

Just a Word...

from Steve Dickerson, Communications Secretary

Have you ever hit a deer? Yesterday my wife, Barbie, and I drove to Portland, returning after dark. As our car rounded a corner, the headlights revealed what looked like an animal in the road ahead. I hit the brakes and the car slowed in plenty of time to avoid hitting the deer. But it wasn't a deer—it was a coyote, one of the largest ones I had ever seen. It had been trying to climb the rocky cut on the right shoulder of the road, but when it saw our car coming, it retreated toward the left side of the road, down the bank toward the river. As we passed the spot, I saw why the coyote had been trying to climb the rocks. A deer was about halfway up, trying to escape the coyote.



They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD. Isaiah 11:9

We continued on our way not knowing whether the coyote returned or whether the deer made it to safety. I was rooting for the deer.

It occurred to me that the coyote had to eat, too, and if the deer population was left to grow unchecked, a lot of deer would starve to death. I know how that all works, but it didn't change my mind about the deer. I hope it's alive and well today. Still, it got me thinking about a lot of things. We have a mental picture of the New Earth as described in the book of Isaiah—where the lion and the lamb lie down together. It's a beautiful picture, one that Doug Bachelor referred to the other night in his televised comments on the Sabbath School lesson (currently focusing on the book of Revelation). Doug mentioned Little Tyke, a lion cub raised by the Westbeaus some years ago on their ranch near Seattle. Little Tyke refused to eat meat, and so (according to Doug) became a total vegetarian.

It's a nice story, but not true. All animals (humans included) need taurine, an amino acid which is one of the building blocks of protein. Humans, dogs and most other animals can synthesize this substance from other foods. Cats can't. It's just the way they are made. In Little Tyke's case, this need was supplied by feeding her lots of eggs. I know this, because I met the Westbeaus in person as a young kid (we lived just a few miles from them) and later listened to Mr. Westbeau telling little Tyke's story. I've also got his book, "Little Tyke," which describes the lion's diet.

Why do I care about this? Little Tyke's need for animal products in her diet runs counter to the picture given to us in the Bible of the New Earth. And it's just one small example of many that could be raised showing how much animal life today depends on killing other animals. According to Isaiah, God says, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain." I'm convinced that God's ideal doesn't include killing other creatures for survival. And it doesn't include getting what we want at the expense of others.

I don't know how God is going to do it, but it's worth waiting to find out!