

The Reign of “Mother” Nature

The Banquet Table of Consequences – Part VII

Romans 1:25

Introduction

Recently I had the privilege of addressing the graduates of a nearby Christian School. As I prepared for that Baccalaureate speech, which I turned into a sermon, of course (I do not do speeches), it struck me again how far our country has digressed from the faith of its fathers.

Newsweek magazine revealed as much in the May 28, 2001, world view article entitled, “The Character of our Campuses”. The author, Fareed Zakaria, wrote of her concern about these graduates who are,

... super-achievers, yet have little interest in developing moral character.

She contrasted this graduating class with the class of the early twentieth century and wrote,

Those students were relatively unconcerned with academic achievement but went to great lengths to instill character. We, on the other hand, place enormous emphasis on achievement but are tongue-tied when it comes to what makes a virtuous life.

The author went on to quote John Hibben, the former president of Princeton University, as he addressed the graduating class of 1913. Hibben said to that class,

The world commands you to take your place and fight the fight in the name of honor and of chivalry, against the powers of organized evil and commercialized vice, against the poverty, disease and death which follow fast in the wake of sin . . . against all the innumerable

forces which are working to destroy the image of God in man, and unleash the passions of the beast.

Down with Man . . . Up with Nature!

Two generations since that speech have brought about the rise and display and approval of those passions of the beast, and the digression of the image of God in man.

The apostle Paul virtually prophesied in Romans, chapter 1, verse 21, when he said that, when mankind refuses to honor and thank Creator God, they condemn themselves to wandering around in spiritual darkness, filled with speculations that do not satisfy the human heart or give meaning and dignity to human life.

He said, in verse 25,

... they exchanged the truth of God for a lie

...

We have previously taken note of several lies that have impacted and influenced our generation. These are lies that resemble the very first lie of Satan to Eve that assaulted the character of God, the kindness of God, and the authority of God’s Word.

Satan said to Eve, in effect, “Did God really speak? And, did He really mean what He said that, if you eat that fruit you will die? Surely Eve, God would never be so restrictive of your desires. If you eat that fruit, you will not surely die.”

She was deceived and ate, both she and Adam, and they both began to die.

Jesus Christ said of Satan, in John, chapter 8, verse 44b,

... Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature; for he is a liar and the father of lies.

Exposing the Lies:

We have discussed several lies that dominate our culture today – lies that equally assault the truth of God's Word and dilute His power and authority.

That truth is . . .

1. One lie is that truth is a personal creation; that it is relative; that whatever you want to believe, you can believe and no one should ever tell you that you are wrong, because, when it comes to spiritual matters, you are right and so is everyone else.

This is spiritual nonsense. Either the Hindu is right in believing in the existence of three hundred million gods, or I am right in believing in the existence of only one true God. Either the cow of the Indian is indeed sacred, or the cow is not sacred. Both of us cannot be right. One of us is entirely wrong.

Yet, that lie of relative truth is now the sand upon which our culture stands.

That salvation is . . .

2. Another popular deception is that salvation is universal; that is, everyone is going to heaven.

It is interesting that, at least, heaven is absolutely believed in, even though truth cannot be absolute. People want to believe anything they want and behave any way they want and yet, in the end, go to some sort of heavenly paradise. So, nearly everyone who believes in immortality, believes they are on their way to heaven.

That judgment is . . .

3. Another lie, that follows closely behind that one, is the lie that judgment is non-existent.

If this is true, then Jesus Christ was deceived, in Matthew, chapter 7, verses 13 and 14, when he said,

Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter

by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it.

The apostle John was deceived by the Lord, as he wrote in the book of Revelation, chapter 20, verse 15, these fearful words,

And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire [or hell].

How do you get your name in the Lamb's book of life? By coming in faith and repentance to the Lamb of God, who is the Lord Jesus Christ, John's Gospel informs us. If you do not want to come to Him in repentance and confession, then you had better hope that Jesus Christ and the apostle John were both deceived, for they paint a terrible future for you.

That man . . .

4. Another lie is that man evolved. We will address that later in this sermon.

That God is . . .

5. Finally, there is the lie that God is uninvolved in His creation.

The Bible tells us, however, that God is intimately involved, having created us and even taken on the form of flesh in order to be related to us, die for us, and pay the eternal penalty for our sin and guilt. You cannot get any more involved than childbirth and crucifixion.

Experiencing the Consequences:

Now, what happens when man believes the lie? There are a number of consequences.

Mankind rejects a . . .

1. First, mankind rejects a personal, loving, forgiving God.

Mankind replaces God with . . .

2. A second consequence is that mankind replaces God with other objects of worship.

The drug addict and sexual addict longs for that high and that experience, because he does not long after God. The materialist does not long after God, so he longs after things. The proud person does not

long after God, so he longs for power, prestige, and popularity.

The human heart was created to crave. If it does not crave after God, it will crave after something else.

Mankind abandons the only basis for . . .

3. Thirdly, mankind abandons the only basis for morality.

If you evolved, then you are just another animal. And, if you are an animal, then you can do whatever other animals do. Like the lyrics of the number seventeen song on last year's "Billboard's Top 200" album chart, that said over and over,

You and me ain't nothin' but mammals; so let's do it like they do on the Discovery Channel.

I have read that MTV regularly aired the video of the song, which featured band members dressed as monkeys simulating sexual acts with one another. The band said,

It was all a joke.

Maybe so, but the song relied upon the assumption that has become a natural progression of Darwinian evolution – that man is just another animal, and whatever behavior seems natural and normative for animals, can be normative for humans as well.

No one is laughing anymore. The brutality of the animal kingdom has become a part of the human experience.

A new paperback for children, ages nine to twelve, is called, *The Beast In You*. It attempts to relate human characteristics back to animal predecessors. Full of catch cartoons, the book gushes that fingernails are proof that they evolved from claws and goose bumps are proof that we once had fur.

Even evolutionists are recognizing that their theory undercuts traditional morality, however, and they are troubled by that loss.

Others, like Robert Wright, think it is about time we got over human moral tendencies and rid ourselves of any restrictions. He writes in his book, *The Moral Animal*, which was quoted in the April 22, 2000, *World Magazine*, that,

There is definitely no reason to assume that existing moral codes reflect some higher truth apprehended via divine inspiration.

Instead, he writes,

Morality is merely an idea that evolved in the human mind as a tool for increasing reproductive success; whatever gets our genes into the next generation is morally right.

He goes on to postulate,

Both men and women are biologically programmed to be unfaithful to their spouses; wanderlust is an innate part of our minds, [thus] lifelong monogamous devotion just isn't natural.

Wouldn't he make a wonderful husband?! This is the man every father hopes his daughter marries.

Princeton's president was right, in 1913, that when you abandon the revelation of God Himself, and His moral direction within that revelation, called the Bible, you unleash the passions of the beast. You lose moral boundaries; you wander into all sorts of perverse and destructive behavior.

Mankind gives away his . . .

4. The fourth consequence thus follows, that mankind gives away his personal God-given nobility.

Now follow this carefully – since God is the One who has told us of our infinite value and also the One who defined our special place within creation, then, when God is rejected, there follows the loss of everything God has told us about ourselves.

Notice the position of nobility and authority given to mankind by God, the creator, in Genesis, chapter 1, verses 26 to 28,

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. And God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

According to God's creative plan, Adam and Eve were king and queen over the planet and over all the animals. They were told to "subdue the earth". The Hebrew word for "subdue," or "kabas," means, "to

tread down and bring into bondage; to control and to order”.

Furthermore, in chapter 2 of Genesis, God gives man the role of “caring” for creation. The word “care,” from “samar,” means, “to keep and to preserve; to cultivate”.

God has delegated the care and cultivation of the planet to mankind, as well as the rule over all the animal kingdom.

When God’s Word is rejected, however, not only does mankind lose his place of dignity and honor, but there is a fifth consequence as well.

Mankind loses the . . .

5. Mankind loses the value of human life in favor of animal life.

In other words, man either rules nature or he is ruled by nature. He either exercises sovereignty over the natural world, or he loses his perspective and, ultimately, becomes just another member of the food chain. God made him to be ruler, he, instead, is ruled.

Here is how it happens. If people are really just animals, then animals are people.

Someone might say, “What’s wrong with that? To believe that human beings are worth more than animals and have a special place in creation is nothing more than arrogance and pride, right?”

Ladies and gentlemen, apart from God’s Word and a belief in what His Word teaches about creation, it could be arrogance.

In fact, Peter Singer, the evolutionist at Princeton University, calls it “speciesism”. He says it is another form of “racism” to not give animals equal rights with human beings.

He was quoted in the *National Review*, April 2, 2001, as saying,

Insofar as animals feel pleasure and pain and are capable of enjoyment and suffering, they have legitimate interests that must be given equal weight with those of human beings.

He also went on to say that,

A chimpanzee, dog, or pig will have a higher degree of self-awareness and a greater capacity for meaningful relations with others than a severely retarded infant or someone in a state of advanced senility, thus the life of a human infant with irreversible brain damage is no more valuable than the lives of animals.

This philosophy, ladies and gentlemen, is rampant in our culture today. Animals are being treated more and more like people all the time.

One of the fastest growing segments of law today is animal or pet law.

A *USA Today* article, that I clipped, reported,

There is a growing movement that asks courts to abandon centuries of precedent and treat pets not as property or livestock but as something akin to humans. In courts across the United States, there are signs that pet law is awakening. In the past four years, juries in six states have awarded large judgments to pet owners. Twelve law schools, including Georgetown and Harvard, now offer courses in animal law. Perhaps most significantly, courts have begun to allow owners of damaged or destroyed pets to sue not only for the animal’s cash value, but also for loss of companionship and their own pain and suffering, as if the deceased pet had been their child or spouse.

One example of this is the case of Kay Corvo, who won a suit against an animal hospital that had switched the remains of her late poodle with those of a cat. The error was discovered during her pet’s open-casket funeral. She sued for emotional distress and won.

Since medieval times, courts have considered animals to be property, or “chattel” in legal terms. Owners whose animals were harmed, were limited to recovering only the cost of replacing the animal. Not now.

Today, a national network of animal rights lawyers are pushing the envelope until, as Joyce Tischler was quoted in the May 27, 2000, *World Magazine* as saying,

. . . we succeed in presenting a case in which the animal is the plaintiff.

We are already getting close, my friends. Just in the last year, a Lowell, Massachusetts judge became the first jurist in that state to allow a dog owner to sue for the emotional distress of the animal. The owner had watched as the dog was roughed up by a neighbor’s dog.

The September, 13, 2000, *USA Today*, quoted Richard Cupp, a professor at the Pepperdine University School of Law, in Malibu, California, as saying,

The envelope is really being pressed. Right now there's still kind of a giggle factor when you're talking about emotional distress for pets. But, as more and more cases are filed, we'll be giggling less and paying more.

The logical outgrowth of the evolutionist philosophy that refuses God's created order is – people can treat people like animals, but they must treat animals like people.

In Tennessee, a pet owner – excuse me, guardian – can now sue for up to four thousand dollars for the wrongful death of a pet. And recently, in Southern California, a judge awarded a woman twenty seven thousand dollars for suffering brought to her dog as a result of botched dental repairs.

Americans are spending more than eleven billion dollars a year on pet health care. Add to that the fact that, in America, there are already thirty five vacation resorts for pets and six hundred fifty pet cemeteries. Three greeting card companies have even begun marketing sympathy cards for the “loss of animal companions.” And, Boulder, Colorado recently changed its legal language so that pet owners are no longer called “owners,” but “guardians”.

And why not? If animals are worth the same as people, then you should give them chemo-therapy, take them on vacation, and bury them in a cemetery lot.

What does the Bible say? God told Adam and Eve to rule the animal kingdom. The Old Testament is filled with references on not treating animals cruelly.

But what about intrinsic value? Is that dog or cat worth the same as a person? Are we guilty of “specieism” because we think people are worth more than animals?

Jesus Christ said to His audience, in Matthew, chapter 6, verse 26, as He delivered the sermon on the mount,

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?

Later in Matthew, chapter 12, verse 12a, the religious leaders were trying to accuse the Lord of violating the Sabbath rest by healing a man with a crippled hand. The Lord responded to them by saying, in effect, “Listen, why wouldn't I help this man on the Sabbath? Even you would pull one of your sheep out of a ditch on the Sabbath if it fell in.”

Then the Lord said, and I quote,

Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep! . . .

For those who disregard the words of Christ, there are consequences. There are inverted values, the loss of human dignity, and the loss of foundational morality, as people live like animals and believe that animals should be able to live like people.

One more step downward in this spiral is as Paul summarized in Romans, chapter 1, verse 25, that rebellious man refuses to worship and serve the Creator and instead worships and serves the creature.

Mankind becomes bound to meet the needs . . .

6. The sixth consequence is that mankind becomes bound to meet the needs of nature rather than meeting the needs of mankind.

Think of this balance as a seesaw. Man is on one side and nature is on the other. If man is elevated and given his noble right by Creator God, nature is down, below man. But as man refuses Creator God, then he lowers himself, by virtue of his refusal, and nature begins to rise in importance.

Here is how the seesaw works:

- Nature is – enjoyed by man,
- Nature is – equal with man,
- Nature is – sovereign over man.

As long as you have man ruling over nature, believing God's created order as truth, you have man enjoying, marveling over, cultivating, and caring for nature. But when you reject God's design, the seesaw begins to tilt, until you have nature ruling over man. And what we are seeing today, ladies and gentlemen, is the emerging reign of “mother” nature.

The article, “Good News,” by Dennis Prager, in the July/August 1993, *Christianity Today*, told that in the last fifteen years, high school graduates have been polled and have responded with the same answer. They were asked,

If you were in an emergency situation, would you save your dog first or a stranger?

The typical answer is,

I love my dog, I do not love the stranger. So, I would save my dog first.

This feeling of love has supplanted the God-given moral guide for young people. What is right has now been redefined with what an individual feels.

And, the life of a dog becomes more valuable than that of a human. Thus, man has become the dog's best friend.

The inversion of values was painfully and tragically illustrated recently to a church in San Diego, California. It involved the building project of a church pastored by John Maxwell. He, after fighting with town officials, eventually left and another pastor came and finished the project.

The editors of *Religion Today* reported this incredible story, which, by the way never made national news.

The story began in 1981, when pastor John Maxwell announced the need for a new campus. After a long search, the church bought a one hundred thirty acre mountain on a major freeway. The costly complications emerged immediately.

The church was not allowed to build on top of the mountain, because it would block the view of nearby residents. So, the campus was totally redesigned for the side of the mountain.

Then, an endangered bird, known as the California Black Tailed Gnat Catcher, was the next obstacle. Because a pair of Gnat Catchers was discovered on that mountain, the church was allowed to build only on twenty five acres. The other one hundred five acres belonged to the birds. Furthermore, the church was told that heavy construction could not take place on the mountain during the Gnat Catcher breeding season, which lasts from midnight February 15 to midnight August 15.

Then, while the church project waited until the end of breeding season for the pair of birds, a small bush, called the coastal sage, was found. Developers were forbidden from building anywhere the bush grew, or might someday grow.

Next, the church was required to pay one hundred twenty thousand dollars for a two acre dig that uncovered a pottery shard and a rock believed to have been blackened by a cooking fire started by Indians. The church paid ten thousand dollars to cover the area with a special mat and a soil cap.

Then, governmental officials cited "light pollution" from the proposed church parking lot and required the parking lot lights to be lowered from the normal twenty feet to three feet. The pastor replied that this, "was fine so long as your cars were only six inches in height." Officials eventually relented, but restricted the church from holding public services between five and seven p.m. on weekdays.

This news release goes on and on and on. The church building was delayed more than ten years, because of these issues, and the project cost eighteen million dollars more, by the time they were finished.

I have mentioned, previously, of the cows that wander about India. Two hundred million head of cattle on which the people have placed spiritual value. Therefore, they do not kill and eat them – even though the country is starving to death.

You might say, "Those people in India with their cows . . . how ridiculous!"

We are not too far away. For a congregation of several thousand people to have to virtually deed over the majority of their property to a pair of birds, and then only be allowed to build for half of a year at a time, so as not to disturb the breeding season of two birds – we are not too far away.

This Really Is My Father's World!

Let me summarize with these truths:

God has . . .

1. God has created all there is.

As John, chapter 1, verse 3, says,

All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

God sustains . . .

2. Secondly, God sustains all there is.

Read Psalm chapter 104, sometime and rediscover that God created the seasons and systems on planet earth to sustain life.

Let me read just a few verses. Verse 10,

He sends forth springs in the valleys; they flow between the mountains; they give drink to every beast of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst.

Verse 13,

He waters the mountains from His upper chambers; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of His works.

Verse 14,

He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the labor of man, so that he may bring forth food from the earth,

In other words, you do not keep planet earth going, my friend, God does.

The popular theory, however, is that mankind is in a desperate race to keep earth going. You might say, "But how do you know the earth is going to make it?"

Just read this Bible – it tells you what happens, all the way to the end of time. Revelation, chapters 20 and 21, tell us that the earth will keep going and there will be plenty of resources for billions of people, until that day, in the future, when He burns the earth and creates a brand new one, as well as a new heaven for the believers to enjoy forever and ever.

A popular fourth grade ecology program, called "Earthkeepers," teaches this typical New Age philosophy,

The only way to save the environment is to have a deep, abiding relationship with the earth.

I cannot help but think of Romans, chapter 1, verse 25, that they refuse a relationship with the Creator and choose to have a relationship with the created thing, or earth.

God grants . . .

3. The third truth is that God grants special dignity to mankind.
 - Creation shows His unique involvement with man, and
 - Creation reveals His image imprinted in man.

Yes, man can be classified as a mammal. That is, we carry on mammalian kinds of processes; such as: ingestion, digestion, absorption, assimilation, respiration, excretion, secretion, motion, and reproduction. We do these things too, but what sets mankind uniquely apart is the fact that God made us in His image, as Genesis, chapter 1, tells us.

What does that mean?

Created in the image of God means that:

- Man is a spiritual being.
- Man has immortality.

Because you are an immortal soul, you will live forever. The Bible gives two possible eternal homes – heaven or hell. No fish, bird, dog, or cat has been promised a place in the Father's house in heaven, or warned of a future judgment in hell. No horse, cow, or dolphin has been made a joint heir of Jesus Christ for all of infinity. Only human beings.

- Because of that, man is not only a spiritual being with immortality, but he enjoys spiritual fellowship.
- And again, man has been given the right to exercise sovereignty over creation.

You could put it this way – It is God's world, but it is man's job.

God owns . . .

4. The fourth and final truth is, God not only created all there is, He owns all there is.

In Psalm, chapter 50, verses 10 to 12, God the Creator says,

For every beast of the forest is Mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird of the mountains, and everything that moves in the field is Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell you; for the world is Mine and all it contains.

God has created all there is. God sustains all there is. God owns all there is.

And even though the world refuses to acknowledge and worship this wonderful Creator God, the believer does what Paul does at the end of Romans, chapter 1, verse 25 – he simply states, in pure and lovely worship,

. . . the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

The world denies Him but,

. . . [He] is blessed forever.

The world dishonors, ignores, shuns, and hates Him, but,

. . . [He] is blessed forever. Amen.

The world will not worship Him, but we will – our wonderful Creator and Redeemer, for,

. . . [He] is blessed forever. Amen.

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 5/27/2001 by Stephen Davey.

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