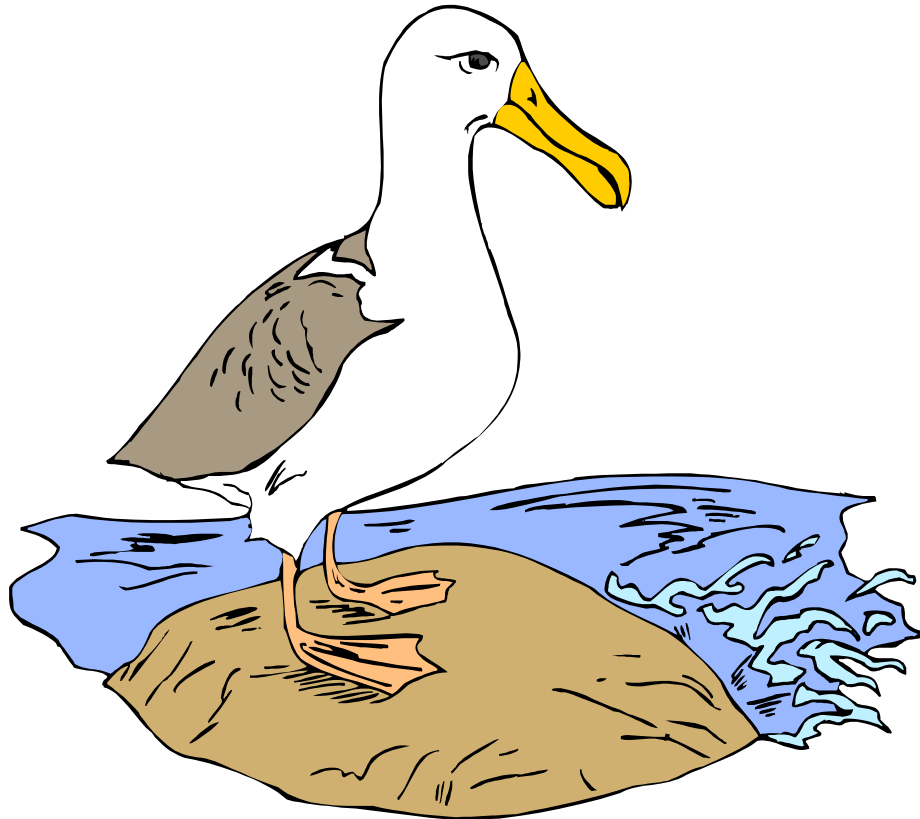


God's Animal Kingdom Classroom

Albatross



The albatross is a seabird that spends most of its life in solitary flight. The albatross is a master at riding air currents so that it can go wherever it wants without exhausting itself. The albatross feeds on squid at night and on dead fish, seals and whales during the day which makes them valuable helpers in keeping the oceans clean. When laying their eggs, the albatross lives in colonies.

What can we learn from the albatross?

The albatross teaches us to spend our lives in the heavens rather than being trapped on earth. Our focus should always be on our eternal home which is heaven rather than the sinful pleasures that trap us on earth. The Bible tells us in 2nd Corinthians 4:18, *“We fix our eyes not on what is seen but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary but what is unseen is eternal.”*

The albatross also teaches us to rely on God the way it relies on the wind to take it wherever it wants to go. If we trust in God’s loving care, we will always be led to just the place that is right for us. We often exhaust ourselves trying to figure out what we should do and where we should go. Instead, we should pray for guidance and let God lead the way. The Bible tells us in Psalm 73:24, *“You (God) guide me with your counsel and afterward you will take me into glory (heaven).”*

The albatross helps keep the ocean clean of dead things. By the things we say and do, we can either add to the sinful garbage heap of the world or help clean up our community. When friends want to do something we know is wrong, do we go along with them or do we tell them it is wrong and try to lead

them and ourselves in a more God pleasing direction? When choices have to be made in life, do we only do what we want or do we think about what God would want us to do? Do we help make more of a mess of things or try to clean things up? Jesus tells us in Luke 16:13, *“No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.”*

The albatross goes its own way except when it lays eggs and cares for its young. It is not afraid to stand by itself, yet it enjoys the company of others. This is a good lesson for us all. We should not be afraid to stand up for what is right. We should also seek the company of others who believe in Jesus as the Savior so that we can encourage one another.

Sailors are always happy to see an albatross. It means that land is not too far away. Sailors have a superstition that it is good luck to see an albatross but bad luck to harm one. It would be wonderful if people felt that way about us - they should be happy and encouraged to see us and the faith we have and, at the same time, have respect for our Savior Jesus and not want to hurt us.

There is much we can learn from the albatross. In the early church, the apostles and disciples lived very

similar lives to the albatross. They traveled alone or in small numbers spreading the gospel and from time to time, they stopped to rest with small groups of fellow Christians. They were not afraid to stand up alone for the sake of the gospel and they lived in such a way as to be a shining example for others to see. They worked very hard to clean up the ungodliness of the world and put faith in the place of the world's unbelief. Through the Holy Spirit, the apostles and disciples spoke with such authority that many people came to believe in Jesus and many of those who did not believe were afraid to harm them. It is sad that many of the people of the early church died because of their faith. God does not say that we will not suffer, but that our reward is in heaven where there is no suffering.

