

Series: **Aliens 2.0**

Today's Title: **"Wokeism"**

October 24, 2021 – *Selected passages*

---

**Objective:** To help people know what the Bible says about wokeism.

---

Today we begin a 6-week series - Aliens 2.0.

I preached Aliens 1.0 in May - August 2019 - 18 sermons.

*Why the title Aliens?*

Because in the N.T., followers of Christ - Christians - are referred to as aliens / strangers / sojourners / exiles in this world.

The Apostle Peter wrote:

**1 Peter 2:11** (NASB)

"Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against your soul."

**Hebrews 11:13-16**

"These all died in faith...having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland...they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one."

So, I chose the title 'Aliens':

- 1) To emphasize the Christian's temporary status - our temporary visas in this world.
- 2) To remind every believer that we should be living in this world in ways that anticipate and prepare us for our true, eternal home - Heaven.

As I mentioned last week, the issues we will discuss these next 6 weeks are important issues - these are issues the Bible addresses - and they have been extremely divisive in our nation - and in many churches.

I can understand the conflict in the culture.

It upsets me and frustrates me that churches / Christians have been in conflict over these issues, because that points to the lack of a Biblical lens - a Biblical worldview that many churches / Christians are using when they consider these things.

So, over the next 6 weeks, we will look at these 6 topics, try to understand them, but most importantly we will look at what the Bible says about them.

### *Opening Prayer*

**As Christians, we need to align our mind with Scripture.**

**Romans 8:29** tells us that God has saved us to be “conformed to the image of His Son...”

One of the results of being conformed to the image of Christ is we begin seeing the world and thinking like Jesus.

**1 Corinthians 2:16** “But we have the mind of Christ.”

So... when it comes to these issues - do you have the mind of Christ, or do you have the mind of a political party, a cable news network, a talk show host, or various authors and commentators in the media?

**Who or what is forming the basis for your thoughts, opinions, and convictions?**

Or... maybe you view and think about these issues from your own experiences.

Experiences should not be ignored - they are impactful - but they must not be the basis for our worldview.

**We must have the mind of Christ.**

This morning, we're going to look at the issue of 'Wokeness' / 'Wokeism'.

However, before we get to that topic, I want to talk about a knowledge and skill that I believe fewer and fewer modern-day Christians have worked at and developed in their life.

Discernment.

**Christians need to be discerning.**

One of the challenges of living in this world is discerning what is true / false.

Discerning or judging what is good / bad or evil.

Discerning what is wise / foolish.

Discerning what is worth my time and energy.

I would propose to you that discernment is part of what I would call 'Biblical Wokeness'.

More on this in a few minutes.

Do you use discernment when it comes to the sources of information you listen to / watch / read?

In our world today, we have more sources of information than any previous generation in human history.

While that's a wonderful thing, it's not always a good or helpful.

News: Do you ingest news that is true / accurate / fair - or is it biased / one-sided.

Is it news - or opinions about the news?

Philosophy - worldview - do you develop these through movies / entertainment / music / books / social media?

As Christians, we get into trouble - we get off-track - when we ingest what is unhealthy and of no benefit - we fail to discern what we ingest - and when we fail to compare what we ingest to the Bible.

**1 Thessalonians 5:21**

"...test everything; hold fast what is good."

That's a discernment issue - judgment is involved.

**1 John 4:1**

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world."

Our eyes, ears and mind must be open and filtering, discerning, judging what we are reading, watching, hearing.

I often encounter Christians who buy into certain ideas and philosophies because the culture is awash in the ideas.

They exercise no discernment - or very little discernment - and they get swept up in the tidal wave of public opinion and the talking points that dominate the airwaves and social media.

But as Christians, we're supposed to be more entrenched in the truth of God's Word.

We should be more stable - steadfast - grounded in what is true - not what is popular or trendy.

**Ephesians 4:14**

"...so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes."

**Colossians 2:8**

"See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ."

The Christian life is not easy!

It is demanding - requiring constant intellectual energy to discern what we encounter in life.

Just because a Christian preacher or author says it, it doesn't make it right - in-line with Scripture.

**That's why I always try to give you the Scripture that underlies and supports what I say.**

Like the Bereans in **Acts 17**, when they heard the Apostle Paul, they listened - then they spent time "examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so."

### 1 Timothy 6:20-21

“O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called “knowledge,” for by professing it some have swerved from the faith.”

Your views on:

- The value and sanctity of life...
- The value and worth of every person...
- The inherent dignity of every person...
- The importance of gender and sexuality...
- The importance and role of government...
- The importance of justice and mercy.
- The value of family...
- The importance of marriage...

As followers of Christ, our views, opinions, attitudes must be shaped by the principles we find in the Bible - as we grow and attain to having the mind of Christ.

### **What is wokeness / wokeism?**

What does it mean to be woke - and is this something Christians should do?

To most of us, ‘Wokeism’ seems like a new thing - something that has been created / invented in the last few years.

But the idea and term has been around much longer.

Case and point: A 1962 New York Times article by William Melvin Kelley entitled “If You’re Woke, You Dig It” which defined woke as “*well informed, up-to-date.*”

In its most basic use, this was the definition of ‘woke’ - to be “*well informed, up-to-date*” - aware of what was going on in the world around you.

Antithesis: Living with your head in the sand - or isolated from the culture at large and clueless to what was happening in the culture.

**But the term has morphed and evolved into something much different today.**

From my research, ‘wokeism’ seems to be a philosophy, a worldview, some claim it’s a new religion.

When you look up ‘woke’ on Merriam Webster.com - it lists ‘woke’ as ‘*US slang*’.

So, it’s very difficult to nail down a solid, concise definition because it’s still a fluid term with its meaning changing and nuancing in real time.

Finding a definition feels like chasing the wind - holding onto a slimy fish that keeps slipping out of your hands.

From Wikipedia...

**Woke** (/wouk/ wohk) is a term originating in the United States which originally meant to be alert to racial prejudice and discrimination. Beginning in the 2010s, it came to encompass a broader awareness of social inequalities such as sexism and has also been used as shorthand for left-wing ideas involving identity politics and social justice, such as the notion of white privilege and slavery reparations for African Americans.

Another source said: Wokeism is having a sense of awareness of one's ethnic (racial) heritage and an awareness of the historical obstacles and injustices that have hurt and limited people - especially people of minority groups.

It means being 'awake' (aware) of the problems other people face - especially people of different backgrounds.

Another commentator says wokeism "...is being aware that society is constructed of systems of power which are maintained by language, representation, symbology, and art and the means of cultural corruption in those domains must be challenged, disrupted, dismantled, replaced by a different means."

(James Lindsey - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLERGkXwsnU>)

There are acronyms used in these circles.

POC = Person of color

DEI = Diversity - Equity - Inclusion

SJW = Social Justice Warrior



## **Is current day Wokeism / Wokeness something Christians should aspire to?**

Wokeism is a worldview.

It is a perspective - a lens to see everything through.

As Christians, our worldview should be rooted and built on the truths of the Bible.

So, the key question is, *'Does wokeism align with the truths, principles and values of the Bible?'*

**No. Not really. I will point out 2 things, but first.**

Wokeism Aligns with the Bible when it brings attention to injustice and other evils.

Wokeism does have some kernels of truth.

The kernels of truth are that some people have experienced injustice.

Some people have suffered unfairly - unjustly.

Many of those injustices were suffered by black people under the abusive and evil use of power by white people.

For a period of time, the church - at least a significant % of the church in the United States - and elsewhere around the world - was complicit and fully supportive of the evils committed against black people.

The Church also fueled the fight against those evils and to bring justice and dignity to all men and women.

Much of the basis for Wokeism is rooted in these evils.

*That part of it is in-line with the Biblical truths and principles regarding the value and sacredness of all human life, the dignity of every person, the image of God in every human being, and the heart of God against injustice and for the marginalized, the mistreated, and the poor.*

*Wokeism points our attention to injustice that has occurred. It puts a spotlight on human life that was disregarded, disrespected, and abused.*

*This is in-line with the Bible's teaching - in-line with the heart of God.*

1) However, Wokeism walks away from Biblical alignment when it condemns and places guilt on entire groups of people because they look like people who committed those evil acts in the past.

Wokeism - along with some of the other topics we'll look at in the coming weeks - views people not as individuals but in groups.

*Wokeism has become what it claims to detest and fight against.*

It views and judges people according to their ethnicity (race), skin color, gender, and cultural status.

**This stands in contrast to what the Bible teaches.**

Guilt for sin does not get passed down to descendants.

**Ezekiel 18:20** (also Deuteronomy 24:16)

“The person who sins is the one who will die. The child will not be punished for the parent’s sins, and the parent will not be punished for the child’s sins. Righteous people will be rewarded for their own righteous behavior, and wicked people will be punished for their own wickedness.”

In God’s eyes, I am not guilty for the sins of my parents - and they are not guilty for my many sins.

However,

The consequences of sin do get passed down to descendants.

**Exodus 20:5b** (also Deut. 5:9; Exodus 34:6-7; 1 Cor. 15:22)

“I lay the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations of those who reject Me.”

At first glance this verse seems to contradict the previous verse. But they are not in contradiction.

**Ezekiel 18:20** is describing the legal structure, and **Exodus 20:5** is talking about a covenantal structure - the covenant between God and the nation of Israel.

There is no legal guilt passed on to descendants, but as **Exodus 20:5** points out, the consequences - the

problems - the difficulties and fallout from a father's sin is upon the children.

We see this in the case of abuse.

Often, children who are raised in abusive homes become abusers. The children are not guilty of the parent's sin, but they do carry the consequences, scars, and behavioral patterns unless they turn to God and allow God to work in their life to break the cycle that sin has produced.

2) Wokeism also walks away from Biblical alignment when it tries to correct those injustices by unbiblical means.

Another core problem with Wokeism is it attempts to achieve justice outside of our justice system.

The Bible affirms the role of civic government to restrain evil and execute justice. (Romans 13:1-5)

Wokeism activists often view and believe our system of justice is broken - racist.

So, they don't trust it.

This is another consequence of sins committed in certain courtrooms. (Exodus 20:5b)

However, when you sidetrack the justice system, and try to instill your own justice, you are bound for failure.

What does a person do when the courts fail?

When the justice system is unjust?

1) The Body of Christ must support those suffering injustice. We must walk through those difficult, unjust times with them.

2) Act like Jesus when we are mistreated. Appeal the case - follow all legal avenues of recourse. But Jesus, when He was treated with hate and injustice, He was silent. “He was oppressed...afflicted, yet He opened not his mouth...” (Isaiah 53:7)

Wokeism activists get justice by ‘canceling’ or somehow, through getting people fired from their job or some other form of imposed penalty and punishment when a person or business refuses to confess to their guilt in the injustices of the past or the perceived injustices of the present.

Failure to go along with Wokeism’s declarations and judgments will make you (a person or a business) a target. This goes against the Bible’s teaching on retribution or revenge.

**Nahum 1:2**

“The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD is avenging and wrathful; the LORD takes vengeance on His adversaries and keeps wrath for His enemies.”

**1 Thessalonians 5:15**

“See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone.”

Vetting out one's own idea of justice and penalty is a recipe for anarchism, increasing hatred and evil, and it will lead to even greater abuses than our past holds.

**Christians must develop Biblical wokeness.**

The Bible encourages a different kind of 'wokeness' than our culture is promoting.

The Bible wants to wake us up spiritually.

The Gospel brings life to a dead soul, beginning the process of conforming a person to the image of Christ.

**Ephesians 1:15-18**

"I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints...remembering you in my prayers...that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him...having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which He has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints..."

When someone gets saved, they awaken spiritually.

After someone gets saved, they should be waking up more and more to the truth and reality of Christ.

The implications of Christ widen and gain more strength in the Christian's life.

"...having the eyes of your hearts enlightened" is a greater and more important awakening than current-day Wokeism.

As Christians who are being transformed into the image of Christ, we are called to bring justice, love and truth into the world - into our world - our circle of influence.

***Apply it...***

Be awakened spiritually.

Put your faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins.

Invite His Spirit into your life - allow God to change you - transform you - conform to you to the image of His Son - and be a blessing to those who have been less fortunate - who have suffered injustice and a lack of love and dignity.

Confess and repent of any racism and hatred.

Confess and repent if you have ever contributed (actively or passively) to another person's injustice.

Seek forgiveness from those you have wronged.

If possible, ask forgiveness.

This will take the burden of guilt and shame off your shoulders.

It will also remove the burden of anger, hatred, and vengeance off their shoulders.

Live and think in alignment with the Bible's teaching.

Allow God's Word to transform your mind - to penetrate the deepest parts of your heart.

Learn to develop a Biblical worldview - and see the world as Christ sees the world - see people how Christ sees people.

*Close in prayer*