

~ In the Beginning: God, Man, Animals ~

God created the heavens and the earth, man, woman, and all the animals. God created man in His own image. He was without sin and was perfect. God then gave Adam dominion over all the animals. **“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground’” (Genesis 1:26).**

God brought all the animals to Adam so he could name them. When someone names something it gives them a sense of ownership. God brought the animals to Adam because he was to rule over them. He was to be their master. In that same way God named man. He is our master and has dominion over us.

In God’s perfect world man was without sin, and there was no fear or suffering. Animals were not afraid of man or other animals. Man and all the animals were vegetarians. **“Then God said, ‘I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food’” (Genesis 1:29-30).**

When God had finished everything He had made, **“God saw all that he had made, and it was very good” (Genesis 1:31).** I do not picture a lion tearing into the flesh of a defenseless calf. Before the fall of man there was no suffering or death. Also, when Noah gathered the animals to put on the ark, they were not afraid of him, or each other. **“Pairs of clean and unclean animals, of birds and of all creatures that move along the ground, male and female, came to Noah and entered the ark, as God had commanded Noah” (Genesis 7:8-9).** Noah gathered the animals and loaded them. This tells us 2 things; that they obeyed Noah, and that they were not afraid of him or the other animals hurting them. They were obviously not eating each other at this time or there would have been only carnivores getting off the ark.

It wasn’t until Noah had gotten off the ark that fear grew between man and animals and between animals and animals. **“The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything” (Genesis 9:2-3).**

Once sin had entered the world, man lost the perfect world that God had created for them. They lost the closeness they had with God, along with the loyalty of the animals. After they left the ark, man was permitted to eat animals and animals began to eat other animals. Fear and self-preservation entered into prey animals, with the instinct to fight or run for their lives.

God says He will return and restore that which was taken, and the world will be how it once was. **“Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the**

yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox” (Isaiah 11:5-7).

I believe that Noah was able to have closeness with the animals because he was perfect, and God needed someone He could bring the animals to. **“But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God” (Genesis 6:8-9 KJV).** God blessed Noah’s sons and spared their lives to replenish the earth, but it never says that they were perfect.

This is why I believe He commanded them to eat meat and that **“The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea” (Genesis 9:2).** Since they were not perfect, because of sin, they could no longer have dominion over the animals without having to overcome a lack of trust and disobedience. For with sin in the world, this is what we must overcome to have closeness with our Master.

However, there is one more aspect about the Garden of Eden and the relationship between man and animals that we need to look at. When the snake spoke to Eve in the garden, she did not say, “Wow! A talking snake! Quick Adam, come see this talking snake!” No, she struck up a conversation and began to talk to him. This makes me think of the possibility that there might have been communication between man and animals before sin entered the world. If an animal talking to Eve was out of the ordinary, why didn’t she ask the snake who he was?

Why didn’t she ask the snake what gave him the ability to talk, when all the other animals could not? The fact that she was not suspicious of a talking animal makes me believe that it may not have been out of the ordinary for man and animals to communicate.

Man and animals had a special bond before sin entered the world, just like man and God. The problems we have with our animals not obeying are the same problems God has with us. I believe these problems can be linked back to 3 primary factors: disobedience, lack of trust (due to self-preservation), and a lack of communication.

God tells us to trust in Him. **“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding (self-preservation); in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight” (Proverbs 3:5-6).** He also expects obedience so we will follow His commands. In Deuteronomy God tells His people what will happen if they obey Him and what will happen if they do not, **“See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse – the blessing if you obey the commands of the LORD your God that I am giving you today; the curse if you disobey the commands of the LORD your God and turn from the way that I command you today. . .” (Deuteronomy 11:26-28).**

Not only does God want us to trust Him and expects obedience, but He wants to have a relationship. He wants to communicate with us. **“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me” (John 10:27).** Once we have received the Spirit, God is then able to speak to us and we are able to hear His voice. God is then able to communicate His will to us and we are able to follow Him.

“I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength. . .” (Ephesians 1:17-19).

Just like our horses, there are consequences for the choices we make. If our horses do what is right, we reward them with relief. If they choose to do things their own way, we make them work at it until they look for a way out. They look for a better way, because doing things their way is too much work. The Lord says, **“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).** This is what good horsemen offer their horses, and the Lord has the same thing waiting for us; if we would only follow His will.

Sin is what keeps us away from God, and the price of sin is death. However, by accepting Jesus into our heart the blood that He shed wipes away all of our sins and we can be close to Him; just like He intended in His perfect world. The more time we spend with Him, the more He grows in us, until we are transformed into His image and become like Him.

What is God? God is love. **“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no records of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres” (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).** Having true harmony with your horse is not a change of mind, it is a change of heart, and the same is true with the Lord.

God is love and He waits for us to turn to Him. A good horseman does not drive a horse to do a job every step of the way. Instead he waits for the horse, until it is their idea. If he forced the horse to do a job, it would then become the will of the man pushing the horse, instead of the will of the horse. If it is not the will of the horse, the horse will likely not want to obey the human, and will resist. The same is true with the Lord. He waits for us to come to Him.

With our horses, we set it up through pressure and relief, until the horse wants to do the job for us. When the horse is not doing what we want, he experiences pressure that is undesirable. Then, when he turns and does things our way, we immediately give him relief. By doing this, what we would like our horse to do, they not only do, but they would have it no other way. The will that we would have for our horse, becomes the will of the horse. This is what God wants for us; *True Harmony Between God and Man.*

God created the world and He controls everything in it. He has dominion over us, but not wanting robots, He gives us free choice to serve Him or not serve Him. God gave us dominion over the animals and I believe that the problems we have with them are to teach us how to grow closer to God. Today, man does rule over the animals. If we believe that God does not rule over man, and that there are not consequences for our actions, we are going to have a wake up call some day.

A lack of trust and communication, along with disobedience, are what keeps us from true harmony with God. This is what keeps us from true harmony with our animals as well. We know that love works with our horses. Tom Dorrance understood this and Ray Hunt has been trying to show a form of this to people for years, just in a round about way.

If we apply what Paul says in 1 Corinthians about love to our horsemanship, and continually approach the horse in this matter, we will gain trust. However, we must also have obedience. If all we have is trust, they often walk over the top of us. Without obedience, they will do what they want, and they will not obey us.

So we put some walls up and let the horse run into them. The horse does what he wants and runs into some pressure, until it is uncomfortable and he takes the path that we have chosen for him. It is easy to tell if your horse is really with you, just give him his head and give him the slightest cues and see if he does exactly what you want him to do.

The Lord does the same thing with us to test our obedience. He will try to guide us and if we will not listen, He lets us go get into trouble, so we will come back and appreciate the better life He has to offer. A frightened colt with bad experiences does not become a bridle horse overnight. Similarly, a confused person with bad experiences can't totally understand and become one with God overnight. However, with patience and timing, a horse can learn to trust and be obedient, and a person can turn to God and live the life they were called to live.