

## Limitations of Nature to Lead Man to Ultimate Truth

- I. Preliminary thoughts.
  - A. The created order is a data set that can be analyzed. The “stuff” of creation does not lie but conclusions about it and drawn from it are subject to limited power of investigation, faulty premises and biases, assumptions, inadequate sampling, etc.
  - B. The data of the creation is the same for both the unbeliever and the believer. The difference is in how the data is interpreted and processed.
  - C. If the created order is an equal witness to Scripture in finding ultimate truth (God), then what is the significance of Scripture?
  - D. Can a man with a functioning mind grounded in logic discover and concede ultimate truth (God) from the created order, or even from Scripture? Or is something more needed?
  - E. Can a regenerate man with a grasp of grammar and definitions of words be perfected from Scripture alone, or is Scripture inadequate to the task?
  - F. By what means has God determined to save believers: human wisdom or preaching?
  - G. Can man by logical analysis of available data alone be converted to the truth of the gospel?
  - H. Can regenerate man with a knowledge of Scripture be fully informed and formed in the image of Christ without preaching?
  - I. We ought not to glorify human wisdom nor human ignorance.
- II. To underscore his argument for hair length, Paul says, “Doth not nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?” (**1CO 11:14**).
  - A. This reasoning is based upon the premise that the natural order of things is a weaker revelation that shames those who should be wise enough to know better than to erase distinctions between the sexes.
  - B. The brute creatures generally present clear differences in appearance and function between the sexes.
  - C. Paul's reasoning here is that the natural order of things contains a measure of instruction which should be given *qualified* consideration.
    - 1. Nature is under the bondage of corruption (**ROM 8:20-22**) and is therefore limited in its ability to instruct men as to what is right.
    - 2. This counters the faulty notion that some Christians affirm, to wit, that Nature is “...the 67th book of the Bible.”
    - 3. Nature is a broken, impure “book” overwritten with entropy/death but Scripture is unbroken, pure, lively, durable and only corrupted by man’s tinkering.  
**PRO 8:8; 30:5; JOH 10:35; ACT 7:38; PSA 119:89; MAT 24:35; 2CO 2:17.**
    - 4. The supreme standard by which right is determined is Scripture. **PSA 119:128.**
- III. Scripture speaks of things which men know naturally. **JUDE 1:10.**
  - A. Those whose corrupt antics Jude condemns are “...as brute beasts...”
    - 1. They are defiling the flesh after the manner of the sinners of Sodom and Gomorrah. **JUDE 1:7-8.**
    - 2. They are doing “...that which is *against nature*...” (**ROM 1:26-27**).
    - 3. This is why sodomy is such a repugnant sin: it violates the morality God has declared in the Scripture and also the witness of nature which predominantly demonstrates male-female sexuality.
  - B. Scripture speaks of the sin of being without *natural affection*. **ROM 1:31.**
    - 1. It is natural for men to have a desire for women, and vice-versa.
    - 2. It is natural for parents, particularly a mother, to tenderly care for offspring.

3. It is natural to have an interest in one's own health and life. **EPH 5:29.**
  4. It is natural to assume power over one's own body.
  - C. Mind that those things which men know naturally do not require the new birth or the light of God's word. Therefore,
    1. the rejection of sodomy, etc. is not necessarily proof of regeneration or conversion.
    2. the pro-life cause is not necessarily proof of regeneration or conversion. The animal world has examples of pre-emergent protection of young.
  - D. brute: Wanting in reason or understanding;....Of human beings: senseless, stupid; unintelligent, unreasoning, uninstructed; sensual.
    1. The animals have not the capacity for rational or abstract thought; they do what they do by base instinct.
    2. The animals are not spiritual as man was made spiritual. **GEN 2:7; ECC 3:21.**
    3. The animals are not held morally accountable for their conduct.
    4. Is it any wonder that a God-rejecting world strives to equate men with animals?
- IV. Nature serves as a limited witness to men to which they are held accountable. **ROM 1:18-21.**
- A. The universe is a declaration of His glory and creative genius. **PSA 19:1-3.**
  - B. The universe's existence can not be explained except by the recognition of the Laws of Thermodynamics being subordinate to the First Cause.
    1. The universe did not spontaneously emerge from nothing.
    2. The universe is not eternal. The law of entropy denies this possibility.
    3. A Force greater than the universe must have brought it into existence.
    4. But even the ultimate explanation of the universe's existence depends on faith, not observation and reason of natural things. **HEB 11:3.**
  - C. There is a profound order in the stars and their systems which He has named. **PSA 147:4; JOB 9:9.**
    1. The heavenly lights are set for signs, seasons, days and years. **GEN 1:14.**
    2. They have distinct settings and courses (**JDG 5:20**) which demonstrate order and provide for navigation.
    3. They exert influences. **JOB 38:31.**
    4. A prophesied star was discerned by the Magi as heralding Christ's advent. **NUM 24:17-19 c/w MAT 2:2, 9.**
  - D. The unique existence of life on earth, its dependence on the sun, and the careful balance of all things physical testifies of His special purpose for man.
  - E. God corrected Job by pointing him to His genius in nature which Job could never duplicate or control. **JOB 38-41.**
  - F. Nature provides all sinners with a profound proof of God's being, power, justice and the veracity of His written word: the fossil record which speaks of sudden, calamitous deposition and burial caused by a Great Flood. One has to be willingly ignorant to deny this record. **2PE 3:5-6.**
  - G. There is no contradiction between the testimony of Scripture and the data set of the natural order.
    1. Scripture declares the data set of the natural order to be corrupt and decaying, and the natural order is so.
    2. True science will accord with Scripture but not false science. **1TI 6:20.**
  - H. Nature can not teach heaven nor heaven's spiritual truth. **2CO 4:18; 5:7; HEB 11:1.**