

WAR OF THE WORLDVIEWS #31

“What is Man?”

Part 2

Review

- We are spiritual battle; our enemies are not flesh and blood; we call this a “War of the Worldviews”
- Worldviews answer the most important questions of life: one of which is, “What is Man?”
- One worldview says man is just tissue. Another says man is an evolved monkey. Some worldviews believe that man is a god!
- But the *biblical* worldview has a *biblical* answer to the question, “What is Man?”

“All the answers the Holy Ghost gives concerning man, are to humble man: man is ready to flatter himself, and one man to flatter another, but God tells us plainly what we are.”

Joseph Caryl (1602-1673)

- Man, left to himself, can never know what he truly is: *God must define us*

Overview

- **The Bible is a 3-Act Play: Creation, Fall and Redemption**

- In the Creation, God made man “in His own image after His own likeness”
- But in the Fall, man corrupted himself; spirit, soul and body
- The rest of the Bible is about how God brings Redemption to fallen man through the work of His Son Jesus Christ
- But how do we bring this Good News to fallen men? What are we up against when we want to share the Gospel with those who don’t know God? We need some teaching on...

I. The Biblical Worldview of Fallen Man

“Our goal is to assist believers in understanding the condition of the unbelieving world, thereby increasing our intellectual and practical courage in communicating the biblical message in the midst of a secular world.”

Thomas K. Johnson, “The First Step in Missions Training”

We need a biblical worldview of “What is Fallen Man?”

A. We Begin With an Extraordinary Text

Because of the miraculous signs Jesus did in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration, many began to trust in him. But Jesus didn't trust them, because he knew human nature. No one needed to tell him what mankind is really like.

John 2:23-25 NLT

1. We tend to believe that if people can just see miracles that they will believe and be saved. But that “ain’t necessarily so”.

2. These people saw miracles and “*began to trust in Him*”; but He did not trust in them! Another version says they “began to believe in Him” but Jesus did not believe in them. *Notice why...*

“...He knew what was in human nature...what mankind is really like”

John 3:25 AMP

“Jesus knew what was in man; in particular persons, in the nature and race of man. We know what is done *by* men; Christ knows what is *in* them.”

Matthew Henry

3. If we want to know “What is Man?”-we have to look beyond what he does and what he says he believes; we have to know what He *is*.

“We know the character of the trees only from the fruits; Christ knows the very roots of the trees.”

John Calvin

4. The most powerful presentation of man’s sinful nature is found in the 1st chapter of the Book of Romans, the most theological book in the Bible. Paul is writing to the Christians living in Rome, one of the most sinful cities in world history.

I am not ashamed of the Gospel, for it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes...

Romans 1:16

For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "*The just shall live by faith.*"*

Romans 1:17

5. But what of those who do not believe? The rest of the chapter is a revelation of "What is Man" who does not believe. And it ain't pretty.

II. A Crash Course in Romans 1: The Darkness of the Human Heart Revealed

A. The Wrath of God is Revealed From Heaven Against Ungodliness

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men...

Romans 1:18a

1. We have to pause here. There was a time when the Church accepted the biblical teaching about the wrath of God.

"wrath"

Anger, indignation, vengeance

2. But today, the wrath of God is rarely mentioned, much less preached. Instead, we hear...

- "God is good-all the time" (True)
- "God is in a good mood" (Mostly true)
- God never gets angry (Not true!)

a. The Bible says He is "angry every day"!

b.

God is an honest judge. He is angry with the wicked every day.

Psalm 7:11 NLT

b. Some Bible teachers limit the wrath of God to the Father, the 1st Person of the Trinity; but the Psalmist warns the heathen nations...

Kiss the Son lest He be angry and you perish from the way when His anger is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.

Psalm 2:12

c. Some say God was angry in the Old Testament but not in the New Testament; they do away with all the Old Testament revelation of the nature of God and point to Jesus as a God who never gets angry. But Mark 3:5 says...

When the Pharisees rebuked Jesus for healing on the Sabbath Day, the Bible says Jesus “looked on them with anger”

Mark 3:5

And of course, the anger was revealed when He made a whip of cords and drove the money-changers out of the Temple! (John 2:15)

d. I hear some say that Jesus was nice to everybody. Really? During His earthly ministry, Jesus called men at various places: Hypocrites, whited sepulchers, dogs, pigs, and told one group that they were of their father the devil!

e. Then someone says to me, “Okay, but that was before He went to the Cross; He’s not angry anymore.” Really? What about what men cry out in Revelation 6...

...and they will say to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! 17 For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Revelation 6:16-17 NKJV

3. Oh, beloved! God is good; merciful; gracious; but He does get angry! And what makes Him so? Back to our text, read the rest of the verse....

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness...

Romans 1:18

4. The wrath of God falls (is falling) upon sinful man not because He does not know the truth about God; the wrath of God falls upon sinful man because he does know the truth about God and *suppresses* it. What does that mean? To “suppress” means “to hold down” or to hold back.

They hold the truth as a captive or prisoner, that it should not influence them, as otherwise it would.

Matthew Henry

a. The Bible reveals that all men have been given some sense of God, basic ideas of right and wrong, of good and evil; but they choose not to listen to it.

b. The great Charles Spurgeon preached this to his congregation at Metropolitan Tabernacle in London 150 years ago...

“They will not let the truth work upon their hearts; they will not allow it to operate in their minds; but they try to make it an excuse for their sin.”

“Is there anybody here who is holding down the truth to prevent its entering his heart? I fear that there are some such persons, who have come here for years, and the truth has pricked them, troubled them, made them lie awake at night;

“... but they are holding it down, like one who grasps a wild animal by the ears, and holds it down for fear it should bite him. Oh, sirs, when you are afraid of the truth, you may be well be afraid of hell! When you and the truth quarrel, you had better end your fighting soon, for you will have the worst of it if you do not yield.

Charles Spurgeon

5. We find the same thing in the famous 3rd chapter of John; everyone knows. John 3:16; that God so loved the world...He sent His Son...so whoever believes has everlasting life; but very few seem to know the verses that follow!

John 3:18-19

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

a. God does not judge men because they have no light; God's judgment falls because men prefer darkness. They suppress the truth.

6. So what is the “truth” that men suppress? Back to Romans 1:

...because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.

Romans 1:19

20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

Romans 1:20

7. The Bible tells us that God makes himself known to all men through His creation and in nature; theologians call this “general” or “universal” revelation. Look at Psalm 19:

**The heavens are telling of the glory of God;
The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship.
Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known.
They speak without a sound or word; their voice is never heard.*
Yet their message has gone throughout the earth, and their words to all the world.**

Psalm 19:1-4 NLT

a. The heavens “declare” the glory of God!
b. The skies display His handiwork!
c. Nature preaches! Without speaking a word...Yet the message goes throughout the earth, day and night, to all the world!

8. Bible scholars call this “general revelation”; it is NOT sufficient to save; that requires “special” (“saving”) revelation of Jesus Christ; acknowledging the glory of God in nature cannot save men; but the testimony of the creation leaves men without excuse!

“This means that they hold back, or restrain the truth, by their wickedness. The truth of God is known by the light of nature; the truth pertaining to His perfections, his Law, etc. They hold it back or restrain its influence.

Barnes’ Notes

9. Here is what the biblical worldview says about the situation: **Through the Creation and nature, God presents proof of Himself to every man; knowledge of the truth forces a choice; live in the truth or suppress the truth.**

10. If someone chooses to continue to suppress the truth, they go from bad to worse. The rest of Romans 1 reveals how man descends into ever increasing depravity and perversion.

B. From Bad To Worse

1. God's testimony about man is this...

**Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools.
Romans 1:21-22 NLT**

2. This is the biblical worldview explanation for the condition of the world:

- Fallen man knows God is real by simply observing His creation and its order
- But fallen man refuses to worship God or give Him thanks
- Instead, man begins to create an *alternative* god; he gives his worship to things created instead of to the Creator of all things!

3. Those who continue to suppress the truth of the real God to embrace a false idea of god, will suffer the wrath of God revealed in 3 ways:

3 Ways the Wrath of God is Being Revealed

- **God gave them over to uncleanness (v.24)**
- **God gave them over to shameful lusts (v.26)**
- **God gave them over to a depraved mind (v.28)**

4. It's interesting that most of this uncleanness is SEXUAL in nature:

- Uncleanness: The lusts of the heart where they 'dishonor their bodies among themselves' (Pornography)
- Shameful lusts: Homosexuality/in men and women

God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. 27 Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men

committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.

Romans 1:26-27

- Finally: The wrath of God is revealed when He gives men over to a “depraved” or “debased” mind...

Furthermore, since they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, he gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done.

29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; 31 they are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless.

Romans 1:28-32 NIV

a. Keep in mind that all this depravity is the result of the wrath of God upon men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.

5. Then he closes with this:

Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

Romans 1:32 NIV

6. There was a day in America when abortion and homosexuality were considered sinful behaviors. Today, abortion is a legal right and gay marriage is not only recognized, but celebrated! And woe to the Preachers who speak out against it!

7. But the Word of God stands true: they know it's wrong but they continue to do it; they approve of those who do it; and they condemn anyone who doesn't approve of what they are doing.

8. But take heart! This is not a new thing! Rome was this bad! And Paul saw Rome as ripe for revival! In the midst of it all he said...

“For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every that believes. Romans 1:1

9. This is not time to be silent! This is not a time to be ashamed of the Gospel or make apologies for the Bible! We need the courage of the Apostle Paul and know where he got it...

**“Paul attained his intellectual courage from his understanding of the human condition before God, a condition characterized by the repression of God’s general revelation”
Thomas K. Johnson**

III. Conclusion

A. The Purpose of the “What is Man?” Messages

1. I do not teach these 2 messages so we can sit in the seat of judgment of the sinful depravity of lost people and how bad they are.

2. God wants us to understand the hopeless condition mankind without the Gospel!

3. Then we can take this as a tool to reach the lost; to appeal to men on the basis of the light God gives men through His Creation and through His Christ!

4. The hope of Rome is the hope of America; the Good News of the Gospel.

‘WHAT IS MAN?’