

Jane Goodall Dies at 91: What She Really Believed About God

Jane Goodall, the pioneering primatologist whose groundbreaking work with chimpanzees shook the world, has died at the age of 91. She passed away Oct. 1, 2025, of natural causes while on a speaking tour in California.

Born Valerie Jane Morris-Goodall in London in 1934, she was raised in Bournemouth, England, in a Christian household. Her father gave her a toy chimpanzee, "Jubilee," which sparked a lifelong fascination with animals. That childlike wonder grew into a vocation that would carry her into the jungles of Africa, where she would spend more than 60 years observing chimpanzees in their natural habitat.

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Her research in Tanzania transformed our understanding of primates, and her advocacy for conservation and animal welfare left a lasting impact on the world.

Faith and Spiritual Background

While her life's work was centered in science, Goodall often spoke about her faith and spiritual experiences. She was raised in a Christian congregationalist family and attended church as a girl. She was later asked if she was still held to those beliefs she said, "I suppose so; I was raised as a Christian."

During her teenage years, she was drawn to church through the preaching of minister Trevor Davies, whose sermons she described as "powerful and thought-provoking."



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Later in life, she spoke of mystical experiences and said, "I don't have a clear definition of God, but I feel there is a greater spiritual power – something larger than any individual." She maintained that she saw "no fundamental contradiction between belief in God and acceptance of evolution or scientific understanding."

Goodall's reflections show her openness to the reality of God, even as her views did not always align with historic Christian teaching.

A Christian Perspective

As believers, we recognize the remarkable contributions Jane Goodall made to science and to the care of God's creation. At the same time, we hold firmly to the truth of Scripture: eternal life comes not through spiritual experiences or a belief in a higher power, but through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

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Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). While we cannot know the state of her heart in her final moments, we pray her encounters with God's creation pointed her to its Creator and to the hope found only in Christ.

Remembering Her Legacy

Jane Goodall will be remembered as a woman of courage, conviction, and curiosity, who dedicated her life to studying and protecting the natural world. Her passion stirred many to look more closely at the beauty of creation.

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In her own words: "When I am immersed in nature, I feel that greater power most strongly." For those of us in Christ, we know that greater power is not an undefined force but the living God revealed through His Son.

Prepared by Charisma Media Staff.