

In looking back at these Christian Anthropology articles, it was our intent to demonstrate the central role Messiah Jesus, the Christ – King of Heaven and earth, has played in the cultural development of humanity. Humanity requires a guiding ideology that is big enough and challenging enough to transform humans from “smart animals” inhabiting earth to the “sons and daughters” of God bound for eternity. This high calling is not merely one of many hopeful futures – if the hope is too small, it can’t properly galvanize people into purposeful living for a hopeful future. The high calling must be to a hope large enough to get a person past their own selfish ambition and desire. The high calling requires a means to achieve the desired end – if it remains only a hope unrealizable and incapable of achieving a transformational experience, it becomes only a burden... a bondage of oppression which must necessarily fail. Zondervan’s Expository Bible Commentary says the following of Ecclesiastes 8:8-13

The analogy of the king illustrates the concept of God's total plan. Like the king, God has the power of life and death; and, when the time comes for a person to die, he or she cannot insist on retaining the breath of life. Meanwhile, one must press on until the end. There is no escape from the battle by treacherously joining the enemies of the king.

Powerful oppressors who made a show of religious observances have had magnificent funerals and public orations in their honor. This has had its effect on society by creating an attitude of "If I can get away with it, I will do it." [In this context] the only crime is in being found out. [However] Servants of God know that they live in a fallen world, where bad people often escape punishment. Nevertheless, they look for the enduring approval of their Lord, for this is the purpose of living.

Up to the time when Ecclesiastes was written, God had revealed little about the future life. The superficial contradiction between verse 12 and verse 13 can best be resolved by the Teacher's realization that living a long time is not necessarily the same as prolonging one's days--a concept made meaningful by the revelation of eternal life in Christ. Such [eternal] life is both qualitatively and quantitatively beyond any number of years on earth. The Teacher obviously believes in a future judgment (11:9). The day of the wicked, however long it lasts, will not be the normal day that closes with the lengthening of the evening shadows.

Obviously, a relativistic world illustrated in the Ecclesiastes passage above is not Biblical; God is a just and righteous God who will judge the world and each individual by His standard revealed in Scripture. It is clear that wisdom, truth, reason, and logic are fixed by God’s standards not humanities. Political and social constructs of the day not founded on God’s Will and Purpose will not please God. The Great Commandment confirms humanities relational standard – Matthew 22:36-40

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

Jesus replied: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

The Great Commission confirms God's standard of action for humanity – Matthew 28:18-20

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

This is the battle ground where Christianity's Godly standard acts as a counter-cultural restraint upon the relativistic worldly values and standards of the secular worldview. The imposition of Secular Humanism as the culture's dominant ideology and Scientific Naturalism as the guiding principle of science and academics does not change God's standard... Christians need to know what they believe and remain firm in their convictions.

Pastor Chip Ingraham often taught that "God gave you a brain and He expects you to use it." As Christ followers, God expects us to act in accordance with His revelation. Scripture also affirms that an era will come when humanity will pervert truth and justice (Exodus 23:2; Leviticus 19:15; Deuteronomy 16:19; Job 8:3; 34:12; Proverbs 17:23; Galatians 1:7).

Francis Schaeffer wrote a book in 1976 titled How Should We Then Live? – The Rise and Decline of Western Thought and Culture. It is a formidable scholarly work, "Using... Western thought and culture as a base... to present the flow and development which have led to twentieth-century thinking." More recently, scholar and philosopher Vishal Mangalwadi emerged from his native India Hindu Ashrams and secular universities to study at Francis Schaeffer's L'Abris, and wrote a current and compelling view of the Bible in his The Book That Made Your World – How the Bible Created the Soul of Western Civilization. Vishal's book written in 2011, is a wonderful scholarly treatise on many issues discussed in this series of articles, and I recommend it to those hungering for more substance. There is no doubt that Christian ideological identity and Democratic socio-political values are under siege and that we stand at a Crossroads... literally and figuratively; and there is no doubt that this conflict is no surprise to God. The question we need to prayerfully ask mirrors Schaeffer's... How Then Shall We Live?