

## Pets in Heaven? 3 Views: Yes



By [Nathan Jones](#)

I was zipping through the TV channels in the typical male fashion the other night and came to a screeching halt (more like a crash, really) on Jack Van Impe's television show "Jack Van Impe Presents." In the 2-3 seconds I give per channel, hearing the words "your pets will definitely be waiting for you in Heaven" caused my rapid channel changing to immediately cease.

What actually did feel like watching a car crash, I was frozen spellbound as Jack and his wife continued to explain that everyone's Rex, Fluffy and Mojo that had ever died now reside in the hereafter, ready to pick up the ball once more and play with their old masters. They then presenting a video they had made that supposedly proves everyone's pets are waiting for them in the afterlife, and stated that over 500 noted theologians agree with them.

Can this be true — are my dearly departed pets waiting for me up in Heaven? And if so, what kinds of theological problems do I now have to contend with? What if not just pets, but every animal, tree and microbe that ever lived since Creation is waiting for me in Heaven as well? Will the New Earth be big enough to house all of these creatures? Am I going to have to share my heavenly mansion with cows and chickens and rhinos and things? Are animals also going to be raptured, as every fish I've ever owned and snakes and squids and aardvarks fly up with me to meet Jesus in the clouds? And on the flip-side, shouldn't animals that trample people, sting babies and devour children go to Hell?

All I had wanted to do was cool my brain watching that cute Shaun the Sheep, and instead my mind was left racing over whether Shaun has a soul or not. (Well, actually, Shaun is claymation, so at least that problem's solved.)

Because of the afterlife and eschatological boondoggles the Van Impe's had put me in, I decided to seek answers by watching a "Christ in Prophecy" Dr. Reagan had made a few years back based on a letter from Michelle Shannon of Houston, Texas, titled [Will Our Pets Be in Heaven?](#) Mrs. Shannon has done a lot of good research into the subject of whether

pets go to Heaven, and has written the following article in support of the view that, yes, pets do go to Heaven.

### **View #1: Yes**

Our dog, Sable, died when she was just over 9 years old.

We had taken her to the vet just six days earlier and a tumor was found. But the vet said she was otherwise in great health. So, we decided to have the tumor removed after our camping trip that weekend.

When we returned Sunday, Sable was dying. She struggled to greet my husband, Steve, and then slumped down, breathing laboriously. She would not get up again.

We knew she would not make it through the night, so we stayed with her, gently stroking her fur and scratching her favorite places, until she was gone — just before midnight.

What a blessing it was to us to be able to be there for her in her last moments. We are greatly comforted that she was not alone.

### **Seeking an Explanation**

It's been a long time since we lost a pet. This time, though, we had a 5-year-old who would need an explanation. But, we knew what to say. It would be "easy," regardless of our tears because we ourselves believed what we would say: "Yes, honey, Sable is in heaven with the Lord Jesus, and He is taking great care of her. And, yes, one day we will see her again."

Over the past few years, it has been very disappointing to hear what other Christians have to say about animal death. One source said, in referring to the New Earth (our eternal abode), "there will be no animals at all..." Another said, "The Bible does not give us any reason to say yes to the question of whether or not a pet goes to heaven."

Well, I have a problem with these conclusions. While it is true that the Bible is about Man, not animals, and that there is much about animals we are not told, God has given us just enough to comfort us.

God cares for the animals He created:

- [Revelation 4:11](#) tells us that all things were created for God's pleasure.
- [Matthew 10:29](#) says that even when a little sparrow falls to the ground, God notices.
- [Luke 12:6](#) says that God never forgets about the animals.
- [Psalm 104:21-30](#) and [Matthew 6:26](#) describe how God Himself feeds the animals.
- [Proverbs 12:10](#) declares that a righteous man cares for the needs of his animals.
- [Job 12:10](#) assures us that *"In His hand is the life of every creature."*

Man's sin brought death and suffering to animals. God had decreed in [Genesis 1:29-30](#) that green plants and fruit were to be the diet for all creatures. People and animals alike were to be strictly herbivores. Carnivorous activity necessitates death and suffering, which, of course, in the beginning, would have had no part in the beautiful creation God had called "very good" ([Genesis 1:25](#)).

Man was given the responsibility of serving as overseer of the animals. In fact, it wasn't until after the flood experienced by Noah that animals became afraid of people ([Genesis 9:2](#)). When Man chose to rebel against God, Man brought down not only himself but also all those for whom he was responsible. In [Genesis 3:17](#) God told Adam: *"Cursed is the ground because of you..."* According to [Hosea 4:3](#) this curse affected animals too: *"Because of [the sins of Man], the land mourns, and... the beasts of the field and the birds of the air and the fish of the sea are dying."* Paul confirmed this in [Romans 8:20](#) when he wrote: *"For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it..."*

But there is good news! Animals share in and even look forward to the redemption of Mankind accomplished by Jesus on the Cross. Because God cares for His animal creations, as seen above, they also reap the benefits of the redeeming Cross of Jesus. When He returns, the creation will be restored to its original "very good" state, and carnivorous activity will cease. This promise is found in [Isaiah 11:6-11](#) where God says, *"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 the lion will eat straw like the ox... They will neither harm nor destroy on all My holy mountain for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord..."* ([Isaiah 65:25](#)).

In his allegorical book, *The Great Divorce*, C. S. Lewis gives us a beautiful picture of a redeemed lady arriving in Heaven with a glorious processional of animals. An observer asks his angelic teacher:

"And how... but hullo! What are all these animals? A cat — two cats — dozens of cats. And all those dogs... why, I can't count them. And the birds. And the horses."

"They are her beasts."

"Did she keep a sort of zoo? I mean, this is a bit too much."

"Every beast and bird that came near her had its place in her love. In her they became themselves. And now the abundance of life she has in Christ from the Father flows over into them."

I looked at my teacher in amazement.

"Yes," he said. "It is like when you throw a stone into a pool, and the concentric waves spread out further and further. Who knows where it will end? Redeemed humanity is still young, it has hardly come to its full strength. But already there is joy enough in the little finger of a great saint such as yonder lady to waken all the dead things of the universe into life."<sup>1</sup>

And, so, Sable, we know exactly where you are... in the caring palm of your Maker, bringing Him the pleasure for which you were created.

We look forward to seeing you in our processional.

## Notes

1. C.S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), pp. 106-107.

In the next of this "Pets in Heaven?" series, we'll look at the answer "Maybe."