

Week 2: The Bible and Politics

The Christian Worldview: Viewing the World in Light of God's Self Revelation

Recap & Plan

Last week:

That we would honor and rejoice in God as the Creator, Sustainer, Judge, Redeemer and in the Good News of His Kingdom

That we would prioritize the Gospel in light of our differences with others

Not mentioned: What is NOT the plan for this series: advocate for specific candidates, parties, ballot measures. My hope is to facilitate your own consideration of your own views and the positions that are around you in the light of Scripture.

“Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.”

Follow up: Slido question from last week.

How do I view my anger toward professing believers that hold to non biblical views?

- Anger is God given when viewing injustice and destructive ideas
- Beware of God's patience, goodness, gentleness, grace and mercy with you in your brokenness and rebellion
- Let this cultivate humility, love, patience, goodness, gentleness, grace and mercy in you. Pray for this cultivation. Pray for mercy, grace and illumination for those people.
- With this in mind, if you speak with them, speak with them with love and patience, as you would want to address you if the tables were turned.
- Seek to understand them. Be forthright. Be amicable.
- If possible, seek to show them hospitality

This week: How we come to our political positions?

What is the Goal of this session

To set forth the worldview, or belief system, put forth by God's self revelation in the Bible.

How We Come To Our Political Positions

Question after last week: Does seeking unity in the Gospel with other Christians and peace with all imply that all other issues are relative? Are all political positions equally valid?

No. Not at all. Not even remotely.

How do we come to any position: politically, culturally, philosophically, economically, ethically, morally? What directs our values, goals, incentives? How do we determine lifestyle choices? How do we prioritize ideas?

Our Worldview, our theology directs the creation and adherence of our views, positions and ideals

Analogy of a river

What happens at one point in the river fundamentally impacts what the river will be like downstream



Politics is Downstream from Culture

All questions and stances on political issues flow from cultural issues and beliefs. Said another way, politics is the outworking of culture.

Example: Specific laws against shoplifting - Culture that values private property.

Culture is Downstream from Worldview

All questions around cultural issues flow from a belief system, a worldview, a faith. Said another way, culture is the outworking of belief systems.

Example: Valuing private property - God has revealed that taking the property of others is forbidden. People own the products of their labor.

Worldview is Downstream from a Belief system, a Theology

Everyone has and uses a worldview. All people arrive at a worldview which is ultimately determined by the theology they presuppose.

We need to understand how to view the world that God created and the conflicting views that say otherwise.

A belief system, a theology begs the question: what is truth?

What is Truth?

That which conforms with fact or reality. It is genuine. It is objective. It is real. It is not the product of our individual imagination or preference. It is not the product of collective consensus. It remains fact even if all deny it.

How Do We Find Truth?

It must be revealed.

Truth is discovered, not invented, it is not a product of consensus, it is not subject to a vote, it is not determined by our own cultural moment.

Example: U.S. Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy's immortalized words in Casey: "At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and of the mystery of human life."

My mind cannot see the effects of gravity on a ball dropped in front of me if I am blind and deaf or my eyes are shut and my hands are over my ears. My mind is dependent upon this information being revealed to it.

Truth about the world and how it is designed is revealed and discovered. We are dependent upon God revealing

"The marks of truth, as Christianly conceived, are that it is supernaturally grounded not developed within nature; that it is objective and not subjective; that it is a revelation and not a construction; that it is discovered by inquiry and not elected by a majority vote; that it is authoritative and not a matter of personal choice."

Harry Blamires, [The Christian Mind: How Should a Christian Think?](#)

Truth about the world and how it is designed is not invented independently of the God who made the world. This is the lie that first came in the Garden of Eden. That wisdom can be found apart from God.

This covers all areas: Not just politics, but all areas of knowledge including biology, astronomy, economics, esthetics, ethics, law, psychology, philosophy, law, journalism, business....etc.

Worldview

What is a Worldview?

A worldview (or vision of life) is a framework or set of fundamental beliefs through which we view the world and our calling and future in it...it may be so internalized that it goes largely unquestioned...it is the standard by which reality is managed and pursued; it is the set of hinges on which all our everyday thinking and doing turns.

James H. Olthuis, "On Worldviews," in
Stained Glass: Worldviews and Social Science

Worldview Commitments

What is prime reality - the really real?

God, or the gods, or the material cosmos. Our answer here is the most fundamental.

What is the nature of external reality (that is, the world around us)?

Created or autonomous, as chaotic or orderly, as matter or spirit; or whether we emphasize our subjective, personal relationship to the world or its objectivity apart from us.

What is a human being?

A highly complex machine, a sleeping god, a person made in the image of God, a naked ape, a meaningless clump of atoms and cells

What happens to a person at death?

Personal extinction, or transformation to a higher state, or reincarnation, or departure to a shadowy existence on "the other side."

Why is it possible to know anything at all?

We are made in the image of an all-knowing God who reveals, or that consciousness and rationality developed under the contingencies of survival in a long process of evolution.

How do we know what is right and wrong?

Made in the image of a God whose character is good; or right and wrong are determined by human choice alone or what feels good; or the notions simply developed under material evolution

What personal, life-orienting core commitments are consistent with this worldview?

Christians might say to fulfill the will of God, or to seek first the kingdom of God, or to obey God and enjoy him forever, or to be devoted to knowing God or loving God. Naturalists might say to realize their personal potential for experiencing life, or to do as much good as they can for others.

What is your worldview?

Is your worldview from what God has revealed about Himself, you, and the world? Or have you adopted a view by your own authority and reasoning?

The Goal of this session is to set forth the worldview, or belief system, put forth by God's self revelation in the Bible. God created and sustains all. Our observations of the world around us validate that this is true.

My hope is to stir up, to provoke in you a greater desire and pursuit of understanding Jesus, and therefore the gospel, and therefore a biblical worldview, and therefore more informed cultural political views.

With that worldview, once understood, we then address the implications of that view as it directs our stance on cultural and political issues.

The Christian Worldview: Viewing the World in Light of God's Self Revelation

Prime Reality

Prime reality is the infinite, personal God revealed in the holy scriptures. This God is triune, transcendent and immanent, omniscient, sovereign, and good.

God is infinite. He is beyond scope and measure. All other things are secondary. He alone is self-existent. He is the one source of reality.

God is personal; he is not an impersonal force or substance being personal means that he has self-consciousness and self-determination.

God is transcendent; he is beyond this world. God is beyond all things that are created.

God is eminent, meaning that he is with us, and at every point, but he is not the creation.

God is omniscient. He is all knowing he knows the first from the last.

God is sovereign, nothing is beyond gods, ultimate interest, control, and authority.

God is good. God is goodness itself. He is the measurement of what Good is. No other goodness surpasses him. This goodness expresses itself to his love and holiness.

External reality

External reality is the cosmos God created out of nothing to operate with a uniformity of cause and effect in a system that he interacts with. Human beings are created in the image of God, and thus possess personality, self-transcendence, intelligence, morality, gregariousness, and creativity.

For thus says the Lord,
who created the heavens
(he is God!),
who formed the earth and made it
(he established it;
he did not create it empty,
he formed it to be inhabited!):
“I am the Lord, and there is no other.
I did not speak in secret,
in a land of darkness;
I did not say to the offspring of Jacob,
‘Seek me in vain.’
I the Lord speak the truth;
I declare what is right.
Isaiah 45:18-20

The cosmos is not chaotic, it is orderly

Human Beings

Human beings are created in the image of God, and thus possess personality, self-transcendence, intelligence, morality, gregariousness, and creativity.

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,
what is man that you are mindful of him,
and the son of man that you care for him?
Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.
You have given him dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under his feet,

Psalm 8:3-8

We can summarize this conception of humankind in God's image by saying that, like God, we have personality,

self-transcendence (as spiritual beings going beyond this world and life),

intelligence (the capacity for reason and knowledge),

morality (the capacity for recognizing and understanding good and evil),

gregariousness or social capacity our characteristic and fundamental desire and need for human companionship-community especially represented by the "male and female" aspect), and

creativity (the ability to imagine new things or to endow old things with new significance).

We are created with dignity. The dignity of being created in God's image

Knowledge

Human beings can know both the world around them, and God himself because God has built into them the capacity to do so because he takes an active role in communicating with them.

The foundation of human knowledge is the character of God as Creator. We are made in his image (Genesis 1:27). As he is the all-knowing knower of all things, so we can be the sometimes knowing knowers of some things. The Gospel of John puts the concept this way:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men." John 1:1-4

Of course, God himself is forever so beyond us that we cannot have anything approaching total comprehension of him. In fact, if God desired, he could remain forever hidden. But God wants us to know him, and he takes the initiative in this transfer of knowledge.

God reveals, or discloses, himself to us in two basic ways: by general revelation and by special revelation. In general revelation God speaks through the created order of the universe.

General

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge."

Psalms 19:1-2

Special

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known."

John 1:14, 18

Human Morality

Human beings were created good, but through the fall the image of God became defaced, though not so ruined as not to be capable of restoration; through the work of Christ, God redeemed and began the process of restoring people to goodness

Death

For each person death is either the gate to life with God and his people or the gate to eternal separation from the only thing that will ultimately fulfill human aspirations.

Morality

Morality is transcendent and is based on the character of God as good (holy and loving). We are not the measure of morality, God is. Our preferences are not relevant. A cultural consensus is not relevant.

Core commitments

Christian theists live to seek first the kingdom of God, that is, to glorify God and enjoy him forever

“The Christian mind sees human life and human history held in the hands of God. It sees the whole universe sustained by His power and His love. It sees the natural order as dependent upon the supernatural order, time as contained within eternity.”

Harry Blamires, *The Christian Mind*

The are implications for the above

Authority

One of the most important implications for us as His creatures.

One of the most important implication for us as His creatures for any endeavor we take on (think any cultural or political endeavor for purposes of this conversation)

There is the matter of authority.

The Question of Authority

Is authority a legitimate concept? What authority structures are legitimate? Can an authority figure be legitimate? How about illegitimate?

Is there an ultimate authority? Who or what is that authority?

The question of authority has implications for all of life: individually, in families, in churches, in workplaces, in civil government.

There is a final authority. That final authority is God.

Jesus Christ is Lord

God had an eternal plan centered in Jesus Christ to create the world. His plans carry on through the present into eternity. This plan is around having intimate fellowship with the redeemed

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof,
the world and those who dwell therein,
for he has founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the rivers.

Psalm 24:1-2

Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”

Revelation 4:11

The most foundational and fundamental relationship of God to his creatures - the Creator/creature distinction. He is God, we are not

Everyone thinks they are God, when they are only creatures

We, as creatures owe Him everything

God alone is Good and is the standard of what is good.

God is the Lord, the rightful and only Ruler over all. Christ is Lord

God, rightly demands that all perfectly conform to His will and character

All people, whether they acknowledge it or not are under the Lordship of Christ - All are rightfully to obey Him

To be a rebel against God is to stand against who He made us to be - our very life and breath are from him.

Every endeavor of a creature is under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and every endeavor should acknowledge Christ's Lordship

For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God

Deuteronomy 10:17

Why do the nations rage

and the peoples plot in vain?

The kings of the earth set themselves,

and the rulers take counsel together,

against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying,

“Let us burst their bonds apart

and cast away their cords from us.”

He who sits in the heavens laughs;

the Lord holds them in derision.

Then he will speak to them in his wrath,

and terrify them in his fury, saying,

“As for me, I have set my King

on Zion, my holy hill.”

Psalm 2

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.

And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me”

Matthew 28:16-27

“There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, Mine!”

Abraham Kuyper, Prime Minister of the Netherlands (1901-1905)

“Christ is either Lord of all, or is not Lord at all”

Hudson Taylor

A Cultural Response To Faith -

Secular/Sacred Split

Faith is a private thing, the rest of life is secular.

Faith should never seep over into secular life.

Christ is only Lord to those who follow him

“The gospel is like a caged lion,’ said the great baptist preacher Charles Spurgeon. ‘It does not need to be defended, it simply needs to be let out of its cage’ Today, the cage is our accommodation to the secular/sacred split that reduces Christianity to a matter of personal belief. To unlock the cage, we need to become utterly convinced that, as Francis Schaeffer said, Christianity is not merely religious truth, it is total truth- truth about the whole of reality.”

— Nancy Pearcey, [Total Truth](#)

This secular/sacred split view is a wholly different worldview from Christianity.

This view stands in opposition to Christianity.

Many believers do not even realize that they have assumed this very position. They have taken in a part of a contradictory worldview and try to combine the two.

“The danger is that is Christians do not consciously develop a biblical approach to a subject, then we will unconsciously absorb some other philosophical approach.”

— Nancy Pearcey, [Total Truth](#)

Understanding worldview has many important implications. Here are two key ones

An Aside: Worldview

Worldview As Apologetic

The Christian Worldview is the only view that gives a coherent and complete reason for the way the world is.

The Christian worldview alone accounts for the existence of science, beauty, logic, morality, meaning, ethics, cause and effect,

This is testified to by our lived experiences.

"I believe in Christianity as I believe that the Sun has risen not only because I see it but because by it I see everything else."

C.S. Lewis

Seeing God and His well ordered creation builds our confidence in him. It enables us to give a reasoned defense for our faith.

Not only does worldview bolster our confidence in God, a worldview also leads to worship - to honor and and rejoice him

Worldview As A Reason For Worship

Seeing a well ordered universe displays the beauty, wisdom, goodness, love, creativity of the Maker. This should drive our love and affection for him. leads to worship - to honor and and rejoice him

Praise him, sun and moon, praise him all you shining stars! . . . Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created" (Ps 148:3-5)

Viewing the World in Light of God's Self Revelation

We find that this is The Pathway to True Joy & Fulfillment

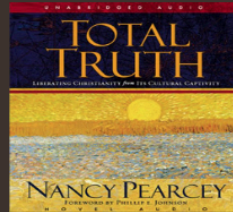
Review:

Viewing the World in Light of God's Self Revelation
Politics is Downstream from Culture
Culture is Downstream from Worldview
Worldview is Downstream from a Belief system, a Theology

What is Truth? How is it
What is a Worldview?
Worldview Commitments
The Christian Worldview: Viewing the World in Light of God's Self Revelation
A Cultural Response To Faith - Secular/Sacred Split
An Aside: Apologetic & Reason For Worship

Book Recommendation

**Total Truth: Liberating Christianity from
Its Cultural Captivity**
By Nancy Pearcey



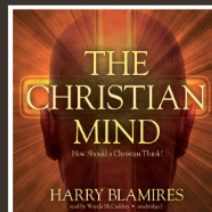
**The Consequences of Ideas:
Understanding the Concepts that
Shaped Our World**
By RC Sproul



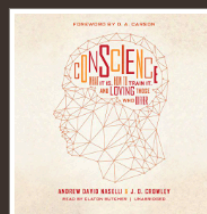
**The Universe Next Door: A Basic
Worldview Catalog**
By James Sire



**The Christian Mind: How Should a
Christian Think?**
By Harry Blamires



**Conscience: What It Is,
How to Train It, and Loving Those Who
Differ**
By Andrew Naselli



Next Week

Competing Worldviews: Viewing the World While At War with Reality.
The Pathway to Dispair

Parting Thought

What is your worldview? Have you considered this? Do you have views that contradict your faith?

My hope is to stir up, to provoke in you a greater desire and pursuit of understanding Jesus, and therefore the gospel, and therefore a biblical worldview, and therefore more informed cultural political views.

Understanding and having a well developed christian worldview provides the basis for understanding not only culture and politics. It displays all of creation as a beautiful and vibrant symphony, internally consistent, driving our own confidence in God and His revelation, causing us to

Honor and rejoice in God as the Creator, Sustainer, Judge, Redeemer and in the Good News of His Kingdom

Do you rejoice in Him with your whole heart?

Do you rejoice in Him with your whole mind?