

Talking to the Animals: Natural Revelation

Written by Calvin Fox

Monday, 27 October 2008 08:52 -

TALKING TO THE ANIMALS- HOW DID THEY HEAR GOD? HOW DO WE HEAR HIM TALK TO US?

Genesis 1:20 And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens." 21 So God created ... 22 And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply ...

God said: "Birds, fly and multiply" and they do. Exactly to whom did God speak? What language did He use?

Job 38:8 "who shut in the sea with doors ... 10 and prescribed limits for it and set bars and doors, 11 and said, 'Thus far shall you come, and no farther... 12 "Have you commanded the morning... and caused the dawn to know its place...?

Job 39:26 "is it by your understanding that the hawk soars and spreads his wings toward the south? 27 Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up and makes his nest on high? [God is saying that it is by His understanding, His command, not Man's]

Here God speaks to, the sea and the sun and the birds, telling them what to do and were to go. Literally? What language? How do the sea and the sun hear? Do these creatures have innate (instinctual) understanding of God's commands or does God give commands immediately, directly and verbally to each creature (in this case, the hawks and eagles)? God did not actually utter words? No. This is figurative, poetic language. Sometimes, the "the Word of God" is non-verbal, but real, effective communication from God. Sometimes the references to God "speaking" are metaphorical, not literal. *Genesis 3: 2 The woman said to the serpent, ... 4 ...the serpent said to the woman 9 ... the LORD God called to the man...10 He answered, "I heard you14 ..the LORD God said to the serpent...*

What language are these speakers- serpent, Eve, Adam and God- using? Is it verbal? audible? cf Balaam's ass -Num. 22:27-30 with 2 Peter 2:16. It is written in Genesis and Numbers that these six characters used verbal speech with each other. They obviously did not. They communicated and again "talking" is a metaphor. We use it ourselves when we say, "The Lord spoke to me". "I heard the Lord speaking."

Psalms 19:1 The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. 2 Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard.

Creation is the subject in this verse. To whom is Creation communicating? God? Man?

Creation is proclaiming, speaking and revealing knowledge- but with no words or speech! How does it do this? It does this by being what it is. Here is non-verbal, non-propositional communication, compare this to Music or Painting or Dance. In this way, God speaks through Creation to men, not verbally or propositionally; He reveals himself through the things he has made (everything from stars and trees to animals). Men are accountable for learning what Creation says to them without words. To study Nature [geology, biology, astronomy, etc] is to study God. It is to "hear" the non-verbal Word of God.

This provides the rationale for pursuing Knowledge. There is objective Reality (biological, botanical, zoological, geological, astronomical, etc) and all of it speaks, i.e.- it reveals, it communicates, to those who would study it. What Reality says, God says. What reality reveals, God reveals. Not only facts about itself, but, more than that. Nature speaks about its Creator, e.g.- Design in Nature reveals a Designer. This is true even if the observer does not believe in the Creator. This is called "General Revelation" in contrast to Special Revelation, which actually is verbal and propositional (and usually written down as Scripture). When conflicted, the latter takes precedence over the former.

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ROM 1:19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made.

Christians learn about God from the Word which is written, by using all the skills and knowledge required for reading and studying Scripture. How are human beings to hear or learn from the Word which comes through everything from stars and trees to animals? By Reason and the so-called Scientific Method [observation, induction hypothesis, replication] in conjunction with the Written Word; and through the inner illumination of God's Spirit within

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