

TREATMENT OF ANIMALS

Introduction:

Among the many issues connected with “personal rights” in our society today, the issue of “animal rights” has become a matter of grave concern to some. This concern has affected such areas as the use of animals in scientific experiments, the protection of wild life in populated areas, and environmental concerns over “endangered species.” Several celebrities have taken up the cause and made it popular, with new laws favoring the protection of animals being proposed or enacted.

The Scriptures speak to this issue only in an indirect way, since God’s word obviously places the greatest importance on human beings (created in God’s image) and their well being, both physical and spiritual. This however, does not mean that any of God’s creatures should be disregarded as unimportant.

The proper treatment of animals, therefore, seems to be restricted to the two following options:

- (1) Either a person may treat animals however he feels like, or (2) Animals should be treated in harmony with Biblical principles and examples.

Let us see what is said about the matter in the Scriptures.

I. CERTAINLY CHRISTIAN COMPASSION WOULD PROHIBIT ANYONE FROM MISTREATING, TORTURING OR ABUSING ANY OF GOD’S LIVING CREATURES.

II. THE FOLLOWING ARE BIBLICALLY APPROVED EXAMPLES OF WHY PEOPLE MAY KILL AN ANIMAL:

1. Animals may be killed for food.... Gen. 43:16; I Timothy 4:4; Acts 10:12-15
2. Animals may be killed in the course of offering sacrifices as an act of worship...Gen. 4:4; Heb. 9:18-22
3. Animals may be killed when proving to be a threat to human health or safety... Acts 28:3-5
4. Animals may be killed when they are destroying human food supplies...I Samuel 17:34-36
5. Animals may be killed to serve some other specifically stated purpose of God. Judges 20:48; Mark 5:11-13

Questions :

1. What other Biblical purposes do we have for killing an animal?
2. What about a person killing an animal merely for the sport of it, to experience a personal thrill, or to provide a stuffed “trophy” to brag about?