

~NATURE (402)

[Greek, *phy'sis*]

- Men and Animals
- Divine Nature
- Inherent Nature
- Conscience
- Natural Use Of Bodies
- Birth

• The basic makeup or constitution of something. It can refer to what a person is by birth, also to hereditary qualities along with general practice. At times it refers to the physical urges of an organism. Translators generally render the Greek words *phy'sis* and *phy-si-kos*, the adjective form, as nature and natural, respectively.

• Men And Animals

• That there is a **nature** belonging to man different from that of wild beasts, and that even wild beasts are not all of the same **nature**, is shown by the statement at;

• For every species of wild beast as well as bird and creeping thing and sea creature is to be tamed and has been tamed by humankind. (**James 3:7**)

• For every species **Greek, *phy'sis*, nature** of wild beast as well as bird and creeping thing and sea creature is to be tamed and has been tamed by humankind, *phy'sei tei an-thro-pi'nei*, **nature belonging to the man.**

• This difference in **nature** reveals the variety in God's creation and is maintained because of the divine Law that each produces according to its own kind.

• And God went on to say; Let the waters swarm forth a swarm of living souls and let flying creatures fly over the earth upon the face of the expanse of the heavens. (**Genesis 1:20**)

• And God proceeded to create the great sea monsters and every living soul that moves about, which the waters swarmed forth according to their kinds, and every winged flying creature according to its kind. And God got to see that it was good.

(Genesis 1:21)

- With that God blessed them, saying; Be fruitful and become many and fill the waters in the sea basins, and let the flying creatures become many in the earth. **(Genesis 1:22)**
- And there came to be evening and there came to be morning, a fifth day. **(Genesis 1:23)**
- And God went on to say; Let the earth put forth living souls according to their kinds, domestic animal and moving animal and wild beast of the earth according to its kind. And it came to be so. **(Genesis 1:24)**
- And God proceeded to make the wild beast of the earth according to its kind and the domestic animal according to its kind and every moving animal of the ground according to its kind. And God got to see that it was good. **(Genesis 1:25)**
- And God went on to say; Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and the domestic animals and all the earth and every moving animal that is moving upon the earth. **(Genesis 1:26)**
- And God proceeded to create the man in his image, in God's image he created him, male and female he created them. **(Genesis 1:27)**
- Further, God blessed them and God said to them; Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it, and have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and every living creature that is moving upon the earth. **(Genesis 1:28)**
- Not all flesh is the same flesh, but there is one of mankind, and there is another flesh of cattle, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish. **(1 Corinthians 15:39)**

.. Divine Nature

- Also, there is a different **nature** belonging to those in heaven, spirit creatures of God. The apostle Peter speaks to his fellow Christians, spiritual brothers of Jesus Christ, of the precious and very

grand promises, that through these you may become sharers in divine nature, *phy'se-os*.

- Through these things he has freely given us the precious and very grand promises, that through these you may become sharers in **divine nature**, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world through lust. (**2 Peter 1:4**)
- That this is a sharing with Christ in his glory as spirit persons, Peter shows in his first letter; God gave us a new birth, *a-na-gen-ne'sas he-mas'*, having generated us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an incorruptible and undefiled and unfading inheritance. It is reserved in the heavens for you.
- Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for according to his great mercy he gave us a new birth to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. (**1 Peter 1:3**)
- To an incorruptible and undefiled and unfading inheritance. It is reserved in the heavens for you. (**1 Peter 1:4**)
- **Divine nature** requires a change in **nature** through death and resurrection, as made plain by the apostle Paul at. (**1 Corinthians Chapter 15**).
- He explains that the Christian must die and must be resurrected in a different body, a spiritual one, which requires a change.
- You unreasonable person! What you sow is not made alive unless first it dies. (**1 Corinthians 15:36**)
- But God gives it a body just as it has pleased him, and to each of the seeds its own body. (**1 Corinthians 15:38**)
- It is sown a physical body, it is raised up a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual one. (**1 Corinthians 15:44**)
- And just as we have borne the image of the one made of dust, we shall bear also the image of the heavenly one. (**1 Corinthians 15:49**)

- Look! I tell you a sacred secret. We shall not all fall asleep in death, but we shall all be changed. (**1 Corinthians 15:51**)

• Inherent Nature

- Paul speaks of his fellow countrymen the Jews, calling them **Jews by nature**, that is, born of Jewish parents, of the children of Israel, or Jacob.
- We who are **Jews by nature**, and not sinners from the nations. (**Galatians 2:15**)
- And the uncircumcised person that is such by **nature** will, by carrying out the Law, judge you who with its written code and circumcision are a transgressor of law. (**Romans 2:27**)
- In the illustration of the olive tree, he calls the fleshly Jews the **natural**, *ka-ta' phy'sin*, **according to nature**, branches of the garden olive. He tells the Gentile Christians.
- For if God did not spare the **natural branches**, neither will he spare you. (**Romans 11:21**)
- See, therefore, God's kindness and severity. Toward those who fell there is severity, but toward you there is God's kindness, provided you remain in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be lopped off. (**Romans 11:22**)
- They also, if they do not remain in their lack of faith, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. (**Romans 11:23**)
- For if you were cut out of the olive tree that is wild by **nature** and were grafted contrary to **nature** into the garden olive tree, how much rather will these who are **natural** be grafted into their own olive tree! (**Romans 11:24**)
- The wild olive tree is unfruitful or produces very inferior fruit, but it is common practice in Mediterranean countries to graft branches of cultivated olive trees into the wild olive tree to produce good fruit. However, if the wild olive branch is grafted into the cultivated tree, it produces only the poor fruit of the wild olive tree.
- Therefore Paul calls this latter grafting, **contrary to nature**. It serves to emphasize the power of God as well as his undeserved

kindness to Gentiles in bringing them in to replace, **natural branches**. The Jews had been cultivated by Yehowah for centuries, but the Gentiles had been wild, not having the true religion, not bringing forth fruitage to God.

- Not **naturally**, but only by God's power could they be made to bring forth fine fruit. Only Yehowah, therefore, could accomplish this grafting successfully.
- Also, in his argument to the Galatians to prevent their enslavement to Judaistic teachings, Paul said; When you did not know God, then it was that you slaved for those who **by nature** are not gods.
- These false gods they had worshiped were by their very origin and production not truly gods, it was impossible for them to come into such a status. Not merely did they have no authority to be gods, but they did not have such qualities in their intrinsic **nature** or makeup.
- Nevertheless, when you did not know God, then it was that you slaved for those who by **nature are not gods**. (**Galatians 4:8**)

•• **Conscience**

- Certain traits or qualities inhere in mankind from birth, actually having been placed in man from the beginning. The apostle Paul comments on the conscience, or at least a vestige of such, that still persists in fallen man, even though in many cases he has strayed from God and does not have his Law.
- This explains why all nations have established many laws that are in harmony with righteousness and justice, and many individuals follow certain good principles.
- Paul says; For whenever people of the nations that do not have Law do **by nature** the things of the Law, these people, although not having law, are a Law to themselves.
- They are the very ones who demonstrate the matter of the Law to be written in their hearts, while their conscience is bearing witness with them and, between their own thoughts, they are being accused or even excused.
- For whenever people of the nations that do not have Law do by **nature** the things of the Law, these people, although not having

law, are a Law to themselves. (**Romans 2:14**)

- They are the very ones who demonstrate the matter of the Law to be written in their hearts, while their conscience is bearing witness with them and, between their own thoughts, they are being accused or even excused. (**Romans 2:15**)
- In discussing the matter of headship with the Corinthian congregation, Paul called attention to the rule that a woman should wear a head covering when praying or prophesying before the congregation, as a sign of subjection.
- In illustration, he says; Does not **nature itself** teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him, but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her? Because her hair is given her instead of a headdress.
- Does not **nature itself** teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him. (**1 Corinthians 11:14**)
- But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her? Because her hair is given her instead of a headdress. (**1 Corinthians 11:15**)
- Paul's reference to **nature itself** evidently included more than **custom**, which he mentions in.
- However, if any man seems to dispute for some other **custom**, we have no other, neither do the congregations of God. (**1 Corinthians 11:16**)
- In connection with the use of a head covering by women. Hereditary characteristics also likely had a bearing on what Christians in Corinth viewed as **natural**.
- Among Europeans, such as the Greeks, the hair of women, when left uncut, usually becomes considerably longer than that of men. But this is not true of the straight hair of Orientals and Indians or of the woolly hair of Blacks and Melanesians.
- In addition to their awareness of hereditary qualities among them, the Christians in Corinth knew that it was the general practice for men to clip their hair to a moderate length.

- This was common also among Jewish men, so the long uncut hair of Nazirites marked them as men who were not following the general custom.
- All the days of the vow of his Naziriteship no razor should pass over his head, until the days that he should be separated to Yehowah come to the full, he should prove holy by letting the locks of the hair of his head grow. (**Numbers 6:5**)
- On the other hand, Jewish women usually wore their hair quite long.
- And, taking a position behind at his feet, she wept and started to wet his feet with her tears and she would wipe them off with the hair of her head. Also, she tenderly kissed his feet and greased them with the perfumed oil. (**Luke 7:38**)
- It was, in fact, the Mary that greased the Lord with perfumed oil and wiped his feet dry with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. (**John 11:2**)
- And in the Greek city of Corinth, shaving a woman's head, or clipping her hair very short, was a sign of her being a slave or of her being in disgrace for having been caught in fornication or adultery.
- For if a woman does not cover herself, let her also be shorn, but if it is disgraceful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. (**1 Corinthians 11:6**)
- So, when saying that **nature itself** taught them, Paul evidently had in mind various factors that would influence their attitude as to what was **natural**.
- In saying Does not **nature itself teach you?** Paul was not personifying **nature**, as though it were a goddess. Rather, God has given man reasoning powers.
- By observing and reasoning on things as God has made them and the results from using these in various ways, man can learn much as to what is proper.
- It is really God that teaches, and the man with his mind properly oriented by God's Word can view things in their right perspective and relationship, thereby rightly discerning what is **natural** or **unnatural**.

- By this means the individual can have a trained conscience in this respect and can avoid a conscience that is defiled and that approves **unnatural** things.
- That is why God gave them up to disgraceful sexual appetites, for both their females changed the **natural** use of themselves into one contrary to **nature**. (**Romans 1:26**)
- And likewise even the males left the natural use of the female and became violently inflamed in their lust toward one another, males with males, working what is obscene and receiving in themselves the full recompense, which was due for their error. (**Romans 1:27**)
- All things are clean to clean persons. But to persons defiled and faithless nothing is clean, but both their minds and their consciences are defiled. (**Titus 1:15**)
- Nevertheless, there is not this knowledge in all persons, but some, being accustomed until now to the idol, eat food as something sacrificed to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. (**1 Corinthians 8:7**)

.. Natural Use Of Bodies

- It is wrong for men and women to use their bodies in any way that is out of harmony with the functions for which God created them. What is **unnatural** in that sense is **sinful**.
- The Scriptures describe the uncleanness and condemnation coming upon those who practice these things. Such persons lower themselves to a beastlike level.
- That is why God gave them up to disgraceful sexual appetites, for both their females changed the natural, *phy-si-ken*' use of themselves into one contrary to **nature**. (**Romans 1:26**)
- And likewise even the males left the natural use of the female and became violently inflamed in their lust toward one another, males with males, working what is obscene and receiving in themselves the full recompense, which was due for their error. (**Romans 1:27**)

- But these men, like unreasoning animals born naturally to be caught and destroyed, will, in the things of which they are ignorant and speak abusively, even suffer destruction in their own course of destruction. (**2 Peter 2:12**)
- They go after wrong fleshly things because, like a beast, they lack reasonableness, having no spirituality.
- So too Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them, after they in the same manner as the foregoing ones had committed fornication excessively and gone out after flesh for **unnatural** use, are placed before us as a warning example by undergoing the judicial punishment of everlasting fire. (**Jude 1:7**)
- Yet these men are speaking abusively of all the things they really do not know, but all the things that they do understand **naturally** like the unreasoning animals, in these things they go on corrupting themselves. (**Jude 1:10**)

.. Birth

- Another **Greek** word often translated, **natural** is *ge'ne-sis*, literally meaning, **birth** or **origin**. James speaks of a man looking at his **natural** face , literally, the face of the **birth** of him, in a mirror.
- For if anyone is a hearer of the word, and not a doer, this one is like a man looking at his **natural** face in a mirror. (**James 1:23**)
- James also says that the tongue is a fire and that it sets the wheel of **natural life**, literally, **the wheel of the birth aflame**.
- So, too, the tongue is a little member and yet makes great brags. Look! How little a fire it takes to set so great a woodland on fire! (**James 3:5**)
- Well, the tongue is a fire. The tongue is constituted a world of unrighteousness among our members, for it spots up all the body and sets the wheel of natural life aflame and it is set aflame by Gehenna. (**James 3:6**)
- James may here be alluding to a wheel, such as that on a chariot, that could be set on fire by a hot, glowing axle. Similarly, the tongue can set aflame **the whole round of one's life** into which he came by

birth, making life become like a vicious circle, possibly even resulting in his own destruction as by fire.