

# Nature, Nurture, Choice, & God's Will 1

## *Nature: Born vs Born Again.*

(preached 7/31/22)

Please turn to *Romans 5:12*.

MIXING THEM UP? As Christians we are called upon to obey and follow God's Will always, yet are there times when we mistake the will of Christ with that of nature, nurture, or our own personal choices? Is it also possible that we mix them together or assume they are the same? In this new sermon series we'll not only define what each are, but how to tell the difference between them.

DEFINITIONS. Let's start with simple definitions of each as it applies to us:

NATURE: you were born that way.

NURTURE: you were raised that way (your environment [INCLUDING OTHER PEOPLE] influenced & molded you and still does).

CHOICE: you picked it (according to personal desires/goals).

GOD'S WILL: He picked it (also designed, planned, created, and enacted).

**The only thing Christians are called upon by God to follow and obey is His will.**

**There's not one time when the Lord said in the Bible to follow nature, nurture, or personal choice.**

*Nature, nurture, & choice are under His feet and completely subject to Him, and not the other way around.*

TODAY we'll only have time to cover nature.

NATURE. Are we treating nature like it's God?

- Do we elevate it to the status of all-powerful deity?
- I'm not talking about extreme environmentalists who refer to the planet as "Gaia Earth Mother" but us—Christians.
- The first commandment is clear: we're not to have any other gods before the LORD and the 2<sup>nd</sup> is like unto it: we can't give life to graven images and call them gods.
- Is it possible that we're inadvertently doing both when it comes to nature?
- Are we assigning it the role of a god over our lives, subjecting ourselves to its powerful influence and lead?

STATEMENT. Before we continue, please allow me to make a definitive statement:

**GOD IS ABOVE NATURE. HE IS NOT SUBJECT TO IT, IT DOES NOT DEFINE HIM, AND IT DOESN'T INFLUENCE HIM IN ANY WAY.**

**GOD AND NATURE ARE NOT MARRIED...EARTH IS THE MOTHER OF UNBELIEVERS AND NOT BELIEVERS.**

**Believers have another mother which the Apostle Paul revealed.**

BORN WITH BODY. We were born with the bodies we have which include our height, skin color, hair & eye color, and frame. Our DNA is what we inherited from our ancestors and its possible to inherit other things from our ancestors such as a propensity toward heart disease, or something else. Our desire to eat, sleep, drink, and procreate are part of the same.

ECOSYSTEM. Nature also consists of the ecosystem on which this planet runs that most of us learned in grade school.

**GOD IS THE ONE WHO CREATED THE HUMAN BODY, NOT NATURE OR EVOLUTION.**

**He designed it with great detail and purpose. He placed the “need” for food, drink, etc. within us.**

*God is the One Who created the earth and its ecosystem.*

GARDEN. In the Garden of Eden, it was on earth as it was in Heaven. Yet in Genesis 3, *all aspects of nature fell and became corrupted.*

**Genesis 3:17-19 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> And to Adam he said, “Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;

<sup>18</sup> thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.

<sup>19</sup> By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

PARADISE LOST. As we see in these 3 tragic verses, not only did Adam & Eve lose their immortality, but the earth itself lost its “Paradise” perfection.

## **THE HUMAN BODY AND THE WAY IT WORKS, THE PLANET AND ITS ECOSYSTEM, ALL BECAME CORRUPTED.**

GROW OLD. This is why our bodies grow old, get sick, tire out, can be injured, experience pain, and eventually die. Creation itself follows the same pattern, whether flora or fauna, and disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, draught, flooding, and volcanic eruptions are all part of the curse that took place in Genesis 3. All diseases come from nature as well including viruses, pathogens, and harmful bacteria.

KILL & EAT. Born from this was the need and desire to kill other things for food: humans killing animals, and predatory animals killing plant eating ones to eat.

IMHERITED. Everyone who was born after Adam & Eve, which is everyone, inherited this corrupt nature:

### **Romans 5:12-14 (ESV)**

- <sup>12</sup> Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—
- <sup>13</sup> for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law.
- <sup>14</sup> Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.

BORN THAT WAY. In other words, you and I were born this way. Nature. At the moment of our conception, the corruption that Adam caused entered into us: we would not live forever, but someday our body would expire.

NEVER TAUGHT SIN. No one had to teach us to lie, steal, lust, or curse—it’s ingrained within our natural self. Adam & Eve never murdered anyone, yet their son Cain killed his brother Abel. Cain didn’t grow up in a violent neighborhood and his parents didn’t model this behavior.

### **FLESH DESIRES CORRUPT.**

- Our God-given need to eat can morph into gluttony and using food to self-medicate.
- Our God-granted need and desire for sex can be morphed into the various forms of immorality we see listed in Scripture and happening all around us.
- Our God-given need to drink water can flow into drunkenness.

**We were born with disobedient Adam as our father, the corrupted earth our mother (from the dust you were formed), and death as our destiny (to the dust you will return).**

“I WAS BORN THIS WAY.” This is why I’m not phased when someone claims they were “born this way” when it comes to some proclivity, desire, or temptation...we were all born with a propensity to sin in one way or another. Others want argue that they “choose” this or that but not me, because I’ve studied what the Bible says about the Fall and its consequences on us.

**THAT BEING SAID, THE WAY WE WERE BORN IS NOT THE WAY GOD MADE US.**

**It’s the result of the Fall.**

- Let’s stop making nature our god & creator.
- Let’s stop giving it the power to determine our present and future.
- Let’s follow and submit to God’s plan for us vs. that of our flesh.

JESUS! Which brings us to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The death of Jesus on the Cross and His resurrection 3 days later was the greatest act of love this world has ever seen! Not only did He shed His blood for the forgiveness of all our sins, but our beautiful Messiah took things to the next level: ***He reversed the curse of Adam.***

We’ve already read *Romans 5:12-14* showing how Adam messed everything up, so let’s continue reading:

**Romans 5:15-17 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man’s trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.

<sup>16</sup> And the free gift is not like the result of that one man’s sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.

<sup>17</sup> For if, because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

**Verse 15:** the “free gift” Paul is talking about is Salvation. He goes on to say in this verse that countless numbers of people have died because of Adam’s one act of disobedience—eating the FF. Yet through one act of dying on the Cross, Jesus had made eternal life available to countless others!

**Verse 16:** don’t we often tell others that actions have consequences? Don’t we hate it when someone else’s bad action had far reaching negative consequences upon us & others?

ANGRY! I can tell you this: the first time I really “got” what Adam did and the effect it’s had on the human race I was angry! First I shook my fist at him with a “what were you thinking?!” type response. Then I was even angrier at the overall unfairness of it—how could one quick action by one man condemn the entire human race to the curse of death and the burden of sin?

ANGRY WITH GOD. Then I was angry with God—why would He give one man this level of power and why not do something to turn things around?!

***These 3 verses are showing us that God did do something about it: He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever should believe in Him should not perish (die) but have everlasting life.***

**Verse 17:** just as Adam’s one act has caused all kinds of pain, sorrow, hatred, destruction and death...the one act of Jesus has granted love, joy, peace, restoration, and immortality.

#### **Romans 5:18-21 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.

<sup>19</sup> For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.

<sup>20</sup> Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,

<sup>21</sup> so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Verse 20:** no matter the level of sin, the grace of God is always bigger.

**Verse 21:** grace reigns over sin. The word reign translates to “king” or “rule.” In other words, sin doesn’t rule over God’s grace. Death isn’t king over God’s grace. It’s God and His grace that are Lord over death and sin.

**Let’s go back to verse 17:** Paul tells us that all who receive Christ as Savior also reign—same word already used. What do we reign over and how? The how is Jesus and remember what I’ve taught you about Psalm 23: when a king prepares us a table in the presence of our enemies, HE

HE GAVE US VICTORY. He's put us in authority over them. He already defeated them, has them in handcuffs, and his guards drag them forward to kneel down in front of us. He rests His feet upon their backs and we, sitting next to Him, follow suit. We both sip a cup that runneth over whilst resting our feet on the backs of our enemies.

REIGN THROUGH CHRIST. Paul told us in verse 17 that we reign through Jesus—that's the how. The enemies of sin and death are the who that we reign over.

BY OURSELVES.... By and of ourselves, nature is bigger and stronger than we are. It will enslave us to its desires and batter us with its sickness, pain, and death. ***Now that we're with Jesus, however, all that has changed.***

FLESH INHERITS. When you and I were first born of and by the flesh, we inherited all the things already mentioned.

## **BUT YOU AND I ARE NOW BORN AGAIN:**

### **John 3:3-6 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

<sup>4</sup> Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

<sup>6</sup> That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

**Focus on verse 6:** when you and I were first born, that was a birth of the flesh which is completely in subjection to nature. Adam is our father and earth is our mother.

**Now the last half of verse 6:** you and I are born a second time of the Holy Spirit and now God is our Father. Our regenerated spirit is a DIRECT creation of God, just like an angel. It didn't come from the fallen earth. It wasn't conceived and delivered by corrupt flesh into corrupt flesh.

***It's made from the stuff of heaven, the matter of God. It's therefore not subject to death or sin.***

- You and I may very well have been born a certain way.
- We might have inherited a propensity and greater temptation toward certain sins.
- The good news is that Jesus freed us from all that.

### **Romans 6:9-14 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has

dominion over him.

<sup>10</sup> For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God.

<sup>11</sup> So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

<sup>12</sup> Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.

<sup>13</sup> Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

<sup>14</sup> For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

**Verses 9-10:** resurrected Christ is no longer subject to death.

**Verse 11:** we are the same as Jesus in our spirit.

**Verses 12-13:** aren't just commandments, but words of empowerment. In other words, Paul isn't merely saying "quit sinning!" he's telling us that ***nature is no longer our king.*** He's revealing that we have another option than just obeying the passions of the flesh. Slaves have no choice but to obey their masters, but free men and women can choose differently.

**Verse 14** is the why: we are under God's grace. Nature and sin don't rule over us anymore.

- As born-again Christians let's reject nature as a god, king, ruler, or mother.
- Let's stop giving it power over us that Jesus died and rose again to take away.
- Just as Jesus is greater than nature, He's made it so we are too.

DIFFERENT MOM. We don't just have a different Father now, but a different mom too. I don't hear this verse quoted too often:

**Galatians 4:26 (NKJV)**

<sup>26</sup> but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.

The New Jerusalem is our mother, which means that she has married God. Is this true?

**Revelation 21:2 (NKJV)**

<sup>2</sup> Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

CHURCH = NJ. I preached a sermon a few years back where I made a strong biblical case that the Church and the New Jerusalem are one and the same. We are the bride of Christ!

***Planet earth isn't your mother, didn't give you life, and doesn't currently give you life. God is the life-giver and all life comes from Him.***

WAITING FOR ITS REDEMPTION. Planet earth—yea, all of physical creation—is actually waiting on us to receive our final redemption so that it can too:

**Romans 8:18-23 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

<sup>19</sup> For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.

<sup>20</sup> For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope

<sup>21</sup> that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

<sup>22</sup> For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

<sup>23</sup> And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

BORN-AGAIN EARTH! Planet earth is waiting to be born again just like we are. It's waiting for its own resurrection. While it's behind us in line, let's look at the bigger picture:

***creation knows its subject to God and that God is its only hope for redemption.*** The same Lord Who created the heavens and the earth can and will restore it.

You and I are born again, made in the likeness of Jesus and not nature.

You and I are now a direct creation of God and seated next to Him on a throne of authority.

Nature does not rule over us, God does.