2 Prehistory 1: Animals in the pre-Hellenistic writings of the Bible

"The Bible only has this anthropocentrist world view. An ethic that would take animals into consideration is not found in the Bible" (Eugen Drewermann 2012; expressed in the same way ten days earlier on 19.9.2012 at the 16th Philosophicum in Lech). In this assertion, which Eugen Drewermann has been advocating with increasing acuity and frequency for decades, the Bible is given a conceivably bad report card with regard to animals. But does it really have a (predominantly or consistently) anthropocentristic world view? And is there really no ethic in it that takes animals into account? Has Christianity inherited its anthropocentrism from the Bible, as Drewermann suggests? These questions will be explored in the following.

In this chapter, I will limit myself to those biblical texts that can be dated back to before the time of Hellenism, i.e. before the reign of Alexander the Great. For them it is beyond doubt that they are not subject to any significant influence from Greek philosophy and thus reflect the Hebrew world in a relatively "pure" way (influences from the neighbouring oriental cultures included!). Those biblical texts that fall into the period of Hellenism and are potentially subject to the influences of Greek thought, on the other hand, are not discussed until chapter 4. These are the late writings of the Old Testament as well as the entire New Testament. Of course, it must always be borne in mind that the pre-Hellenistic books of the Old Testament are not available in the original text but have gone through processes of tradition up to the final editing of today's Bible. However, since, in case of doubt, these processes have rather introduced a form of Hellenisation into the texts, where such Hellenisation is not to be found in the present text, it can be assumed that it was not present in the original text either.

In the following, it will suffice to go through a few key texts of the Old Testament—but to do so very thoroughly and precisely: the two biblical Creation narratives, the animal ethical directives of the Torah and finally those biblical texts that convey the vision of a comprehensive peace of creation.

2.1 Animals in the older Creation narrative (Gen 2–8): Companions and Fates

In the course of the 20th century, the historically critical interpretation of the Bible has recognised that in the first books of Scripture there are essentially two texts from different periods of Israel's history, which were only combined in the 4th century BC into the one text that is present today in the five books of Moses. The second of these texts is called the "Priestly Scriptures" because it pays great attention to liturgical observances and regulations and may have been written by a group of priests. It dates back to the 6th or 5th century BC, i.e. the time during or after the Babylonian exile (587–538 BC). The first text, on the other hand, dates back to the time before the Babylonian exile, thus tending towards the 7th century BC. For it, the term "pre-Priest-scriptural tradition" is common today. First, this older source will be analysed for its animal ethical implications.

The pre-priestly narrative begins with a small paradisiacal garden that God creates in the middle of the hostile desert (Gen 2:4b-25). There he "places" the human being and the animals (Gen 2:8.15), both of which he forms out of clay and breathes life into. He creates the animals with a clear purpose: they are to give help to the lonely man (Gen 2:18). They are not the equal help he is looking for, but the story implies a great closeness and similarity between animal and human if the divine attempt is not to be discredited as a farce. Both are formed of earth and likewise both are animated by the *næfæš ḥajjāh* (חַיָּה נֶפֶשׁ), the living breath. Both are mortal (Gen 3:19), although even for humans at the time the text was written, a continuation of life after death was by no means expected—Israel at that time saw death as the natural end of life for both animals and humans[6]. "He has life only because God breathed into him breath of life by way of respite.... Man as 'dust' is, strictly logically considered, not capable of life without death at all." (Joachim Jeremias 1990, 33)

Through the names that man gives to the animals (Gen 2:19), a close relationship is established: If the name is to give expression to the nature of the animals, and that is the point, man must know them well. In naming the animals, Adam establishes a relationship with them that is more than merely factual and purposeful, because he recognises their being and gives

6 Ludger Schwienhorst-Schönberger 2004, 282 comments on this passage in the sense of a "naturalness of man as an animal". Cf. also Peter Riede 2017, 119 and chapter 4.1 in this book.

them respect. The naming of animals is therefore not primarily to be read as evidence of a position of dominance on the part of man but stands above all for his ability to recognise the nature of animals and his familiarity with them (Marie Louise Henry 1993, 26–27).

Man and animals are each other's companions and helpers, even though the animals are not equal to man. Only the woman whom God creates as the crowning glory of his work has that status (Gen 2:21–25). She alone is "bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. Male (אִשָּׁה / *ischah*) she shall be called, for from male (אִישׁ / *isch*) she is taken" (Gen 2:23). Together with the man she is to cultivate and tend the garden.

The narrative suggests that the garden God creates in the midst of the hostile, disorderly desert has a life-enhancing order: There is a centre where one or two trees stand[7]. The rivers that originate in the garden flow from there in the four cardinal directions and divide the garden into four areas ("quarters"). But the order of the garden, as beneficial as it is, is unstable and vulnerable (Gen 2:9–17). People are allowed to use everything, but they are not allowed to touch the tree (or the two trees?) in the middle, which symbolises order.

The very next chapter tells us that the first human couple abuses God's trust and upsets the order of the garden: Adam and Eve eat of the forbidden fruit. They upset the natural balance of the garden. In Gen 3:14, the story impressively demonstrates how this disturbs relationships: Enmity or opposition prevails from now on between man and the serpent, man and the habitat (soil, thistles, thorns), man and woman. The transgression of the law disturbs the community of life in the garden originally intended and made possible by God. The paradisiacal peace of creation is lost.

The Flood narrative, in which the priestly and pre-priestly texts are interwoven into a single story (Gen 6–8), is to be understood in a similar way. Both the pre-priestly (Gen 6:5) and priestly (Gen 6:13) narratives interpret the Flood as a consequence of human wickedness and sin: Because of the "wickedness of men", and because the earth is "full of violent deeds", the Flood comes, threatening not only the perpetrators but the very existence of the whole of creation. Sin disturbs the order of life and threatens the survival of even the innocent. It deprives them of the air to breathe and the space to live, so that they are in danger of sinking. It is not only human beings who are up to their necks in water.

7 According to today's Bible text, there are two trees in the middle (Gen 2:9), but in reality only one of the two can be exactly in the middle.

Thus Noah, the only righteous one, is instructed to take two specimens of each kind of living creature into the lifeboat of the ark. The ark is therefore the archetypal symbol of the fact that the community of humans and animals, which is created for the purpose of survival, is bonded by fate. The formulation in Gen 8:1 "Then God remembered Noah and all the animals and livestock that were with him in the ark" illustrates how closely humans and animals are connected. What they have in common is God's almost boundless mercy. And so Noah is able to send out two birds to test whether the earth is habitable again for all the living creatures in the ark. Raven and dove are the first test animals in (biblical) history, even if the experiments take place harmlessly and painlessly, unlike in many modern laboratories. Finally, God solemnly promises: "I will not curse the earth again because of man; for the striving of man is evil from his youth. I will not destroy all living things in the future, as I have done. As long as the earth endures, sowing and reaping, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease." (Gen 8:21–22)

2.2 Animals in the younger Creation narrative (Gen 1–9): Co-habitants and covenant partners

The more recent Creation narrative of the so-called Priestly Scriptures (Gen 1:1–2:4a) tells how God creates an orderly whole out of the originally existing, hostile chaos in seven day's work. According to Gen 1:2, the earth was not simply non-existent before God began his creative work, but "hullabaloo" (וָבֹהוּ תֹהוּ), "madness and confusion". God's act of Creation in the sense of this text is therefore not creation out of nothing, but an intervention that establishes order in a previously chaotic mass. Life is only possible where there is order in the sense of separation and distinction. Chaos is hostile and destructive to life.

Already in purely formal terms, there is a considerable difference between the first three works of Creation and those from the fourth to the sixth day: while at first it is a matter of three divorces of existing realities that were previously life-threatening (light from darkness, water above from water below, water below from land), in the second half of the week beings are created that were not there before. Those divorced things are named by God, the newly created beings are not. In terms of content, the first three days are about the preparatory ordering of the living space: "Successively... the deadliness of the primeval flood is eliminated, so that

finally the hullabaloo earth becomes a nourishing (!) earth that can serve as a living space for the living beings that are then to be created." (Erich Zenger 1983, 84)

The fourth day of Creation, like the first and seventh, is dedicated to the temporal order of the living space: daily, weekly, monthly and annual rhythms (represented by the sun, moon and the Sabbath) are emphasised as realities of creation, with the week standing out as the supreme and at the same time sacred moment in the temporal order.

The next two days then serve the creation of living beings: The animals in the water, in the air and on the land, including humans. In the overall structure of the six days, the habitats and the living beings that reside in them correspond to each other: The living beings of the fifth day colonise the habitats of the second day and those of the sixth day the habitats of the third day. Habitats and living beings are not ordered according to an ascending or descending line (from the "lower" to the "higher" living being or vice versa), but in concentric circles according to their proximity to humans (Albert de Pury 1993, 139–140).

For the narrative, then, the distinction between habitats and living beings, "'dwelling space' and "inhabitants'" is the crucial point (Albert de Pury 1993, 139; cf. Erich Zenger 1995, 99). Animals and humans are equally characterised as inhabitants of habitats, receive the same reproductive blessing and, equally, only plants as food (even if cultivated plants are reserved for humans in Gen 1:29). Meat consumption is not permitted in the ideal state described by Gen 1. Thus, even the first Creation narrative designs "as a positive utopia for dealing with creation, a peaceful and non-violent relationship between humans and animals" (Bernhard Irrgang 1992, 130). The living beings live in the habitats allotted to them, there is enough space for all of them and they have enough food. "That the most precious good in the house of life of creation is the happy life of all living beings unfolds in Gen 1:29f with an image of peace that we must meditate on and concretise, especially today as a paradigm critical of progress.... The central point of this utopia is the coexistence of all living beings without violence." (Erich Zenger 1989, 142).

The narrators are keen to explain the rhythm of the seven days, with the Sabbath as the climax and conclusion, as an order by God placed in creation from the beginning. Resting on the Sabbath on the seventh day is not a mere convention but corresponds to the "essence" of all living things. The fact that God blesses the Sabbath (Gen 2:3) brings about "the continuing, life-promoting validity of this order" (Bernd Janowski 1990,

59). Therefore, the Sabbath is not only for human beings, but for the whole of creation. It is also a day of rest and worship at the same time: breathing again and focusing on oneself as well as all creatures praising God belong inseparably together. The Sabbath, not man, is the "crown of creation".

Diagram: Genesis 1—outline according to Erich Zenger 1983, 200

Day 1: TIME RHYTHMS	Day and night	
	Day 2: LIVING SPACE	Water and sky
	Day 3: LIVING SPACE	Soil and plants
Day 4: TIME RHYTHMS	Sun and moon	
	Day 5: LIVING BEINGS	Aquatic and flying animals
	Day 6: LIVING BEINGS	Land animals and humans
Day 7: TIME RHYTHMS	Sabbath	

But what is the *role of man* if, in the logic of this text, he cannot be dubbed the "crown of creation"[8]? Gen 1 undeniably ascribes a special role to man. And it is precisely these sentences that have had the most far-reaching consequences in the history of Christianity. On the one hand, man is called the image of God; on the other hand, he is given a "mandate to govern". Both aspects require a thorough analysis that is independent of later theological and ecclesiastical interpretation.

Gen 1:26–27 reads: "Then God said, 'Let us make man as our image, as our likeness. They shall rule over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, over the cattle, over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. God created man as his image, as the image of God he created him. Male and female he created them."

First of all, it is remarkable that the concept of the *image of God,* although highly prominent in this narrative and which recurs in Gen 5:1

8 The expression of man as the "crown of creation" appears relatively late, first appearing in Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1808). Cf. Barbara Schmitz 2012, 26.

and 9:6, has not found any echo beyond the Noah narrative in the entire Hebrew Bible—in contrast to its central meaning in Christian dogmatics (Otmar Keel/ Silvia Schroer 2002, 177–178; Barbara Schmitz 2012, 20). This calls for caution, because it could well be that Christian anthropology has interpreted things into the term that it does not contain. So what is meant? It is striking that the biblical text says that man was created "as" the image. The "as" points to a role, a function of man in creation. It is not an ontological statement about the nature of human beings, but a relational statement about their relationship to their fellow creatures (Otmar Keel/Silvia Schroer 2002, 177–178; Barbara Schmitz 2012, 20; in contrast to Renate Brandscheidt 2020, 36).

In this sense, exegesis names three meanings of the concept of the image (cf. Karl Löning/ Erich Zenger 1997, 146–155 and Otmar Keel/ Silvia Schroer 2002, 178–180): Man is the image

1) like a statue of a god: Statues of gods were called images of the deities in the ancient Orient. The role assigned to them is to be a medium of divine life force for all creation. Whoever looks at the statue and prays receives blessings and salvation.
2) like a king: In the ancient oriental kingdoms, kings were called images of the Godhead because, on the one hand, they were given the divine authority to rule in the name of the Godhead within their kingdom, but on the other hand, they were also charged with the duty of defending the order of life of their God precisely with regard to the weak. It is not only in the Bible that the king is committed to the ideal of a caring shepherd. And it is not only in Israel that there are depictions of the king as the protector of the tree of life, and thus of the divine order of creation. A king thus only fulfils his role as God's image if he ensures justice in creation. This is what is meant when Gen 1:26, in the revised Einheitsübersetzung (ecumenical standard translation), formulates that man should "rule" over the animals in the various habitats. Consequently, man's rule "does not have an exploitative or destructive ('trampling down') meaning, but fits into the image of kingship, which is characterised by peace (Ps 72:7–11), justice (Ps 72:12–14) and fertility of the land (Ps 62:16f)" (Ute Neumann-Gorsolke 2004, 307–308).
3) like a child: Some ancient oriental creation myths tell us that man emerged from the womb of the Godhead and therefore resembles it like an image. The likeness is, as it were, the similarity of a child to its

parents. This likeness should be shown by all human beings in their actions towards creation, according to the impetus from Gen 1:26–27.

Otmar Keel and Silvia Schroer assume that in Gen 1 this last aspect is the most important: "The aspect of vicarious dominion is not an issue in Gen 5:3, an association with an image of a god is not implied. Thus, one may also assume for 1:26 that with the likeness not only were thoughts of representation and dominion connected, but above all the greatest possible kinship between God and man was to be expressed." (Otmar Keel/ Silvia Schroer 2002, 180)

In continental European philosophy and theology, the image of God was described by René Descartes (1596 La Haye en Touraine-1650 Stockholm) as "maîtres et possesseurs de la nature" (René Descartes 1637, Discours de la méthode VI,2). Descartes was not thinking of the ruthless exploitation of nature, but of its comprehensive mastery by human technology and science, and at least unconsciously paved the way for modern anthropocentrism. In contrast, Anglo-Saxon philosophy and theology had already begun to interpret the concept of the image of God with the concept of "stewardship" a generation after Descartes. The term was introduced into the debate on creation ethics in 1676 by Matthew Hale (1609–1676 Alderley, Gloucestershire)[9] and in recent decades has also been discovered in continental Europe (Gotthard M. Teutsch 1985, 98). Since then, it has become

9 The term stewardship itself is very familiar in the religious debates of the 17th and 18th centuries in the Anglo-Saxon-speaking world. Matthew Hale, however, makes it the key concept in his reflections on contract theory and asks about the ethical consequences that follow from it. In his Contemplations Moral and Divine, Volume 1, published posthumously in 1676, he entitled an entire chapter "The Great Audit, with the Account of the Good Steward" (Matthew Hale 1676, 409–484). In it he draws on Jesus' parable of the talents (Mt 25:14–30) and lists a total of 17 groups of entrusted gifts. Among them are, as the 6th group, the works of creation and, as the 10th group, non-human creatures. However, while the works of creation call primarily for wonder and greater praise of God (theocentristic), the non-human creatures call for stewardship, fiduciary treatment (biocentristic). Thus, Hale writes: "I have esteemed them as thine in Propriety: thou hast committed unto me the use; and a subordinate Dominion over them; yet I ever esteemed myself an Accountant to Thee for them... I received and used thy creatures as committed to me under a Trust, and as a Steward and Accomptant for them; and therefore I was always careful to use them according to those Limits, and in order for those Ends, for which thou didst commit them to me." (Matthew Hale 1676, 441–443). Cruelty and mistreatment of animals, as well as intemperance and lack of compassion towards them, are a breach of God's covenant with creation, a breach of trust and justice (Matthew Hale 1676, 445–446). The book has gone through numerous editions, and the chapter quoted here in particular has

established as a useful term. The term stewardship also corresponds more to the description of God's action in the act of Creation. This is because, in contrast to the Babylonian creation myth Enuma elish, which depicts the creation of the world as a divine conquest, Gen 1 emphasises God's caring, loving relationship with his creation (Anathea Portier-Young 2019, 45–67). Thus, it can be summarised: being created in God's image means the "active responsibility of the royal human being as God's steward for the entire world of creation in the power of divine blessing" (Walter Gross 1995, 871).

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Of course, there is also criticism of the concept of likeness and its transposition with "stewardship". The concept behind both is half-hearted because it still gives humans a special position (Robert Shore-Goss 2016, 14). It falls short because it separates humans from other creatures instead of connecting them (Gloria L. Schaab 2011, 59). The talk of stewardship is seductive because it views creation as a household to be used and promotes utilitarian thinking (Gloria L. Schaab 2011, 58). It is seductive because it suggests that humans can manage and control the earth's house of life (Michael S. Northcott 1996, 129). These criticisms are certainly to be taken seriously, but only if the two concepts of the image of God and stewardship are taken out of their biblical context and isolated. In the overall context of Gen 1, it is perfectly clear that the earth must not be seen primarily in terms of utility. And it is equally clear that humans have more in common with other living beings than separates them. In this respect, it takes a very selective reading of Gen 1 to fall prey to an anthropocentristic misinterpretation. Historically, however, it is precisely this selective reading that has dominated for almost 2000 years.

What is revolutionary, because it is directed against the real patriarchal environment, is the strong impulse in Gen 1 that all human beings are to rule as God's images, men as well as women. Moreover, likeness is not

been reproduced in many smaller writings. So one can hardly claim that the history of Christianity is exclusively anthropocentristic.

attributed to the king alone, but to every human being. In the concept of the image, therefore, and at least in this the later Christian reception is right, fundamental equality of all human beings is expressed. In the house of creation, all human beings are called to shape this house with direct authority given by God, but also with indispensable responsibility to be there for the community of all living beings in a caring, life-serving and beneficial way. It is about formal anthropocentrics, not material, teleological anthropocentrism.

Gen 1:28 reads: "God blessed them and God said to them: Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it, and rule over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air and over all the animals that crawl on the earth!"

This is the so-called "*dominion order*", the "*dominium terrae*"—a problematic concept from today's point of view because it is prejudiced. While the first half of the verse with the blessing of fertility and multiplication is also promised to the animals, the second part is only dedicated to humans. But what does it mean? First of all, a comparison of different translations shows that it depends on the exact choice of words.

- "fill the earth and subdue it to you, and have dominion over..." (according to the revised Luther Bible 2017),
- "populate the earth, subdue it to you and rule over..." (according to the 1983 Einheitsübersetzung),
- "fill the earth and subdue it and rule over..." (according to the Einheitsübersetzung of 2016) or
- "fill the earth and make it arable and rule over..." (according to Othmar Keel and Silvia Schroer 2002)?

First of all, it is noticeable that the latter two translations omit the "*you*". It does not appear in the Hebrew text. And of course, it makes a considerable difference whether the human being subdues the earth for himself or for another, greater one. In the sense of the aforementioned image metaphor, it is actually clear that it can only be a matter of subduing the earth to God, i.e. of making sure that God's will is done in the whole of creation.

Furthermore, there are two verbs in Hebrew:

- כבש / *kabaš* literally means "to set foot on". It could refer to the ancient oriental ritual used when someone took over a territory or a house in fief. The moment he first set foot on it, he took on the care and responsibility for it, but of course also the power over it. This power, when "setting foot on the earth", would then consist of keeping the life house of creation liv-

able for all its inhabitants and defending it against destruction. Ancient oriental depictions show people defending their livestock against attacks by predators, placing their foot on the animals to be protected. One can interpret this as selfish, because the cow or goat is worth a lot to its owner. But one can also make the point that a living being is being protected in a caring way—at the risk of losing its own human life.

– רדה / *radah* literally means "to rule, to tread down". The subsequent enumeration of the habitats of the animals indicates what is meant: Man should ensure that all living creatures get their habitat. This is often made clear in ancient oriental images of the so-called "Lord of the Beasts": two ibexes or ostriches or other animals fighting with each other are separated by man in order to end their competition. However, "to rule" does not mean to kill, for in the sentence that follows, humans are also only given plants for food.

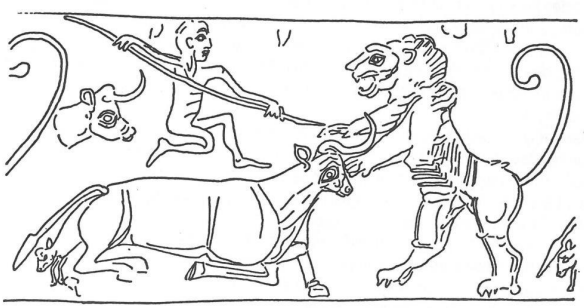
Of course, even caring, just and altruistic governance remains linked to the use of force. This is no different even in a modern democratic constitutional state. Order cannot be established without violence. But violence should serve to establish justice. It must be measured against this: "The terms *kibbesch* 'to set foot on' and *radah* 'to tread down, trample underfoot, dominate' used in Gen 1:28 denote rule that may include the use of violence... Apologetic exegesis that seeks to completely exclude the aspects of violence... and only focuses on responsibility does not contribute to processing the history of the impact of this command to rule." (Othmar Keel/ Silvia Schroer 2002, 181)

The narrative ends in Gen 1:29–2:3 with the vision of cosmic peace (Karl Löning/ Erich Zenger 1997, 155–162). With a so-called formula of transfer, God, like a lord to his vassals, gives all living beings the earth as a house and the plants as food. Every living being has its place and its food. In this context, the vegetarian nourishment of all living beings is a sign of the fullness of life: "That the most precious good in the house of life of creation is the happy life of all living beings unfolds Gen 1:29f with an image of peace that we must meditate on and concretise, especially today as a paradigm critical of progress [...] The central point of this utopia is the coexistence of all living beings without violence." (Erich Zenger 1989, 142)

The Flood narrative, in which the priestly and pre-priestly texts are interwoven into a single story, has already been presented. What is new in the priestly narrative is the section on *God's covenant with Noah and all creatures* (Gen 9:1–17): When Noah leaves the ark after the end of the great

Illustration: The Lord of the Ibexes illustrates well what is meant by governing the animals: scarab from Akko (Tell Fuchar) c. 1600–1500 BC (taken from: Henrike Frey-Anthes 2010, fig. 4; cf. also Othmar Keel/ Silvia Schroer 2002, 208, fig. 161).

Illustration: On this Early Sumerian scroll seal from c. 3300–2900 BC, a naked man defends a calving cow against a lion while placing his foot on it (taken from: Jan Dietrich 2017, Fig. 1).



flood, we are told, God makes a covenant—with him, with his descendants and "with all living creatures among you" (Gen 9:9–10; cf. Hos 2:20–21). God, man and animals become covenant partners. However, the covenant is not as harmonious as the initial peace of creation in Gen 1: fear and terror of man will settle over the animals, the previous relationship of trust is disturbed (Gen 9:2). Man, on whom the blessing of multiplication is pronounced twice, is henceforth allowed to slaughter and eat animals for food. However, he must not exploit them to the last drop of blood (Gen 9:3–4): He must pour away the blood when slaughtering—a profound symbol of

Illustration: On this Neo-Assyrian scroll seal from the 9th-7th century BC, a man presents his dominion over the earth through his stamped foot on the caprid and simultaneously defending it from the lion (taken from: Jan Dietrich 2017, fig. 9). Keel and Schroer comment on the illustration thus: "'Having under foot' or 'treading' does not necessarily mean brutal, certainly not arbitrary submission, but can also imply the protection of the weaker from the stronger." (Othmar Keel/ Silvia Schroer 2002, 181 fig. 144)

reverence. The killing of humans remains strictly forbidden, but the Bible obviously reckons with violations of this commandment. Thus, the Noahide Covenant is an agreement that reckons with man's sinfulness and violence and tries to limit it as much as possible—for the protection of people and animals. For never again, God promises, shall there be a flood that destroys everything (Gen 9:11).

2.3 Animals in the instructions of the Torah: addressees of justice

The Torah, i.e. the first five books of the Bible, contains over twenty commandments concerning animals. That is no small number. Of course, animal ethics cannot be developed from these alone. But certain basic orientations in dealing with animals emerge unmistakably. These reveal a dual perspective: on the one hand, domesticated animals are a valuable possession of humans, on the other hand, all animals—wild and domesticated—have their own significance as fellow creatures to be treated justly.

The first aspect, that domesticated animals are a *possession of man,* is addressed, for example, when it comes to questions of liability, be it in the case of lost, injured or dead domestic animals (Gen 31:39; Ex 21:33–34,37; 22:9–14), be it in the case of damage caused by domesticated animals (Ex 21:28–32,35f; 22:4). Even the obligation to help the enemy's donkey, which

had collapsed under its excessive burdens (Ex 23:5), is more likely to have arisen not out of concern for the animal but for its owner: "The enemy's economic existence would be threatened if he lost the donkey on whose labour he depended." (Peter Riede 2010, 1.4)

The second aspect, that animals are to be *treated justly for their own sake*, takes up much broader space. Paradoxically, the list begins with the statement that domesticated but violent animals are to be sentenced to death by stoning (Ex 21:28–32). The Bible, which does not yet make a distinction between punitive action and impunity, treats animals as "moral agents", i.e. as responsible subjects of action—something we would certainly no longer do today (or at most in a very limited way, for example in the case of a "problem bear"). In addition, the following topics are addressed:

Protection of animal parents and their young from excessive stress: The young should stay with their mother for at least seven days before being slaughtered (Ex 22:29; Lev 22:27). Parents are not to be killed at the same time as their young, neither in the case of farm animals (Lev 22:28) nor in the case of wild animals (Dt 22:6–7). If one takes the young from their parents, then one should at least let them live. The Old Testament thus knows about the special protection of brood, birth and rearing of offspring.

Prohibition of sexual intercourse between humans and animals (Ex 22:18; Lev 18:23) and the interbreeding of different animal species (Lev 19:19): This idea of not mixing different species, which can also be observed in other areas, e.g. in agriculture or in the production of textiles, is an extremely important commandment for the Old Testament with its strongly symbolic thinking in order to preserve God's order of creation.

Prohibition of harnessing different kinds of animals to the same cart at the same time (Dt 22:10): First of all, this commandment could also be counted among the latter logic of the prohibition of mixing. However, it could also have a directly animal ethical motive, namely that in the case of different species in front of a cart, one of the two draft animals is always the weaker one and is overburdened.

Ensuring decent working conditions for the animal (Dt 25:4): "You shall not bind the mouth of the ox that threshes." Hard work should be rewarded with good nutrition—for humans as well as for animals.

Admonition to be careful when hitting animals: In the normative instructions of the Torah, the hitting of animals is not an issue. As a means of education, used in the right measure, it was just as acceptable at that time as the beating of people in need of protection. However, Num 22:23–34 tells the wonderful story of the prophet Balaam, who beats his donkey three

times because he mistakenly thinks it is stubborn. The donkey, however, has seen something that has escaped Balaam's notice and has thus shown himself to be the more understanding of the two. When Balaam realises this, he falls on his knees before the donkey and asks for forgiveness.

Limitation of animal slaughter by the blood ritual (Gen 9:4 a.o.): In principle, the slaughter of animals for meat consumption is permitted by the Noahide narrative. Nevertheless, the ritual of slaughter, according to which the animal's blood must flow out completely, sets a noticeable inhibition threshold. Man is supposed to consider whether he really has to kill the animal. And if he does, the killing must always be justified.

Sharing in the abundance of the Sabbatical year (Ex 23:11; Lev 25:7): Every seventh year is a sabbatical year in Israel, during which the fields are left fallow. What nevertheless grows in the fields is to be harvested by the poor people and the wild animals. It is precisely they who are to receive some of the abundance with which God bestows on his people.

Equal rest on the Sabbath: The probably oldest formulation of the Sabbath commandment in Ex 34:21 does not yet explicitly apply to animals and socially inferior people. But in Ex 23:12 and even more so in the (post-) exilic texts Dt 5:12–15 and Ex 20:8–11, the Sabbath also applies to animals used for ploughing and threshing, pulling carts and carrying loads and other work. Like people, animals are entitled to rest and recreation. Like humans, they are to "catch their breath" on this day (Ex 23:12). This is an eminently important rule that directly opposes the economic dynamic of producing more and more and exploiting human and animal labour for this purpose.

The Sabbath commandment is the crown of all the commandments of the Torah and the Sabbath itself in Gen 2:1–4a is the crown of all creation. If animals are also included in this commandment, then this shows how naturally the Bible grants them a legal status: "The animal, then, is under the protection of the law like man who is weak in rights." (Marie Louise Henry 1993, 39). "The righteous knows what his cattle need." (Prov 12:10).

2.4 The vision of the peace of creation

The Noahide narrative assumes that in earthly reality there are irreconcilable conflicts between humans and humans, animals and animals, and humans and animals: Competition for scarce resources cannot be resolved without violence. But the Bible also has a vision of how the earth will

be one day when God has completely redeemed and perfected it. Such a vision is by no means pure reverie, but has an impact on the present behaviour of those who allow themselves to be inspired by it: Visions (or less theologically: utopias) provide guidance because they point to a distant goal; they motivate because this goal seems attractive and criticise because they create a counter-image to reality and thus pose the question of whether everything really has to remain as it has always been and still is at present.

The Bible presents three great visions: that all people will be filled—an epitome of interpersonal justice (Am 9:11–15; Is 55:1–2; 25:6–8; the fulfilment through Jesus Mk 6:30–44, etc.); that people of all religions and cultures will go on a pilgrimage to Mount Zion—an epitome of global peace (Mic 4:1–5; Is 2:2–4; fulfilment through the risen Christ Rev 21–22); that all creatures will live together in a healthy community without violence—the epitome of peace in creation.

As we have seen, the two Creation narratives Gen 1–2 already "outline a peaceful and non-violent relationship between humans and animals as a positive utopia for dealing with creation" (Bernhard Irrgang 1992, 130). Living beings live in habitats that have been assigned to them, there is enough space for all of them, they have enough food, which consists exclusively of vegetables for all of them. In Paradise, both humans and animals are vegetarians. "That the most precious good in the house of life of creation is the happy life of all living beings unfolds in Gen 1:29f with an image of peace that we must meditate on and concretise especially today as a paradigm critical of progress.... The central point of this utopia is the coexistence of all living beings without violence." (Erich Zenger 1989, 142).

The prophetic texts express it even more clearly (Hos 2:20–21; Is 32:15–20; 65:25; Eze 34:25–30 and especially Is 11:1–9): The Messiah will establish justice and righteousness, there will be peace, which is not only for the people of Israel, but includes the animals and all creation. Wolf and lamb, panther and little goat, calf and lion, cow and she-bear and their young, serpent and suckling dwell together, and the lion eats straw like the ox. In this list, a living creature in the care of man and a wild animal are brought together, as are adult animals and young animals and male and female animals. It could not be made clearer that all living beings are included in the great peace of the Messiah.

In the New Testament, this motif is explicitly taken up only once, but in a highly prominent place: In Mk 1:13, i.e. in the programmatic prologue of the Gospel of Mark, it is reported, as already explained, that the wild animals provide Jesus with fellowship during his forty-day stay in the desert. In

Christ, the new Adam, the messianic age dawns, which brings us the peace of creation already laid out in Paradise. In him God's reign and kingdom dawns—a kingdom that wants to include not only human beings but all creatures. In it, the cycle of violence against creation is broken and man is given the opportunity to live as a new creation himself. When a human being returns to its origins and does not sin, even wild animals become tame again, this is how Theophilos of Antioch interprets it around 180 AD (Theophilos of Antioch, Apology to Autolykus II,17).

A form of animal ethics that is guided by such a vision will not be able to be satisfied with the current status quo of animal husbandry and killing. Rather, it will constantly ask whether a next step is not possible to improve the situation of animals. It knows that the vision itself is an unattainable goal for humans. But here and now it is necessary to move towards this goal, without coming to an end, but also without stopping and putting our hands complacently in our laps. This kind of animal ethics, which finds itself in eschatological tension, thus poses the question to animal welfare activists of whether they have the necessary patience to be satisfied with small progress if it is continuous, and to animal owners of whether they have the consistency to immediately ask for the next improvement after an improvement has been made for their own animals.

2.5 Contribution: Anthropocentrism in the pre-Hellenistic Bible?

What is the yield from going through the pre-Hellenistic biblical texts? Are they entirely or at least largely anthropocentristic? The Creation narratives ascribe numerous similarities with humans to animals. Habitats are created for humans and animals. During the Flood, animals are in the same boat with humans, and afterwards they are covenant partners together with God. Man is neither the crown of creation—which in Gen 1:1–2,4a is the Sabbath—nor its centre—which in Gen 2:4b-25 is the tree (or the two trees?) in the middle of the garden. Rather, man is a steward, entrusted with creation as a loan to be cherished and cared for—including all the human and non-human inhabitants of this house of life. Finally, one would have to violently contort the meaning of the Torah with its numerous animal protection commandments if one wanted to read from them that animals exist solely for the benefit of humans. And the vision of the peace of creation clearly underlines that the Bible cannot imagine a fulfilled life

without or at the expense of animals. They, too, shall one day enjoy the great peace that God promises to his creation.

"The Bible only has this anthropocentrist world view. An ethic that would show consideration for animals is not found in the Bible." (Eugen Drewermann 2012). A more erroneous statement can hardly be made[10]. Anthropocentristic thinking is only found in the Bible in individual texts from the time of Hellenism that are influenced by Greco-Roman philosophy—some late wisdom texts in the Old Testament as well as some Pauline passages in the New Testament (see chapter 4). They allow us to truly trace of the origin of Christian anthropocentrism: Greek and Roman philosophy, which will be examined in the next chapter.

10 Gerd Häfner 2019, 305 considers this statement, which I have already made in Michael Rosenberger 2015, 127, to be "exaggerated". He says: "As far as the relationship to the animal world is concerned, the biblical tradition is clearly determined by an anthropocentristic perspective." In doing so, he refers on the one hand to the Old Testament "dominion position" of man, which, however, as shown, does not reveal material anthropocentrism, but only formal anthropocentrics. On the other hand, he refers to Jesus' words that attribute more value to humans than to animals. However, these also do not testify to anthropocentrism, but the opposite because Jesus obviously assigns intrinsic value to animals. As a reminder, anthropocentrism is defined by the thesis that everything is created solely for man. It embodies teleology (see chapter 1.2). And this is not to be found in the Bible. On the contrary, God takes care of the ox, as Gerd Häfner 2019, 314 notes against Paul as the literal sense of Dt 25:4. The ox is thus a telos in itself in the sense of the Torah. Therefore, Häfner effectively confirms rather than invalidates my statement.