

Biblical Studies Program Spring 2012

Politics and the Bible

Lesson Two

A Biblical Worldview

- I. Introduction to a Biblical Worldview
 - A. Before examining and discussing specific political issues, it is important that we begin with an overall Christian worldview
 1. The overall perspective from which one sees and interprets the world
 2. A collection of beliefs about life and the universe held by an individual or a group
 - B. It is important to recognize that there are several basic fundamental truths about God and His relationship to the world and about human beings that affect our position on nearly every political policy decision
 - C. It is important to realize that many non-Christians in today's society hold to a far different worldview and strongly oppose these basic principles
- II. Basic Principles of a Biblical Worldview¹
 - A. **God created everything**
 1. The first element in a Christian worldview is that God is the Creator and everything that exists has been created by Him
 2. Scripture:
 - a. Gen 1:1 - *"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth"*
 - b. Ex 20:11 - *"For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them"*
 - c. Gen 1:27 - *"God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them"*
 - d. Rev 4:11 - *"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"*
 3. Christians can differ on some of the details, but there should be no disagreement about the fact that God created all of it and therefore the entire creation belongs to Him
 4. He is the Lord over all creation
 5. When the fact of God's creation of the universe is excluded from our nation's educational system that the most fundamental fact in the entire universe is concealed from our children
 6. The fact that God is Creator also means He deserves the obedience and worship of His creatures
 7. As Creator, He has planted some indications of His existence and

¹These principles come from chapter four of Wayne Grudem's *Politics According to the Bible*, pages 116-123.

character in the world He has made

- a. Ps 19:3 – *“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. (2) Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. (3) There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard.”*
- b. Rom 1:21 – *“...men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. (19) For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. (20) For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.”*

B. The one true God reveals Himself and His moral standards clearly in the Bible

1. In the words of the Bible, God speaks to us and gives us a clear and truthful revelation of Himself
2. The moral standards that God reveals in the Bible are not simply moral standards for one particular religion, but are the moral standards for which the one true God the Creator and Lord of the entire universe will hold every single person accountable at the last judgment
 - a. 1 Peter 4:4-5 – *“...they are surprised when you do not join them in the same flood of debauchery, and they malign you; (5) but **they will give account to him** who is ready to judge the living and the dead.”*
 - b. Acts 17:24-25,30-31 – *“The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, (25) nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything... The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now **he commands all people everywhere to repent**, (31) because he has fixed a day on which **he will judge the world in righteousness** by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”*
3. A Christian worldview affirms that there is only one true God over the whole world and the moral standard He has given in the Bible are the ones by which He will judge every single human being
4. This truth has major implications for how professing Christians understand political questions that involve “right” and “wrong”
 - a. If God says that murder is wrong and it is determined that the command not to murder applies to pre-born children into those who are elderly or very ill, it should affect how a

- Christians views laws regarding abortion and euthanasia
- b. If the Bible views homosexual conduct as morally wrong, then that should have a significant influence on how one views laws that would give government approval and encouragement to homosexual “marriage”

C. **The original creation was very good**

1. When God first completed His work of creation, He “*saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good*” (Gen 1:31)
2. In this perfect world He created, God gave Adam and Eve work to do in caring for the garden
3. God also set before Adam and Eve the entire creation, and He told them to develop it and make it useful, with the implication that they would enjoy it and give thanks to Him
4. This implies that productive work is something good and part of the purpose for which God made human beings
5. The “ideal” life for human beings is one of meaningful, productive activity – filled with some kind of work that is pleasing to God

D. **Because Adam and Eve sinned, there is moral evil in the heart of every human being**

1. This moral evil in human beings (which the Bible calls “sins”) must be defined in comparison with an external standard of right and wrong – a standard that comes not from within the human race but from God Himself
2. This idea has major implications for numerous policy differences
3. After Adam and Eve sinned, their inward moral nature was sinful
 - a. Their sin led to the corruption of their natures
 - b. This sinful nature was passed on to all later generations – to every human being that has descended from them
 - c. Rom 3:12 – “...no one does good, not even one”
 - d. Rom 3:23 – “...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”
4. The implications of this truth:
 - a. **There are moral standards external to the human race**
 - (1) Even the best human conduct is not the true standard of right and wrong
 - (2) “Right” and “wrong” should not be determined by observing current human experience
 - (3) In contrast to this idea, many people in society today adopt an entirely man-centered approach to moral standards
 - (4) Much of society assumes that human beings are basically good and moral standards can only come

from observing human conduct and considering human opinion about right and wrong

- (5) They reject the idea that there is any absolute moral standard external to the human race or that anyone can know what God's moral standards are
- (6) These people tend to advocate "moral relativism" (for example, thinking that differences in people's sexual behavior are simply different personal choices that people have made and cannot be measured by standards of right and wrong)

b. **Human nature is not basically good**

- (1) Even after the fall, people retain many elements of likeness to God, for they are created in His image and, by what is called "common grace," God still gives to mankind many blessings in this life that they do not actually deserve, including a sense of right and wrong
- (2) This biblical truth means that evil does not merely come from the influence of society on a person, and those who do evil are not merely "victims" of external influences
- (3) There are evil influences on people and society should try to remove those influences where possible, but doing evil is still a result of a person's evil choices and people should be held accountable for the evil that they do
- (4) In contrast, the secular perspective tends to believe that all human beings are basically good, and they do wrong because of something in society that has harmed them; therefore, society is mostly blamed for the wrong, and the wrongdoer himself is often presented as a "victim"

c. **Human responsibility**

- (1) People should be held responsible for their actions
- (2) Because their actions come from their decisions to follow tendencies toward good or evil that are found in their own hearts

d. **There is violent, irrational evil in this fallen world**

- (1) The Bible recognizes that in some people the tendency to do evil becomes exceptionally strong and violent
- (2) They must be restrained by superior force in order to protect the broader society from harm
- (3) Even here, some hold a purely secular viewpoint –

believing in the basic goodness of all human hearts and reject the idea that the best way to deal with such people is to use superior force by government

- (4) The idea that there is violent, irrational evil in some human beings has major implications for several political questions: national defense, the punishment of crime, and even the discipline of children in the family and in schools

E. **Because of the fall God placed a curse on the entire natural world**

1. A Christian worldview includes the idea that the current state of this natural world is not the way God created it
2. Adam's sin resulted a change in the natural world
 - a. Gen 3:17-19
"Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; (18) thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. (19) By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return"
 - b. Rom 8:20-22 – *"For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope (21) that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. (22) For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now."*
 - c. The cursing of the earth represents a multitude of things:
 - (1) Hurricanes
 - (2) Droughts
 - (3) Floods
 - (4) Earthquakes
 - (5) Poisonous plants
 - (6) Poisonous snakes and insects
 - (7) Hostile wild animals
3. The earth is a place in which its natural beauty and usefulness is mixed with other elements that bring destruction, sickness, and death
4. Therefore, what we think of as "natural" today is not always good

- F. **God wants human beings to develop the earth's resources and to use them wisely and joyfully**
1. God's purpose for placing human beings on earth was so that they may explore and develop the earth's resources in such a way that they would bring benefits themselves and other human beings
 2. We are not to use the earth in a wasteful or destructive way or intentionally treat animals with cruelty
 - a. Deut 20:19-20 - *"When you besiege a city for a long time, making war against it in order to take it, you shall not destroy its trees by wielding an axe against them. You may eat from them, but you shall not cut them down. Are the trees in the field human, that they should be besieged by you? (20) Only the trees that you know are not trees for food you may destroy and cut down, that you may build siegeworks against the city that makes war with you, until it falls."*
 - b. Prov 12:10 - *"Whoever is righteous has regard for the life of his beast"*
 3. We are to use the resources of the earth wisely as good stewards
 4. We should consider the development and production of goods from the earth as something morally good, not reject it as an evil kind of materialism
 - a. Although things can be misused and peoples attitudes can be wrong the things in themselves should not be viewed as morally evil
 - b. They are part of God's intention in placing us on the earth