

God (Revelation 5:13; 4:8), are heroes (Numbers 22:21-39), fulfill prophecy (John 12:14-15), and are recipients of God's covenant promises (Genesis 9:15; Hosea 2:18). Most importantly, however, animals have been part of God's plan for Creation from the beginning (Genesis 1:20-31) and are part of God's promised plan for the restored kingdom (Isaiah 11:6-9).

3. Why did God give humanity dominion over all the animals?

Dominion in Genesis 1:28 means faithful and wise stewardship (Luke 12:42) where we are appointed as caretakers of the animals and of the whole earth (Genesis 2:15). The very next passage (Genesis 1:29) tells us our food is to be fruits and greens, so clearly *dominion* is not a license to kill and eat animals. Instead it is an instruction to take care of the animals and to lead them in the way of love and peace (Isaiah 11:6).

4. Did God give us permission to eat animals after the flood?

God tells us what is good but also gives us the freedom to act contrary to what is good, albeit with negative consequences (James 4:17, Deuteronomy 30:15). When we began killing animals, cooking their flesh, and seeing them as food, God described this behavior as following our own "evil imaginations" (Genesis 8:20-21), in contrast

to following the "very good" instructions God gave us in the beginning to eat only fruits and greens (Genesis 1:29-31). This behavior brings fear and violence into the world (Genesis 9:2; Habakkuk 2:17), which are contrary to God's ways of love and peace (Galatians 5:22-23). We should therefore be motivated to do good rather than looking for ways to justify doing evil (1 Corinthians 10:23).

5. Why did God command animal sacrifices?

It was a test to reveal what is in our heart (2 Chronicles 32:31), just as God tested Abraham by commanding him to sacrifice his son Isaac despite not actually wanting him to do so (Genesis 22:1-18). God has never desired animal sacrifices (Psalm 51:16, Psalm 40:6, Isaiah 1:11), but instead has always desired mercy (Matthew 9:13, Hosea 6:6), obedience to God's original instructions (Jeremiah 7:22-23), and to wholeheartedly love God and neighbor (Mark 12:33). By walking to his own death like a lamb to slaughter (Isaiah 53:7, John 1:29), Jesus ended the system of animal sacrifices that were being carried out for centuries in God's name.

6. Was Jesus an animal liberator?

Yes. The bible says Jesus entered the temple court where people were buying and selling animals for slaughter; He overturned

the tables and drove out all the animals and people there (John 2:15), calling the animal exploiters a "den of thieves" (Matthew 21:12-13) who "come only to steal and kill and destroy" (John 10:10).

7. Does Jesus want us to eat fish?

No. Jesus lived in a fishing village and recruited fishermen as disciples (Matthew 4:19). He said he had much more to say to his followers that they were not yet ready to bear but that he would provide his holy spirit to guide them further into truth (John 16:12-13). He also said his true followers would do greater works than he did in his lifetime because of this holy spirit he sends us (John 14:12). Jesus prayed for the kingdom to come on earth as it is in heaven (Matthew 6:10), and that kingdom describes animals no longer being killed (Isaiah 6:9). So ceasing to kill and eat animals, including fish, would necessarily be one such truth the holy spirit leads us into.

8. Does harming animals hinder our ability to bring others to Christ?

Yes. Paul says if what we eat causes someone distress then we are not walking in love (Romans 14:15). Ask any vegan and they will testify that it causes them great distress to know that animals suffer because of our food choices. Since we are instructed to "do everything in love" (1 Corinthians 16:14), it would be wise to