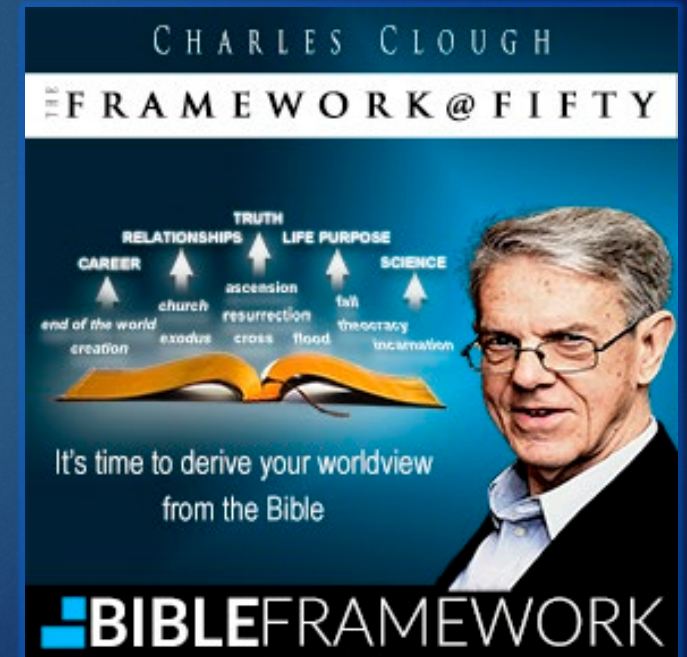


# The Bible Framework at 50

## Using the Bible Framework to Counter Paganism in Christian Education

*2025 Chafer Theological Seminary Pastors' Conf.*

Prof. Robert Cooper



# Introduction

- Many in the body of Christ confess a biblical worldview, while simultaneously thinking, speaking and acting from a pagan worldview
- Sources of modern paganism are; empiricism, relativism, humanism, liberalism and neo-orthodoxy
- Contemporary Christian separation of the spiritual and the physical resembles Greek rather than biblical thinking
- American students, during 12 years of school, spend approximately 12,000 hours learning subjects from a secular-pagan worldview while only 1,800 hours in church learning one subject, theology



# Introduction, cont'd

- Like Israel, the church hasn't stood by the Word of God so hasn't recognized & defended itself from the intrusion of pagan thought

“... examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.  
(Acts 17:11b)

- The church has incorporated evolution, psychiatry, materialism & antisemitism
- The vehicles of paganism have been public education, entertainment, even Christian denominations & seminaries

*Christian education needs the Bible Framework to counter the intrusion of pervasive paganism.*

# History of Pervasive Paganism



- *Paganism is the carnal mind which views god as universal, impersonal and is both good & evil – Charles Clough*
- Another term is “Fate” to which even the ancient gods were subject to
- To clarify, paganism doesn’t mean primitive
- Paganism is defined by 2 key beliefs
  - Continuity of Being: No qualitative difference between god, man & nature
  - Impersonal Chance: Nothing is superior & in control as everything is matter

Paganism has spread its deception across many disciplines, including astronomy, biology, geology, anthropology, and physics. -- Charles Clough

# Biblical Examples of Pervasive Paganism:

- Antediluvian World (Gen. 6:11-12)
- Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:2-4)
- Israel from Exodus to Exile

Deut 31:20(NASB95) or when I bring them into the land flowing with milk and honey, which I swore to their fathers, and they have eaten and are satisfied and become prosperous, then *they will turn to other gods and serve them, and spurn Me and break My covenant.*

- The apostles warning to the new Church

Jude 1:3b(NASB95) ... appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints. *<sup>4</sup>For certain persons have crept in unnoticed... ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.*

# How Is Paganism Pervasive in Christianity Today?

- When America was founded it was 98% Protestant with a shared biblical worldview, largely from the Reformation
- Over time Protestantism and its emphasis on the Bible has decreased as a percentage of the American public
- Gallup in 2022 asked Americans their view about the Bible

	Actual word	Inspired word	Fables, legends	No opinion
2022	20%	49%	29%	1%
1976	38%	45%	13%	5%

# The Church Today

- Many Christians believe the Bible is fallible & not authoritative
- Few believe in Revelation, Inspiration & Inerrancy
- Fewer believe the Bible is authoritative regarding;
  - ❑ Doctrine
  - ❑ History
  - ❑ Science
  - ❑ Geography
- If man turns from the Bible then they must turn towards paganism (Pro. 1:29-32)

# % of Evangelical Protestants who say...

	Older (b. before 1981)	Millennials (b. 1981-1996)
Favor same-sex marriage	23%	45%
Homosexuality should be accepted by society	32%	51%
Growing immigrant population is a change for the better	13%	27%
Bigger government and more services are preferable	27%	41%
Stricter environmental laws are worth the cost	43%	55%
Govt. aid does more harm than good	36%	45%

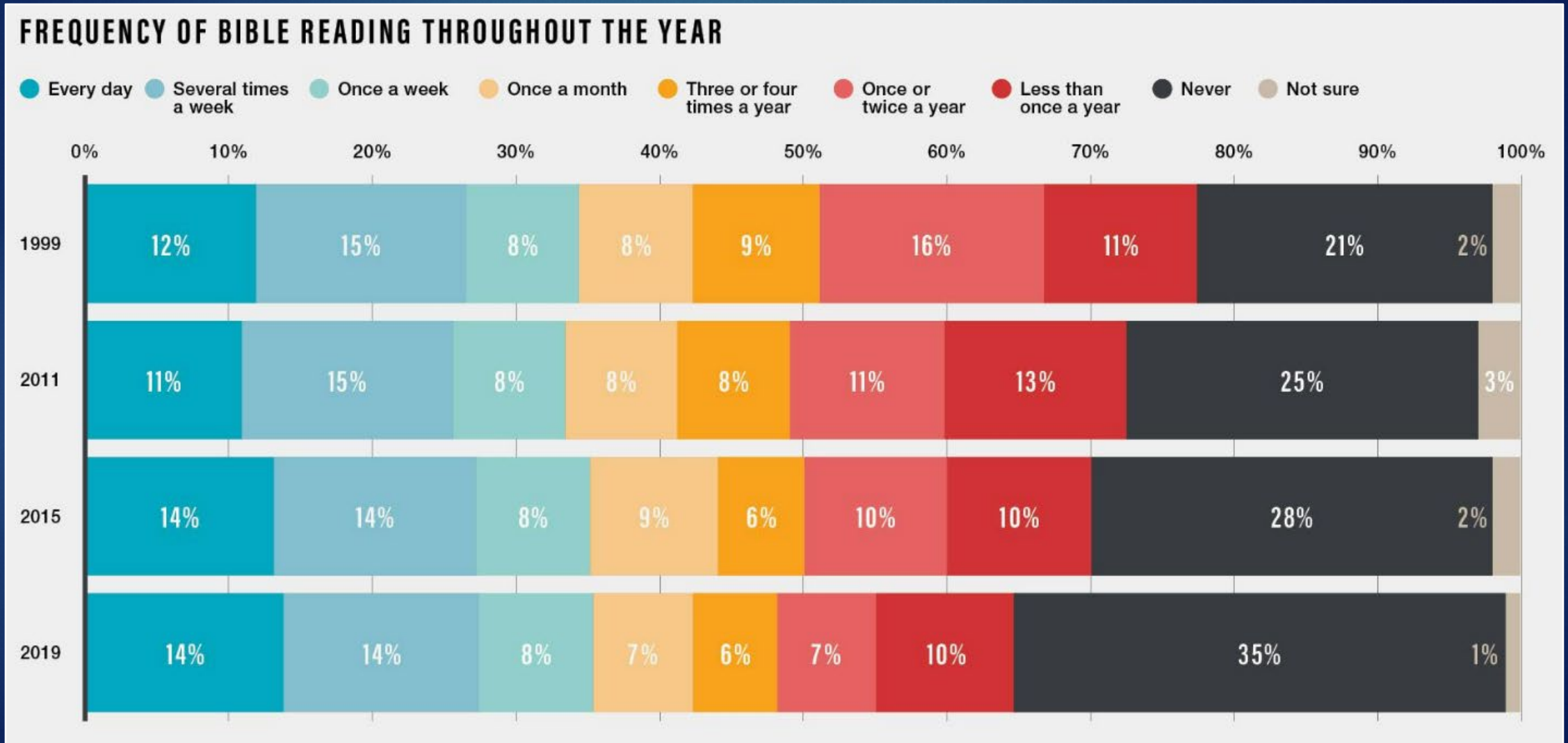


# % of Evangelical Protestants who say...

- millennials submission to Biblical revelation is remarkably less than previous generations. It appears that the older generations, like ancient Israel, did not teach their posterity a Biblical worldview. This is a failure of education, a combination of academic, church and family.
- **One issue that millennial evangelical Protestants agreed with the elders was on abortion. Sadly, the same survey recorded that 33% of both groups believe that “Abortion should be legal in *all/most cases*”**

Judg 2:8a(NASB95) Then Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died... <sup>10</sup>All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and *there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel.*

# Frequency of Bible Reading Throughout the Year, 2020



# Does Spirituality = Trust & Obedience

➤ American “Bible users” are those who read the Bible 3-4 times a year

□ In 1999, 52%

□ in 2019, 49%

□ In 2024, 38%

➤ Today, Christians are struggling with sexual sin, including adultery, homosexuality, lesbianism, pornography, transgenderism...

1 Thes 4:3(NSB95) For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; <sup>4</sup>that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, <sup>5</sup>*not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God*



# How the Church Has Absorbed Paganism

## ➤ Higher “Destructive” Criticism

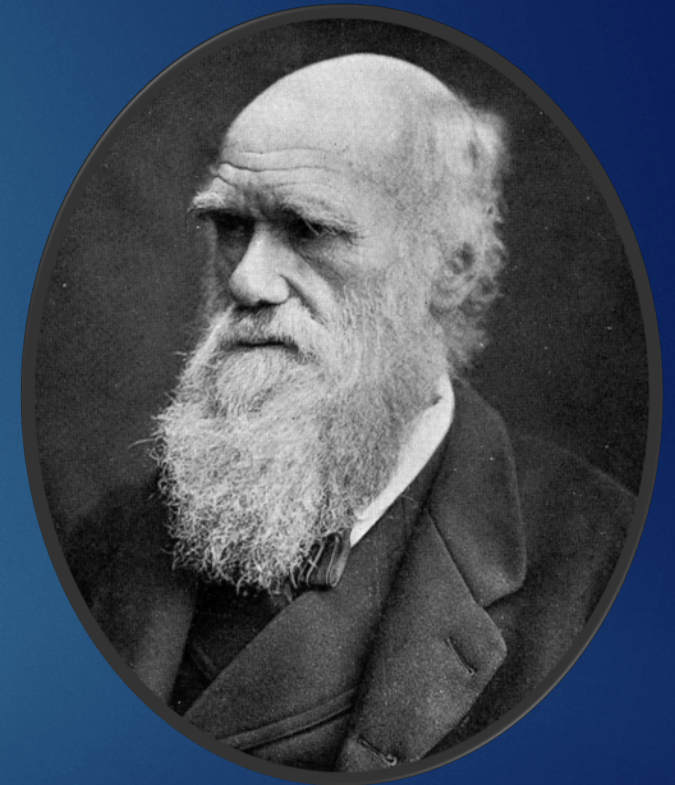
- ❑ Johann Semler (1725-1791): Accommodation Strategy
- ❑ Johann Eichhorn (1752-1827): Father of Higher Criticism
- ❑ KH Graf & Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918): Documentary Hypotheses

## ➤ Liberal Theology (Kant, Schleiermacher, Hegel...) may be summed up as:

- ❑ The Bible is a witness to revelation, not to be equated objectively with the Word of God
- ❑ Man meets God in an experiential encounter with Jesus Christ
- ❑ Events of Scripture are transcendent, experiential stories rather than verifiable history
- ❑ God is transcendent. Man can come to fellowship with God only through “a leap of faith”

# How the Church Has Absorbed Paganism

- With the authority of Bible removed; Man invented his own modern religion with man as god with their own priests & doctrines
  - ❑ Charles Darwin (1809-1882): Popularized evolution which provided a religion in scientific terms
  - ❑ Karl Marx (1818-1883): Communism was man's way to create a paradise on earth
  - ❑ Sigmund Freud (1856-1939): Evolution relative to human behavior driven by sexual gratification
  - ❑ John Dewey (1859-1952): Father of Progressive Education with no eternal truths or moral laws



# Peter's Last Warning (2 Pet 3:2-7)

Pet 3:2(NASB95) ... you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles.

*<sup>3</sup>Know this first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking, following after their own lusts, <sup>4</sup>and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation."* <sup>5</sup>For when they maintain this, it *escapes their notice* that by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, <sup>6</sup>through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of *ungodly men*.

# How the Church Has Absorbed Paganism

- The Bible is a good book but not authoritative
- Society is authoritative & man is the final authority
- Humanism
  - ❑ Secular (pagan): appeals to man's reason to achieve truth & good
  - ❑ Religious (effectively pagan but substitutes God)
- Karl Barth (1886-1968): Founder of Neo-Orthodoxy
  - Recognized liberalism didn't provide authoritative answers
  - Didn't believe in the inspiration & inerrancy of the Bible
  - The Bible could provide a subjective way for man to come to know God

# The Bible Framework Counters Paganism in the Church

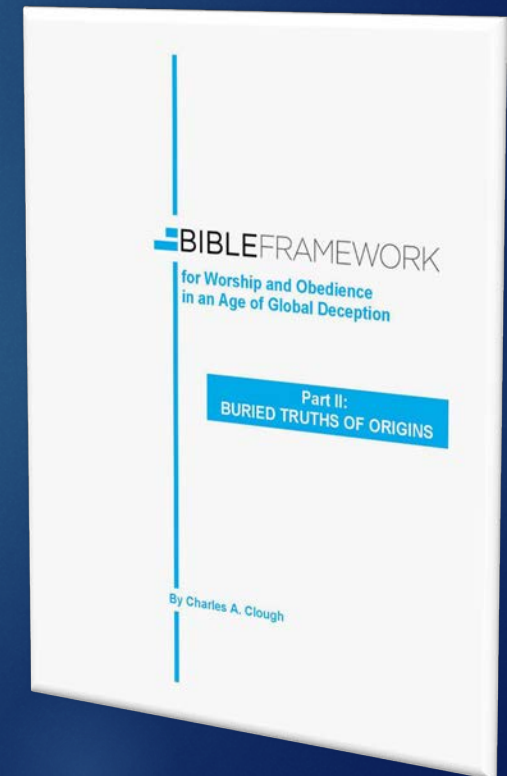
... we had to take the Word of God and respect the historical sequence that God used to reveal His doctrine. And that was the lead-in, that was the curriculum, that was the lesson plan in order to make it clear.

-- Charles Clough

## ➤ Learned & Applied in 3 Steps

1. Bible narrative of key events
2. Truths revealed through the events
3. Contrast biblical with non-biblical worldviews

-- Amos & Jennifer Kwok





# The Framework Integrates other Bible Tools

Christians “can learn biblical truths from studying historical events. If these event-based truths are contrasted with corresponding pagan speculations, students will mature in thinking biblically about all of life. The truths have implications in all aspects of our lives—marriage, family, the arts, science, law, business, math, the environment, economics, history, logic, medicine, language ...”

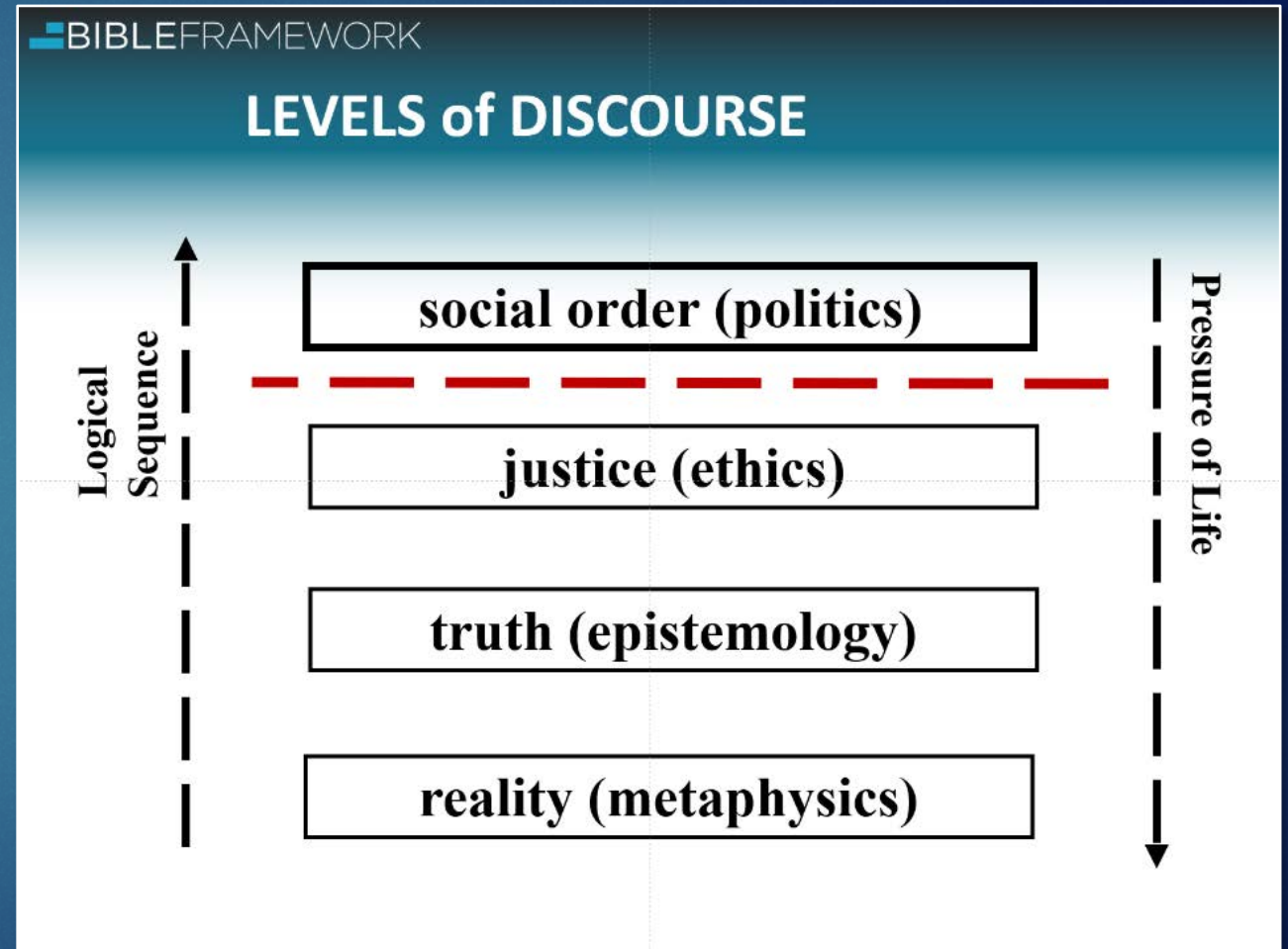
-- Charles Clough

*Ecc1 3:11 (NASB95)* *He has made everything appropriate in its time.* He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that man will not find out the work which God has done from the beginning even to the end.

Systematic Theology Doctrines	Bible Framework	
	Key Events	Doctrinal Images
Theology proper (God)	Creation	God, Man, Nature
Bibliology (the Bible)	Fall	Evil & Suffering
Angelology (angels & demons)	Flood	Judgement and Salvation
Anthropology (humanity)	Noahic Covenant	God, Man, Nature
Hamartiology (sin)	Call of Abraham	Election, Justification, Faith
Christology (Christ)	Exodus	Judgment, Salvation
Soteriology (Salvation)	Sinai & the Law	Revelation, Inspiration, Canonicity
Pneumatology (Holy Spirit)	Conquest through Exile	Sanctification
Ecclesiology (the church)	The Birth of the King	Hypostatic Union
Eschatology (End times)	The Life of the King	Kenosis, Impeccability, Infallibility
	The Cross	Substitutionary Blood Atonement
	The Resurrection	Glorification
	The Ascension	Judgment and Salvation
	Pentecost	Person & Work of the Holy Spirit, Sanctification
	Emergence of the Church	Dispensations
	Maturing of the Church	Historical Theology
	Destiny of the Church	Eschatology
	The 2nd Coming	Jesus will rule with justice
	Final Judgment and Eternity	Eternal destinies Ultimate fulfillment of man's design

# Biblical vs. Unbiblical Views of Reality, Truth, & Ethics

- Charles Clough Gave a presentation to the Helms School of Government at Liberty University in Oct 2020
- The presentation, “Biblical vs. Unbiblical Views of Reality, Truth, & Ethics” applied the Bible Framework to government students with the application to social & political actions



# Student Feedback

- Not only did he discuss biblical and pagan views on the bible and events, but he went into detail with... man, nature, reality, lifeforms, truth, authority, evil, justice, and more. It was nice to see a different point of view from the bible and be reassured with what Christians believe.
- This presentation helped me to realize the implications of ongoing movements in the United States. The socialist movement is not a revolt against the capitalistic structure of America, as I had originally thought. Instead, as Dr. Clough explained, it is a revolt against God and a part of the wave of secularization which has been sweeping throughout the world for the past century.
- The Levels of Discourse are important in regard to intelligence because paying attention to them can help us know how our enemies may be thinking. In order to understand their politics, we must first understand their ethics, epistemology, and metaphysics.

# Student Feedback, cont'd

- The average American Christian may not be aware of how secular philosophies have influenced and permeated our society. Critically examining these worldviews will enable a Christian to identify discrepancies between the objective truth found in Genesis and the subjective perspectives of contemporary theorists.
- Mr. Clough described how an understanding of major events in the bible can help us to answer the questions of everyday life, whether that be dilemmas in the workplace, setting priorities, and enduring through suffering. The application that can be drawn from the bible to the issues of our world today are stunning.

# Conclusion

Though today, many members of the body of Christ confess they have a Biblical worldview, they think, talk and function as though they have a pagan worldview. Regrettably, the church has not adequately prepared generations of believers to understand the Bible, themselves, or their adversaries; the flesh, the world and Satan. Christian education has allowed the world to invade, divide and neutralize much of Christianity. Much of what Christianity now accepts as Christian is actually evolution, socialism, humanism based on rationalism, empiricism and existentialism which are doctrines of demons (1 Tim. 4:1).

*Col 2:8(NASB95) See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. <sup>9</sup>For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, <sup>10</sup>and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority;*

Q&A



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