

Genesis 1:29 and Being Vegetarian

By David DeWitt

Then God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you (Genesis 1:29).

Both Man and All Living Creatures Were Vegetarians

From the time of Adam and Eve until the Flood of Noah, both humans and animals were vegetarians [more accurately “herbivores”], and neither humans nor animals feared one another. Therefore, I think it is safe to say that animals were not hostile to man. So ruling the animals probably meant using the domestic ones and keeping the wild ones out of the cultivated fields.

That Changed at the Flood

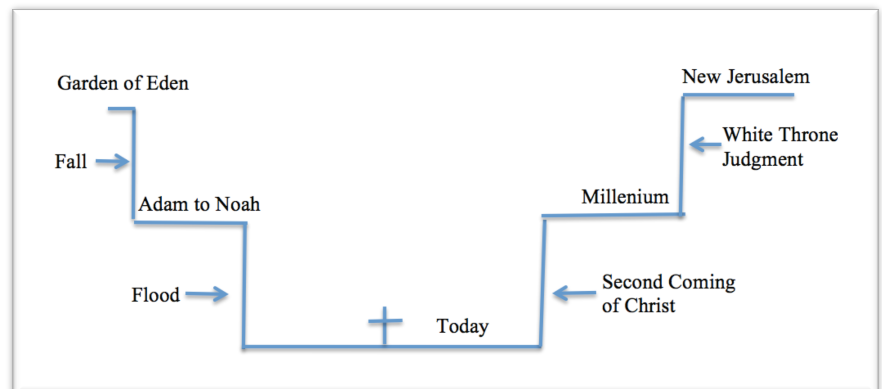
After Noah’s Flood, that all changed. God told Noah, *the fear of you and the terror of you will be on every beast of the earth and on every bird of the sky; with everything that creeps on the ground, and all the fish of the sea, into your hand they are given. Every moving thing that is alive shall be food for you; I give all to you, as I gave the green plant (Genesis 9:2-3).*

Then, for the first time, Noah faced a hostile arrangement where man could hunt, kill, and eat animal flesh (as long as he drained the blood out of it – Genesis 9:4). It is reasonable to assume that this is also the time when animals were no longer vegetarians and could eat (sting, bite, and attack) humans. Then nature would no longer be balanced by eating vegetables but by man and animals killing and eating one another (what, on human moral standards, would be considered cruelty). Paul explained, *for the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption (Romans 8:20-21).* It is possible that the (rainbow) covenant with Noah also limited man’s dominion over the animals.

This Will Change Again in the Millennial Kingdom

This dominion will change back, probably back to something like it was before the Flood, during the Millennial Kingdom. Isaiah tells us,

And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, And the leopard will lie down with the young goat, And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them. Also the cow and the bear will graze, their young will lie down together, And the lion will eat straw like the ox (Isaiah 11:6-7).



In all ages, man has had dominion over the animals. Apparently,

- Before the Flood and during the Millennium, dominion over the animals was and will be just herding them and keeping them out of his gardens.
- Between the Flood and the Millennium (today), that includes killing them and not being killed by them. In the Millennium, it seems that the earth returns to a vegetarian state.
- And although the New Jerusalem is completely different and is not on this earth but in a *new heaven and a new earth*, there will be a return of the benevolent conditions of the Garden of Eden.