

## A Lesson From The Birds

Ryan Goodwin

*“Even the stork in the sky knows her seasons; and the turtledove and the swift and the crane observe the time of their migration; but My people do not know the ordinance of the Lord” (Jeremiah 8:7).* It is fascinating to see how the Lord uses His own creation to prove a practical point to us. God does not need to formulate complex arguments or write a long thesis on the obstinate nature of mankind. All He needs is the picture of a bird in flight, heading in its due season to its appropriate environment.

### The Birds Remind Us That We Are Surrounded By The Laws Of God

For the birds, God has ordained when and where each species of bird should go during each season of the natural year. One bird goes to its ideal setting, another bird to its own, and so on. Some birds will fly for thousands of miles, across harsh environments – many birds will cross the Atlantic Ocean to reach winter destinations in North Africa – for the sole purpose of maintaining a healthy life. If a bird chooses not to migrate, there is a great possibility that it will die very soon once the extreme cold of winter hits, or the parched draught of summer sets in. Many birds will face numerous predators if they do not leave, and without the support network of its fellow birds it will surely be killed. Without being told, birds simply leave when they know it is time to leave. And they return when they know it is time to return. They do not question the laws of God, they simply observe that the laws exist and they do them.

I am reminded of what our Lord spoke in **Matthew 6:26**. *“Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?”* If we are, indeed, of more value to God than birds, and if God has provided so fully the laws for these birds – to their benefit – we should expect that God will make laws and edicts for us as well! Without a doubt, though, the laws of the animals and the laws for mankind are completely different in form and motivation. To the animals, the law of God comes as a necessity, as a course determined by unconscious instinct. To man, however, it comes as a mandate of duty, a way of truth that can be freely chosen or dismissed.

Even though man is not physically bound to the laws of God as the birds are to their instincts, though he is free to rebel at any time, morally he is no more his own master than are the birds who are bound by the laws of their instincts. Freedom from compulsion is not freedom from obligation. *“It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another” (Galatians 5:1,13).* While Paul is specifically speaking to those who are set free from obligation to the Old Law of Moses, the concept can be applied to us in the sense of our freedom from instinct. Though we are, indeed, free to do as we please, it does not excuse us from obligation to a higher moral standard than the animals.

### The Birds Rebuke Us In Our Disobedience

If dumb birds, with no more sense than any other animal, have the logic in their minds to obey God so diligently and so exactly, then why do so many people show such an inability to do the same? Birds are free to roam wherever they may choose. They have, after all, the gift of flight. If they wanted to, they could soar above the clouds on a warm breeze and explore the world. But they do not do that. They know that there is no hope in selfish pursuits. They know that if they did not obey God, they would die and find nothing fulfilling out in the cold, cruel world. They know that it is best to follow the Lord of all creation.

Do we?