

How nature relates to Creation, the Bible, and God

Thoughts that have come from the development and use of Nature's Lamp materials

- 1) God made nature.
- 2) Nature belongs to God.
- 3) God made nature to serve His purposes and He uses it to accomplish His purposes.
- 4) Nature is everything that God created which is not human or human-made.
- 5) Nature is everywhere all at once.
- 6) Nature is reliably obedient to God.
- 7) Everything that we understand about nature has been purposely revealed to us by God, but not everything about nature has been revealed to us.
- 8) God has many purposes for nature.
- 9) Nature serves a role in salvation. Most evidently, it testifies to the presence and character of God.
- 10) Nature connects us to God through a different path than the Bible does
- 11) Be attentive to nature as an instrument which God uses to deliver messages or to accomplish His purposes in our lives.
- 12) God directed us to name the things in nature for a purpose.
- 13) Nature is used to improve the delivery of God's message in the Bible.

- 1) God made nature. *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth* (Genesis 1:1). This short, simple, first sentence in the Bible is foundational to the relationship between God and nature. To the Christian it is an opening declaration, like "we hold these truths to be self-evident:" It states that there is God, there is the physical world, and the relationship between God and the physical world that we live in is that God created it. It is the most basic answer to that most basic of questions – how? How did this entire place we live in come to be? How did the earth with its night and day, water and land, sky, stars, plants, and animals get here? It was all made by God.
- 2) Nature belongs to God. *The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.* (Psalm 24:1). This basic principle is confirmed in several Biblical passages such as Colossians 1:16 ... *all things were created by him and for him* and Psalm 89:11 *The heavens are yours, and yours also the earth...*
- 3) God made nature to serve His purposes and He uses it to accomplish His purposes. As Creator and owner of nature, God certainly has the right to do what He wants with Nature. Such passages as Job 37:2-13 and Acts 17:24-27 help explain that God uses nature to correct us, to benefit us, to demonstrate His love, and ultimately, so that "men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him."

4) Nature is everything that God created which is not human or human-made. Nature can be grouped into the 8 categories of:

- Light
- Water in its many forms like fog, ice, rain, rivers
- Sky as everything above the land including air, wind, space, stars
- Land
- Plants
- Animals and things that are unique to animals like a wing, roar, hoof
- Fire including things that fire produces, like ash and smoke
- Decay

Creation is generally considered to be only what God made before The Fall in Genesis 1 (Light, Water, Sky, Land, Plants, and Animals). Now, nature includes the original elements of Creation plus the additional God-created elements (Fire and Decay) that came when God subjected Creation to The Fall.

5) Nature is everywhere all at once. Nature can be found inside a building, outside in a city, in a forest, on a lake. It is the air we breathe, the water we drink and the origin of the food we eat. God constructed nature so that we are always in its presence. Like nature, God is everywhere. There is never a place where nature is that God is not there also.

6) Nature is reliably obedient to God. Everything in nature does what it is designed to do. It may appear as though nature operates like well-built clock, but nature is not the marvel. It is merely obedient to God. God is the marvel behind nature..

7) Everything that we understand about nature has been purposely revealed to us by God, but not everything about nature has been revealed to us. The Bible contains a lot of references to nature, but it is not a book on nature. We understand much more about nature than what the Bible reveals. It may seem like the sciences (biology, chemistry, geology, astronomy, etc.) are the sources of what we know about nature, but ultimately the source of all information is God. God has made nature to be vaster and more complex than anyone is capable of comprehending. What He has revealed to us about nature is not accidental. He has chosen what we are to understand about nature. He has also chosen “the secret things” that belong to Him, which will not be revealed.

8) God has many purposes for nature:

- To place beauty, wonder, and awe before us as a way to recognize His presence
- To demonstrate His power and dominion (that He is in control or manages nature)
- To express His kindness and love
- To teach His lessons
- To help you praise and be thankful for God
- To help you understand that God and His abilities surpass our comprehension
- To help you understand the meaning of Bible stories and its message
- To help us recognize His miracles. Nature sets up what we should expect as normal so a miracle that uses nature is recognizable. A bush on fire that remains undamaged is a miracle.

Ultimately all of the ways that nature is used by God can be combined into one major overall purpose for nature: Nature is used by God to focus our attention and worship towards Him.

- 9) Nature serves a role in salvation. Most evidently, it testifies to the presence and character of God. The familiar pathway to salvation has been provided to us as a written message in the Bible. However, both the Bible and Creation are God-breathed and function to serve His purposes in our lives. Basic Christian concepts that we commonly recognize from Biblical teachings in church (faith, grace, love, redemption) can also be learned from nature, if God chooses to do so. It is sinful to worship nature, however we may be missing a connection to God if we dismiss the potential that God is perfectly capable of using either or both of his creations (The Bible or Creation) as tools in bringing a person to a saving faith in Christ.
- 10) Nature connects us to God through a different path than the Bible does. Both the Bible and nature serve to focus our attention on God, help us to understand God, and remind us of his constant presence in our lives. The Bible is God's written word. On the other hand, God designed nature to be the physical environment for us to experience life. To use these God-given tools, we read the Bible and experience nature.
- 11) Nature is an instrument which God uses to deliver messages or to accomplish His purposes in our lives. Nature can be beautiful and lovely. It can also be disgusting, destructive, dangerous and the source of much pain and suffering. God may use any of these aspects of nature to achieve his purposes. Disgust or fear may be the purpose that God intends when He uses nature to direct or protect. As Christians we have learned to look to The Bible for God's direction. Similarly, be attentive to the potential for God's directive through nature.
- 12) God directed us to name the things in nature for a purpose. God directed us to name the things in nature (Genesis 2: 19-20). He is not expecting that we should be able to name everything in nature, but naming things that we encounter in nature provides us with two benefits. Naming things is a way that God gave us to be less fearful of nature. Naming also causes us to be more attentive to that which God has created.
- 13) Nature is used to enhance the delivery of God's message in the Bible;
- As word-pictures such as "God is the Rock." Complex concepts are easier to comprehend. Nature is God's picture book.
 - As a universally understood part of language. All around the world, throughout all cultures and across all languages the properties of a rock are understood. Missionaries can use this to help deliver Christ's message across language barriers.
 - As a way to make the Biblical message timeless. A rock in your back yard allows you understand properties of a rock as well as it did for the Old Testament people who first heard this message.
 - As visual enhancements to written or spoken words. Images of nature are often used as accents to a worship service. We see nature images used on the cover of service bulletins and as the background for projected songs. From candlelight to palm fronds, elements of nature are brought into churches everywhere to in an effort to enhance the worship experience.