

SHARE LIFE



Dear Neighbours,

It is a great joy to be running another holiday club for children during the half-term. Our holiday clubs are full of fun, singing, games and learning from the Bible.

Last year we looked at three big emotions that affect children so much—joy, anger and sadness. This year we are seeing what animals in the Bible teach about God's BIG PLAN for us and the world. The holiday club this year is called ZOOLAND.

In this edition of *Share Life* magazine, we thought we would look at those animals too. I hope you enjoy reading about how the Bible uses the donkey, the lamb, the snake and the lion as illustrations of what God is doing and has done in our world.

Many think that the Bible is a book of rules and laws when actually it is mostly narrative. In those stories a vast array of animals is included. Each animal plays its part in telling God's story.

Cornerstone Church has produced a podcast on a whole zoo of Bible animals, showing their part in telling God's big story of salvation. Listen at: cstone.uk/animals

Hope you enjoy these articles.

Pete Woodcock

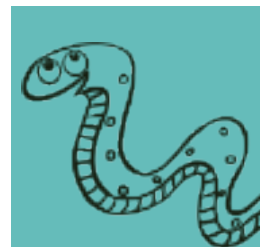
Pastor of Cornerstone Church Kingston.



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DONKEY

The King who comes in humble love



Quick Facts

- Lifespan: 25–35 years
- Extremely strong for their size
- Great memory and navigation skills
- More cautious than stubborn—won't move if they sense danger

Cultural Views

- Middle East & Africa: Symbol of hard labour, survival, humility
- Europe: Sometimes mocked as a sign of foolishness
- China: Associated with endurance and traditional medicine

Common Saying

- “As stubborn as a donkey”

Donkey stands with steady patience. Long ears flicking at flies. Dark eyes are calm but serious. One hoof taps the ground. Along donkey's back is the mark of the cross, as if it was always destined to carry the weight of the world.

Donkeys are not majestic animals. They are ordinary and common, and sometimes seem stubborn. But the Bible raises the donkey up as a signpost pointing to Jesus.

In the ancient world, powerful kings rode war horses; only peaceful rulers rode donkeys. When Israel's King Solomon was crowned, he rode a donkey—not to impress but to signal peace. The Bible prophet Zechariah declared that the coming king would arrive “humble and riding on a donkey”. No one imagined that his prophecy would one day be fulfilled by a carpenter from Nazareth.

But Jesus deliberately chose a donkey when entering Jerusalem. The crowds expected a political revolution, but Jesus offered a better victory—peace between people and God, healing for broken hearts and liberation from sin. His choice of the donkey said that he has come as the king, not to crush but to serve; not to take but to give; not to dominate but to save.

Throughout his public life, Jesus consistently embraced humility. He touched people with leprosy, welcomed children, ate with outcasts, and washed his disciples' feet. His humility wasn't weakness—it was love in action. The world often tells us that significance comes from power, success, and status. But Jesus flips the pattern. He shows he is the king whose glory is revealed in gentleness, whose authority is rooted in mercy, and whose victory comes through sacrifice.

The donkey didn't just carry a king; it carried the message of God's heart. The king who comes to you is humble, kind, and ready to save.

LAMB

God's unexpected rescue



Quick Facts

- A lamb is a young sheep (under 1 year old)
- Sheep recognise up to 50 faces
- Highly social and emotionally sensitive
- Excellent memory once bonded with a flock

Cultural Views

- Middle East: A sign of purity
- China: Symbol of kindness and gentle obedience
- Europe: Spring, rebirth, gentleness

Common Saying

- "As gentle as a lamb"

Lamb like a cloud on legs. Soft and innocent but always ready to spring into the air and bounce along with life.

The image of a lamb appears throughout the Bible, gentle and harmless, often representing innocence. However, in God's story, the lamb is of central importance. God uses the lamb to point toward his plan to rescue people.

In the Bible book of Exodus, God's people faced the terrifying penalty of death. Their only protection was the blood of a unblemished lamb painted on their doorposts. That lamb, sacrificed in their place, brought freedom. Every year after that rescue, Israel remembered the Passover lamb: a symbol of forgiveness and rescue that comes only through the sacrifice of another.

Centuries later, a prophet stood by the River Jordan and pointed to a wandering teacher from Galilee, saying, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" It was a shocking statement. Lambs were offered to God—yet this man, Jesus, was offered by God for us.

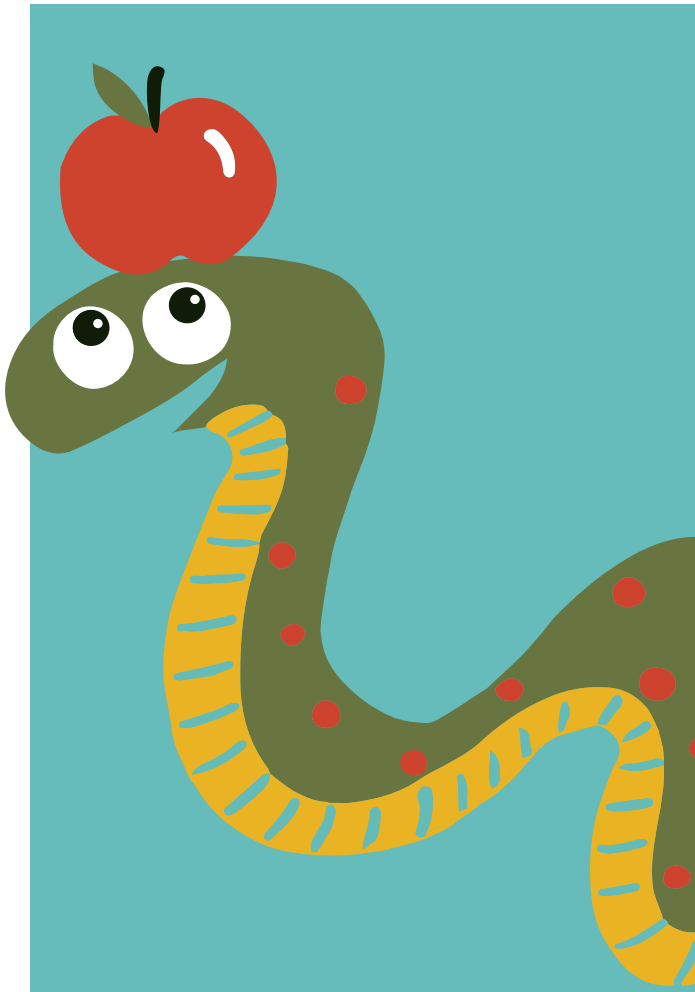
On the cross, Jesus fulfilled what every sacrificial lamb could only hint at. He was innocent and unblemished, and willingly laid down his life. His blood brings forgiveness; his sacrifice brings freedom. In the final Bible book, Revelation, Jesus is still called "the Lamb", but now he is risen and victorious, worshipped by people from every nation.

The picture of the lamb shows us that God saves not by force but by self-giving love. Jesus does not demand that we clean ourselves up first. He has offered himself in our place. Through his sacrifice, shame can be lifted, guilt can be removed, and a new beginning becomes possible.

The Lamb of God invites you to trust him. He invites you to rest in what he has already done. In a noisy world filled with striving, his gentle voice still calls, "Come to me". And those who do find the freedom and forgiveness that only the Lamb of God can give.

Snake

Evil exposed and defeated by Jesus



Quick Facts

- Over 3,000 species worldwide
- “Smells” using its tongue
- Can unhinge its jaw to swallow large prey
- Some are venomous; most are not
- Sheds skin multiple times a year

Cultural Views

- Western traditions: Deceit, danger, temptation
- India: Sacred; linked to gods like Shiva
- China: Wisdom, strategy, mystery
- Africa: Life force, rebirth, healing

Common Saying

- “A snake in the grass” = a hidden enemy.

Snake moves like water across the ground. Silently sliding coils through the dust and leaves. Eyes always open, tongue flicking in and out as snake tastes for prey

Snakes are one of those creatures that make many shudder. In the Bible, the serpent becomes a picture of deception, danger, and spiritual rebellion. Yet even the snake helps tell the story of Jesus.

In the Garden of Eden, a serpent (in fact God’s enemy, the devil) tempted our first parents, Adam and Eve, away from God’s goodness, promising freedom but delivering slavery. The world has been captured by that same deception ever since, resulting in brokenness, shame, conflict, and death. But God made a promise: one day a descendant of the woman would crush the serpent’s head, even as the serpent would strike his heel. Both wounds would be mortal. But one would result in the ultimate victory and the other in eternal defeat.

Centuries later, Jesus explained that he had come to destroy the works of the devil. On the cross, it looked as if the serpent had won. Jesus was “struck”—killed, buried, and seemingly defeated. But the resurrection of Jesus exposed the serpent’s lie. Death could not hold Jesus. Evil could not end his story. Jesus crushed the power of sin, death, and the devil not by avoiding suffering but by passing through it and triumphing over it.

There had been another moment in Israel’s history, when poisonous snakes invaded the Israelite camp in the desert. These snakes bit their poison into the people, but God provided a way of healing. God told Moses to make and lift up a bronze serpent on a pole; anyone who looked at it would live. It was a miracle.

Jesus used this event to explain his mission: “Just as Moses lifted up the serpent ... so the Son of Man (Jesus) must be lifted up.” The symbol of curse became the means of healing. Jesus took our curse upon himself so that we could receive life.

The serpent that deceived humanity has been defanged and de-poisoned. And for all who look to Jesus, the risen Saviour, there is healing, restoration, and a new beginning.

Lion

Strength that saves rather than destroys



Quick Facts

- Known as the “King of Beasts”
- Lives in social groups called prides
- Females do most of the hunting
- A lion's roar can be heard up to 8 km (5 miles) away

Cultural Views

- Africa: Power, leadership, protection
- Europe: Royalty, courage, nobility
- India: Sacred guardian, symbol of cosmic order
- Global: Strength, dominance, heroism

Common Saying

- “Lion-hearted” = fearless and brave.

Lion with golden mane that crowns his head. A king by right with a roar to get the attention of any animal.

When most people imagine a lion, they think of majesty, danger, and strength. Lions are powerful, commanding, and impossible to ignore.

The Bible uses this very imagery to describe Jesus—but not in the way we might expect.

Jacob, blessing his sons in the Bible book of Genesis, described one son—Judah—as a lion. Out of the tribe that would come from Judah would come a ruler whose kingdom would never end.

Israel spent centuries waiting for this promised king: a Lion who would defeat evil and restore God's world.

Jesus was born from that very tribe. Yet he didn't arrive with armies or political power. Instead, he used his strength to heal the sick, lift up the broken, and confront injustice. He defended the weak rather than devouring them. His roar was not one that terrorises but one of authority—commanding storms to stop, forgiving sins, and calling people out of darkness.

But the greatest surprise comes in the Bible book of Revelation. John hears about a mighty lion, the conquering King. But when he turns, he sees... a lamb. The message is clear: Jesus conquers not by violence, but by sacrificial love. He is both Lamb and Lion—gentle enough to carry the hurting and strong enough to overthrow evil.

This Lion is not meant to frighten you. He is meant to free you. And he invites you into his victory, his peace, and his kingdom. The Lion roars—not to scare you away but to call you home.

**SPECIAL
EVENT**

**Saturday
28 March**
3:00–4:30pm
Cornerstone Hub
£10 per family

Book at cstone.uk/tinker

Michael J. Tinker Kids' Concert

Come and hear Michael J. Tinker perform lively music that will have the kids up and dancing. Mike is a folk musician by trade with multiple children's albums and a UK tour underway. A must-attend event for all local parents and carers with their children. His songs will make you think, laugh and want to join in.



For children in Reception to Year 6

Wednesdays during term-time
5:00–6:30pm at The Hub

**JOIN US FOR FOOD, BIBLE, CRAFT,
GAMES, ACTIVITIES & MORE!**



MORE TO EXPLORE

The story continues in our podcast: Animals of The Bible. Listen to how God uses animals to teach us something about ourselves and himself.



What's on at CORNERSTONE CHURCH KINGSTON

cstone.uk/whats-on

WEEKLY EVENTS

Monday Tots

9:30am and 11:00am, Mondays in term-time. For parents/carers and their little ones

International Café

7:00pm every Tuesday. For internationals wanting to improve their English

Women's Bible Study

9:45am, Wednesdays in term-time. All women welcome (creche available)

Hub Club

5:00pm, Wednesdays in term-time. For primary-aged children

Soul

7:00pm, Fridays in term-time
For youth aged 11–14

Rooted

8:00pm, Fridays in term-time
For youth aged 14–18

Sunday church services (all welcome)

Morning – 10:30am*
Evening – 6:30pm

All events take place at the
Cornerstone Hub,
234a Canbury Park Road,
Kingston, KT2 6LF

* The morning service is at Tiffin School,
Queen Elizabeth Road, Kingston, KT2 6RL





Cornerstone Hub

234a Canbury Park Road
Kingston, KT2 6LF

Tiffin School

Queen Elizabeth Road
Kingston, KT2 6RL

cstone.uk/home



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