**LIGHTS IN A DARK WORLD (#1)**

*Young Christian, Start With Your Worldview*

“***That you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world***.” - Philippians 2:15

Blameless, harmless children bring to mind an age of innocence when all of life was giggles and laughter by day, and kisses, hugs and sweet dreams by night. Children surrounded by loving parents who provide for their every need are living in the best days of their life. To them everyone is good and kind. Life is a fairy tale.

Adam and Eve were the only adults who ever experienced this age of innocence where all the world was a utopia. It sickened God to see His beautiful paradise turned to thorns and thistles and screams in childbirth. The age of innocence was over. A crooked and perverse generation took its place. Cain killed Abel. It went from bad to worse as just nine generations later we are told, “*The Lord saw the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually… and He was grieved in His heart*.” (Gen. 6:5-13).

A century later that wicked, corrupt world was gone. The rainbow was God’s smile of satisfaction that the purge was complete. But sadly, predictably, man did not learn his lesson. He never does. Again, just nine generations later the world had reverted right back to its crooked, perverse state. From Shem to Abraham we discover a world so corrupt that God had to rain fire and brimstone upon an entire region of the earth. What Abram saw the following morning must have resembled Hiroshima Japan on August 6, 1945.

The history of man is summarized succinctly from the days of the Judges when it says, “*everyone did what was right in his own eyes*” (Judg. 17;6; 21:25). That sentence perfectly states all the worldviews that have opposed God’s views from the dawn of time. Man repeatedly has tried to invent “new and improved” ways to trump God’s ways (Isa. 55:8-9). Man’s ways “*seem right*” but they are “*the way of death*” (Prov. 14:12). Man gives his worldview a fresh coat of paint and a new name, but in the end “*there is nothing new under the sun*” (Eccl. 1:9). In the end all of man’s worldviews are simply labeled by Paul as “the world” (Rom. 12:2 “*be not conformed to the world*”).

Just take a look at some of the worldviews man has invented in order to find “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” James Sire, in his very informative book *The Universe Next Door*, has powerfully described the prevalent worldviews now waging mortal combat for the souls of our youth. According to Sire a worldview is simply “the filter through which one answers seven basic questions.” Here are the seven questions:

1. Is there a God, and what is He like?
2. What is the nature and origin of the universe?
3. What is the nature and origin of man?
4. What happens to man after death?
5. Where does knowledge come from?
6. Is it possible to know right from wrong?
7. What is the meaning of human history?

Here are the possible worldviews in answering those seven questions.

THEISM. If you gave book, chapter and verse from the Bible to answer those questions then you are a theist (“a believer in God and the Bible”). Theism claims there is one God who created the universe, making the world out of nothing (ex nihilo), and continues to providentially oversee His creation according to His will, moving history toward climax.

DEISM. This position is a downward step from theism. Sire calls this “the clockwork universe,” claiming that God created the world but then, like a wound-up clock, left it to run on its own without His intervention or providence.

NATURALISM. In theism God is personal. In deism God is reduced to impersonal. In naturalism it is reduced again, but this time to extinction! Matter is eternal. This is secular humanism in which man becomes the be-all / end-all of the universe. It says we live in a closed system with no outside influence (i.e. “there is no God”) that can altar history. As they wrote in the Humanist Manifesto, “no deity will save us, we must save ourselves.” Darwin and Karl Marx (evolution, socialism, communism) began from this premise.

NIHILISM. Naturalism looks to make the world a better place by its own wisdom. But nihilism has no positive outlook for the future, claiming nothing really matters, for there is no rhyme or reason for life on earth. If there is no God to whom we are accountable, why bother. Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow you die. A simple shrug of the shoulders and a bored remark of “whatever” is the sad outlook of a nihilist.

Young people, the world is trying to “*squeeze you into its mold*” (Rom. 12:2 Phillips NT translation). If you do not know what worldview you believe, and what worldviews you are fighting, you will be like Don Quixote ignorantly and foolishly jousting at windmills. Without a theistic foundation of putting on the whole armor of God, Satan will eat you up for lunch and spit you out for dinner. Knowing your worldview will arm you for the fight, “*lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices”* (2 Cor. 2:11). Paul worried that Christians in the first century were being “*cheated with philosophy…according to the basic principles of the world*” (Col. 2:4-8). Young people are today being likewise cheated through these same philosophies renamed deism, naturalism and nihilism. A. W. Tozer said it right: “That the world is a playground instead of a battleground has now been accepted in practice by the vast majority of fundamentalist Christians. They are facing both ways, enjoying Christ and the world too.”

I pray for you young man and young woman, that you know you are on a battlefield, not a playground, and that you will put on the armor of God to stand against the wiles of the devil (Eph. 6:10-17). Our next article will address the power of God to defeat Satan.

“*… among whom you shine as lights in the world*.” Let your light shine. - Rick