



Thor

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awaits his
master's voice.

Dogs are remarkable creatures. God created them that way. We cannot know if He made them to do what we have taught them to do, and what we depend on them to do, but God did give them all the tools- strength, speed, keen senses, and most importantly, loyalty to their masters. Dogs are perhaps the only animals that prefer human company to their own kind.

By tradition we call dogs “Man’s best friend.” I agree. I have heard horses referred to as “Man’s favorite friend.” We were very fond of our horses, and our cats, and had feelings for all the critters our children used to bring home. These animals are all God’s creatures, yet there is still not anything in the animal kingdom quite like the affection for and from a dog.

So it was with a huge male Rottweiler named “Thor.” He went well over 100 pounds. He was as gentle as he was large. This powerful breed has often been given a bad reputation as aggressive and dangerous, especially around children. These stories are generally the result of mishandled dogs.

When our son brought his new Rottweiler puppy to our home one day, I admit that I was concerned about the welfare of our future grandchildren. He named the awkward little thing with big feet “Thor.” Though very young, Thor, a gift from our son’s wife, was already as large as his Boston Terrier, Gizmo.

Our son is excellent with animals, a good amateur trainer. The hope for Thor was for him to be a K-9 dog, but he ended up as a family pet. There is a humorous account about Thor and Gizmo catching some real-life bad guys one night, but that is as far as we will go here.

When our first granddaughter was born, my uneasiness of Rottweilers and children was put to the test. Guess what- Thor loved her! Thor became her recliner and stuffed pillow.

Once I had pneumonia and was in bed while our family room (aptly named) was full of family. It usually was full of family every weekend, including Thor and Gizmo; however, we did make the horses stay in the barn. Not wanting to be an outcast like the horses, I mustered enough strength to make it downstairs. I sat on the floor and slouched back against a chair.

Thor sensed my illness. He came to my side to protect me. Thor was not content to just lie beside me, he insisted on having one paw across my legs and his head on my lap. He would not leave my side the remaining time he was there. I felt a special bond with Thor from that day forward. He did not cure me or save my life, but he wanted to. He tried.

Our first grandchild is our daughter's daughter. The next four grandchildren are our son's two sons and two daughters. Thor loved them all. He was their mountain, wrestling partner, and "horse." Thor was their protector.

Large dogs often do not live as long as small dogs. We knew that the day would come when we would have to say goodbye to Thor. The inevitable became more real when Thor started having strokes. He lost his hearing. Sometimes he wandered off and seemed to forget how to get home. Three days ago my son e-mailed us to report that he noticed a large growth on one of Thor's legs.

The Bible does not clearly define what comes of animals after they die. My feeling is that they are merely here to serve us, though my wishes are different than my beliefs. There are those who believe in a "nephish spirit"¹ This spirit is apart from the spirit that the Bible teaches will go to heaven for believers. My wish, with no biblical support, is that the nephish spirit of all creatures that love and were loved will go to heaven.

The day we feared came on July 5, 2003. Thor made his scheduled visit to the veterinarian. The lump on his leg was diagnosed as cancerous.

Thor now lies near the horse barn our son is building, at the corner of a future orchard. What a beautiful setting! This spot pales compared to the beauty of heaven:

I saw a new earth and a new sky, for the present earth and sky had disappeared. And I, John, saw the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven. It was a glorious sight, beautiful as a bride at her wedding. I heard a loud shout from the throne saying, "Look, the home of God is now among men. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, nor pain. All of that has gone forever. I am making all things new! Everyone who conquers will inherit all these blessings, and I will be his God and he will be my son."

In a vision (I saw) that wondrous city. It was filled with the glory of God, and flashed and glowed like a precious gem, crystal clear like jasper. Its walls were broad and high, with three gates on each side--north, south, east, and west. The twelve gates were made of pearls--each gate from a single pearl! And the main street was pure, transparent gold, like glass. The walls had twelve foundation stones.

¹ Nephish Spirit: Parkhurst says, "it means breath; animal life; a living animal that lives by breathing; the human body though dead; the human soul or spirit as distinguished from the body; the human animal soul; the mind, disposition, particularly as denoting the affections; a human person; and the souls of those who were slain for the word of God." *The Harvest Herald* http://www.harvestherald.com/istate/chapter_three.htm

The city itself was pure, transparent gold like glass! The wall was made of jasper, and was built on twelve layers of foundation stones inlaid with gems: The first layer with jasper; The second with sapphire; The third with chalcedony; The fourth with emerald; The fifth with sardonyx; The sixth layer with sardus; The seventh with chrysolite; The eighth with beryl; The ninth with topaz; The tenth with chrysoprase; The eleventh with jacinth; The twelfth with amethyst.

And the city has no need of sun or moon to light it, for the glory of God and of the Lamb illuminate it. Its light will light the nations of the earth, and the rulers of the world will come and bring their glory to it. Its gates never close. Nothing evil will be permitted in it--no one immoral or dishonest--but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. (From Revelation 21 Living Bible.)

The Bible clearly states that people *can* go to heaven:

The words of Jesus: *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. (John 14:1-3).*

How? We do not deserve heaven and eternal life: *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 6:23).*

Do not be presumptuous: *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23).*

There is a clue to the way of salvation beside Thor's picture: "He patiently awaits his master's voice." Open your eyes and heart to your Master's voice: *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9).*

If you want eternal life, accept Jesus as your Savior. Pray these words, "*Dear Father in Heaven, I know I am a sinner and have sinned against you. I am sorry for my sins and sinful nature, and ask that you will forgive me. I accept Jesus now as my Savior who shed His blood for me. I give my life to you and will strive to live for you. Thank you, Lord, for saving my soul. In Jesus name I pray, Amen.*"

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