

Elder Vernon Johnson  
Animals  
Raven

Animals in the scripture are often associated each with a particular bible subject or principle. The Raven is closely associated with the flesh nature of fallen man. God uses the raven in the scriptures to teach us spiritual principles about the nature of man in his depraved fallen state.

The words, raven and ravens, appear exactly eleven times in the scripture. The first time it appeared was in connection with Noah sending forth birds out of the ark to determine if the waters were abated off the face of the ground: Gen. 8:7 “And he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth.” The raven did not return unto the ark but was satisfied to eat the dead carcasses that were floating on the top of the flood waters. The raven is black, which color is closely associated with sin in the scriptures. Man in his fallen state is totally depraved and sinful. The raven had no message for the inhabitants of the ark except that it was completely selfish and had no concern for the inhabitants of the ark. Likewise, as Paul stated: Rom. 7:18 “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing:” Our fleshly nature is altogether wicked and all the works thereof are evil (See Gal. 5:19-21).

The raven is classified of God in the Old Testament as one of the unclean animals:

1. Lev. 11:15 “Every raven after his kind;”
2. Deu. 14:14 “And every raven after his kind,”

One of the purposes of God in classifying some animals as clean and some as unclean was to show us the difference between that which is righteous and that which is unrighteous in the eyes of God. The clean animals would be typical of Christ and typical of the inner man of the born again child of God who has been cleansed by the blood of Christ. The unclean are typical of the fleshly nature of man which, of course, is not changed in regeneration. The fleshly nature of the elect will be changed in the resurrection of the body.

The uncleanness of the fleshly nature of man is illustrated by the raven in Prov. 30:17 “The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.” In this scripture the ravens and the young eagles are depicted as being like the vultures in our country as they eat the dead things of the earth. The fleshly nature of man is like that in that in

our fleshly nature we eat of the total depravity of man which is dead in trespasses and sins.

In the following passage the raven is associated with confusion and emptiness: Is. 34:11 “But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness.”

Lest we get the impression that God does not have any care for the fleshly bodies of his elect we read in the following verses:

1. Job 38:41 “Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat.”
2. Ps. 147:9 “He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.”
3. Luke 12:24 “Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?”

God takes care for our natural fleshly needs and provides for our necessities just as he provides for the necessities of the raven. The Lord loved us in that Christ died to redeem us from the sins of our flesh and we in our flesh will see God in heaven.

Moreover, in our dealings with our fleshly nature while we live on earth should consider the servitude that God made of the ravens:

1. 1 Ki. 17:4 “And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.”
2. 1 Ki.17:6 “And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.”

Like as God made servants of the unclean ravens to feed the prophet, so we are to bring our flesh into servitude of the inner man: 1 Cor. 9:27 “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.” Not only are we to mortify the deeds of the flesh and to present our bodies a living sacrifice, we are also to subject our bodies to the inner man.