

WEEK 4

How do you explain the Cosmos?

What makes us human?

How can we know right & wrong?

Cosmology

Discussions of how the universe came into being./how life came into being/purpose, design and intention in all of this.

Two basic answers:

There is a creative intelligence behind creation.

There is nothing but time and chance behind creation.

Many interpretations of Genesis 1-3

God is responsible. God has intentions. God values all of creation.

God can create something out of nothing beyond himself.

On the Naturalist front:

No creator/intelligence/etc.

Avoids any accountability to such.

The difference

God made something out of nothing.

Nothing made something out of nothing.

Psalm 19:1 - The heavens... **Psalm 139:14** I am fearfully and wonderfully made... **Genesis 2:15**

The Lord God ... placed him in ... Eden to care for it ... **Romans 8:19-21** ... in hope that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage of decay into the glorious freedom of God's children.

Conclusions – TAKE AWAY #1

We are God's special creation and therefore have best reasons to treasure and protect our world as fellow worshippers with Creation, as those tasked to care-take this broken Garden, joining Christ in his restoration and looking forward to its complete redemption.

Humanity/Anthropology

What does it mean to be human?

In what ways are humans distinct or different from other living species?

Do human beings have any particular primacy or privilege above creation or other creatures in this world?

How is human personality formed and shaped?

Is a human being a unitary thing - simply a physical organism?

or

Is there such a thing as an independent mind and independent spirit that is not, at its core, physical?

The Christian's answer:

God's image for fellowship

Broken but restorable through Christ's humanity

Independent minds Eternal spirits

Potential to be what God makes us!

Other "spiritual" answers:

Condemned to earn it in this life or the next or the next or the next...

No confidence

Non-"spiritual" answers:

We are 100% physical
Seeming winners of evolutionary bingo.
Governed by a “three-pound computer made out of meat”.
Impractical to live with – few want to embrace a lack of human freedom of mind and will.

The upshot of Christian anthropology:

We cannot, in good Christian conscience, demean any human being.
We offer the only hope for full human potential.

TAKE AWAY #2

Christians have the strongest argument for human dignity, the most realistic explanations of the human condition and the best hope for human fulfillment.

Ethics – Right & Wrong

Is there a way to be good again?/an ultimate source of good?/livable way?
Those who reject true (God-based) morality can be highly moral people!

How about the Golden Rule?

1. Practical Problem

Romans 7 reality: What I want to do I can't and what I don't want to do I can't help doing – what a wretched guy I am!

2. Philosophical Problem

What makes “good” good? You cannot make an “ought from an is”. – David Hume

Alternatives: utilitarianism, might makes right, let culture determine...

Philosophical solution?

The arguably best source for ultimate ethics would be a unitary, personal God that has revealed an ethical standard. Biblical Christianity certainly has an external, ultimate claim to morality and ethics.

Scripture's precepts & principals – beware legalism or forgetfulness

Scripture's person - Always make moral judgments in the light of God's character, his personhood.

Jonathan Edwards' 2 Virtues

Common Virtue – obey to avoid punishment and shame.

True Virtue – rooted in the beauty of God/God is worthy of our worship and devotion, the more we get to know and adore God the more beautiful He becomes and incidentally, the more our lives are just plain right.

TAKE AWAY #3

The most reasonable source of ethical behavior would reasonably spring from a perfect, just, all-knowing and merciful personality who, as an added bonus, has walked in our shoes.

There is a way to be good again!

There is a fountain filled with blood drawn from Emmanuel's vein. And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains. – *William Cowper*