

## **What Happens to Animals When They Die?**

By R.C. Sproul in Now That's a Good Question

**I can't answer that question for sure, but I don't want you to think for a minute that it's a frivolous question. People get very attached to their pets, particularly if the pet has been with them for a long time. In our present culture more and more pet cemeteries are appearing, and we see people going to great expense and ceremony---gravestones and all---to dispose of the bodies of their pets.**

**Within the Christian church there are different schools of thought on this issue. Some people believe that animals simply disintegrate; they pass into nothingness and are annihilated, which is based on the premise that animals don't have souls that can survive the grave. However, nowhere does Scripture explicitly state that animals do not have souls.**

**The Bible tells us that we have the image of God in a way that animals do not. Now is the "image of God" what differentiates between a soul and a nonsoul? Those who take a Greek view of the soul---that it is this substance that continues indestructibly forever---may want to restrict that to human beings. But, again, there's nothing in Scripture I know of that would preclude the possibility of animals' continued existence.**

**The Bible does give us some reason to hope that departed animals will be restored. We read in the Bible that redemption is a cosmic matter. The whole creation is destined to be redeemed through the work of Christ (Rom 8:21), and we see the images of what heaven will be like; beautiful passages of Scripture tell us about the lion and the lamb and other animals being at peace with one another. Whenever heaven is described, though it may be in highly imaginative language, it is a place where animals seem to be present. Whether these are animals newly created for the new heavens and the new earth, or they are the redeemed souls of our pets that have perished, we can't know for sure.**

**All of this is sheer speculation, but I would like think that we will see our beloved pets again someday as they participate in the benefits of the redemption that Christ has achieved for the human race.**