

GENESIS 1:20-25 (TASTY AND DELICIOUS)

One day a zoo-keeper noticed that a monkey was reading two books - the Bible and Darwin's The Origin of Species. In surprise he asked the ape, "Why are you reading both those books?"
"Well, I'm trying to figure out if I'm brother's keeper or my keeper's brother."

Most people love to go to zoos and see all the fun animals God created. When Hideko and I lived in Japan, we lived literally right next door to the Hamura zoo. My daughter has just started out on a new adventure – raising and handling big cats. She's responsible for three tigers right now. One of them she named Thorr after our son, her brother.

Wherever we go, there are animals to excite our imagination and entertain our lives. I was watching a special on crows just a few days ago with Hideko and it was amazing to see how intelligent they are. They are one of only three types of life that not only use, but actually make their own tools. They can also perform cognitive thinking in multiple stages – something that was previously thought only humans and primates could do.

Crows can recognize individual humans and remember them for over two years and can communicate their knowledge of specific humans to hundreds and even thousands of other crows. If I catch a crow and keep him trapped, after I release him, he will instruct all the other crows to stay away from me, teaching this even to the next generation.

At the Hamura Zoo by our house in Tokyo, they kept crows in a special area so that the people could accurately predict coming earthquakes before they happened. They are such amazing creatures and yet crows are a miniscule part of the vast array of life God created on planet earth.

Introduction: In a little less than two days, the fifth and part of the sixth days of creation, which were Thursday and Friday of the first week, God created every type of animal that exists. On Thursday He created the birds and other winged creatures and all of the life in the sea. And then on Friday, before creating man, he created all of the land animals that we've

come to know and love – as pets, as natural curiosities, and as nummy nummy dinners.

Just as with the rest of creation, these creatures were prepared by God for man's expected arrival. Today we'll talk about the six verses which have come to be the focus of our fishing vacations, our dreams of flying like the birds, and our afternoon naps with snuggle partners of the four footed variety.

Text Verse: Who knows if the spirit of man rises upward and if the spirit of the animal goes down into the earth?" Ecclesiastes 3:21

May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. God's Creation

Remember the words which open the pages of the Bible –

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

God is the Creator and therefore the creation is His. What happens to the creation should be as He purposes. He divides up the lands and the nations as He so chooses. He ordains what man can and cannot eat. He bestows authority on His creatures as He sees fit. He is the Creator and therefore the entire creation is subject to Him. He is the potter and the clay can be used, reformed, or disposed of as He determines.

Although all of this should seem painfully obvious to us, we unfortunately often fail to see it as clearly as that. Our modern world treats God's sovereign decisions as if they came from a lunatic.

God has reserved the land of Israel for Himself. Eight times in the Old Testament God specifically calls that piece of property "My land" and He implies it probably thousands of times. It is His alone to parcel out to whom He sees fit. And He has sovereignly given it to one group of people, Israel –

And because He loved your fathers, therefore He chose their descendants after them; and He brought you out of Egypt with His Presence, with His mighty power, driving out from before you nations greater and mightier than you, to bring you in, to give you their land *as* an inheritance, as *it is* this day. Deuteronomy 4:37, 38

But like many other issues, we snub God, spit on His word, and actively work against His ordinances. The land of Israel belongs to the Jewish people as a heritage forever. And because the world is actively working against this edict, the judgment of God will fall on all nations –

For behold, in those days and at that time,
When I bring back the captives of Judah and Jerusalem,
I will also gather all nations,
And bring them down to the Valley of Jehoshaphat;
And I will enter into judgment with them there
On account of My people, My heritage Israel,
Whom they have scattered among the nations;
They have also divided up My land. Joel 3:1, 2

Several things don't matter a bit, not an iota concerning this verse, 1) what you think about it, 2) what I think about it, or 3) what the rest of the world thinks about it. The only thing that matters is what God thinks about it. We are currently working to divide the land of Israel in a search for peace, but the Bible says that instead of peace we will only find war, destruction, and judgment.

Another unfortunate action man has recently pursued is the folly of “global warming.” In an attempt to restrict how we live and what we do with the world God has given us, people make up bizarre theories about our ability to affect global temperatures, despite the evidence being exactly the opposite.

Because of following this path, the oil God placed in the earth for our use is considered unclean. The trees God gave us for houses and fuel are placed as sacred idols which deserve worship instead of a chainsaw. But God ordained a different path for us –

“Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” Genesis 1:28

King David elaborated on what God ordained in Genesis when he penned the 8th Psalm –

What is man that You are mindful of him,
And the son of man that You visit him?
For You have made him a little lower than the angels,
And You have crowned him with glory and honor.
You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands;
You have put all *things* under his feet,
All sheep and oxen—
Even the beasts of the field,
The birds of the air,
And the fish of the sea
That pass through the paths of the seas. Psalm 8:4-8

Just like the Land of Israel and the earth we blasphemously call “Mother,” it’s become fashionable to reject the foods that we are given by God. Instead we treat them in a harsh manner as well. We can’t enjoy a good steak without being made to feel guilty about it by someone. People demand rights for animals when God has ordained that animals are to be eaten if we so desire. Later in Genesis 9 we read this –

Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move *on* the earth, and on all the fish of the sea. They are given into your hand. Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. I have given you all things, even as the green herbs. Genesis 9:1-3

And even those who do eat meat will often put restrictions on what kinds of meat we can and can’t eat. Misunderstanding our freedom in Christ, sects and denominations forbid pork, shellfish, and other tasty treats. None of this is biblical and all of it is harmful to the relationship we enjoy in the freedom of Jesus Christ.

Speaking of nummy nummy food, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14 –

I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that *there is* nothing unclean of itself; vs 14.

We'll talk more about the food we can eat a little later, but remember that the God of creation is the ultimate authority on what is allowed and what is forbidden in the use of His creation. If He allows something, then we interfere with that at our own peril. If we add restrictions that He didn't without obvious and valid reasons, then we are adding to that which isn't at our prerogative.

Likewise, if we detract from His restrictions, then we violate what He alone has the right to mandate. Either way, when we disobey God's law, then we state that we are more intelligent, more compassionate, or more important than He is.

II. The Fifth Day – An Abundance of Life

Have you ever taken the time to watch a bird of prey catch what it's after? My mom sent me a link a while ago of an Eagle Owl coming in for a piece of meat which was attached to a camera. The camera was set to record 1000 frames per second and the video lasted 59 seconds or a flight of 59,000 frames was recorded.

At first, the bird swoops in at ground level, below where the target is. As it gets closer, it starts to flap its wings to slow itself down while at the same time lowering its legs with its massive claws tucked in like a clenched fist.

As it got closer, it tucked it's legs back behind itself and put its wings out straight, having readied itself for the final few feet – its eyes never diverting from the target. A little closer and its tail feathers begin to fan out like a parachute behind the space shuttle as it lands. Within just a couple feet of the target, the wings fan out along with the tail so that the bird is flat like a wall, facing the target.

Just at this time, its legs rise to point straight out in front of it, while its body remains completely facing out. Within inches of the target, the claws

open up just like the mouth of a monster on a sci-fi show. During this entire time, the eyes of the bird never divert in any direction. At the same time its claws are opened up, its wings draw back and the wind rushes against them as it prepares to grab the target and simultaneously fly away.

The perfection of what occurs during this entire display is simply amazing to watch. When all of this occurs in real time, it happens faster than we could ever imagine. This type of beauty and precision comes directly from the mind of God as He constructed His creatures to both amaze us and dazzle our senses.

On the fifth day, which was Thursday, God did a marvelous work when He ordained life in the form of birds and sea life to flourish on the earth.

²⁰ Then God said, “Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens.”

²¹ So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that *it was* good.

²² And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.”

²³ So the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

As a side note on these verses, the King James Version translates verse 20 differently than most other translations. It says, “And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.”

This translation seems to imply that the sea creatures and the birds were produced out of the waters. However, a different translational choice will allow for a more probable interpretation –

Then God said, “Let the waters abound with an abundance of creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens. ...”

The modern translations clear up any sense that the waters were the source of the life of these creatures. Instead, God is the source and the water was the medium in which He created the sea life. The birds of the air were created by the same great Creator and their domain is the sky above us.

This should seem obvious, but it's important to separate these so that people can't jump to the conclusion that the waters are the source of life. For all we know, Darwin, who was raised in a Christian context and most probably with the King James Version, could have come to this insane conclusion as he developed his notion about the origin of species.

On this day God created the immense and much debated Leviathan which is mentioned in the book of Job. The description of it takes up the entire chapter and this, along with another beast we'll talk about later, the Behemoth, are highly disputed among liberal and even some conservative theologians today. Here's a portion of the description about Leviathan –

7 Can you fill his skin with harpoons,
Or his head with fishing spears?
8 Lay your hand on him;
Remember the battle—
Never do it again!
9 Indeed, any hope of overcoming him is false;
Shall one not be overwhelmed at the sight of him? ...
14 Who can open the doors of his face,
With his terrible teeth all around?
15 His rows of scales are his pride,
Shut up tightly as with a seal;
16 One is so near another
That no air can come between them;
17 They are joined one to another,
They stick together and cannot be parted.
18 His sneezings flash forth light,
And his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning.
19 Out of his mouth go burning lights;
Sparks of fire shoot out.

20 Smoke goes out of his nostrils,
As from a boiling pot and burning rushes.
21 His breath kindles coals,
And a flame goes out of his mouth...
26 Though the sword reaches him, it cannot avail;
Nor does spear, dart, or javelin.
27 He regards iron as straw,
And bronze as rotten wood.
28 The arrow cannot make him flee;
Slingstones become like stubble to him.
29 Darts are regarded as straw;
He laughs at the threat of javelins.
30 His undersides are like sharp potsherds;
He spreads pointed marks in the mire.
31 He makes the deep boil like a pot;
He makes the sea like a pot of ointment.
32 He leaves a shining wake behind him;
One would think the deep had white hair.
33 On earth there is nothing like him,
Which is made without fear.
-Job 41:7-33

I didn't cite the whole description, but it was something that God spoke to Job about as if he was already well familiar with it. Modern scholars try to claim this was probably a crocodile, but describing a crocodile like this would be like giving a description of a 747 when speaking about a little boy's toy kite. This was undoubtedly a dinosaur of some type that Job had seen with his own eyes.

Have you ever wondered about the question "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?" We have the answer in the verses we're looking at as well. God created the birds in a dazzling array of types and kinds, including the chicken. When the first rooster sidled up to the first hen and rolled his eyes at her, she gave a coo, he gave a cockle-doodle-doo, and a little while later there was mom sitting on the first eggs.

Matthew Henry says of the fifth day of creation, “Each day, hitherto, has produced very noble and excellent beings, which we can never sufficiently admire; but we do not read of the creation of any living creature till the fifth day, of which these verses give us an account. The work of creation not only proceeded gradually from one thing to another, but rose and advanced gradually from that which was less excellent to that which was more so, teaching us to press towards perfection and endeavour that our last works may be our best works.”

Mr. Henry is equating each day’s increased nobility of the creation with a general guideline for us to live our lives. We should endeavor to increase the quality of our works as we develop in life so that what we accomplish is progressively better, thus emulating God’s handiwork in creation.

In a similar manner, our lives as Christians should develop as well. Instead of getting saved and then spending the rest of our lives at a marginal level of Christian maturity, we should be actively reading our Bibles, learning about what God has given us in creation, and working out the fruits of our salvation in the help of others through discipleship and ministry.

Let’s move on to verse 24 and into the sixth day which is Friday –

²⁴ Then God said, “Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, *each* according to its kind”; and it was so.

²⁵ And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that *it was good*.

Have you ever stood and watched a cow as it chews the cud? Their mouths just kind of move from side to side and their eyes look off into absolutely nothingness. I can’t think of a more monotonous sight in the world. When I see them doing this, I wonder what they’re thinking... The funny thing is, God knows.

Every animal on earth, whether it’s the bizarre cats that control our entire life, or the monkey swinging from the tree, whether it’s a squirrel or a yak, every animal has a specific purpose and was designed in a specific way in

anticipation of the coming man. God knows every thing about every one of them, every thought they think, and every move they will make. King David says in the 139th Psalm – “*Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is high, I cannot attain it.*” This is exactly how I feel when I think of the works which come from the hand of God.

On this day came the other great and marvelous creature described in Job. This animal is often footnoted as an elephant or a hippopotamus but listen to the description of the Behemoth and see if it matches either –

15“Look now at the behemoth, which I made along with you;

He eats grass like an ox.

16 See now, his strength is in his hips,
And his power is in his stomach muscles.

17 He moves his tail like a cedar;
The sinews of his thighs are tightly knit.

18 His bones are like beams of bronze,
His ribs like bars of iron.

19 He is the first of the ways of God;
Only He who made him can bring near His sword.

20 Surely the mountains yield food for him,
And all the beasts of the field play there.

21 He lies under the lotus trees,
In a covert of reeds and marsh.

22 The lotus trees cover him with their shade;
The willows by the brook surround him.

23 Indeed the river may rage,
Yet he is not disturbed;
He is confident, though the Jordan gushes into his mouth,

24 Though he takes it in his eyes,
Or one pierces his nose with a snare.

-Job 40:15-24

First, this description says that he moves his tail like a cedar. Have you ever seen the tail of either an elephant or a hippopotamus? Both of them are like little dinky pencils. This creature had a tail like a large tree. Second, this guy is said to be the “first of the ways of God” as spoken from God’s own

mouth. To say this is a hippo or an elephant is to call into question the truth of the inspiration of the Bible. This creature was massive; so large in fact that when the Jordan was at flood stage, raging at a full flow, the Behemoth remained unmoved.

As with the Leviathan, this creature was both familiar to Job and perfectly fits the description of a dinosaur. As a final nail in the doubter's coffin, no such animal exists in the Jordan basin today, clearly indicating that it was neither an elephant nor a hippo. Rather, it was a type of animal no longer in existence today' a dinosaur

III. Tasty and Delicious

One of my favorite things to do, second only to sleeping, is to eat. And tasty animals are right at the top of my food enjoyment meter. Other than bread and an Asian fruit called durian, I don't think I enjoy anything more than eating a well cooked beast.

If you've been to one of my barbecues, you've seen that I buy enough meat for 5 times as many people as show up. This is so I can eat barbecued tasties for weeks after the party. (buuurp... oh excuse me!)

One area indicating a weak understanding or a poor interpretation of the Bible is revealed on the dinner tables of the Christian, or pseudo-Christian world. What God ordains as good is acceptable for the believer. Finding fault in or misrepresenting what God has allowed then is sin...plain and simple.

Christians have every right to claim as their own the Chinese proverb which says, "If it flies in the sky, if it swims in the ocean, or if it moves on the earth, I will eat it."

We saw earlier that in the first verses of Chapter 9 of Genesis, God allowed Noah and those after him to eat all forms of life. "Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you." Not every "every" in the Bible really means "every" just as not all "alls" in the Bible mean "all." Context is always king

when interpreting the Bible, and in the context of this verse the “every” **does** mean every.

There were no restrictions on the people of the world about what they could eat all the way up until the time of Moses and the Law. At that time, God set aside a special group of people for His own special purposes. The restrictions levied upon them were upon them alone and all the other people of the world were allowed to continue with Saturday morning bacon fests and Tuesday afternoon possum cook-offs.

When Christ came, He fulfilled the Law on our behalf and the law is set aside in Christ. This is stated explicitly three times in the book of Hebrews and it is alluded to numerous times in the New Testament. The Law is in no way binding on the Christian, in any way shape or form. We obtain our doctrine for life and conduct from the New Testament. To add to, subtract from, or misrepresent the New Testament for the believer is sin. Period.

There are numerous references to the suitability of all foods for the believer, but the example of Peter in Acts is as clear as they come:

Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. And a voice came to him, “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.” But Peter said, “Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.” And a voice *spoke* to him again the second time, “What God has cleansed you must not call common.” This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again. Acts 10:9-16

This account hearkens back to the book of Ezekiel where he was told to eat defiled food as a sign to the people of Israel that they would likewise eat defiled food in their exile. But Ezekiel cried out to God –

“Ah, Lord GOD! Indeed I have never defiled myself from my youth till now; I have never eaten what died of itself or was torn by beasts, nor has

abominable flesh ever come into my mouth.” Then He said to me, “See, I am giving you cow dung instead of human waste, and you shall prepare your bread over it.” Ezekiel 4:9-15

In the case of Ezekiel, God allowed him to substitute a clean source of fuel for an unclean one. By doing this, he maintained Ezekiel’s ability to uphold the law. However, in Peter’s case, God repeated His statement that what was presented to him was no longer unclean and he was to acknowledge this.

This account actually has two separate applications, both of which are equally valid and both of which are to be understood in the greater context of the New Testament. In the first application, God was ordaining all foods as clean because of the work of Jesus – the fulfillment of the Law.

In the second application, God was showing Peter that Gentiles, whose tummies were full of these previously unclean animals, were to be considered clean when they called on Jesus as Lord. He purified them of any defilement and therefore no further cleansing, such as dietary restrictions, was needed then or in the future.

Because we’re talking about food today, and specifically about what the Bible allows I want to take a moment and warn you about “biblical diets” which people promote in advertising and on Christian channels. These are never more than a sham and are always taken out of context for someone to make a buck. Maybe you’ve heard of the Ezekiel Diet.

This is a diet which supposedly is the biblical way of staying healthy... it must be right? It’s in the Bible. The Ezekiel diet comes from the passage I referenced a moment ago – “Also take for yourself wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and spelt; put them into one vessel, and make bread of them for yourself.”

So some money grubber put together bread made of this stuff and is selling it as a nutritious diet so you can live forever. Never mind the fact that the **reason** for Ezekiel eating this stuff is mentioned a few verses later –

Moreover He said to me, “Son of man, surely I will cut off the supply of bread in Jerusalem; they shall eat bread by weight and with anxiety, and shall drink water by measure and with dread, that they may lack bread and water, and be dismayed with one another, and **waste away** because of their iniquity. Ezekiel 4:16, 17

Ezekiel was told to eat this stuff as a subsistence level diet – just enough to keep a person alive each day, but not enough to live properly. The devil is in the details that the Ezekiel Diet folks left out. Be really careful about anyone who promotes a diet which is supposedly a biblical remedy to health and fitness. Whether it’s the Daniel Diet, the Jesus Loaf of Bread Diet, whatever...

Paul explains in the New Testament the goodness of the foods God has placed in the world and the deception concerning them which is pushed upon the unsuspecting –

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, ² speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, ³ forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. ⁴ For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; ⁵ for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. 1 Timothy 4:1-5

IV. Care for the Creation

We have just one more short section today because I feel compelled, after talking about eating all the tasty animals that God has given us, to make sure each of us looks at God’s creation as valuable and worth preserving and that we don’t abuse it or waste what is so precious.

I talked about the owl awhile ago and how splendidly it flew in to grab its meal. When we carefully consider them, every animal, every bird, every sea creature that God created is a marvel of imagination and a delight to our

minds. Let me read a few of the marvelous things God has given us in the animal world –

Flying frogs change color throughout the day. They are greenish-blue in sunlight and green in the evening. At night there are black.

The king Cobra can grow to almost 20 feet in length and is regarded as the largest poisonous snake in the world. A tiny amount of its poison can kill up to 30 people.

Anteaters protect their long claws by walking on their knuckles. That's why they look as if they are limping.

Bats eat all types of food. There is no restriction where their diet is concerned.

The hippopotamus's eyes, ears and nostrils are on the top of its head. This enables it to stand or sit, almost completely covered by water with as little showing above the surface as possible.

There is no sideways movement for a cat's jaws.

Armadillos have four babies of the same sex at a time. They are perfect identical quadruplets. They sleep for an average of 18.5 hours a day and they can walk underwater. They are the only other species outside of humans that can carry and transmit leprosy.

Giraffes have no vocal chords, but cats have 100 vocal chords.

A goat's eyes have got rectangular pupils.

A camel's milk never curdles.

I could go on with fun facts all day. God has presented us with such a dazzling array of life on this planet and every type fills a specific role. If God has given such tender care and detail to the life He's created, we then should be equally careful to preserve it for the generations to come.

I love my little dogs,
But to me cats just don't please
The way I enjoy a cow, is with potatoes and some peas

Bears are amazing, but one needs to keep some space
If not you may lose an arm, or the nose right off your face

Watching squirrels reminds me
That God knows humor too
Who can't but laugh at how they act
And the funny things they do

Wherever you go on this big round ball
All types of creatures abound
From the really big to the really small
Everywhere, they can be found

God has lavished us with His loving hand
In the beasties that He's made
Everywhere and in every land
In the open sun or in the darkest shade

So let us take good care
Of the beasts He put under our control
Whether out in nature, or in a zoo,
Or beside our dinner roll

And God saw that it was good.

This is the middle of the first Friday on earth which is the sixth day of creation. Everything to this point has been created by God in anticipation of His final great act. The house is complete and He has one more thing to make to finish His marvelous work. Next week we'll look at the stupendous wonder of the sixth day – the creation of man.

Last week I told you that only on the third day of creation did God say "it is

good” twice. However, after creating the animals on the sixth day he says “it is good” and then pronounces an even greater blessing at the end of the day. The first Friday on earth was a very good day. And since the time of Jesus’ cross, Friday has become known as Good Friday, forming a wonderful parallel to the first Friday when God finished up His wonderful works of creation. Next week, we’ll look over those last verses.