

God on Trial

With the Honorable Judge Culture Presiding

How does culture affect the way I understand Scripture and View God?

- *To read Scripture well, I must read myself and culture well.*

Me-Centeredness

- Bible Study: “*What does this passage mean to you?*” “*To me this passage means...*”
“*To make the individual Christian the starting point for interpretation and the center of the text’s meaning – the Western pattern – is problematic.*”
 - Preferences and Values (Heavily Influenced by Culture & Personal Experience)
 - Pick & Choose from Passages I Perceive “Relevant”

A me-centered approach to the Bible confuses application with meaning. Simply put, I am not the focus of the Bible’s meaning; Christ is. Yes, as God’s image-bearers, we play an important role in the Bible’s story. Christ has come to save us, and much of the Bible’s story explains the wonder of how he has done just that. But if the first question I ask of the biblical text is how I can apply that text to my life, I leapfrog over meaning to applicability. I place myself at the center of the universe – “I may not be sure what God’s plans are, but I am confident that at the center will be me, or my country, or my time in history,” a tendency especially prevalent among American Christians...

- **If I am the Center, then God is Accountable to Me:**
 - My Agreement/Disagreement
 - My Approval/Disapproval
 - My Preferences
 - My Perspective
- **If I am the Center, then I am Judge...and Someone Else is to Blame...God on Trial**

We Don’t Have Time to Discuss Other Major Cultural Influences...

- *Moral Truth is Relative and Evolving*
- *Domination of the Empirical Worldview*
- *Ultimate Pursuit of Wealth*
- *Strong Aversion to any Discomfort or Suffering*

Some Sobering, Fatherly Advice from God

1. The Fear of the LORD is the Beginning of Knowledge

- You are not the Center!

Habakkuk 2:20 “The Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth be silent before Him.”

- It frightens me – sometimes the tone some take...accusation, blame, judging...God

- Wrestle with God – Yes – but do so respectfully, reverently, sincerely, without accusation or blame, or judgment...
- **Proverbs 3:5-7**
Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. Don't be impressed with your own wisdom. Instead, fear the Lord and turn away from evil.
- **Job 40:2,8**
“Do you still want to argue with the Almighty? You are God's critic, but do you have the answers?”
“Will you discredit my justice and condemn me just to prove you are right?”

2. Be Keenly Aware of Your Enemies' Tactics

- The whole premise of the book of Job is that Satan wagers that difficult/tragic circumstances and suffering that one experiences and doesn't understand, will devastate their faith and the allegiance they have towards God.

Job 2:1-5

One day the members of the heavenly court came again to present themselves before the Lord, and the Accuser, Satan, came with them. ²“Where have you come from?” the Lord asked Satan. Satan answered the Lord, “I have been patrolling the earth, watching everything that's going on.” ³Then the Lord asked Satan, “Have you noticed my servant Job? He is the finest man in all the earth. He is blameless—a man of complete integrity. He fears God and stays away from evil. And he has maintained his integrity, even though you urged me to harm him without cause.” ⁴Satan replied to the Lord, “Skin for skin! A man will give up everything he has to save his life. ⁵But reach out and take away his health, and he will surely curse you to your face!”

2 Cor. 4:4

If the Good News we preach is hidden behind a veil, it is hidden only from people who are perishing. ⁴Satan, who is the god of this world, has blinded the minds of those who don't believe. They are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News. They don't understand this message about the glory of Christ, who is the exact likeness of God.

2 Cor. 10:3-5

³We are human, but we don't wage war as humans do. ⁴We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. ⁵We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.

3. To Carry Your Cross is to Walk in a Fallen World of Suffering Modeling the Power of Self-Sacrifice & Overcoming Faith

- The meaning of “the Cross”
- “Lights of the World”...“Salt of the Earth”...
- Instead of Seeing God as part of the Problem...See that You are part of the Cure!

