Resurrection of Animals

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 291–292 (HC 5:339–345). John saw curious looking beasts in heaven; he saw every creature that was in heaven,—all the beasts, fowls and fish in heaven,—actually there, giving glory to God. How do you prove it? (See Rev 5:13.) “And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”

Varied Creatures in Heaven

I suppose John saw beings there of a thousand forms, that had been saved from ten thousand times ten thousand worlds like this,—strange beasts of which we have no conception: all might be seen in heaven. The grand secret was to show John what there was in heaven. John learned that God glorified Himself by saving all that His hands had made, whether beasts, fowls, fishes or men; and He will glorify Himself with them.

Says one, “I cannot believe in the salvation of beasts.” Any man who would tell you that this could not be, would tell you that revelations are not true. John heard the words of [292] the beasts giving glory to God, and understood them. God who made the beasts could understand every language spoken by them. The four beasts were four of the most noble animals that had filled the measure of their creation, and had been saved from other worlds, because they were perfect: they were like angels in their sphere. We are not told where they came from, and I do not know; but they were seen and heard by John praising and glorifying God.

The popular religionists of the day tell us, forsooth, that the beasts spoken of in the Revelation represent kingdoms. Very well, on the same principle we can say that the twenty-four elders spoken of represent beasts; for they are all spoken of at the same time, and are represented as all uniting in the same acts of praise and devotion.

This learned interpretation is all as flat as a pancake! “What do you use such vulgar expressions for, being a prophet?” Because the old women understand it—they make pancakes. Deacon Homespun said the earth was flat as a pancake, and ridiculed the science which proved to the contrary. The whole argument is flat, and I don’t know of anything better to represent it. The world is full of technicalities and misrepresentation, which I calculate to overthrow, and speak of things as they actually exist.

Again, there is no revelation to prove that things do not exist in heaven as I have set forth, nor yet to show that the beasts meant anything but beasts; and we never can comprehend the things of God and of heaven, but by revelation. We may spiritualize and express opinions to all eternity; but that is no authority.
Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation* (comp. Bruce R. McConkie), 2:281. [Italics in original.]

RESURRECTION OF ALL THINGS

**Earth and All Life Resurrected.** Every creature on the earth, whether it be man, *animal, fish, fowl,* or *other creature,* that the Lord has created, is redeemed from death on the same terms that man is redeemed. These creatures are not responsible for death coming into the world any more than we were, and since they have been created by the Father, they are entitled to their redemption and eternal duration.

The *earth itself* shall be changed from its mortal body, for it too is a living thing now, under the curse of death, and it “abideth the law of a celestial kingdom, for it filleth the measure of its creation, and transgresseth not the law—Wherefore, it shall be sanctified; yea, notwithstanding it shall die, it shall be quickened again, and shall abide the power by which it is quickened, and the righteous shall inherit it.” [D&C 88:25–26.]

**All Living Things Resurrected.** “I know that, whatsoever God doeth,” we read in the scriptures, “it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it.” [Eccl 3:14.] We know that all these creatures are animated by the spirit which is in them, just as man is. The Lord declared through the Prophet that “the spirit of man [is] in the likeness of his person, also the spirit of the beast, and every other creature which God has created.” [D&C 77:2.] Is there any living creature that God has not made? If so, the power of creation has gone out of his hands. He is supreme, and all life is from him, his gift to every creature.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation* (comp. Bruce R. McConkie), 2:287–288. [Italics in original.] Bodies will be quickened according to the kingdom which they are judged worthy to enter. Elder Orson Pratt many years ago in writing of the resurrection and the kind of bodies which would be raised in these kingdoms said:

“In every species of animals and plants, there are many resemblances in the general outlines and many specific differences characterizing the individuals of each species. So in the resurrection. There will be several classes of resurrected bodies; some celestial, some terrestrial, some telestial, and some sons of perdition. Each of these classes will differ from the others by prominent and marked distinctions; yet, in each, considered by itself, there will be found many resemblances as well as distinctions. There will be some physical peculiarity by which each individual in every class can be identified.

**Procreation Limited to Celestial Bodies.** Some will gain celestial bodies with all the powers of exaltation and eternal increase. These bodies will shine like the sun as our Savior’s does, as described by John. [Rev 1:12–18; D&C 110:1–4; Ex 24:9–10.] Those who enter the terrestrial kingdom will have terrestrial bodies, and they will not shine like the sun, but they will be more glorious than the bodies of those who receive the telestial glory.

*In both of these kingdoms there will be changes in the bodies and limitations. They will not have the power of increase, neither the power or nature to live as husbands and wives, for this will be denied them and they cannot increase.*
Thus saith the Lord: “And the end shall come, and the heaven and the earth shall be consumed and

Those who receive the exaltation in the celestial kingdom will have the “continuation of the seeds forever.” [D&C 132:19.] They will live in the family relationship. In the terrestrial and in the celestial kingdoms there will be no marriage. Those who enter there will remain “separately and singly” forever. [D&C 132:15–32.]

Some of the functions in the celestial body will not appear in the terrestrial body, neither in the celestial body, and the power of procreation will be removed. I take it that men and women will, in these kingdoms, be just what the so-called Christian world expects us all to be—neither man nor woman, merely immortal beings having received the resurrection.

Bruce R. McConkie, “Animals,” Mormon Doctrine, 38. [Italics in original.] ... 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. (Moses 3:1–9.) When first placed on earth in the Garden of Eden, they were immortal. The revealed record, speaking of the edenic day, specifies: “All things which were created must have remained in the same state in which they were after they were created; and they must have remained forever, and had no end.” (2 Ne 2:22.) Such would have been the continuing condition had there been no fall of Adam, but Adam and all forms of life were subject to the fall and have been living on earth in their mortal states ever since.

At the Second Coming, when the earth is taken back to its edenic state, “every corruptible thing, both of man, or of the beasts of the field, or the fowls of the heavens, or of the fish of the sea, that dwells upon all the face of the earth, shall be consumed.... And in that day the enmity of man, and the enmity of beasts, yea, the enmity of all flesh, shall cease from before my face.” (D&C 101:24–26.) Then finally, all these forms of life will come up in the resurrection, “in their destined order or spheres of creation, in the enjoyment of their eternal felicity.” (D&C 77:3.)

Bruce R. McConkie, “Resurrection,” Mormon Doctrine, 637–643. [Italics in original.] ... The resurrection is the creation of an immortal soul; it consists in the uniting or reuniting of body and spirit in immortality. (Doctrines of Salvation 2:258–301.) A resurrected being is one for whom body and spirit are inseparably connected in a state in which there never again can be decay (corruption) or death (separation of body and spirit). (I Cor 15; Alma 11:37–46; 12:12–18.) Resurrected beings have bodies of flesh and bones, tangible, corporeal bodies, bodies that occupy space, digest food, and have power, outwardly, to appear as mortal bodies do. (Lk 24.)

Nothing is more absolutely universal than the resurrection. Every living being will be resurrected. “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” (1 Cor 15:22.) ...

[642] Just as the creative and redemptive powers of Christ extend to the earth and all things thereon, as also to the infinite expanse of worlds in immensity, so the power of the resurrection is universal in scope. Man, the earth, and all life thereon will come forth in the resurrection. And the resurrection applies to and is going on in other worlds and other galaxies.

Thus saith the Lord: “And the end shall come, and the heaven and the earth shall be consumed and
pass away, and there shall be a new heaven and a new earth. For all old things shall pass away, and all things shall become new, even the heaven and the earth, and all the fulness thereof, both men and beasts, the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea; And not one hair, neither mote, shall be lost, for it is the workmanship of mine hand.” (D&C 29:23–25.)

Gerald E. Jones, director, Institute of Religion, Berkeley, California, “Where do animals fit in the eternal plan of things?” in “I Have a Question,” Ensign, March 1977, 60ff. “Nature helps us to see and understand God. To all His creations we owe an allegiance of service and a profound admiration.” Thus the General Superintendency of the Deseret Sunday School Union, President Joseph F. Smith, President of the Church, and Elders David O. McKay and Stephen L. Richards, members of the Council of the Twelve, editorialized in the April 1918 Juvenile Instructor. Recognizing that the “love of nature is akin to the love of God” they reminded the members of the Church that “men learn more easily in sympathetic relationships of all life than they do in the seclusion of human interest.” (183.) Many families recognize the importance of pets and the resultant loving and sharing among their children. Caring for pets can also develop a sense of responsibility.

Devotion of animals to families can be inspiring as well as practical. A recent news item related the bravery of a dog in saving the life of a small girl by breaking the window of a burning automobile and pulling her to safety.

A number of questions have been asked concerning the place of animals in the gospel plan:

Do animals have spirits and are they resurrected? Yes. The Prophet Joseph Smith received information concerning the eternal status of animals. Answers to questions he posed are in the Doctrine and Covenants, section 77 [D&C 77]. He also spoke about the resurrection of animals in a sermon but did not expand on the subject. (History of the Church, 5:343.)

To what degree of glory do animals go? The scriptures speak only of animals being in the celestial kingdom. Whether they go to other kingdoms is a matter of conjecture. Elder Joseph Fielding Smith on one occasion said the distribution of animals into all three degrees of glory is “very probable.” (Improvement Era, Jan. 1958, 16–17.) To my knowledge, no other prophet has published an opinion on the subject.

Are animals judged and resurrected according to their obedience to laws? According to Elder Joseph Fielding Smith, animals do not have a conscience. They cannot sin and they cannot repent, for they have not knowledge of right and wrong. (Man: His Origin and Destiny, Deseret Book Co., 1954, 204–205.)

Can animals be with their owners in the hereafter? There is no revealed word on this subject. Reason would tell us that a rancher or farmer may not want all of the cattle he has owned during his life. On the other hand, emotional ties may be honored and family pets may well be restored to their owners in the resurrection, Elder Orson F. Whitney wrote that Joseph Smith expected to have his favorite horse in eternity. (Improvement Era, August 1927, 855.)

Just what is the relationship between men and animals? Men are children of God. Animals are for the benefit of man. This does not mean, however, that man is not to have a concern for this part of his stewardship. The prophets in all ages have indicated that man will be accountable for his treatment of

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animals and that justice and mercy should be exercised concerning them. Alma encourages us to pray over our flocks. (Alma 34:20, 25.) There are numerous examples in Church history of animals being administered to by the anointing of oil and their resultant healing. In the best-known incident, Mary Fielding Smith’s oxen were spared to bring her pioneer family, including a future President of the Church, Joseph F. Smith, to Utah. (Preston Nibley, Presidents of the Church, Deseret Book Co., 1959, 234–235.)

Though the prophets have spoken frequently about man’s responsibility to treat animals properly in this world, very little detail is known about the states of animals in the eternities. Greater emphasis is rightly placed upon man’s need to live the gospel and be worthy to return to his Heavenly Father where he will then learn the answers to such questions. Quoting again from the editorial cited at the beginning of this article: “Men cannot worship the Creator and look with careless indifference upon his creations. The love of all life helps man to the enjoyment of a better life. I exalt the spiritual nature of those in need of divine favor.” (Juvenile Instructor, April 1918, 182.)