

# "The Moral Crisis of Our Time" – "The Poison of Subjectivism" Gn 3:1-6; Ro 1:26-32; 2:14-16

## I. A PERENNIAL TENSION

- A. Dual (and dueling) Dimensions—cf. Plato's "Analogy of the Charioteer" in *Phaedrus*
  - 1. Objective/Subjective—C.S. Lewis: *The Abolition of Man*
  - 2. Head/Heart—Pascal: *Pensees*
  - 3. Left brain/Right brain—Arthur Brooks: *The Meaning of Your Life*
  - 4. Reason/Feeling; Rational/Irrational—J. Budziszewski: *Pandemic of Lunacy*
- B. Personal Illustrations: Cataracts; Cherokees; Dan's estate
- C. Conclusion:
  - 1. Difficult balance to maintain
  - 2. Biblical history—oft-repeated pattern, following own desires, not Law
    - a. Adam & Eve choose to determine standards
    - b. During the Judges every man did what was "right in his own eyes"
    - c. Kings of Israel & Judah present sorry story of doing what pleases
  - 3. Paul's diagnosis in Romans
    - a. Worshipping creatures rather than Creator
    - b. Following depraved feelings, passions

## II. MODERNITY'S TURN to the SUBJECTIVE

- A. "Age of Reason" & Enlightenment celebrate subjectivity
  - 1. Rene Descartes—"cogito ergo sum" ("I think, therefore I am")
  - 2. Immanuel Kant—"sapere aude" ("dare to know")
- B. Modern currents contributing to subjectivism
  - 1. Utilitarianism—"greatest good for greatest number"
    - a. Jeremy Bentham ("calculus of pleasures") & John Stuart Mill (*On Liberty* & *Libertarianism*)
    - b. Peter Singer today at Princeton—*Animal Liberation*; justifies infanticide
  - 2. Socialism—equality for all
    - a. French Revolution spawns various socialisms
    - b. Marxists justify anything promoting revolution
    - c. Democratic Socialists gaining traction in U.S.
  - 3. Pragmatism—what works is truth
    - a. William James & John Dewey impact progressive politics & education
    - b. Oliver Wendell Holmes & rejection of Natural Law; "living Constitution" of Progressives
  - 4. Existentialism—existence precedes essence
    - a. Friedrich Nietzsche—*Beyond Good and Evil*
    - b. Jean-Paul Sartre & Simone de Beauvoir impact post-WWII era—evident in "trans"

## III. AN ANSWER: THOMISTIC BLEND of SCRIPTURE & ARISTOTLE

- A. Alistair McIntyre (in *After Virtue*) says must cause between Nietzsche & Aristotle
- B. Virtue Ethics combines Divine Law commands with Natural Law
- C. Mounting a movement: John Lennox; James Tour; Justices Clarence Thomas & Samuel Alito; J. Budziszewski; Robert George; Charlie Kirk & Turning Point USA;