Guide to Pigs*, 16.

<sup>28</sup> Broom et al, “Pigs Learn What a Mirror Image Represents”, 1040.

<sup>29</sup> Robbins, *The Food Revolution*, 172.

<sup>30</sup> Robbins, *The Food Revolution*, 172.

<sup>31</sup> Connor, *Recommended Practice for Pigs*, 21.

<sup>32</sup> Connor, *Recommended Practice for Pigs*, 22.

<sup>33</sup> Connor, *Recommended Practice for Pigs*, 24.

<sup>34</sup> Connor, *Recommended Practice for Pigs*, 23.

relatively small, with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada recommending a mere 0.8 m<sup>2</sup> for a 110 kg creature.<sup>35</sup> This is enough room for the creature to move forward or backward slightly and be able to lie down, but not large enough to allow the creature to turn around.<sup>36</sup> Thus even though this is a naturally intelligent, social, and active animal, it is placed in a single cell, isolated, and given only as much space as it needs to lie down.

### *Addressing the Issue*

From the preceding three examples of factory farming there are a number of issues that should be addressed regarding the practice. First, in all three examples, the creatures are viewed entirely as objects, with no subjective value. This is a necessary requirement of factory farming, for the primary concern is not the animal's welfare, but maximizing profit. John Robbins references the industry journal *Hog Farm Management*, which states outright "What we are really trying to do is to modify the animal's environment for maximum profit. . . . Forget the pig is an animal. Treat him just like a machine in a factory."<sup>37</sup> It is this push for profit that creates the need to limit the space allowed for each animal, and even ends their lives long before they would naturally die. This focus on the animal as a commodity, devoid of subjective value, rather than as a living creature of God also provides a means by which to treat the animals in ways which impose negative experiences upon them.

In each of the three examples above, it was shown that a number of the natural ways in which the animals exist outside of a factory farm are being denied the creature. Pigs for example are social and often move great distances in their daily lives, and chickens set up complex social

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<sup>35</sup> Connor, *Recommended Practice for Pigs*, 12.

<sup>36</sup> Connor, *Recommended Practice for Pigs*, 12.

<sup>37</sup> Robbins, *The Food Revolution*, 174; Hall, "Heating Systems for Swine Buildings", 16.

hierarchies that determine their place among the group. Denying these animals their natural social behavior negatively impacts their quality of life. That the removal of such things has a negative impact on the creatures is seen in the harmful behaviours the animals partake in. It is recognized that the comfort of an animal is determined by their behaviour and the state of their health.<sup>38</sup> The behaviour of animals within factory farms (killing one another, tail biting, etc.) suggests that the environment is having a negative effect on the creatures. A number of studies show increased levels of chronic stress,<sup>39</sup> depression,<sup>40</sup> and frustration,<sup>41</sup> through the practices common in factory farms. In addition to the increased suffering imposed on creatures within factory farms is the recognition that the lives of each of these creatures are ended well before they naturally would have. Veal cows live for less than half a year, even though they would naturally live over 20 years, and hens are killed after 2 years though their life span is up to 10 years. The profitability of factory farming requires the treatment of animals as objects, which possess no inherent worth, and focuses primarily on maximizing profits, and not the welfare of creatures.

The position of animals put forward in this paper is that God loves each of His creatures, including humans and animals, and that all of God's creatures have inherent value. If this is the case, then God is interested in the welfare of even the hen, calf, and pig within the factory farm.<sup>42</sup> Likewise, if God is concerned for each creature, and they are mistreated, then God grieves along with them.<sup>43</sup> Such care and concern comes directly from God, and His care for all of His creatures, as explored in the second section of this thesis. And, just as God cares for His

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<sup>38</sup> National Farm Animals Care Council, *Dairy Cow Code of Practice*, 6.

<sup>39</sup> Barnett et al., "Effects of Individual Cage Stalls on Pigs", 23–33.

<sup>40</sup> Mendl et al., "Indicator of depression and poor-welfare in sows", 155.

<sup>41</sup> Broom et al., "A comparison of welfare of sows in different housing conditions", 369–385.

<sup>42</sup> McDaniel, "A God who Loves Animals", 97.

<sup>43</sup> Edwards, "Every Creature that Falls to the Ground", 114.



creatures, so too are we called to care for them and not to mistreat them. Rather than ruling over God's creatures and seeing value in them from a purely objective standpoint, God calls for us to exercise true dominion over them, and in the process, work to restore the breach that has occurred between humanity and animals.

### *Responding to Factory Farming*

To do this requires a rejection of factory farming and all systems built upon treating animals as mere objects and depriving them of their natural form of life. Norman Young did not hold back when he stated that “arrogance toward nature in the name of productivity and the maximizing of profits is not just shortsightedness or carelessness . . . it is a profoundly sinful attitude, amounting to . . . an attack against the natural world, and so against God who is creator.”<sup>44</sup> Walter Brueggemann noted a similar idea, claiming that human avarice and greed, implemented with limitless and shameless technology, now drive the animal kingdom to bizarre forms of devouring and destruction, with the destructive habits of animals within factory farms as a case in point.<sup>45</sup> By mistreating God's creatures, we are in a very real way insulting the God who made them.<sup>46</sup> Thus to live as God would have us, as members of a community that includes animals, requires that instead of condoning and participating in systems that harm creatures to lower costs that we instead actively participate in the redemption that includes animal life (e.g., see the above analysis of Genesis, Isaiah, and Revelation in the section on eschatology).

Jesus' death on the cross, which brings redemption to all creation, acts as a guide for how Christians are to live their lives. Christopher Southgate suggests that “humans have a calling,

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<sup>44</sup> Young, *Creator, Creation and Faith*, 62–63.

<sup>45</sup> Brueggemann, *Isaiah 1–39*, 102.

<sup>46</sup> Williams, “Man and Beast”, 21–22.

stemming from the transformative power of Christ's action on the Cross, to participate in the healing of the world."<sup>47</sup> Edwards likewise states that humans who would live redemptively are called to participate in the healing of the world.<sup>48</sup> This idea is perhaps most fully expressed through a proper understanding of the 'image of God'. As noted earlier, the 'image of God' is perhaps best understood as our calling by God to right ruling. Jürgen Moltmann noted that we take up the *imago Dei* as we take on the *imago Christi*, and in so doing become *gloria Dei*.<sup>49</sup> By working to redeem creation and striving towards the eschatological images given in Genesis and elsewhere, we can become more who we were meant to be as bearers of God's image. What this means is treating animals as they were meant to be treated.<sup>50</sup> This does not mean treating them as though they were human, but to treat them as though we were human.<sup>51</sup> Thus to be human and be an image of God means to participate in God's concern for individual creatures, and recognize that every sparrow that falls to the ground is in the mind of God.<sup>52</sup> For humans to act out in a redemptive manner means acting out to release creation from futility, from suffering and pain and worthlessness."<sup>53</sup> While there are many practical implications of such an understanding, perhaps one of the most pointed is attempting to live without supporting the process of factory farming.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Southgate, "God and Evolutionary Evil", 817.

<sup>48</sup> Edwards, "The Redemption of Animals", 98.

<sup>49</sup> Moltmann, *God In Creation*, 226.

<sup>50</sup> Williams, "Man and Beast", 18.

<sup>51</sup> Williams, "Man and Beast", 18.

<sup>52</sup> Edwards, "The Redemption of Animals", 99.

<sup>53</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, 55.

<sup>54</sup> As noted below, the products from factory farming are much more wide spread than commonly understood. Thus, shy of living a hermit lifestyle, there really is no means of living without using some form of animal products. However, with the understanding that there is no "perfect" means of living, Christians do have some options which enable them to significantly reduce the amount of products they use that come from the misuse of animals.

One way in which a Christian can attempt to reduce the amount of suffering inflicted on animals through factory farming is to avoid buying their products. Such a position is supported by individuals like Christopher Southgate and Karl Barth.<sup>55</sup> While they suggest that vegetarianism is certainly an ideal, they propose that one can also live well and still consume animal flesh. Southgate suggests that given the eschatological promises of God to redeem all creation, raising animals for food in loving and careful ways can be seen as an authentic part of the human vocation.<sup>56</sup> However, in his allowance for meat eating, Southgate is forthright in denying the role of factory farms in such a system, where the killing of animals is not done reverently, but casually, and the animals have no freedom to be themselves.<sup>57</sup> For Barth, the killing of animals is to be done only “under the pressure of necessity”,<sup>58</sup> and is possible only as “a deeply reverential act of repentance, gratitude and praise on the part of a forgiven sinner”.<sup>59</sup> Both of these theologians provide a place for the consumption of animal’s flesh, if done in the right manner, and with the right attitude. However, there are those who suggest a stronger response to the eschatological pictures provided within Scripture.

Another response to factory farming is demonstrated in the outright rejection of eating animal products. Due to the pervasive presence of factory farming, choosing a vegetarian lifestyle is the best way to avoid participation in the mistreatment of animals in factory farming. While animal products are found in a large range of items not normally associated with animal flesh (e.g. cheese often contains rennet from calf stomachs, which aids in coagulation, or lipase, which comes from the tongues of a variety of animals, is an enzyme added to hasten the

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<sup>55</sup> Southgate, *The Groaning of Creation*, 116–22 and Barth, *The Doctrine of Creation*, 352–55.

<sup>56</sup> Southgate, *The Groaning of Creation*, 120–21.

<sup>57</sup> Southgate, *The Groaning of Creation*, 118.

<sup>58</sup> Barth, *The Doctrine of Creation*, 354.

<sup>59</sup> Barth, *The Doctrine of Creation*, 355.

breakdown of fat), the choice of following a vegetarian diet significantly reduces one's reliance on products made through practices that bring about animal suffering. GoVeg, a vegetarian organization, estimates that by choosing a vegetarian diet, each person is able to save approximately 100 animals a year from the process of factory farming.<sup>60</sup> Thus by choosing a vegetarian diet one is able to make a significant contribution towards reducing humanity's harm towards animals. However, in addition to choosing vegetarian diets specifically to reduce the suffering of animals, one can choose a vegetarian lifestyle in an attempt to live out the eschatological images examined above.

Vegetarianism can be a Christian response to participating in the promises of the future, as seen in such eschatological images found in Genesis, Isaiah, and Revelation. By attempting to realize what will be the case in the messianic age, we can seek to live in greater conformity with the Spirit of Jesus himself.<sup>61</sup> Such a choice can be seen as witnessing to the idea that God's creation was not intended to be in conflict with itself, but at peace.<sup>62</sup> Thus for some, the peaceful and non-violent understanding of some of the eschatological images of the Bible lead them to choosing a vegetarian lifestyle in the present.<sup>63</sup> Such a case is generally recognized not to be built from an explicit command from God, and is also not to be required of all people in all times.<sup>64</sup> Instead, the biblical story can provide markers (peace, renewal, and community)

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<sup>60</sup> GoVeg, "Vegetarian 101" [paragraph 5]

<sup>61</sup> Linzey, *Animal Theology*, 136.

<sup>62</sup> Hauerwas and Berkman, "The Chief End of All Flesh", 207–8.

<sup>63</sup> McDaniel, "A God Who Loves Animals", 99; McDaniel, *Of God and Pelicans*, 71; Comstock, "Pigs and Piety", 114; Messer, "Humans, Animals, Evolution, and Ends", 226; Linzey, *Animal Theology*, 136; Young, *Is God a Vegetarian*, 145; Hauerwas and Berkman, "The Chief End of All Flesh", 208; Northcott, "A Creaturely Theology of Non-violence", 247–48; and Greenway, "Animals and the Love of God", 681.

<sup>64</sup> McDaniel, "A God Who Loves Animals", 99; McDaniel, *Of God and Pelicans*, 71; Comstock, "Pigs and Piety", 114; Young, *Is God a Vegetarian*, 124; and Hauerwas and Berkman, "The Chief End of All Flesh", 207–8. Linzey notes the historical example of St. Benedict (*Animal Theology*, 136).

pointing the way for followers of Christ seeking to live in the Kingdom.<sup>65</sup> People clearly come before animals,<sup>66</sup> but the extent to which this datum can go is clearly limited. When a human life is on the line, the human life takes priority, but when it is simply human enjoyment from eating meat, one must seriously question one's reasoning given the love God has for both human and animal.<sup>67</sup> Hauerwas and Berkman have suggested that it is Christians who eat meat who bear the burden of proof, rather than Christians who choose to be vegetarian due to the variety of reasons examined.<sup>68</sup> The choice to become vegetarian for faith based reasons is a personal one but, as this thesis has attempted to show, the call towards vegetarianism from a Christian standpoint is a legitimate one and one that should be examined along one's continual walk with God.

This final section examined the practice of factory farming based on an understanding of animals as creatures of inherent value based on the care that God has for them. The three examples of chickens, veal calves, and hogs within factory farming were used to show how the lives of creatures produced within factory farms are lives that necessarily result in suffering on the part of the animal. Such suffering is due in part to viewing the animals as mere objects, rather than understanding them to be creatures loved by God. Through the previous sections that built the case for the inherent value of animals, and the human responsibility to steward them as creatures of God, it was determined that the practices of factory farming do not align with a proper Christian understanding of the right relationship between humans and animals. As well, this section examined the case for Christian vegetarianism, and found that Christian vegetarianism is a legitimate means of living out one's faith and hopeful expectation of the

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<sup>65</sup> Young, *Is God a Vegetarian*, 124–25.

<sup>66</sup> Matthew 6:26; Luke 12:24.

<sup>67</sup> Greenway, "Animals and the Love of God; and 681; McDaniel, *Of God and Pelicans*, 71.

<sup>68</sup> Hauerwas and Berkman, "A Trinitarian Theology", 72.

coming age of peace. While becoming vegetarian is certainly not a necessary component of the Christian faith, the right relationship with animals is a question that should be addressed in one's walk of faith and our attempts to live presently as we may on the New Earth.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis examined the place of animals within Christianity, and suggested that they are creatures of inherent value and cared for by God. Such a position was maintained by examining a variety of aspects within Christian theology and biblical studies beginning with an examination of animals in the Christian tradition. Next, a study of how animals were presented scripturally was examined, which was followed by a look at various uses of animals in Scripture, including as food and as sacrifices. This was followed by an examination of a variety of eschatological pictures involving animals, which looked at Genesis, Isaiah, and Revelation, as well as investigating the role of Christ his salvific death. Finally, based on the preceding sections, an examination of the ethics of factory farming was examined, as well as the ethics of Christian vegetarianism.

Animals have always had a place, albeit a minor one, within the Christian tradition. Early on, saints were connected with animals both as a means of expressing a reestablishment of the lost order found in Genesis 1, as well as an expression of the kindness of saints towards all creatures. Within the Middle Ages, Aristotelian philosophy brought with it a view of animals as devoid of rationality, and thus, devoid of souls. This idea was furthered in the Renaissance and Enlightenment periods where animals were reduced to mere material machines, lacking not only

reason, but the capacity to feel. However, throughout this time there was a minor stream of Christians who cared for animals. Of these, names such as Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Richard of Chichester in the 13th century, John Wesley in the 18th century, and Albert Schweitzer and Andrew Linzey in the 20th century clearly come to the front. As well, the presence of vegetarianism within the Christian tradition supporting both attempts at an ascetic life, as well as concern for animals can be seen.

The case taken within this thesis is that animals are creatures of inherent value due to the care which God has for them. This idea is based on a variety of scriptural texts. One such text is Genesis 9 in which God covenants with not only humans through Noah, but also with all animal life. This covenant shows God's care for all His creations, and not simply humans. In addition to Genesis 9, a wide variety of examples from the Old Testament including such books as Psalms, Job, and Jonah give evidence of God caring for the welfare of animals by providing them with food and shelter. The New Testament also holds examples demonstrating the value of animals such as Jesus' explanation of God's greater care for humans, based on the understanding of God's care for creatures. In addition to such texts, a number of theological constructs, such as the 'Image of God', human dominion, and the "soul" were examined and shown to be supportive of the idea of both a unique calling for humans, as well as a similarity between all of God's creatures.

Two examples of the use of animals within Scripture were examined and were shown to provide basis for an inherent value of animals, even as they are being used. The first case examined animals as food, and its place within Genesis 9 was shown to be part of a concession on the part of God due to the sin of humanity. On closer examination, the allowance for eating

meat is clearly set within a limitation. The commandment not to consume the blood of any animal killed for food acts as a means to retain the sanctity of life, even while humans are allowed to kill for food. Life acts as a representation for life, and life, like everything else in creation, belongs primarily to God. The second use of animals examined was within the sacrificial system, and this was shown to retain the inherent value of the creature, and its close connection to humans. Sacrificing requires recognition of both the greatness of God (for failure to do this renders the sacrifice ineffective), as well as the sinfulness of oneself (resulting in death). Both examples of eating animals and the sacrifices of animals suggest not only that the killing of animals is not an expectation of God, but a consequence of human sin, but as well that life is something of great value which belongs to God alone, and the taking of it is always a serious act that is not to be done lightly.

Within Genesis, Isaiah, and Revelation are eschatological pictures which involve the presence of animals within the coming cosmic peace which the next age will entail. Such images being within Genesis in the Garden of Eden where a perfect harmony is a way of life, brought about by the very presence of God. Isaiah 9 and 65 describes this picture as the result of the coming Messiah and suggests a three-fold consequence of his coming: a removal of the curse place upon humanity, a reconciliation of all creation, and even a very change in the nature of creatures such that peace reigns over the entire world. Revelation 5 and 21 show all creation, animals and humans, glorifying God among the cosmic peace resulting from the return of Christ. The implications of Jesus as the Christ were examined by looking at the incarnation, Mark 1, and the crucifixion of Jesus. Through these, it was shown that in taking on flesh, Jesus identified with all creation, he enacted the eschatological peace by living at peace with the wild animals, and redeemed all creation through the cross. In doing so, it was suggested that an inscriptive



understanding, with the possibility of universal resurrection, was the best means of understanding how Jesus redeemed creation.

The final section addressed the consequences of holding a view of animals as creatures of inherent value by examining the practice of factory farming. In doing so, three cases were examined, those of chickens, veal calves, and pigs. It was shown that the lives of creatures which exist within the factory farming system live unnatural lives, leading to suffering, and have their lives taken well before their natural expectancy. Such practices come about through the objectification of animals into mere objects, where a push for profits leads to treating them as commodities. These practices were shown to be contrary to the respect which humans should give animals due to their inherent value. As a result, this thesis suggested a rejection of factory farming. In addition the practice of vegetarianism both as a means of reducing the suffering of animals, as well as participating in the messianic age was proposed as a way to live out one's faith.

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