

FROM OUR PASTOR

MAY 27, 2017

Sabbath Greetings to everyone!

The first recorded mention of the dodo was by Dutch sailors in 1598. The dodo (*Raphus cucullatus*) was a flightless bird over three feet tall that was endemic to the island of Mauritius, east of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean. Sailors needed meat to eat and the dodo was easy to kill, so the ships made the island a regular stop and the slaughter began. Settlers brought cats, pigs, and other animals that also preyed on the hapless dodo. Within sixty four years the dodo was no more. The last one was sighted in 1662.

The dodo bird is recorded as the first species to be removed from the earth by human predation. Tragically, the fate of the dodo was shared by dozens, then hundreds of other unique animals. In the following centuries disappeared species included the Quagga (a zebra type animal in Africa), the Carolina Parakeet, Zanzibar Leopard, Arabian Ostrich, Passenger Pigeon, Bupal Hartebeest, Caribbean Monk Seal, plus many other animals and more plants than one can name.

Teach times.com reports, "Human activity is causing one of the largest mass extinction of species the world has ever seen, according to a new study conducted by scientists in Mexico. An international team of researchers led by the National Autonomous University (UNAM) has found that since the year 1900, about 477 different species have become extinct because of continued human degradation and destruction of natural habitat.."

According to recent reports, many more species are on the edge of existence and could be lost in the next few years. UK Telegraph science editor, Sara Knapton, wrote this week: "Some of the world's most exotic animals could be extinct within months, conservationists have warned, with future generations growing up in a world without many of the species that are alive today. The WWF claims that some animals, such as the vaquita porpoise, could be wiped out in the next few months." Many species would now be extinct had not zoos, such as the San Diego zoo, provided a 'Noahs Ark' from which to reestablish populations. Knapton concluded, "Habitat loss, poaching, hunting and disease are pushing many species to the brink to such an extent that the world has now entered a sixth mass extinction."

God's word tells us that, on the fifth day of creation our Creator made abundant wildlife fill the earth. "Then God said, "Let the waters abound with an abundance of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the face of the firmament of the heavens."

So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that moves, with which the waters abounded, according to their kind, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." So the evening and the morning were the fifth day. Genesis 1: 20-23

On the sixth day land animals were created. "And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good." Notice! The creation of abundant life on the earth was pronounced "Good!." And indeed it was. In recent years man has upset the balance of life on this planet in several ways. The hundreds of species that are barely hanging on to existence provide voluminous testimony that this world needs a rescue.

Thankfully the Bible predicts that this rescue is coming! "The creation itself will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Romans 8:21-22. How descriptive, "The whole creation groans and labors..."

Indeed there are so many examples of how much the entire creation needs to be rescued--pollution of land, oceans, and air, vanishing wildlife, chemical poisoning of farmland, and invasive species damage all over the earth just to name a few of the obvious ones.

After Jesus Christ returns to rule the earth all the earth will be healed. This is predicted in Ezekiel 47:9 "And it shall be that every living thing that moves, wherever the rivers go, will live. There will be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters go there; for they will be healed, and everything will live wherever the river goes."

Will we see the Dodo again? I hope you are there to find out.

*Rex Sexton
Pastor, UCG Portland*