

Psalm 147:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry.

Analysis

He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry. The scope of divine providence extends beyond humanity to include all creatures. The Hebrew noten livhemah lachmah (נותן לבעלי חיים לחם) emphasizes God's active giving (noten) of sustenance to animals. The term behemah generally refers to cattle and domestic animals, while the specific mention of "**young ravens**" (livnei orev, לִבְנֵי עֶרֶב) includes wild creatures.

Ravens were considered unclean birds in Levitical law (Leviticus 11:15), yet God feeds them when "**they cry**" (yiqra'u, יִקְרָאוּ). Job 38:41 asks, "Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God." The image is of fledgling ravens calling out in hunger, and God responding with provision. Jesus echoed this in His teaching: "Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap... and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?" (Luke 12:24).

This verse demolishes any notion of divine indifference to creation. If God attends to the cries of raven chicks, how much more will He hear the prayers of His covenant children? It also challenges human arrogance—we are not the sole focus of God's care, but part of a creation-wide network of divine provision. Ecology becomes theology: caring for creation reflects God's own sustaining work.

Historical Context

Ancient Israelites lived in close connection with the natural world, observing animal behavior daily. Ravens are resourceful scavengers, yet even they depend on God's provision through the food chain He established. The mention of ravens may also allude to Elijah's experience, when ravens miraculously fed the prophet during drought (1 Kings 17:4-6)—a historical demonstration that God commands even wild creatures to accomplish His purposes.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. If God feeds even 'unclean' ravens, what does this teach about His grace toward those deemed unworthy by religious standards?
2. How should the reality of God's care for all creation shape Christian environmental stewardship?
3. What 'crying out' in your life might God already be answering, even if you haven't recognized His provision?

Interlinear Text

He giveth	to the beast	his food	and to the young	ravens	H834	which cry
H5414	H929	H3899	H1121	H6158		H7121

Additional Cross-References

Job 38:41 (Parallel theme): Who provideth for the raven his food? when his young ones cry unto God, they wander for lack of meat.

Matthew 6:26 (Parallel theme): Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

Psalms 136:25 (Parallel theme): Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy endureth for ever.

Luke 12:24 (Parallel theme): Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?

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