

## Section 4. Do Animals Go to Heaven

*In this section we will explore the various understandings of what happens to our pets, other animals, when they die. There are some that say they are certainly in heaven with the rest of us... haven't you watched the cartoon movie "All Dogs go to Heaven." Some say that animals do not have spirits/souls like humans do, so they don't go to heaven. Read and decide for yourself.*

**HOMEWORK: Read section 4 and make notes. Then skim over the questions on the last page.**

Given that human beings can have fellowship with God in a way that the animals can't, it would make sense that life in heaven is a privilege that animals don't share with us in any form. But Scripture seems to be silent about the matter, and the Church has never pronounced on it authoritatively.

<https://simplycatholic.com/animals-in-heaven/>

Well-known apostle and prominent gospel scholar Bruce R. McConkie was also of the opinion that

animals, and all forms of life, are eternal. "Animals, birds, fowls, fishes, plants, and all forms of life occupy an assigned sphere and play an eternal role in the great plan of creation, redemption, and salvation. They were all created as spirit entities in pre-existence" (Mormon Doctrine, 1966). <https://www.ldsiving.com/Animals-and-the-Afterlife-Do-All-Dogs-Go-to-Heaven/s/80286/#::~:~:text=Well-known%20apostle%20and%20prominent%20gospel%20scholar%20Bruce%20R.,the%20great%20plan%20of%20creation%2C%20redemption%2C%20and%20salvation.>

When it comes to our relationships with pets, we not only take them into our homes: We welcome them deep within our hearts. In fact, some become so attached that they yearn to be with their pets throughout eternity. C. S. Lewis speculated on the eternal fate of animals in *The Problem of Pain*, suggesting that at least tame animals might enter heaven through their relationship with humans, in the same way that humans do through their relationship with Christ. <https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2012/april/do-pets-go-to-heaven.html>

One day, we will see our animals again in the eternity of Christ. Paradise is open to all of God's creatures. – Pope Francis <https://www.snopes.com/fact-check/pomeranians-in-paradise/>



Do Animals Go to Heaven?

<https://blog.franciscanmedia.org/franciscan-spirit/do-animals-go-to-heaven>

by Jim Van Vurst, OFM – 04/23/2018

From time to time, I am posed with an interesting theological question: Do animals go to heaven? We've heard people with great sincerity say, "If my dear pet can't be with me, then I can't be there." That sounds extreme, but we shouldn't criticize such strong emotions. Any of my readers who have owned pets will know this feeling well. It is a topic worth discussing, not that we know the answer for certain. But there are suggestions in



Scripture that could point to such a conclusion. In several places, there is the image used that, at the end of time, God will create "new heavens and a new earth" (Rv 21:1; 2 Pt 3:13).

We shouldn't throw away God's creation of the universe. In Genesis 1:31, it reads: "God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good." Indeed, all that God does is truly good. And among those good works are humans, animals, and plants. God is life itself, and we could argue that once God gives life, he would not destroy it.

### **Out of Love**

Sometimes we think that God made us to love him. Yes, but that was not his first reason. We were made so that God could love us. Loving is what God does. Isn't that why moms and dads have babies? It is not so the baby can love his or her parents. Rather, it is because the parents have a new little person whom they can love. Out of love, God made us and gave us all of creation. God did that for our sake, so that we could consider how loving our God is.

The theology would hint that heaven and earth are not for God, but for God's creatures. And, thus, animals that have been so loving and helpful to their owners would be there, too. Some Christians imagine an afterlife where we spend eternity loving and praising God. They say we don't even need each other—just God. But that is so contrary to all that we know about God and his love and need for us. Aren't parents most happy when their children are happy and loving one another?

What heaven is like is far beyond our wildest imaginations. Our call on our earthly journey is simply to know, love, and serve God as best we can. But what God has planned for us we cannot conceive.

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As you can see there are so many differing views on this very important question. Many of us have had pets that we hope to see in heaven, when we get there; standing next to mom and dad greetings us. Then there are mosquitoes... there is another place we'd like to send them!!! Now, now is that very nice 😊

The bible doesn't explicitly say either way. There are no passages that give us a glimpse into what heaven is like for animals. Haven't found a passage in Revelation that says, and I saw the throne of God, with Jesus at the right hand and Jesus' childhood pet Aharon at the left hand...

Yet there are scriptures that allow us to "read between the lines" as you may do... seeing God's love for God's creation and then making up our own minds as to what we believe to be the truth among truths.

So, read through these verses and we will discuss:

(Isaiah 11:6–9 CEB) "6 The wolf will live with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat; the calf and the young lion will feed together, and a little child will lead them. 7 The cow and the bear will graze. Their young will lie down together, and a lion will eat straw like an ox. 8 A nursing child will play over the snake's hole; toddlers will reach right over the serpent's den. 9 They won't harm or destroy anywhere on my holy mountain. The earth will surely be filled with the knowledge of the LORD, just as the water covers the sea."

(Revelation 5:13 CEB) "And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea—I heard everything everywhere say, "Blessing, honor, glory, and power belong to the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb forever and always.""

(Revelation 19:11 CEB) "Then I saw heaven opened, and there was a white horse. Its rider was called Faithful and True, and he judges and makes war justly."

(Matthew 10:29 CEB) "Aren't two sparrows sold for a small coin? But not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father knowing about it already."

(Romans 8:19-22 MESSAGE) 19 The created world itself can hardly wait for what's coming next. 20 Everything in creation is being more or less held back. God reins it in 21 until both creation and all the

creatures are ready and can be released at the same moment into the glorious times ahead. Meanwhile, the joyful anticipation deepens. 22 All around us we observe a creation ready to give birth. The difficult times of pain throughout the world are simply pains of a birthing process. But it's not only around us; it's within us.

(Job 12:7–10 MESSAGE) “7 “But ask the animals what they think—let them teach you; let the birds tell you what's going on. 8 Put your ear to the earth—learn the basics. Listen—the fish in the ocean will tell you their stories. 9 Isn't it clear that they all know and agree that GOD is sovereign, that God holds all things in hand— 10 Every living soul, yes, every breathing creature?”

(Genesis 1:20–27 MESSAGE) “20 God spoke: “Swarm, Ocean, with fish and all sea life! Birds, fly through the sky over Earth!” 21 God created the huge whales, all the swarm of life in the waters, And every kind and species of flying birds. God saw that it was good. 22 God blessed them: “Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Ocean! Birds, reproduce on Earth!” 23 It was evening, it was morning— Day Five. 24 God spoke: “Earth, generate life! Every sort and kind: cattle and reptiles and wild animals—all kinds.” And there it was: 25 wild animals of every kind, Cattle of all kinds, every sort of reptile and bug. God saw that it was good. 26 God spoke: “Let us make human beings in our image, make them reflecting our nature. So they can be responsible for the fish in the sea, the birds in the air, the cattle, And, yes, Earth itself, and every animal that moves on the face of Earth.” 27 God created human beings; God created them godlike, Reflecting God's nature.”

(Genesis 9:9–10 CEB) “9 “I am now setting up my covenant with you, with your descendants, 10 and with every living being with you—with the birds, with the large animals, and with all the animals of the earth, leaving the ark with you.”

(Psalm 36:6–7 CEB) “6 Your righteousness is like the strongest mountains; your justice is like the deepest sea. LORD, you save both humans and animals. 7 Your faithful love is priceless, God!”

(Hosea 2:18 CEB) “On that day, I will make a covenant for them with the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the creeping creatures of the fertile ground. I will do away with the bow, the sword, and war from the land; I will make you lie down in safety.”

(2 Samuel 12:1–3 CEB) “1 So the LORD sent Nathan to David. When Nathan arrived he said, “There were two men in the same city, one rich, one poor. 2 The rich man had a lot of sheep and cattle, 3 but the poor man had nothing—just one small ewe lamb that he had bought. He raised that lamb, and it grew up with him and his children. It would eat from his food and drink from his cup—even sleep in his arms! It was like a daughter to him.”

(Deuteronomy 5:12–15 MESSAGE) “12 No working on the Sabbath; keep it holy just as GOD, your God, commanded you. 13 Work six days, doing everything you have to do, 14 but the seventh day is a Sabbath, a Rest Day—no work: not you, your son, your daughter, your servant, your maid, your ox, your donkey (or any of your animals), and not even the foreigner visiting your town. That way your servants and maids will get the same rest as you. 15 Don't ever forget that you were slaves in Egypt and GOD, your God, got you out of there in a powerful show of strength. That's why GOD, your God, commands you to observe the day of Sabbath rest.”

(1 Corinthians 15:39–41 MESSAGE) “39 You will notice that the variety of bodies is stunning. Just as there are different kinds of seeds, there are different kinds of bodies—humans, animals, birds, fish—each unprecedented in its form. 40 You get a hint at the diversity of resurrection glory by looking at the diversity of bodies not only on earth but in the skies— 41 sun, moon, stars—all these varieties of beauty and brightness. And we're only looking at pre-resurrection “seeds”—who can imagine what the resurrection “plants” will be like!”

(Psalm 150:6 MESSAGE) “Let every living, breathing creature praise GOD! Hallelujah!”

## Questions – what say you?

- As you read through the commentaries above, which ones spoke to you; Agreed or disagreed?
- Franciscan Brother Jim Van Vurst, wrote in his blog about "love" – who's love came first? Why does it make a difference?
- As you read through the bible verses, which ones jumped out at you as important and why?
  - Are there any verses that say "NO" animals do not go to heaven?
  - Are there any verses that say "YES" animals go to heaven?
- Do you notice something profound in the texts above that call out for praises to God? From where are the praises to come?
- Do you notice something profound in the texts above, when God talks about "covenants" – who will benefit?
- Have you made up your mind? Do animals go to heaven? Using the answers below, say why you feel the way you do...
  - NOT SURE: I understand from the scriptures that God has great love for all creation, but I'm not sure the answer.
  - NO: God's love for all creation is abundant, yet animals do not have they same spirit/soul as humans. So, they will not be in heaven.
  - YES: God's love for all creation will not exclude. It seems to me that scripture, for the most part, says that I will see animals in heaven.

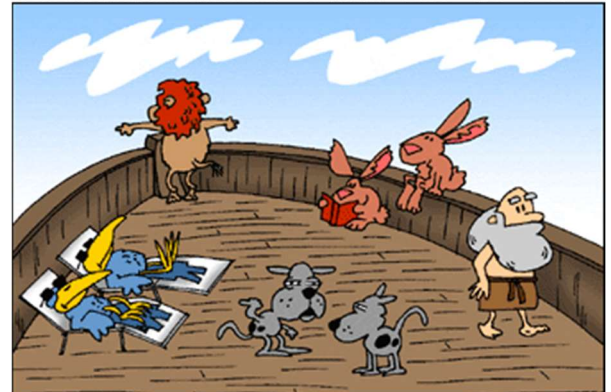
*NOTE: There is NO WRONG ANSWER – Christians of all walks and people of all faiths, have wrestled with this question for thousands of years. It is OKAY to believe what you believe. BUT it is NEVER OKAY to mistreat any animal. No matter what, they are part of God's creation.*

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PROFESSOR SPORT MADE SOME EXCELLENT POINTS DURING HIS SPEECH, BUT MANY STILL THOUGHT HIM BIASED

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Thanks to Dad Hengeveld (See Genesis 6-8)  
LIONARDO THINKS THAT HE IS "KING OF THE WORLD" AGAIN

## As we End this Session

Any new take-aways – aha moments – new questions, you have gathered from this study time?

*CANTICLE OF CREATION - Francis of Assisi, 1225 A.D*

**Be praised Good Lord for Brother Sun who brings us each new day. Be praised for Sister Moon: white beauty bright and fair, with wandering stars she moves through the night. Be praised my Lord for Brother Wind, for air and clouds and the skies of every season. Be praised for Sister Water: humble, helpful, precious, pure; she cleanses us in rivers and renews us in rain. Be praised my Lord for Brother fire: he purifies and enlightens us. Be praised my Lord for Mother Earth: abundant source, all life sustaining; she feeds us bread and fruit and gives us flowers. Be praised my Lord for the gift of life; for changing dusk and dawn; for touch and scent and song. Be praised my Lord for those who pardon one another for love of thee, and endure sickness and tribulation. Blessed are they who shall endure it in peace, for they shall be crowned by Thee. Be praised Good Lord for sister Death who welcomes us in loving embrace. Be praised my Lord for all your creation serving you joyfully.**