New Inventions: In the Beginning Memory Verse: Genesis 1:1

April 23rd, 2023Scripture Reading: Genesis 1:27-31

**SLIDE 1: TITLE**

Throughout this series we are going to be taking up the topic of worldviews. Last week we laid out a lot of information about what a worldview is and stated that everybody has a worldview, everyone lives by some sort of commitment to assumptions they have about reality.

**SLIDE 2: commitment to assumptions about reality**

We talked through seven basic questions that a worldview needs to answer and then we took Psalm 24 as an example of how the bible provides for us a worldview of it’s own. So, as a Christian, I am committed to my assumption that God’s word provides the best information we can have on reality. I trust in what it says and I seek to see this world through the perspective of a biblical worldview.

 So, we concern ourselves today looking at how we can develop a biblical worldview and remain committed to it, even though we live in a time where many churches and Christian leaders are adapting and modifying this worldview. In many cases, it has been tweaked and tinkered with so much that we must now regard the results as a new invention.

**SLIDE 3: BOYS**

The other day my two boys came into our house after being dropped off by the bus after school. Most days you hear the door open and a voice shout, ”Hello, we’re home! What’s for supper?” But on this particular day my wife and I heard the door slam shut and then just scuffling…a little bit of heavy breathing…some shoe squeaks on the vinyl flooring…and finally our entryway table bashing up against the wall. These children just came into the house fighting. And one was being annoying, and one got punched in the back and one was getting made fun of and one was not listening… and on and on. Needless to say, as parents, we had to sift through two very convoluted and dramatized accounts of what had happened on the bus, continued down the culdesac and spilled over into our entryway. Now, these types of situations are an everyday occurrence. We have all had those situations in which we have to decide who to believe. What’s the right call to make? Which view of reality should we ascribe to in the situation? Well, as someone who tries to be committed to a biblical worldview, a am blessed to be able to see the situation from that perspective, a perspective that, I believe to be, the viewpoint of reality. With biblical truth in mind I can know two things for sure: both of these kids are guilty in some regard. They are both fallen human beings, they are sinners, and both engaged in wrongdoing or inappropriate behavior. The second thing I can know is that this incident is not something to just be shrugged off. Yes, boys will be boys and all that, but you could also say criminals will be criminals. I know that their treatment of one another reflects a heart issue that I as another fallen human cannot touch. I can force certain behavior, but their anger has a source beyond my intervention. It is an issue that I must be faithful to pray over as I ask the Holy Spirit to intervene. Now, I am not going to pretend that another parent with a different worldview cannot be a good parent. I am not going to even pretend that I am some kind of firstclass parent. I am just giving an example of how our worldview shapes every aspect of our lives.

**SLIDE 4: NORTHERN LIGHTS**

 Even witnessing a beautiful sunset or the northern lights which many had seen last month. What is your reaction? Does it give us pause to regard the creativity of a good God, or maybe we just note the interesting way light is bouncing off of airborne particles.

**SLIDE 5: The Biblical worldview helps explains reality.**

Well, it is my conviction that living with a biblical worldview is the best way to live as it actually helps us explain and understand reality as it is. We saw last week how Psalm 24, a little passage of 10 verses, goes a long way in answering the seven basic worldview questions, and again, some people will say that these questions are meaningless and there is no need to answer them. That is certainly a position to take, but I would say it is akin to an ostrich sticking its head into the ground. Life is better when you take a look around, when you observe and engage with the things you see and relate to the people around you. The Christian life is a well examined life and we are going to begin our examination at the beginning with the question of origins. Taking a look at origins will answer a few of the questions we posed last week. We will discover the primacy of reality, the nature of this world and we will see what constitutes a human being, and this will also touch on morality, what is right and wrong.

 So if you would crack open your bibles to the very beginning of Genesis we will read: READ 1:1-5

**SLIDE 6: When God began to create[a] the heavens and the earth—the earth was without shape or form, it was dark over the deep sea, and God’s wind swept over the waters—God said, “Let there be light.” And so light appeared. God saw how good the light was. God separated the light from the darkness. God named the light Day and the darkness Night. There was evening and there was morning: the first day.**

This passage might be nothing new to you. Likely you have heard it so many times it may have lost its luster so to speak, but as humans, we have to account for this world we live in somehow.

**SLIDE 7: Don’t let Genesis lose its luster.**

For some reason we want to know from where it all comes. Genesis provides an answer by simply saying it all comes from God. At this point, we don’t know what kind of God this is, but we do know a few things: God speaks in some form or another. However that works, we can see that he is not silent. We know that God separates the light from the darkness, so he organizes, he sets boundaries. God evaluates. He says the light is good. So right here in the very beginning we have established a differentiation between good and bad. And obviously, God is the Creator which means He is beyond this world. As Creator he is separate from creation. God is not a part of creation, he exist over and above it. That’s a crucial dividing line between a biblical worldview and other options, like Pantheism for example, which sees everything as a part of God.

**SLIDE 8: Pantheism: Everything is part of God**

 In our culture, the best-selling idea being pushed forward today is evolutionary theory. This theory reflects a different worldview. It’s called naturalism or maybe materialism. It’s the assumption that matter is all there is or has ever been. If we can’t see it or somehow test it, it cannot be real. So the idea of God is quite out of the question. He is not observable, so he is not real. Plants and animals, rocks and trees, other humans, these are real things, they are made out of matter, we can subject these things to the scientific method and learn about these things. The supernatural or the miraculous is an untenable notion. So naturalists have an answer to what is prime reality…for them it is the stuff of this world around us.

**SLIDE 9: Naturalism: Everything is part of God.**

What you see is what you get. Famous astrophysicist Carl Sagan boldly proclaimed, “The Cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be.” And we have knowledge about this world through our five senses and through experimentation. But when we humans get to wondering about how the world around us came to be, naturalists have to delve into their imagination to come up with a theory. They call it the “big bang”. How many of you learned about this in school? How many of you understand it? I know it doesn’t make much sense to me so I turned to space.com, that seemed like a pretty good source, to get a summery of this theory, and I want to share with you some parts of it because, even in the naturalists worldview it seems God cannot really be avoided.

**SLIDE 10: “Says the universe as we know it started with an infinitely hot and dense single point that inflated and stretched – first at unimaginable speeds over the next 13.7 billion years.”**

In an article by astrophysicist Andrew May we are told that the big bang theory, simply put, “Says the universe as we know it started with an infinitely hot and dense single point that inflated and stretched – first at unimaginable speeds over the next 13.7 billion years.” He goes on to say that the “cosmic inflation came to a sudden and still-mysterious end.” So Andrew May can admit to some mystery in the mix here. He uses words like “infinitely” and “unimaginable”. DO not these words describe God?

**SLIDE 11: Do these words describe God?**

He uses numbers like 13.7 billion and talks about the universe being heated to 10 billion degrees Fahrenheit. Aren’t this numbers so large as to be beyond us? In another section, May tries to explain what “dark matter” is. He writes, “Researchers think most of the cosmos is made up of matter and energy that cannot be ‘sensed…’” I mean I read that sentence and see God there. Many of these scientists and researchers hold to this naturalistic worldview, yet here they admit is something…we are going to call it matter…but we cannot sense it, at least not for the moment. And if the universe started as a single point, who can tell us what that point was made of? Andrew May says that after the bang, the cosmos now contained neutrons and electrons. But how? These folks are people of great hope and great faith! More than I have! I hear these unbelievable numbers, these unbelievable events, these unbelievable outcomes and I come away as an unbeliever.

 These theories focus on what is, but we have yet to address the question as to why it is in the first place. Why was there a big bang? No reason. It just happened. Nature just is, there is no “why”. But if that is true, why do we care so much? Why research something that literally does not matter? Why do humans insist on asking why if we are just a product of a nature that just is for no reason? Carl Sagan, whom I mentioned earlier actually compares the scientific quest to something like a religious experience. He writes, “Our feeblest contemplations of the cosmos stir us- there is a tingling in the spine, a catch in the voice, a faint sensation, as of a distant memory, of falling from a height. We know we are approaching the greatest of mysteries.” I could have said the same thing about God coming into church today. From where does Sagan get his sense of awe? What is so awesome about randomness? Why are we continually looking far a reason that isn’t there?

 You may know the story of the apostle Paul in Acts 17. Paul finds himself in the city wandering around the city of Athens and he notices all these altars and shrines to various gods. They had one for every sort of god you could think of. And then Paul noticed something that gave him pause…he saw an idol with an inscription to an unknown god. Paul knows these people are very religious. They are dedicated to so many different gods, but at the same time, they notice a loophole. What if there is a god out there we have overlooked? What if we let one fall through the cracks? We better cover our bases, and so, as a clever little catch-all, the people of Athens construct an idol to an unknown god. Well Paul, always eager to talk about Jesus, ends up meeting with the thought leaders of the city and he shares with them what he has observed. Let me read for you Paul’s sermon here, and notice how he espouses a biblical worldview: READ Acts 17:22-31

**SLIDE 12: Paul stood up in the middle of the council on Mars Hill and said, “People of Athens, I see that you are very religious in every way. As I was walking through town and carefully observing your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: ‘To an unknown God.’ What you worship as unknown, I now proclaim to you. God, who made the world and everything in it, is Lord of heaven and earth. He doesn’t live in temples made with human hands. Nor is God served by human hands, as though he needed something, since he is the one who gives life, breath, and everything else. From one person God created every human nation to live on the whole earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their lands. God made the nations so they would seek him, perhaps even reach out to him and find him. In fact, God isn’t far away from any of us. In God we live, move, and exist. As some of your own poets said, ‘We are his offspring.’ “Therefore, as God’s offspring, we have no need to imagine that the divine being is like a gold, silver, or stone image made by human skill and thought. God overlooks ignorance of these things in times past, but now directs everyone everywhere to change their hearts and lives. This is because God has set a day when he intends to judge the world justly by a man he has appointed. God has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”**

 I see such a corollary here with our modern conception of this big bang idea. There are so many parts to it that scientists do not understand, but, like Paul, we are able to fill in the blanks. “I see that you are very intelligent and really good with numbers and estimates. I see that you are very invested in how things have come to be. As I was reading through your research, I noticed that you allow for quite a bit of mystery in your calculations. The unknowns in your theory I can fill in for you. It is the infinite and unimaginable God who made the world and everything in it. He created humans in his image so that we could exist in relationship with him. We have purpose and intelligence and creativity precisely because we reflect the characteristics of this God. Paul might then go on to describe the story of the bible: how God created, hoe man fell, how Jesus redeemed and how there is a restoration that is to come.

Not only can our biblical worldview provide a more sensible answer for how all this came to be, but our answer also explains the “why”. We can explain why this world seems so good sometimes and so broken at others. We can explain why people are so kind and also so hateful. We can explain why humans have a built-in sense of conscience and purpose and observe nature with awe. We can explain how there is hope, not in more advanced technology that will finally allow us to inlock the secrets of the universe, but hope in a crucified and risen Savoir who has come to redeem us and restore us into right relationship with God.

 I will not say that a biblical worldview is simple. C.S. Lewis wrote, “Real things are not simple. They may look simple, but they are not.” This podium seems simple enough, but ask a scientist to tell you what it is really made of – all about the atoms and how the light waves rebound from them and hit your eye and what they do to the optic nerve and what that does to the brain and so on… The mysteries and complications do not end. But as Christians, we can put a name to those mysteries. We can know the source of those mysteries.

**SLIDE 13: The foundation of a biblical worldview begins at the beginning**

The foundation of a biblical worldview begins at the beginning…God created the heaven and the earth. He is above and beyond us and this world. It may not be an easy bit of truth for everyone to swallow, but if you stick with it and truly give it a try, you will find the worldview the bible lays out for us is reasonable, consistent, and glorious! Not to mention more believable than the popular alternative. Amen.