

EARTH DAY SUNDAY 2002
Protection of God's Creatures
April 21, 2002 (or any Sunday throughout the year)



OTHER SCRIPTURAL/SERMON AIDS

The Word On Animals and Endangered Species (adapted from *Green Cross: A Christian Environmental Quarterly*, Winter 1996, p. 14-15, used with permission.)

The Bible contains hundreds of passages about animals. Many of them contain important teachings about human responsibility to care for the creatures and to fit them into a whole theology of creation. Here are some of the key ones with a note about their implications.

GENESIS 1:20-22: The Animals are fulfilling God's command

IMPLICATIONS

- 1) God creates many creatures, and sees them as "good." This means they have intrinsic worth before utilitarian value. It also means that biodiversity is inherent in creation.
- 2) Because God charges the creatures to be fruitful and multiply; they are fundamental to God's order to creation, and so humanity has to learn to live with other creatures.
- 3) Animals have their own purpose, and so destruction of species is sin.
- 4) Because animals have unique food and shelter needs, species preservation presumes habitat preservation.

GENESIS 6:5,7-8, 13-14,7: 12, 16-17: Noah, the First Preserver of Species

IMPLICATIONS

- 1) God's command to Noah demonstrates that preservation of animal species is important.
- 2) God was more concerned about preserving animal species than sinful people.

GENESIS 9:8-13: The covenant is between God and creation

IMPLICATIONS

- 1) The Covenant includes the animals which shows that they have God's respect. If God acknowledges animals, so should people.
- 2) God's Covenant requires a whole panorama of obedience to prevent future catastrophe.

DEUTERONOMY 22:6- 7: Care for the Productivity of Creation

IMPLICATIONS

- 1) Creation's fruitfulness must be preserved.
- 2) Restraint must inform human dominion over animals.

PROVERBS 30:25-28: Insights from Insects, Animals

IMPLICATIONS

- 1) There are lessons from creatures, even the insects.
- 2) Each species reveals different talents and skills.

JOB 12:7-10: The Animals have their own understanding

IMPLICATIONS

- 1) Spiritual lessons are hidden in animals.
- 2) Learning the lessons of nature tests our spiritual penetration.
- 3) The Creator's life is in animals.

ISAIAH 1:2-3: The Witness of Animals

IMPLICATIONS

- 1) Animals can be more obedient than people.
- 2) People forget their purpose, but animals do not.

HOSEA 4: 1-4: Human greed affects the land and animals

IMPLICATIONS

- 1) Animals and people share one earth.
- 2) As humans sin, the animals also suffer.

MATTHEW 6:26-27: Behold the birds

IMPLICATIONS

- 1) Jesus tells us to behold the birds, for lessons about life are in them.
- 2) We acknowledge God's glory by admiring God's works in creation.

REVELATION 5: 13: The creatures give glory to God

IMPLICATIONS

- 1) The creatures also sing in the heavenly choir and give glory to God.
- 2) Silenced voices of praise represent avoidable tragedy.