

Nurture or Nature??

Revelation 20:1-3, 7-10

East Berlin Community Church

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Introduction

- Debate over whether “nurture” or “nature” determines the actions of a person
 - The two sides on terrorists and the war on terror.
 - Heard today in debates concerning gun violence, crime, and drug use
- *Is man born basically “good” and then corrupted by his environment, or is man intrinsically evil, born with a bent toward sin and corruption? Is it “nurture” or “nature”?*
- **God’s Word asserts that the problem with man is primarily “nature”**
 - **We are not born a “blank slate”, but rather born a sinner, alienated from God and bent towards evil.**
 - Romans 3:23-- *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*
 - Romans 3:10-18 -- *“As it is written: ‘There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.’ ‘Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit’; ‘The poison of asps is under their lips’; ‘Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.’ ‘Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; And the way of peace they have not known.’ ‘There is no fear of God before their eyes.’”*
 - **We all have inherited a sinful Adamic nature from our parents.**
 - Romans 5:12-- *“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.”*
 - Romans 5:18-19 -- *“Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous.”*
 - **We are sinners not only by nature, but also by choice. Therefore environment does play a role.**
- *But how does God reveal to mankind his true nature?*

God’s Experiment: Nurture or Nature?

A. God creates a perfect environment for man to live: The Messianic Kingdom

1. **In setting up His kingdom, the Antichrist and false prophet along with the armies of the world will be defeated at Armageddon.**
 - Revelation 19:19-21-- *“And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army. Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.”*
2. **Satan , the very source of evil, will be incarcerated in the bottomless pit during the Kingdom Age.**
 - Revelation 20:1-3-- *“Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on*

him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while."

3. **Only born again, regenerate, Spirit-filled believers will enter into the Kingdom.** Children born to mortals will be born into "Christian homes", surrounded by people who know and love the Lord. They will have all the spiritual advantages possible.
4. **Jesus Christ will be ruling with a rod of iron.** The moral laws of God will be enforced so that righteousness and justice prevails. No more oppression or crime.
5. **Poverty and disease will be eradicated. No more hunger. Everyone will share in the prosperity. It will be a time of unprecedented peace.**

B. Into this perfect environment, God re-introduces an evil influence

- Revelation 20:3 -- *"And he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while."*
1. **Satan's release is part of a test to see if man living in a perfect environment will choose to follow Christ.**
 - a. **A review of "dispensational" understanding of world history**
 - 1) A "dispensation" is "a distinguishable economy in the outworking of God's purpose"
 - a) "economy"-- emphasis in on how God governs man
 - b) "distinguishable"-- feature distinctive to each dispensation
 - c) "outworking of God's purpose"-- which is a display of His glory
 - 2) Six Features of a "dispensation"
 - a) Different governing relationship between God and man
 - b) New responsibilities on the part of man
 - c) New revelation given to affect the change
 - d) A TEST as to whether man will obey God or not
 - e) Man fails the test each time
 - f) As a result judgment comes
 - 3) There are seven distinguishable dispensations: Innocence, Conscience, Human Government, Promise, Law, Grace, and Kingdom. Man has failed in the first six dispensations including the Age of Grace in which we are now living.
 - b. **Test in the Kingdom Age: Will mankind living in a perfect environment choose to trust and obey the perfect ruler, Jesus Christ, or will they chose to rebel against Christ and follow the lies of Satan? Is a positive, perfect environment enough to change a man?**
 2. **Satan's imprisonment does not change his nature or reform him.**
 - Revelation 20:7-10-- *"Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."*
 - a. **Jesus Christ reveals Satan's true nature as the "father of lies"**
 - John 8:44-- *"You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it."*

- b. **Satan is the source of spiritual misinformation and half-truths.**
 - c. **Immediately on his release from the abyss, Satan begins to “deceive the nations”**
 - d. **Debate today over the role of the criminal justice system: *punishment or rehabilitation?***
3. **Satan’s enticement reveals that man’s basic nature has not changed of living in rebellion against God, even though they are living in a perfect world.**
- Revelation 20:8 -- *“will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea.”*
 - a. Those born during the Millennium will have old sinful natures and will need to be born again.
 - b. Many during this time will feign obedience to Christ. Outward conformity but without inward heart change.
 - c. But living in a perfect moral world will begin to grate on them as they rebel against the limitations Christ places on them as He rules with a “rod of iron”.
 - d. Some will question Jesus’ right to rule and to be worshipped. They will refuse to go to Jerusalem annually to worship the LORD and to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.
 - Zechariah 14:17-19 -- *“And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, on them there will be no rain. If the family of Egypt will not come up and enter in, they shall have no rain; they shall receive the plague with which the LORD strikes the nations who do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations that do not come up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.”*
 - e. Satan will find a ready audience for his lies, and will assemble a large, innumerable army to fight against Christ and the saints.
 - 1) His army is called “Gog and Magog”, but not the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel 38-39
 - 2) But symbolically referring to the nations spoken of in Psalm 2 who rebel against God and His Messiah.
 - f. **Findings: There is nothing in their environment to blame for their rebellion. But the problem is rather the innate, sinful human nature of man that rebels against God’s rule.**

C. The Outcome: The Shortest war ever!

- Revelation 20:9-10-- *“They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”*
1. **The human army assembled by Satan is destroyed by fire falling from heaven.**
 - Genesis 19:24 -- *“Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens.”*
 2. **Satan’s diabolical career comes to an end!**
 - a. Before creation of the world, Satan was the covering cherub living in the very presence of God in heaven. But within his very being he developed a heart of pride that led to his downfall.
 - b. He is cast out of the “holy of holies” unto the holy mountain of God. (Ezekiel 28:14)
 - c. From there, he is cast to the general precinct of heaven (Ezekiel 28:13-14)

- d. He ends up in the aerial and stellar regions of the heavens. He today is the “prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2-3). He still has access to heaven as he must give an account to God. (Job 1-2)
- e. At the middle of the tribulation, he will be cast from the aerial and stellar regions of heaven to the earth. (Revelation 12:7-12)
- f. At the end of the tribulation, he will be bound and cast into the bottomless pit for 1,000 years. (Revelation 20:1-3)
- g. At the end of the Kingdom Age, he will be set free for a short period, will lead the final rebellion, and then will be cast alive into the “lake of fire that has been prepared for the devil and his angels”
- h. He will join the living Antichrist and false prophet to be tormented forever and ever in hell.
- i. The fact that the Antichrist and False prophet are still in Hell after 1,000 years argues against annihilationism which teaches that after a time of suffering, a person in Hell will cease to exist. NO, Hell is eternal just as heaven is for believers!

Application: *What is the source of Hope for the World today?*

- Not education or the eradication of world hunger, poverty, or disease
- Not the revitalization of our inner cities or the renovation of our criminal justice and prison systems.
- Not the reformation of our churches and the structure of our society.
- **ONLY HOPE is the TRANSFORMATION of life** possible through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ!
 - 2 Corinthians 5:17-- *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”*
 - 2 Peter 1:4-- *“partakers of the divine nature”*