

**NWCC | 09/05/2021 | Paul Ortiz**

## **HAVING A CHRISTIAN WORLD VIEW**

Matthew 4:1-11

Good morning everyone. I pray you are all well and I praise the Lord for your fellowship this morning.

The topic of the day is biblical worldview. It has been pressed on my heart to broach this subject with the congregation because it is very important in this day and age that Christians hold a biblical worldview as we navigate life.

To demonstrate such a worldview, we will look to our Lord and Savior to be our example. First though, let's define what it is we're talking about.

The definition for worldview is in the term itself. It's how we view the world.

More precisely, a worldview is the sum of our beliefs which form the framework of all our understanding upon which we hang all our assumptions and conclusions about reality as we experience it.

How you assess and respond to any given situation is guided by your worldview. Every person has a worldview whether they bother to consider it or not - and they can differ greatly.

People of different faiths and those who have none at all will hold vastly different beliefs about things like the origin of life, the nature of reality, morality, etc...

As Christians, our understanding of things is rooted in the fundamentals of our faith as guided by the Bible. Having a biblical worldview, and it ought not surprise us then when we differ on this or that issue with friends and family who do not. Of course, that is true only if we do in fact have a biblical worldview.

Allow me to briefly share with you some stats from a 2017 joint study by Barna and Summit Ministries.

According to that study, only 17% of practicing Christians have what the researchers considered a biblical worldview.

61% of those interviewed held beliefs rooted in New Spirituality which includes such beliefs as "all people pray to the same god or spirit" and karma.

15% of the practicing Christians interviewed agreed with the statement "if our beliefs offend someone, they are wrong" and 23% believe that "what is morally right or wrong depends on what an individual believes" removing the standard for morality away from the God they profess and giving it to man.

Again, this is a study conducted in 2017. Looking at the culture around you today, do think these numbers have increased or decreased in the last 4 years?

Let's turn now to the revealed Word of our God so we can learn from Him. Open your Bibles to Mathew chapter 4 if you're following along. I'll be reading verses 1 through 11, Jesus's temptation in the wilderness. We'll also have the verses presented on the screen if you'd rather follow along that way. Starting at verse 1:

1Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2After fasting forty days and forty nights, He was hungry. 3The tempter came to Him and said, "If You are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." 4But Jesus answered, "It is written:

'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

5Then the devil took Him to the holy city and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple. 6"If You are the Son of God," he said, "throw Yourself down.

For it is written:

'He will command His angels concerning You, and they will lift You up in their hands, so that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.'"

7Jesus replied, "It is also written:

'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

8Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9"All this I will give You," he

said, "if You will fall down and worship me."

10 "Away from Me, Satan!" Jesus declared. "For it is written:

'Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.'"

11 Then the devil left Him, and angels came and ministered to Him.

Now this episode in our Lord's life had to happen. In Matthew Chapter 3 Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist and afterward, the heavens were opened and the Spirit of God descended like a dove to rest on Him. A voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased." Well before that event, John tried to resist baptizing Jesus saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and do You come to me?" Jesus replied to him saying, "Let it be so now," ... "It is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness in this way." For the same reason, it was necessary that Jesus enter the wilderness to be tempted.

By doing this, Jesus succeeded where Israel had failed after their "Baptism" through the Red Sea and during the 40 years of their wandering in the wilderness, succumbing to various temptations.

Much can be learned from this episode but I want to use it today to highlight the worldview of our Lord, from which He draws His defense against Satan and his temptations.

First I'll point out something obvious but that's not often thoughtfully considered.

Who's He talking to? Is it some guy in the desert that calls himself the devil? No. Is it a figment of His imagination? No.

Your Bible doesn't say that Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil, but he didn't believe in the supernatural and so chose to disregard all that.

Far from it, Jesus has a supernatural worldview, which includes unseen spiritual, created beings that can interact with our reality and with whom He and we are capable of engaging as well. This is not the only time that Jesus engages beings such as these. Whether casting out demons or conversing with angels, Jesus shows us the reality of the spiritual realm throughout His life. Our Lord's apostle Paul having received direct revelation from Jesus and with the guidance of the Holy

Spirit emphasizes this point in Ephesians chapter 6, verse 12 when he states that, "our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this world's darkness, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms", referring to the angelic beings that oversee and influence the activities of nations and events in the world.

This is the first aspect of Jesus's worldview that we encounter and we should all of us incorporate this same component into our own worldviews. It's important when considering world events, social movements, conflicts and such, that we also consider that there may be unseen forces at work. Let's keep going to learn more.

Back at verse 1 of Chapter 4,

1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, He was hungry."

Now I'd say that scripture presents our Lord's condition rather modestly. It's difficult to imagine what it means by "he was hungry".

Consider that it doesn't say he was immediately tempted as He entered the wilderness. The tempter didn't come until after He'd been fasting for 40 days and nights.

In 2015, a Christian man died after 30 days while trying to imitate Jesus by fasting for 40 days and nights. His isn't the only occurrence with the same outcome. While many have been successful in attempting such a fast, many have not.

Think then just how hungry and near to physical death he must've been at the point when Satan begins his temptations.

Continuing in verse 3,

3 The tempter came to Him and said, "If You are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

Let's pause right here because the first thing we see is a subtle manipulation on the part of Satan when he says, "if you are the Son of God".

With these words, most people would be tempted to justify themselves. When people say stuff like this to us it hits at our pride and is also a subtle accusation that whatever we're claiming might not be true.

Not long ago I found myself confronted with this same kind of manipulation.

The better you get to know me, the more you'd realize just how nerdy I can be. I enjoy working with Microsoft Excel and have been known to create pretty awesome spreadsheets. Since it's for work that I usually find myself creating in excel, my coworkers always know I'm the go to guy for help with it.

Well I had a coworker approach me one day and ask if I would create a spreadsheet for his personal use which, by his description, would include some complex formulas.

I was pretty busy with work and didn't really have time for it and he knew that. His request, though, included something like, "You're supposed to be good at excel, right?" The implication is that If I'm as good as I claim to be, it should be no problem for me to do what he's asking.

It brings up that "I'll show you" feeling when someone does that to us. Thankfully Jesus was not phased and did not need to prove who He was to Satan. Me on the other hand, and not that my coworker was Satan, but I went ahead and did what he asked. I like to tell myself it's because I was being a nice and helpful guy and not that he got one over on me.

So, Satan starts with this mock and then attacks our Lord at His hunger.

I can't imagine the mental and physical stress a 40 day fast would feel like or fathom just how attractive a bit of food or drink might seem in that situation.

And as the Son of God, Jesus has the power of God and so could easily provide for himself by commanding that the rocks become bread but to do so would be to seize, spiritually, power from God the Father, switching from reliance on the Lord to reliance on himself.

Adam and Eve, when similarly tempted by this very same Satan in the garden of Eden, failed miserably. This of course is why our Lord had to come; so he would fulfill all righteousness and overcome where no other human ever could.

This temptation, though, isn't just a spiritual power struggle or an enticement to a desire for food. It touches on human yearning for personal comfort, anxiety relief, personal security, and personal health; things we all desire to control in our own lives.

Even outside of a Christian faith context, people all over the world so easily abandon their convictions for the promise of any of these things.

But let's see how Jesus responds to this manipulation and temptation.

Verse 4; But he answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

He is quoting from Deuteronomy 8:3. Moses, at the end of the 40 years in the wilderness, is reminding Israel of the wonders which God had done, His promises, and their promises. It reads,

"3He humbled you, and in your hunger He gave you manna to eat, which neither you nor your fathers had known, so that you might understand that man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD".

Another observation here; in His quoting of Duet 8:3, Jesus references "The Lord", Yahweh, the God of all creation and sustainer of all life. We already know that He has a supernatural worldview, but so do many non-Christians all over the world, both then and now.

Here, he proclaims the one true God and by identifying Him as the true source of life, He acknowledges His supremacy and authority. He did not appeal to Baal, Dagon, El, Marduk, or any one of the many other ancient idols of the time.

Jesus recognizes the authority of Yahweh over and above all others....as it is written.

This brings us to our next observation about Jesus's worldview, the authority He gives scripture. In response to all 3 of the temptations offered by Satan, Jesus replies with, "it is written".

Our Lord appeals to the authority of scripture in not just one but all of Satan's temptations.

This is by far our most important take away today and we'll dig into it a little more. Recall that a second ago, I said even non-Christians can have a supernatural worldview.

Many people from all sorts of different belief systems claim belief in a "higher power" or god. More specifically, a lot of people today proclaim faith in the God of the bible, but they don't know Him. Additionally, other religions apart from Christianity appropriate the name of Jesus but the person they present differs wildly from the Jesus in your Bible.

Given these things, what is our standard? How are we to discern the truth? Well our Lord gives us the answer in those 3 words, "it is written". It is the scriptures that He is referring to. It is the revealed word of God in your bible. So what does Jesus's response and His appeal to scripture tell us about His worldview? Put simply Jesus believes the scriptures.

That's a loaded concept; belief of the scriptures.

Your Bible is far-reaching and all-encompassing as it relates to all things. It provides a fully constructed worldview.

It presents an established cosmology, an answer for the origin of all things. It gives the believer an explanation of man, our condition and purpose. It provides a standard for all truth. It holds in it the foundation of all knowledge and understanding. It establishes a standard for ethics and morality.

If we claim to believe the bible, do we demonstrate inconsistency if we cherry pick what we will or will not believe from it? Jesus certainly didn't. I encourage every Christian to contemplate their own beliefs and convictions, seeking to know if they align with what scripture presents.

Returning to our text, this engagement between Satan and Jesus has more to reveal to us in the next temptation. Starting at verse 5 we read,

"5Then the devil took Him to the holy city and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple. 6"If You are the Son of God," he said, "throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He will command His angels concerning You, and they will lift You up in their hands, so that You will not strike Your foot against a stone.'" 7Jesus replied, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Similar to the first temptation, we see some manipulation from Satan.

He repeats the earlier taunt, "If you are the Son of God" but then follows it up by quoting scripture himself as part of his devious devices.

Surely noting that Jesus appealed to scripture in His defense against Satan's first attempt, Satan here attempts to manipulate our Lord by referencing Psalm 91, verses 11 and 12. This is a particularly clever temptation on Satan's part.

Understand that at this point, he has had 4000 years or so of tempting mankind. He is very good at what he does. He knows our condition, our natural inclinations, and our faithlessness. People have a very hard time trusting what they cannot see and feel. We want proof, evidence, and verification of everything that we have expectation in. Not having it causes us anxiety as we doubt and distrust.

Israel too, during their 40 years in the wilderness, often demonstrated unbelief in their testing of the Lord, demanding of Him signs and provisions, having no trust in His promises to provide all they need.

So it is with everyone.

When it comes to God, people tend to want signs for assurance before they fully trust. Faith will never come through such things. You may witness a miracle today and tomorrow have no faith that you'll ever see another again, feeling that you have been abandoned, seeking again for more proof. This is an

easy attribute of man for Satan to exploit, sowing seeds of doubt in our minds. Like I said, he's been doing it a long time.

So too has he been distorting the Word of God as a way to ensnare us. In the garden of Eden when Satan was first tempting Eve to Sin against God, he caused her to doubt God's word when he asked, "Did God actually say." And then later he twists God's word when he claims, "You will not surely die". He's using his same methods here with Jesus, twisting the word of God. It's also telling that he specifically chose Psalm 91.

After his work was complete in Genesis 3, God pronounced a curse over Satan, saying, "I will put enmity between you and the Woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

These words probably haunt Satan all through the ages. Almost 3000 years after God pronounced them, the psalmist wrote psalm 91 and reiterated that curse God made in these very verses that Satan quotes from. He quoted verses 11 and 12 but let's include verse 13 as well.

"11For He will command His angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. 12They will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. 13You will tread on the lion and cobra; you will trample the young lion and serpent."

I wonder if there wasn't some provocation going on here as well. Maybe Satan is like, "Are you one that is supposed to crush me? Let's do it then! Come on! After all, it says His angels will guard you! Do what you've come to do!"

Thankfully however, our Lord does not succumb and once again overcomes.

Much like the first time, Jesus again references scripture, Deuteronomy 6:16, when he replies with, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" 'But wait', you might say, 'didn't Satan also appeal to the scriptures?' Right you are.

This shouldn't distress us though.

You see, what Jesus quotes with knowledge and understanding, Satan twists with improper application for nefarious purposes. This should reveal for us one of the tools of our enemy so that we can avoid it. It is the scriptures, rightly understood, that are to be our foundation.

His word is our helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit as Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:17. 'How then', you might ask, 'can we properly equip ourselves?' Well to start, read your bibles. Pray to the Lord for wisdom and understanding.

I'm reminded of the description we're given of the Jews in Berea in Acts 17:11, "11Now the Bereans were more noble-minded than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if these teachings were true."

What we see with them is an unwillingness to so easily believe everything they heard from whoever might come along speaking on the scriptures. Even in that day forces were at work in the world distorting the Word of God that many would be led away from truth.

So then, we now have an important consideration for the framework of our worldview if indeed we strive to have a biblical worldview, proper understanding.

Let the one who says that Adam and Eve weren't real and were only literary constructs be avoided. Let the one who says that the great works and miracles of the Old Testament never really happened be avoided. Let the one who says that Paul taught something different from Jesus and is therefore to be disregarded be avoided. Let the one who says that there will be no physical, literal return of Jesus be avoided.

These are only a small sample of the myriad of false teachings propagated by so called bible scholars. I wonder, though, if we are guiltless if we so easily ascribe to beliefs about the world around us that are contrary to the truth provided in God's word.

If I choose not to believe something the bible says, is it because I was misled or might it be that the implications of that truth are shattering to the worldview I do have?

Are we open to changing what we believe to align with scripture or is it more comfortable to change what scripture says to align with what we believe?

Make no mistake, the great majority of us were all raised in a society built on a secular worldview, the influences of which are seen everywhere and served to inundate us all during the most impressionable years of our early lives.

That's how it was when I was young. It is even worse for young people today.

There is discomfort to be expected as those who come to Christ, by the guiding of God's Spirit, assess what they thought they knew, weigh the balances, and begin to reformulate their worldview to align with what God is revealing to them.

It's my prayer that we not draw lines in the sand for the sake of protecting some previously established, familiar, and comfortable belief about the world but rather labor to understand and see everything as Jesus does.

Satan's third temptation can be summed up in a word, idolatry. Starting at verse 8 we read, "8 Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 "All this I will give You," he said, "if You will fall down and worship me."

This too was a recurring problem for Israel in the wilderness. If they weren't trying to revert back to worshipping old gods they knew in Egypt, they were certainly quick to worship the gods of others they encountered.

Idolatry, though, is more nuanced than just worshipping false gods of stone or wood.

Our tendency to idolatry is also part of our fallen nature. Anything that we put before God becomes an idol to us. Our health, our jobs, popularity, money, peace, relationships, you name it. Satan is hoping to

ensnare Jesus with something that has proven to be a tried and true trap for every other human.

Power, authority, security, riches, etc. All this, if Jesus will worship him.

Again, though, our Lord succeeds where we could not by rejecting Satan's temptation.

He references Deuteronomy 6:13 which reads, "13 Fear the LORD your God, serve Him only, and take your oaths in His name." Again, Jesus uses scripture to defend against the Devil, providing additional insight into His worldview.

There is no God but Yahweh. To worship anything else is an offense against the Lord. He is holy and His authority is without limit. He is a jealous God and has promised to repay those who do not love Him with His wrath poured out. Jesus knows all this and for Him it is no small thing. His actions are in alignment with His worldview. He believes these things about God the Father and so he exclaims to Satan,

10 "Away from Me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.'" Having overcome all of Satan's attempts, we then read that "the devil left Him, and angels came and ministered to Him."

This episode in our savior's life is rich in significance and can be studied from many different angles.

My goal today has been to demonstrate for you that 1) Jesus has a worldview, 2) His actions are consistent with that worldview, and 3) that the revealed word of God in His Holy scriptures is the basis of that worldview.

You have a worldview too and I want to encourage each of you to examine it. Do the truths revealed in your bible, rightly understood, make up the framework for how you see and interact with the world? It is my earnest prayer that the Lord lead us all into conformity in this matter so that we can stand better united in our witness toward an unbelieving world.