

The background features a large, abstract circular pattern on the left side, composed of many concentric, slightly blurred blue and white rings, creating a tunnel-like effect. In the center of this pattern is a bright, colorful lens flare with orange, red, and blue hues. The right side of the image is a soft, out-of-focus background with warm, orange and yellow tones, suggesting a sunset or sunrise sky.

Worldview Thinking

Revisiting the Fundamental Orientations of Our Minds and Hearts



Welcome!

We are glad you chose to join us this morning for Part 12 of our series on *Worldview Thinking*. Today we are going to be considering a question which has troubled thousands of people throughout the ages: “How can people be held accountable before God if they have never heard of Him?” The Apostle Paul addresses this question and reveals who God is and how He has disclosed Himself through creation and conscience.



Because of the immeasurable majesty and glory of God and the staggering beauty and immensity of the universe, the most appropriate responses we can have are awesome wonder, humility, and adoring worship.



BUT EVERYONE DOES NOT THINK THIS WAY....

“Every time you make a choice you are turning the central part of you, the part of you that chooses, into something a little different from what it was before. And taking your life as a whole, with all your innumerable choices, all your life long you are slowly turning this central thing either into a heavenly creature or into a hellish creature: either into a creature that is in harmony with God, and with other creatures, and with itself, or else into one that is in a state of war and hatred with God, and with its fellow-creatures, and with itself. To be the one kind of creature is heaven: that is, it is joy and peace and knowledge and power. To be the other means madness, horror, idiocy, rage, impotence, and eternal loneliness. Each of us at each moment is progressing to the one state or the other.”

- C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

The Unbeliever's Worldview

In this series on *Worldview Thinking*, four of our course objectives are (1) to understand the concept of worldview; (2) to understand how worldviews are formed; (3) to “see” your own worldview by digging below the surface; and (4) to learn how to analyze other worldviews. In each of these categories, we have seen how important it is to embrace the truth which God has revealed to us because, ultimately, our worldview provides us with a conceptual framework from which we can then seek to live *coram Deo* for the glory of God. But what about the unbelievers’ worldview? If God’s revelation is so clear, why is it that *everyone* does not believe in the existence of the triune God and salvation through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ?

What God Says About It

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.”

- Romans 1:18-23



How Unbelievers Respond to the Truth

- The Apostle Paul informs us that ungodly and unrighteous people act in certain ways to **extinguish** the truth about God and His laws. To describe their response to the truth, Paul selected the Greek word *katécho*, which can be variously translated as “to hold fast, to hold back, withhold, to check, restrain, control, bridle, to hold down, overpower, oppress, afflict” (Liddell & Scott).
- In the Romans 1 context, Greek scholars Arndt & Gingrich translate *katécho* as “to hold down, to suppress.”
- R.C. Sproul suggests that the word can be translated as “to hold, hold down, suppress, stifle, and hinder.”



Uses of *katécho* in the New Testament

- “And when day came, He departed and went to a lonely place, and the multitudes were searching for Him, and came to Him, and **tried to keep Him** (hinder Him) from going away from them” (Lk. 4:42).
- “But now we have been released from the Law, having died to that **by which we were bound** (held fast), so that we serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter” (Rom. 7:6).
- “But examine everything carefully; **hold fast** to that which is good” (1 Thess. 5:21).
- In Josephus’ *Life*, he mentions that a military escort was unable **to restrain** their wrath” and beat the rioters with cudgels (clubs).



God's Transcendence

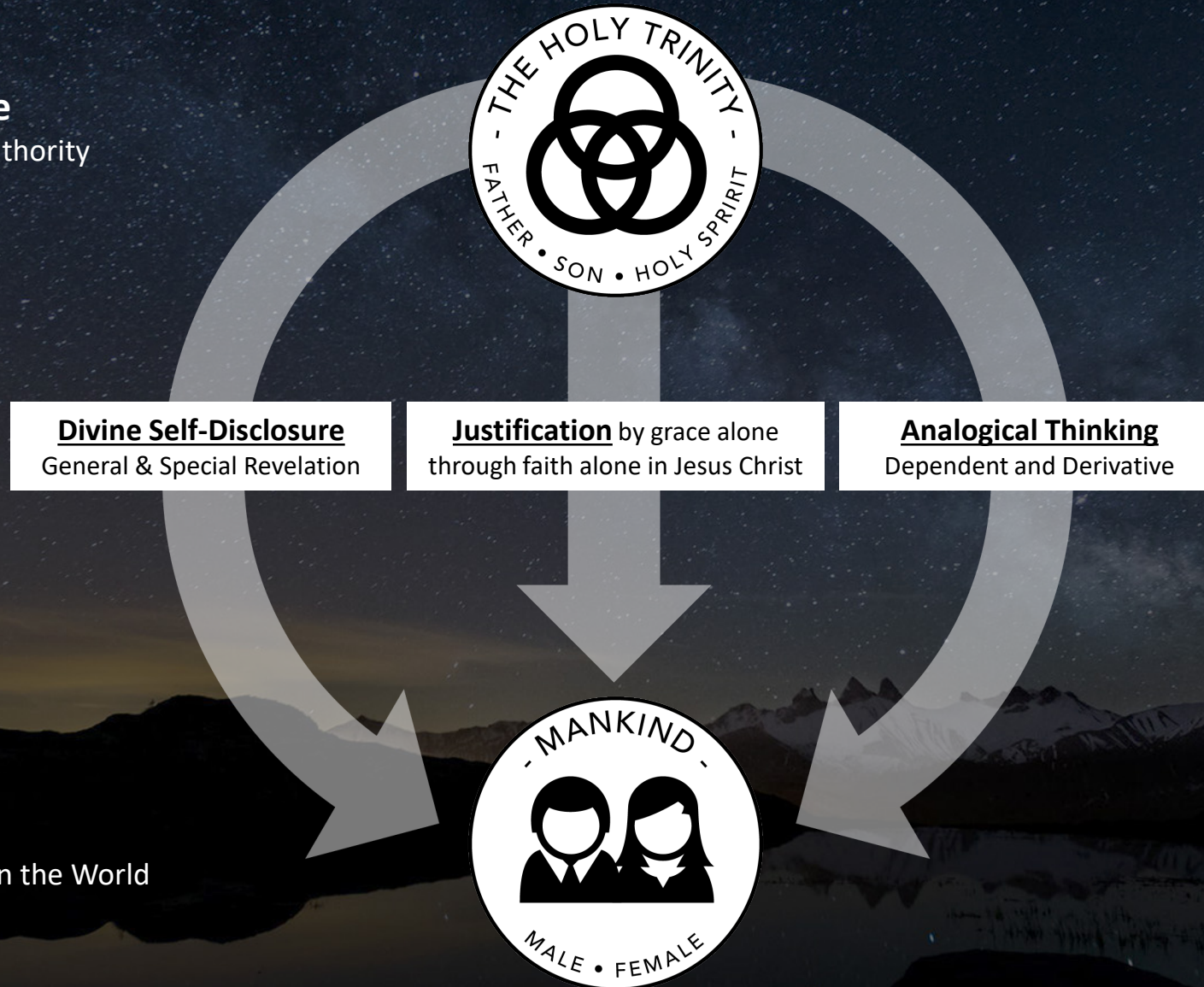
God's Rule: Control and Authority

God's Infinitude

God's Immanence

God's Covenant Presence in the World

Human Finitude



CREATION

FALL

REDEMPTION

CONSUMMATION



God's Transcendence

God's Rule: Control and Authority

God's Infinitude

Hold Down

Suppress

Divine Self-Disclosure

General Revelation & Conscience
God's Eternal Power & Divine Nature

The Wrath of God

Suppression of Truth

Did Not Honor Him As God
Did Not Give Thanks

Stifle

Hinder

Repress

God's Immanence

God's Covenant Presence in the World

Human Finitude



CREATION

FALL

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CONSUMMATION



WORLDVIEW

"A worldview is the fundamental perspective from which one addresses every issue of life."

- James Sire

- Fundamental Orientation of the Heart
- Convictions & Commitments
- Absolute, Objective Truth
- Interpretation of Reality
- Ultimate Beliefs
- Presuppositions
- Values

CREATION

FALL

REDEMPTION

CONSUMMATION



WORLDVIEW

Unbelievers

"A worldview is the fundamental perspective from which one addresses every issue of life."

- James Sire

- Deep Hostility to God
- Assert There Is No Absolute Truth
- Ungodly
- Unrighteous
- Exchange the Truth of God For a Lie
- Substitute the Creature for the Creator
- Given Over to a Depraved Mind
- Filled with All Manner of Wickedness



Richard Dawkins

“The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sado-masochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.”

- Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*



The Attempt at Suppression

- This Greek verb for “suppress” is ***conative***, which suggests ***force or effort*** when it is used in a context which implies *action in progress* (Hendriksen).
- Greek scholar Ernest Burton is helpful in his description of *The Conative Present*: “The Present Indicative is occasionally used of **action attempted, but not accomplished**....A verb which implies *action in progress*, and hence incomplete, naturally suggests the idea of ***attempt***.”
- It is “an act begun but **interrupted**” (A.T. Robertson).
- Since the verb is a present, active participle, **the action of suppressing continues indefinitely**.



What the Romans Passage Teaches

- In Romans 1, Paul is speaking about ungodly and unrighteous people who **continually make every effort to suppress the truth** which God has made evident, or perspicuous = clear, unambiguous, lucid.
- The immediate context makes it clear that “the ungodly do not succeed in holding down or blotting out the truth. They sin against better knowledge” (Hendriksen). In other words, they **attempt** to suppress the truth, but **do not, and can not, succeed**.
- The idea is that the truth asserts itself within nonbelievers, but “they hold it down or suppress it....Undoubtedly there is **a witness of the truth welling up from within** which men suppress by their unrighteousness” (John Murray). Their morality informs their beliefs.



TRUTH

PERSISTENCE



Cornelius Van Til

“Every man, to be a man at all, must already be in contact with the truth. He is so much in contact with the truth that much of his energy is spent in the vain effort to hide this fact from himself. His efforts to hide this fact from himself are bound to be self-frustrative.”



Suppression of the Truth: The Progression

1. God made man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them” (Gen. 1:27). “Adam and Eve lived a moral life in truth, a life consonant with God’s revelation pulsating through the *imago Dei*” (Carl F.H. Henry).
2. Our first parents ate of the forbidden fruit in disobedience to God’s clear commandment. Sin entered the world.
3. “The fall of man was a catastrophic personality shock; it fractured human existence with a devastating fault. Ever since, man’s worship and contemplation of the living God have been broken, his devotion to the divine will shattered. Man’s revolt against God therefore



Suppression of the Truth: The Progression

affects his entire being; he is now motivated by an inordinate will; he no longer loves God nor his neighbor; he devotes human reasoning to the cause of spiritual rebellion. He seeks escape from the claim of God upon his life and blames his fellow man for his own predicament. His revolt against God is at the same time a revolt against truth and the good; his rejection of truth is a rejection of God and the good, his defection from the good a repudiation of God and the truth” (Henry).

4. The consequences of the Fall were severe for man, but the divine image in man was not totally shattered.



Suppression of the Truth: The Progression

5. Man (male and female) lost his moral integrity, his reason was tainted (the *noetic effects* of sin), he became motivated by an inordinate will, he no longer loved God nor his neighbor, he sought to escape from the claim of God upon his life, and he revolted against the truth and the good.
6. In His mercy, God revealed Himself to all people through creation (general revelation) and conscience (Rom. 1:19-20). Every human, therefore, possesses the knowledge of God, and **no one can escape knowing Him**. “No rational creature can escape this witness – everywhere and all the time” (Van Til). John Calvin noted that “man has an inescapable sense of deity.” There is no escape from God.



Suppression of the Truth: The Progression

7. Every person's mind is derivative and is naturally in contact with God's revelation (Van Til).
8. God has written His law on everyone's heart (Jer. 31:33). "Every man is made in the image of God and has impressed upon him the law of God" (Van Til).
9. Even so, Paul says that "even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks" (Rom. 1:21). Base ingratitude begins the process of turning their hearts away from the triune God.
10. The unregenerate man is now in warfare against God, is hostile to Him, and hates Him (R.J. Rushdoony).



Suppression of the Truth: The Progression

11. In full rebellion, they worship the creature rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:23) and pursue religious lawlessness (Rom 1:18-32).
12. They continue (present active participle) to suppress, hold down, and repress the truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18).
13. God gives them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity (vs. 24).
14. God gives them over to degrading passions (vs. 26).
15. God gives them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper (vs. 28).
16. They are now incapable of understanding and accepting the truth of Christianity (Van Til). Think Bunyan's "Man in the Cage."



Three Societal Consequences of Suppressing the Truth

- “Those who are hostile to God and His law will be sympathetic and friendly towards criminals. They feel a common bond uniting them in hatred for law.”
- “Sympathy for the criminal means hostility to God and His people....The punishment in humanistic society is progressively directed against the innocent and the law-abiding.”
- Men and societies in revolt against God’s authority find a common ground in their hostility to law and moral order. “Where there is no submission to the law of God, there is progressive resistance, defiance, and violation thereof.”

- Rousas J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law*

God's Judgment

- God is patient: “the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark...” (1 Pt. 3:20).
- “But he who fails to find me injures himself; all who hate me love death” (Prov. 8:36).
- “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds, there is none who does good” (Ps. 14:1; cf. 53:1).
- “But my people did not listen to my voice; Israel would not submit to me. So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels” (Ps. 81:12).



God's Judgment

- “Mercy unrequited produces wrath. Divine patience without favorable response on the part of man results in the outpouring of divine indignation....At the proper time – known only to God – impenitent sinners are by that wrath allowed to be swept away by their own sins into the pit of their vile passions. By a positive action of God’s will, they are finally abandoned” (Henriksen).
- “For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace” (Rom. 8:5-6).



C.S. Lewis

“There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, ‘Thy will be done,’ and those to whom God says, in the end, ‘*Thy* will be done.’ All that are in Hell, choose it. Without that self-choice there could be no Hell. No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it. Those who seek find. To those who knock it is opened.”