

February 12, 2013 ©Homer Kizer

Commentary — From the Margins *Seeing is Believing?* Part Four

Some of the people of Jerusalem therefore said, "Is not this the man whom they seek to kill? And here He is, speaking openly, and they say nothing to Him! Can it be that the authorities really know that this is the Christ? But we know where this man comes from, and when the Christ appears, no one will know where He comes from." So Jesus proclaimed, as He taught in the temple, "You know me, and you know where I come from? But I have not come of my own accord. He who sent me is true, and Him you do not know. I know Him, for I come from Him, and He sent me." So they were seeking to arrest Him, but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come. Yet many of the people believed in Him. They said, "When the Christ appears, will He do more signs than this man has done?" (John 7:25–31)

When I started this Commentary discussing the consignment of all humanity to disobedience through giving to unbelieving human persons a debased mind, I didn't anticipate how much I would write ... there is still a section to come.

4.

For Christians, *hair* as a spiritual signifier has little importance except within the ministries of the descendants of 16th-Century Radical Reformers; hence modern Anabaptist women in general cover their hair, even if only with a doily and even though they do not understand the theological argument for why they do so. There cannot be, however, understanding of Paul's reasoning or of hair as a sign when Christians are either taught that human persons are humanly born with immortal souls or that a person is not born-again, born-from-above until Christ returns. The Adversary has deceived all of Christendom as part of the whole world (Rev 12:9).

The first three sections of this Commentary have been spiritual milk. Of more interest to me is the ramifications of what Paul wrote about hair length:

For a man ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man. For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. That is why a wife ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman; for as woman was made from

man, so man is now born of woman. And all things are from God. Judge for yourselves: is it proper for a wife to pray to God with her head uncovered? *Does not nature itself teach you that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace for him, but if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For her hair is given to her for a covering.* (1 Cor 11:7–15 emphasis added)

A man has one natural covering on his head, his hair, with which he was born and which remains until male-pattern-baldness takes it from him. The hair on the head of a young man does not differ from the hair on the head of a woman, other than the man by tradition keeps his hair cut short, a tradition that was dealt a setback in the late 1960s when a youthful generation rebelled against the practices of their parents and many young men in Western culture began to wear longish hair, often unkept. So when Paul writes that *nature itself teaches that if a man wears long hair it is a disgrace* simply isn't true. What nature teaches is that as a man ages, he will most likely become bald. Certainly, his hair will thin. But acceptable male hair length is entirely dependant upon the culture in which the male participates.

A Christian man should keep his hair cut short as a symbol of being made naked through circumcision, as the "head" of importance following spiritual birth moves from between the legs to atop the shoulders ... just as the circumcision of record moves from being of the penis and exclusively male to being of the heart and gender neutral, the head that matters is no longer that of the penis but the one on top of a person's shoulders. Before God, man ceased being an animal whose purpose in life was furthering human procreation. Human persons, both male and female, were to become thinking sons of God.

The Christian wife, however, has two heads: Christ Jesus being the head of her inner self, and her husband being the head of the woman in marriage; thus the Christian wife, having one natural covering of her head, needs to add a second covering. The Christian wife needs two coverings on her head, the first being her longish hair and the second being a fabric covering reflecting her skills as *wife*.

Now, not every man who keeps his hair short signifies that his heart is circumcised, but that Christian man who wears longish hair does signify that his heart is not circumcised, that he is not born of God. So male hair length as a sign is, again, context specific, with this context not being biological humanness, but the culture in which the male resides. If this culture is that of greater Christendom, short male hair length represents inclusion whereas longish male hair length represents rebellion against God and by extension, exclusion.

Long male hair carries differing significance in different cultures and cannot be assigned spiritual significance to non-Christians. And the same applies in reverse to female hair length: with Christendom, a woman's long hair is her glory, but this is not necessarily so in a differing culture.

Again, what Paul wrote about nature teaching that long hair on a man is a disgrace isn't factually true if, especially, "human nature" is a derivative of human biology; for the hair on a young male's head closely approximates the hair on a young female's head, including lack of facial hair. Plus long hair was not a disgrace for a pre-contact Amerindian male. And if there is even one case where

what Paul wrote is not true, then what Paul wrote is false, which isn't to say that what Paul wrote is to be rejected but is to say that what Paul wrote must be placed within its context. What is true within Christianity isn't necessarily true outside of Christianity. "Truth" is not—contrary to what absolutists desire—unchanging. Rather, the Greek concept of <truth> better represents the reality of *truth* than does the English concept; for in Koine Greek, *truth* was the revealing of what had been concealed, the negation of concealment.

But what Paul wrote has significance far beyond the hair length of a man ... Paul denied to "nature" the co-equal status it had with "nurture" in Greek tradition (nurture generally being recognized as culture). Paul denies legitimacy to *nature* as a biological force: he refutes the long history of *nature versus nurture* that was old when Sophocles wrote *Antigone* about 441 BCE. And if *nature* isn't a co-equal "force" competing with *nurture*, then the foundational underpinnings of Western civilization have to be rethought.

When Paul wrote the following, he contended that God Himself linked culture [nurture] to nature and made both two sides of the same coin, with both subservient to Him:

For although they [Gentiles] knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things. Therefore **God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity**, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. For this reason **God gave them up to dishonorable passions**. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, **God gave them up to a debased mind** to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. (Rom 1:21–32 emphasis and double emphasis added)

What happens when God gives a people up to impurity, dishonorable passions, debased minds? What sort of thoughts occur in a debased mind?

If a person is given over to dishonorable passions that are manifested in homosexuality, then a debased mind is not focused on human procreation but uses human sexuality to thwart procreation; to not bring to life additional human persons. The debased mind would, logically, support intentional abortion—the murder of the most innocent of human persons.

The debased mind is the mind of the Adversary.

By the criteria Paul used, America's President Obama has a debased mind; for he openly supports abortion, gay rights. He is haughty, boastful, ruthless, filled with strife (always in campaign mode), insolent. He makes no pretense of keeping the commandments; he is filled with all manner of unrighteousness. And he differs little from others in the nation's Capital, on Wall Street, in universities. Christians live in a debased culture and are, unfortunately, tainted by the culture in which they dwell.

According to Paul, humanity possessing debased minds came about by God giving up those who worshiped the creation rather than the Creator to impurity and dishonorable passions. Thus, God has culpability in a woman lusting for another woman or a man for another man, not that God intended for such intercourse to occur. Rather, by God removing from human minds seemingly natural sexual barriers, God permitted the wickedness of imaginations to be seen in the deeds of the person. By God giving to human persons debased minds, all of the world can see the thoughts of these individuals acted out by the bodies of these individuals. Secretive closet behavior stemming from dishonorable passions—behavior that is abominable to God—becomes public behavior when God gives to these individuals debased minds.

In a related occurrence, the prophet Ezekiel records,

And I said to their children in the wilderness, Do not walk in the statutes of your fathers, nor keep their rules, nor defile yourselves with their idols. I am [YHWH] your God; walk in my statutes, and be careful to obey my rules, and keep my Sabbaths holy that they may be a sign between me and you, that you may know that I am [YHWH] your God. But the children rebelled against me. They did not walk in my statutes and were not careful to obey my rules, by which, if a person does them, he shall live; they profaned my Sabbaths. Then I said I would pour out my wrath upon them and spend my anger against them in the wilderness. But I withheld my hand and acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations, in whose sight I had brought them out. Moreover, I swore to them in the wilderness that I would scatter them among the nations and disperse them through the countries, because they had not obeyed my rules, but had rejected my statutes and profaned my Sabbaths, and their eyes were set on their fathers' idols. Moreover, I gave them statutes that were not good and rules by which they could not have life, and I defiled them through their very gifts in their offering up all their firstborn, that I might devastate them. ***I did it that they might know that I am [YHWH].*** (Ezek 20:18–26 double emphasis added)

Evil is nothing more than unbelief; i.e., the manifestation of unbelief. And forms of not-believing-God is evil, and this includes doing things that seem right in human reasoning as in the example Jesus used in Mark's Gospel, Jesus saying,

You [Pharisees] have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! For Moses said, "Honor your father and your mother"; and, "Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die." But you say, "If a man tells his father or his mother, 'Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban' (that is, given to God)—then you no

longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. (Mark 7:9-13)

When evil is unbelief that is sometimes hard for even the unbelieving person to discern, God habitually steps in to reveal this concealed evil through making the *wrongness* of what's being done so apparent that even the perpetrator is appalled by the things the person does. The example in Ezekiel is that of God giving to Israel statutes that seemed to support Israel burning their firstborns; that freed Israel's consciences from guilt when Israel continued the abominable pagan practices of the Canaanite peoples they dispossessed. It wasn't that God commanded Israel to burn their firstborns in worship of Him, but that He commanded Israel to burn their firstborns after Israel would not cease their continuance of Canaanite worship of Baal. In essence, God used reverse psychology on Israel: if Israel would not do what He told the nation through Moses to do but did the opposite, then it was logical for God to command Israel to do what He hated and thereby be so appalled by the practices the people borrowed from the Canaanites that Israel would cease its idolatry.

God's *m.o.* has been to command a people not to do whatever and to do this other thing, with the promise of exile for disobedience. But inevitably, the people of Israel, tuned into the Adversary's broadcast of rebellion, have done the things that God commanded the people not to do. However, before bringing captivity and exile upon Israel, God has tried to use Israel's rebellion against Him to Israel's advantage by commanding Israel to do what Israel was already doing, thereby removing guilt from Israel's unbelief and disobedience in hopes that by Israel seeing how heinous are the idolatrous practices in which the people of Israel have been engaged, the people would come to hate those things that have been doing, repent, and return to God ... He had more success when bringing an enemy against Israel, thoroughly scaring the people.

God gave the world over to dishonorable passions in apparent hope that human persons would be disgusted by a man lusting for another man, placing his "head" in the excrement from the stomach. But when people were not disgusted by things done that should not ever occur, God gave to humanity debased minds ... anything went, and did. The human person was reduced to being meat in a meat market. Women were valued for their biology, and Christians were fed to the lions.

According to Paul, humankind was without an excuse for its bad and idolatrous behavior. Yet, the descendants of the peoples who suppressed the truth and refused to worship the Creator did not have a choice as to whether they would or wouldn't worship the Creator. Their ancestors received debased minds which they in turn "inherited" so that they would continue living with dishonorable passions ... are they also without excuse (Rom 1:20)?

If a human infant is born into a culture based upon dishonorable passions, with America's culture having become so, can the maturing child realistically be

expected to be appalled by homosexuality when the child is taught to read from a book about so-and-so having two mommas? Isn't having two mothers, or two fathers just another acceptable life choice made by the adopted child's *parents*? (Someone has to adopt the unwanted children that were lucky enough not to be aborted; so why not a loving lesbian or gay couple?) Am I not simply being old fashioned in condemning a man laying with another man as he would lay with a woman?

In the hierarchy of penetration, one man will exercise dominion over the other man. One will be the "head" of the other. And no children will come from either's seed, thereby denying to God potential sons. ... How would you feel if someone murdered your potential son, or denied life to potential sons? As a shadow and type of what God experiences, far too many sons and daughters of human parents are murdered by various means, guns being only one of many means that range from bombs to being shaken.

Even the American preschooler who will be lucky enough to be homeschooled cannot escape the widening acceptance of abominable behavior permeating Western culture. The occult has become an appropriate subject for children's literature. Self esteem is taught as a subject rather than earned. And in Chicago, kids shoot kids as if public streets were shooting ranges.

At the *Midnight Sun Writer's Conference* on University of Alaska Fairbanks' campus in, I believe, 1981, author Robert Stone told graduate students that *the veneer of civilization was very thin*. In his travels as a war correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*, he had seen where humans had stepped through this veneer, with men armed with AK-47s committing acts of brutality that were outside of civilized norms, with men like ourselves behaving as if they were predatory beasts, killing for the sake of killing, maiming those they didn't kill because they could. And while this is our usual concept of men having debased minds, the reality is that the man who didn't quit watching Beyonce after a minute or two has a debased mind and is well able to step through the veneer of civilization. (*Why after a minute or two* rather than immediately, because it may well have taken a couple of minutes to realize what was being presented.)

The human body is not appreciably different from the body of the great apes, but there is considerable difference between the cognitive ability of the human mind and that of apes or of other mammals, with this difference not rooted in biology but in the inherited potential for human persons to become sons of God ... as God gave to humans who would not worship Him as God debased minds, God initially gave to humans minds that were not debased, but minds able to think His thoughts. However, once our ancestors denied divinity to God, He denied godliness to them. He made us who we are through consigning humans to disobedience as sons of disobedience so He could have mercy on all (*cf.* Rom 11:32; Eph 2:2-3). He made us who we are when He drove Adam and Eve from the Garden. And the only humans who have escaped debasement are those who

either turned the Adversary's broadcast of rebellion against the Adversary and began to do those things that the Law demands, or those whom the Father has drawn from this world by giving to them the earnest of eternal life through having foreknown the person.

Under the Law as given by Moses, a transgression of the Law occurs when the hands or body of a person performs an act of unbelief. A transgression hasn't occurred when an errant thought falls into the Abyss and rattles around in unbelief before returning to the safety of obedience. However, when the Law moves from being written on two stone tablets [the Sinai Covenant] to being written on two tablets of flesh, the heart and mind of the person [the New Covenant], just as a thought of the mind becomes adultery and anger as a reaction of the heart becomes murder.

When a person receives a second breath of life, this second breath of life doesn't give "life" to the physically living fleshly body that cannot inherit the Kingdom (1 Cor 15:50), but gives life to the dead (through being consigned to disobedience) inner self or soul of the person, that doesn't have hands and feet but has, instead, thoughts and desires differing from the thoughts and desires formerly present in the person's mind. And until a person has truly been born of spirit, the difference between before and after cannot be appreciated. There is nothing of this world that compares or even prepares the person for receipt of the indwelling of Christ. Truly, the thoughts of the person not born of spirit are focused on physical things, usually the acquisition of wealth, assets, even the just distribution of assets and opportunities. But the thoughts of the son of God are on non-physical things—on things that cannot be bought and sold, on things that cannot be obtained by work or diligent study; for if a person diligently studies Scripture, the Old and the New Testament, the person will not find what the person expects to find. The person will not find eternal life.

In John's Gospel, Jesus told Jews seeking to kill Him,

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. I do not receive glory from people. But I know that you do not have the love of God within you. I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him. How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God? Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words? (John 5:39–47 emphasis added)

There is no life in Scripture: what Scripture equates-to is a witness about Christ Jesus, a witness whose testimony is sufficient to cause Israel to come to Christ so that this nation may have life.

In what seems to be the logical conclusion to John's Gospel, the author writes,

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:30–31)

Why does Paul claim that God gave to men debased minds? Because when “what can be known about God [was] plain to them ... and they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking” (Rom 1:19–21). “Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles” (vv. 22–23) ... what was it that the Jews seeking Jesus life were doing? Were they not exchanging the uttered words the unique Son of the Creator for the words of Moses that were already corrupted by the hands of their ancestors? Indeed they were. And therefore, God gave to them debased minds so that they should serve a Book rather than God.

The evidence of history is that a Book can as easily be idolized and worshiped as a carved and gilded stump; for a Book is also the works of hands as was the gold calf Aaron cast ... as Christian theologians deny that Scripture is the works of hands, Aaron denied that the calf was the work of his hands:

And as soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses' anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. He took the calf that they had made and burned it with fire and ground it to powder and scattered it on the water and made the people of Israel drink it. And Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you that you have brought such a great sin upon them?" And Aaron said, "Let not the anger of my lord burn hot. You know the people, that they are set on evil. For they said to me, 'Make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' So I said to them, '*Let any who have gold take it off.' So they gave it to me, and **I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf.***" (Ex 32:19–24 emphasis and double emphasis added)

Whenever you hear a Christian say that the Bible is the infallible word of God, remember what Aaron told Moses: *I took a double handful of gold earrings and threw them into the fire and out popped this gold calf, voila a miracle.* What Aaron said to justify his disobedience simply wasn't believable. Nor is the Bible having written itself because it is the infallible word of God. ... The Bible didn't write itself, nor was it written by the finger of God as were the commandments on the two tablets of stone Moses cast down and broke. The Bible was written by many some-ones over centuries. It was lost, then found. It was edited, rewritten at least twice in more readable forms of Hebrew as even that shapes of letters changed over a millennium. Yet the essence of its witness about Christ Jesus continued intact into the 1st-Century. Only afterwards did subtle omissions and condensations occur that made the Old Testament a poorer witness than it was

before the 1st-Century CE. Nevertheless, it remains an adequate witness through understanding the *key of David* embedded in the structure of Hebraic poetic verse.

God gave to ancient men debased minds because knowing God they chose not to worship the Creator as God. God gave to Jews debased minds because knowing that Jesus was of God, they chose not to worship Jesus, but to kill Him. They committed deicide, and that have since paid a heavy penalty for doing so, with the generations since the Great Revolt having no say in the mind and culture that they have received because of their ancestors' insolence.

One man did, indeed, have to die so that all of Israel could be saved, but in this one man dying so that many could live, millions of others have since died so that additional millions and even billions can live ... salvation really isn't a numbers game, but there are numbers involved, with these numbers each representing a living, breathing person who most likely has no clue about what has or will happen to the person.

*

Under the Law as given by Moses, a man can lust after his neighbor's wife without committing adultery as long as the man makes no physical advance toward fulfilling his lust for his neighbor's wife; thus, it is figuratively okay "to look but don't touch" for as long as the Law is outside of the person. But this is not the case when the Law has been written on hearts and placed in minds: thoughts become actions before any physical movement of the body occurs ... when a man's head turns to look lustfully upon a woman (or vice versa), either fornication or adultery has occurred spiritually. And much of America committed adultery with Beyonce during the Super Bowl halftime show, something that she intended as seen in her eyes.

The long, unsettled debate within Greek logic as to whether nature or nurture is responsible for the behavior of a person, of a people, was settled within Christendom by the Apostle Paul ...

In Paul writing that God, in response to human persons becoming "futile in their thinking," in their thoughts, as demonstrated by their actions—with individual and collective behavior forming culture—gave human persons over to "the lusts of their hearts," thereby removing from these persons inhibitions that had formed societal boundaries for what is and isn't acceptable behavior, God changed *human nature*: God gave to men debased minds. As His response to what human persons were doing, God changed *human nature* to correspond to what human persons were doing; thus, God rewrote "human nature" to make this *nature* in man correspond to demonstrated behavior so that the mind no longer fought with itself (guilt was no longer a problem), with culture being the derivative of things thought and done.

Why would God do this? Why would God remove guilt from aberrant sexuality? Why would a parent give to a child all of the ice cream he or she could eat until the child becomes sick and vomits?

If God gave to the children of Israel commandments that were not good and by which Israel could not have life, did God aid Israel in committing spiritual suicide? In giving to human persons a debased mind so that both men and women reveled in homosexual intercourse, did God not help these persons to commit spiritual suicide by removing guilt from what should have made the person feel soiled and defiled?

In Israel burning its firstborns that belong to God and were to be redeemed (Ex 13:2, 13), those infants that belonged to God were preserved in death without contamination by a debased culture of idolatry. God suffers loss, but less of a loss than imagined; for of those children not burned by their parents, few if any would have faithfully kept the commandments through manifesting love for neighbor and brother. Most would, and in fact, did join with their parents in continuing the idolatry that God hated.

Whereas God suffered little loss when Israel burned its firstborns, Israel as a nation suffered great loss; for in burning its firstborns, Israel weakened itself until it could not endure invasions from outside armies.

In God giving to humanity a debased mind that removes guilt from dishonoring the human body through homosexuality, humanity cannot long survive; for the children that should be born are not. Indeed, a numbers game is being played, with the Adversary attempting to kill sons of God before physical conception, let alone spiritual conception ...

Again, before *human nature* was realigned through God giving to a person or persons debased (no longer based upon God) minds, a man might have lain with another man as he would with a woman, but he would have been overwhelmed by guilt. He would have been like the person psychologists today label a “male-lesbian,” the less accepted gender identification in today’s pluralistic Western cultures. The man, before receiving a debased mind, would have burned with desire, then would have loathed who the person was when sexual release came—the loathing coming from not yet receiving a debased mind even though God has already given to the person dishonorable passions.

The person with impure lusts will achieve sexual release, then minutes or hours later, the person will feel compelled to repeat the cycle of desire and loathing—until God gives to the person a debased mind that not only accepts but embraces what ought not occur. Whereas before receiving a debased mind the defiled person felt his or her defilement and felt guilt because of this defilement, after receiving a debased mind, the person will figuratively come out of the closet and accept whatever gender identity that has come to predominate the person’s mind, heterosexual, homosexual, or other. For the guilt that has come from opposing *mindsets* wrestling for control of the person’s mind is not assuaged by

one side or the other winning, but by God giving to the person or people a debased mind. God ends the struggle, and ends the struggle for generations to come.

A man laying with another man ought to cause guilt, and usually does when first occurs; for the man—often a boy—is defiled in ways that makes recovery difficult. Again, the man will feel defiled. But when culture supports homosexual behavior, cultural guilt is dissipated. The trauma is a little less. And the defilement occurs more often until the person receives a debased mind that feels no guilt from a man laying with a man, or a woman with a woman, or a man with a sheep, or a woman with a dog. The inhibitions that had produced taboos are no longer there: the culture accepts as “normal” one man laying with another man, or a man with a boy as was the case in ancient Greece.

A debased mind is a mind whose thoughts are no longer based upon the ways of God. When Israel was in Egypt, Israel received debased minds; thus, the Lord had to give to Israel through Moses a codification of His ways, of what it means to think the thoughts of God. In Christian parlance, Greek converts who came from a debased culture had to receive the mind of Christ, the mind of the Lord.

All who do not have the indwelling of the mind of Christ have a debased mind.

What Paul writes about “their [those who once knew God] foolish hearts were darkened” so that they, claiming to be wise [*e.g.*, Greek philosophers], exchanged the invisible glory of God for visible images of *things*, living and otherwise, pertains collectively to all of humanity, but individually to each human person at birth.

The human nature of a newly born infant is not the nature of a small child—of a year old child. Between birth and learning to hear language, the culture into which the babe was born determines the *human nature* of the infant, thereby making nature and nurture indistinguishable faces of the same coin. The culture determines the *nature* within the newly born infant through God having given to the persons forming the culture debased minds because these persons in their ancestry chose to worship the creation rather than the Creator. And because the culture denied divinity to God but rather gave divinity to things made, only when a person is newly born into the culture can any “nature” exist within the person imbedded in the culture other than that derived from a debased mind. Thus, debasement of minds is passed on generation to generation as individual *human natures* are sculpted socially by the *nature* of parents and peers.

*

God, because of what human persons did in ignoring the invisible and placing importance on things visible, changed “human nature” for both the generation that rebelled against Him as well as for their descendants. Paul claims that God, long ago, was the cause for all future base-behavior by human persons through giving to human persons a debased mind, a literarily more interesting way of saying that God consigned all of humanity to disobedience (Rom 11:32), doing this in the days of Noah when He baptized the world into death. Paul understood that

humanity's nature is assigned to humanity and is not a product of biology, thereby creating a situation which language cannot effectively convey or represent.

The *nature* of a human person doesn't come from "Nature" (from biology), but is given to the person by God either directly [at birth] or indirectly [through consignment to disobedience];

When the *nature* of the person comes from the person being consigned to disobedience, human nature is "debased" or no-longer-based-on-God's nature, but based on the Adversary's nature;

So-called human nature since God gave to humankind a debased nature has come from the Adversary and is his nature, with the Adversary appearing as an angel of light.

A person can "see" the Adversary in the *natural natures* of men and beasts, with there being nothing "natural" in being assigned a debased mind.

Who a man or a woman "is" isn't determined by biology, but is determined prior to the person's birth by receipt of a debased mind, inherited from ancestors who didn't worship God when they knew Him; when they had the opportunity to worship Him. Instead, these ancestors worshiped the creation rather than the Creator—and their "sin" has been passed down through the generations in a matter that would seem to be contrary to Scripture.

Consider what Moses is told:

The next day Moses said to the people, "You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to [YHWH]; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin." So Moses returned to [YHWH] and said, "Alas, this people has sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold. But now, if you will forgive their sin—but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written." But [YHWH] said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book. But now go, lead the people to the place about which I have spoken to you; behold, my angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, *in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them.*" Then [YHWH] sent a plague on the people, because they made the calf, the one that Aaron made. (Ex 32:30–35 emphasis added)

And what the prophet Ezekiel is told:

Yet you say, "Why should not the son suffer for the iniquity of the father?" When the son has done what is just and right, and has been careful to observe all my statutes, he shall surely live. *The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son.* The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself. But *if a wicked person turns away from all his sins that he has committed and keeps all my statutes and does what is just and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die.* None of the transgressions that he has committed shall be remembered against him; for the righteousness that he has done he shall

live. Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord [YHWH], and not rather that he should turn from his way and live? But when a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice and does the same abominations that the wicked person does, shall he live? None of the righteous deeds that he has done shall be remembered; for the treachery of which he is guilty and the sin he has committed, for them he shall die. Yet you say, “The way of the Lord is not just.” Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just? *When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice, he shall die for it; for the injustice that he has done he shall die. Again, when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he shall save his life.* Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions that he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die. (Ezek 18:19–28 emphasis added)

If a person were to take a macro view of human history, what the prophet Ezekiel records agrees with what Paul wrote: those who knew the Lord (Rom 1:21) but turned away from the Lord and became futile in their thinking (v. 22) had none of their righteousness remembered but perished for their treachery through receiving a debased mind and finally death. But the son who from his first self-conscious moments receives a debased mind and does what is wrong, but turns from his unrighteousness and does what is just and right shall live. None of his injustice shall be counted to him—and the Lord makes it easier to turn from unrighteousness than to turn away from righteousness by consigning all to disobedience so that He can have mercy on whomever turns from injustice in this era—and have mercy on all of Christendom following the Second Passover liberation of Israel, and finally, 1260 days later, have mercy on all of humanity when the single kingdom of this world is given to the Son of Man.

The above citations from Moses and Ezekiel are the defining passages on the forgiveness of transgressions, almost ... if the Lord does not cause a son to suffer for the sins of the father, how can Paul write that God has consigned all of humanity to disobedience so that He might have mercy on all? Is not consigning a person to disobedience—giving to a person a debased mind—causing the person to suffer? And add to this what the prophet Ezekiel also records in a previously cited passage:

Moreover, I swore to them in the wilderness that I would scatter them among the nations and disperse them through the countries, because *they had not obeyed my rules, but had rejected my statutes and profaned my Sabbaths, and their eyes were set on their fathers' idols. Moreover, I gave them statutes that were not good and rules by which they could not have life, and I defiled them through their very gifts in their offering up all their firstborn, that I might devastate them. I did it that they might know that I am [YHWH].* Therefore, son of man, speak to the house of Israel and say to them, Thus says the Lord [YHWH]: In this also your fathers blasphemed

me, by dealing treacherously with me. For when I had brought them into the land that I swore to give them, then wherever they saw any high hill or any leafy tree, there they offered their sacrifices and there they presented the provocation of their offering; there they sent up their pleasing aromas, and there they poured out their drink offerings. (I said to them, What is the high place to which you go? So its name is called Bamah to this day.) Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord [YHWH]: *Will you defile yourselves after the manner of your fathers and go whoring after their detestable things? When you present your gifts and offer up your children in fire, you defile yourselves with all your idols to this day.* And shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live, declares the Lord [YHWH], I will not be inquired of by you. (Ezek 20:23–31)

According to what the Lord told Ezekiel, because the children of Israel—beginning with the second generation of Israel in the wilderness before this generation entered the Promised Land—would not obey the rules of God, His statutes, or keep His Sabbaths but worshiped the idols their fathers brought out from Egypt, the Lord gave to the children of Israel statutes that were not good, that commanded Israel to sacrifice its firstborn, generation after generation, with this evil statute being obeyed in the land of Israel and everywhere Israel was dispersed, from Carthage to the new world in the west ... it is through the adopted Canaanite practice of burning their firstborns that the migrations of the House of Israel during the drought of Elijah can be traced; for after the children of Israel adopted this Canaanite practice, the Lord commanded Israel to continue in the practice so that the people would perish in their defilement. And by doing so (giving to Israel a statute by which Israel would not live), the Lord remembered the sins of the father and visited these sins onto the son, generation after generation, while sealing the infant firstborn that was His (Ex 13:2) in death so that what was His could not be defiled by the idolatry of Egypt or of Canaan.

By assigning the sins [the idolatry] of the father to the son, with the father slaying his firstborn by command of the Lord, who Himself says that this abominable practice was not of Him—

Thus says [YHWH] of hosts, the God of Israel: "Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices, and eat the flesh. For in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to your fathers or command them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices. But this command I gave them: 'Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people. And walk in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you.' But they did not obey or incline their ear, but walked in their own counsels and the stubbornness of their evil hearts, and went backward and not forward. From the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt to this day, I have persistently sent all my servants the prophets to them, day after day. Yet they did not listen to me or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers. So you shall speak all these words to them, but they will not listen to you. You shall call to them, but they will

not answer you. And you shall say to them, 'This is the nation that did not obey the voice of [YHWH] their God, and did not accept discipline; truth has perished; it is cut off from their lips.

Cut off your hair and cast it away;
raise a lamentation on the bare heights,
for [YHWH] has rejected and forsaken
the generation of His wrath.

For the sons of Judah have done evil in my sight, declares [YHWH]. They have set their detestable things in the house that is called by my name, to defile it. And *they have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor did it come into my mind ...* . (Jer 7:29–31 emphasis added)

Wait a minute: does Jeremiah contradict Ezekiel, with Jeremiah recording that the Lord never commanded Israel to burn their firstborn (Jer 7:31) while Ezekiel records the Lord saying that, indeed, He commanded Israel to burn their firstborn (Ezek 20:25–26, 31)? Can both prophets have faithfully recorded the words of the Lord? Have the words of both prophets been faithfully inscribed by the hands of scribes for the two millennia before the words of both prophets were set in print and written on copper press plates?

Returning to the unfinished sentence preceding the citation from Jeremiah and leaving unaddressed the apparent contradiction, would not the Lord commanding the idolatrous children of Israel to sacrifice their firstborn be giving to the children of Israel a debased mind? This is what Paul claims in his treatise to the Romans that the Lord did to all of humanity.

If the Lord never intended for Israel to burn their newborn sons and daughters—and He didn't—then why did generation after generation of Israel burn their firstborns, unless the Lord gave to the children of Israel a debased mind?

The preceding introduces a concept into Scripture that pertains to the inner self of the person who is circumcised-of-heart ... when the commandments are outside of the Israelite, the commandments are inscribed on two tablets of stone, or in a book. In North America (in New Mexico), the commandments in old Hebrew were found carved into a stone wall of a cave, the carving dating back into antiquity. But under the New Covenant, the commandments will be written on hearts and placed in minds of circumcised-of-heart Israelites; so no external commandment needs to be inscribed in stone or printed on paper. Instead, the laws, statutes, and ways of God will be inside the righteous person as a debased mind is inside a lawless person.

The mind that is oriented around the things of God will be “based” on keeping the commandments of God whereas the mind that lacks faith, that doesn't believe God, that practices and supports unrighteousness is not *based* on the ways of God, but is a “debased” mind, a mind without a foundation of righteousness. And the

person who receives in infancy a debased mind does so because his or her ancestors rejected the worship of God and worshiped the creation instead of the Creator. Thus, the sinfulness of the father has been given to his son so that the son suffers because of the unbelief of past ancestors. And this is what the Apostle Paul claims.

However (and here is what's essential), the person who has received a debased mind in infancy receives no blame for being born consigned to disobedience, but receives credit when this person rebels against disobedience, wrestles with his or her debased mind, and strives to walk in this world as Christ Jesus walked, with the person never being fully able to escape from disobedience until the Second Passover liberation of Israel ...

With age the flesh weakens, and the desires of the flesh should be easier to overcome.

Paul wrote,

For we know that the law is spiritual, but *I am of the flesh, sold under sin. For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.* Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. *For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.* (Rom 7:13–19 emphasis added)

Paul describes the reality of being consigned to sin, but desiring to walk in this world as Jesus walked.

*

The preceding is enough for this section. The subject will be continued in Section #5.

* * *

"Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved."

[[Current Commentary](#)] [[Archived Commentaries](#)] [[Home](#)]