

*Worldview, Theology,  
& Culture*



*First Baptist Church, McLoud*

## What is a “Worldview”?

- *Definition:*
  - The way one views the world
  - A person’s worldview can be likened to eyeglasses
    - You see the world *through* glasses.
    - If you have red-tinted glasses, then the world around is tinted with.... Red!
- Everyone has a worldview
- Everyone has a viewpoint—a way in which they view the world

## Why are worldview issues important?

- Ideas have consequences
  - Example of Jorge Crespo at García Moreno Prison in Ecuador<sup>1</sup>
  - Hitler in 1930s Germany
  - Influence of Plato upon Western Christianity
- Therefore, ideas matter!

*“From barbarianism to civilization requires a century; from civilization to barbarianism needs but a day.”*

*-Will Durant<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey, *How Now Shall We Live?* (Wheaton: Tyndale, 1999), 3ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, 19.

## Churches and Christians have worldviews

- Our Worldview **influences** the way we read and interpret our Bible
- Every Christian approaches a text with a set of beliefs and assumptions from the outset
- For example, Rom 8:29-30 and 2 Peter 3:9
  - *Arminians and Rom 8:29-30.*
    - Typically, those in the Arminian tradition see man's free will as most important, and read "predestination texts" in light of their commitment to man's free will.
  - *Calvinists and 2 Peter 3:9.*
    - Typically, those in the Calvinist tradition see God's sovereignty as most important, and they read texts that speak of God's universal love in light of their commitment to God's sovereignty.

## **The main point:**

Right or wrong, we all come to the text of Scripture with a certain set of beliefs and assumptions that govern the way we interpret it.

- *Remember:* A person's worldview is like a lens. And we all interpret Scripture through a lens.
- Everybody brings to the text:
  1. Past religious tradition
  2. Past religious experience (whether good or bad)
  3. One's cultural tradition
  4. One's family upbringing
  5. One's time-frame in which they live

## We all see **through** the eyeglasses

- **Before** we talk about which theology is right and which theology is wrong, we must first talk about how we are going to see the text.
- You must **first** clean your eyeglasses before you can expect to view the world around you!

## Worldviews are Everywhere, and You Can Spot Them!

- A person's worldview **influences** the way they live
- A church's worldview **influences** the way they function
- A culture's worldview **influences** the way society operates and expresses itself

### Let's Do Art...<sup>3</sup>

#### 1. Ancient Greece.

The Greeks held to the “conviction that that ultimate truth is found in mathematics and geometry...[and] At the time, this was a complete novel idea.”

(Pearcey, *Leonardo*, 77).



Images from <http://www.mlahanas.de/Greeks/Arts/ApolloBel/BeIv2.png> and <http://www.bartleby.com/86/2603.gif>

<sup>3</sup> These examples are taken from Nancy Pearcey, *Saving Leonardo: A Call to Resist the Secular Assault on Mind, Morals, & Meaning* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 77-87.

## 2. Byzantine Art

“Did Byzantine painters really think the air was gold?”

(Pearcey, Leonardo, 79)

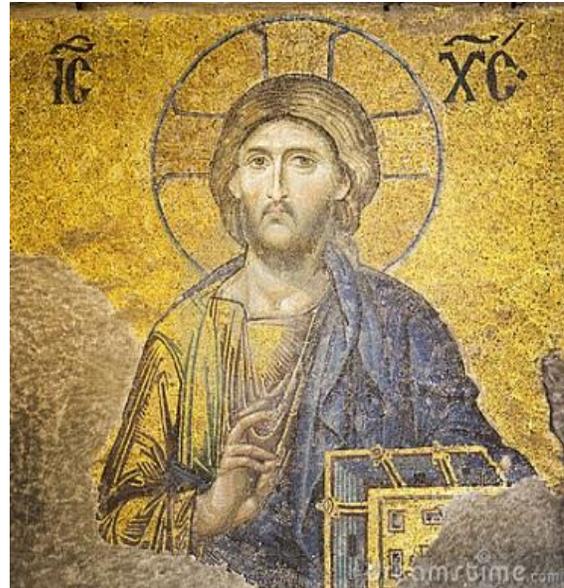


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## 3. Reformation-era Art

“The works of monks and priests, however hold and arduous they be, do not differ one whit in the sight of God from the works of the rustic laborer in the field or the woman going about her household tasks, but that all works are measured before God by faith alone.....Indeed, the menial housework of a manservant or maidservant is often more acceptable to God than all the fastings and other works of a monk or priest, because the monk or priest lacks faith.”

Martin Luther



Image from  
<http://www.oberlin.edu/images/Art200/200-0031.JPG>

***Now What? Some Practical Implications***

- You live the way you do because you are **influenced** by your worldview
- Churches function the way they do because they are **influenced** by their worldview
- Our culture operates and expresses itself the way it does because it has been **influenced** by a particular worldview
- Therefore...
  - A person changes only when they change their mind
  - A church changes only when it changes its mindset
  - A culture will only change when it has had a change of mind, too