

Are Animals Smart?

Linville Dunaway, Corinth Christian Church

In general we think that animals are dumb. Some can learn a few things and some animals are smarter than others, but at best their intelligence is limited. However, in one way they are smarter than some people. They don't claim that there is no God as some people do, and they don't live in rebellion against God. Man, the intelligent creation, has a sinful nature and can be as cruel and deadly as any beast. Animals live and do what they were put here to do.

In Numbers 22:21-34 is the account of the prophet Balaam's cruelty to the donkey that he rode. Balaam wanted to go to the king of Moab to curse the Hebrews and win great rewards. While knowing that God didn't want him to go, he wanted to go. God was angry because he desired to have the gold and reward of the Moabites instead of serving God.

As he traveled with the servants he didn't realize that the angel of God was before him and intended to kill him. The beast that he rode

could see the angel whereas Balaam could not.

Although he was a prophet he could not see the angel because his mind and heart was set on the riches and honor that the king of Moab was going to give him. The donkey turned away from the angel into a field and was struck by Balaam. He didn't know that if the animal had went on the angel would have struck him with the drawn sword.

A second time the donkey turned away from the angel Balaam's foot was caught between the donkey and the wall. Again the beast was beaten with the rod. He didn't know that the faithful beast had saved his life once again. Then as an angry Balaam forced the animal to go forward toward the angel a third time the donkey fell down, fearing to go toward the angel. Balaam was so angry that he wished for a sword to kill the donkey. All he could do was to strike the animal once again. At this God gave the donkey the ability to speak with a man's voice.

Finally Balaam's eyes were opened and he could see that God was displeased with him. He found out that the beast had saved his life. What lengths God would go to for the purpose of showing a man his sin. The animal could sense what a sinful prophet could not. In this the animal was smarter than the man.

Throughout the bible God used animals in various ways in his dealings with man. A great fish swallowed Jonah and delivered him to the place he needed to be, ravens brought food to Elijah, and others were used by the Lord to accomplish his purposes. When the Lord spoke to an animal it obeyed. Whether it was the lions with Daniel, or the unbroken colt that Jesus rode on, they gave no trouble doing the Lord's will.

At times the Lord sent animals, frogs, lice, flies, locusts, and other insects to accomplish a task and they obeyed. Wouldn't it be wonderful if man would obey the Lord like the rest of his creation does? Sure it would, but man doesn't. It is man who makes wars, cause hardships and tears among the people of the world. Mankind does some great and good things, but he also does terrible things both to men and beasts. Man has made chemicals and weapons that could destroy the world. Man, the intelligent creation, made in the image of God, dares to try and change God's word. Courts have ruled that God is unconstitutional, and they promote deviant lifestyles that God calls abomination. Animals have more sense than that. As it says in **1 Corinthians 8**, "Knowledge puffeth up. Man is full of pride and vanity and thinks he knows more than he does."

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