

## **Christian Education**

# **“The Eyes of the Lord”: The Biblical Worldview**

Lesson #4 for October 24, 2020

Scriptures: Proverbs 15:3; Job 12:7-10; Ephesians 6:12; Revelation 20:5-6; John 1:1-14; Mark 12:29-31.

1. How do you know if what you think is true, is really true? There are many strange ideas floating around in our world today. Is it true that the things we believe about our world are actual facts?
2. For at least 2000 years, it was believed that our world was the center of the universe! Some people even thought that our world was flat! Today, thousands of the best educated humans in the world believe that man evolved from simple, one-celled organisms. Why do they believe such things?
3. Over time, each of us develops a paradigm or worldview. This paradigm is our mind’s way of trying to fit all our known facts together into a consistent picture. If some idea comes along that we cannot fit into our paradigm, our minds will often just reject it. Think of the disciples after spending years with Jesus as they are walking up from Jericho to Jerusalem one week before Jesus was tried, beaten, and crucified. Jesus called them aside and said:

**Luke 18:31-34:** <sup>31</sup> Jesus took the twelve disciples aside and said to them, “Listen! We are going to Jerusalem where everything the prophets wrote about the Son of Man will come true. <sup>32</sup>He will be handed over to the Gentiles, who will mock him, insult him, and spit on him. <sup>33</sup>They will whip him and kill him, but three days later he will rise to life.”

<sup>34</sup> **But the disciples did not understand any of these things; the meaning of the words was hidden from them, and they did not know what Jesus was talking about.**—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation\** (2nd ed., Luke 18:31–34). New York: American Bible Society.<sup>†</sup>

4. There is an Oxford University professor who has theorized that our world is nothing more than a bunch of digital creations, controlled by a race of aliens with superpowerful computers somewhere else in the universe! Does that sound right to you?
5. There are two very contradictory explanations of our world’s existence. One view holds that everything we see and are is a purely material, purely natural result of chemical and biological forces without any guidance. Democritus was a Greek philosopher who lived between 460 and 370 B.C. He was known as *the laughing philosopher*. About 2500 years ago, he said in his Diogenes Laërtius, *Democritus*, volume IX, 44: “Atoms and the vacuum were the beginning of the universe; and that everything else existed only in opinion.”—<http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Democritus> [Retrieved on August 25, 2020].
6. Christians have a better worldview. It is broader, deeper, and has many more aspects to it than that empty space that Democritus talked about. So, what does the Bible tell us about our origins?

**Psalms 53:1:** Fools say to themselves,  
“There is no God.”  
They are all corrupt,  
and they have done terrible things;

there is no one who does what is right.—*Good News Bible*.\*

**Proverbs 15:3:** The LORD sees what happens everywhere; he is watching us, whether we do good or evil.—*Good News Bible*.\*

**John 3:16:** For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life.—*Good News Bible*.\*

**Isaiah 45:21:** “Come and present your case in court;  
let the defendants consult one another.

**Who predicted long ago what would happen?**

**Was it not I, the LORD, the God who saves his people?**

**There is no other god.**”—*Good News Bible*.\*†

7. But, there is more to creation than just the idea that God created us. What kind of a God is He? Is it really true that a personal God loves us and is willing to interact with us? Is He the God who gave the laws that we should live by?
8. The great controversy is all about what kind of person God is. Satan realizes that if people know the truth about God, he, Satan, will lose. Therefore, Satan is doing everything he can to misrepresent God. Will we fall for his lies?

The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. **To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan.** This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, “with healing in His wings.” Malachi 4:2.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Age*\* 22.1.†

9. In actual fact, atheistic worldviews are very narrow and limited. The biblical worldview is all about reality, and there is a whole universe full of it.
10. Many years ago Godfried Wilhelm Leibnitz asked the question: “Why is there something instead of nothing?” And how should Christians answer that question? Read Genesis 1:1; John 1:1-4; Exodus 20:8-11; Revelation 14:6-7; and Job 12:7-10.
11. These passages are just a few samples of what the Bible says about God. Notice, very interestingly, that the Bible does not engage in long arguments to explain God's existence; it just assumes it.

**Exodus 3:13-14:** <sup>13</sup> But Moses replied, “When I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your ancestors sent me to you,’ they will ask me, ‘What is his name?’ So what can I tell them?”

<sup>14</sup> God said, “I am who I am. This is what you must say to them: ‘The one who is called I AM has sent me to you.’ ”—*Good News Bible*.\*

12. So, why do you think in that encounter with Moses that God called Himself, “I am who I am”? Sometimes, that expression is translated, “The Eternal One.” But, without an understanding of God as our Creator, what would we do with our understanding of the atonement, the law,

the cross, even resurrection and the second coming? Creation is also a very central part of Adventist beliefs.

13. God asks us to spend one-seventh of our lives, i.e., one day every week, to remember the seven-day creation week and all that it implies. He does not make that kind of demand for any other teaching. Does God think that was and is an important teaching?
14. Think of how much difference a biblical worldview makes to our thinking. For example, take the simple rainbow. Atheistic materialists see raindrops and sunlight being refracted; that is all. But, Christians know about the story of the flood, and they see evidences for God's promise.

**Genesis 9:13-16:** <sup>13</sup> “I am putting my bow in the clouds. It will be the sign of my covenant with the world. <sup>14</sup>Whenever I cover the sky with clouds and the rainbow appears, <sup>15</sup>I will remember my promise to you and to all the animals that a flood will never again destroy all living beings. <sup>16</sup>When the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between me and all living beings on earth.”—*Good News Bible*.\*

How great the condescension of God and His compassion for His erring creatures in thus placing the beautiful rainbow in the clouds as a token of His covenant with men!... It was God's purpose that as the children of after generations should ask the meaning of the glorious arch which spans the heavens, their parents should repeat the story of the Flood, and tell them that the Most High had bended the bow and placed it in the clouds as an assurance that the waters should never again overflow the earth.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*\* 106.2.

15. So, what kind of an impact does it have on our day-by-day thinking to have a biblical worldview?

**Ephesians 6:12:** For we are not fighting against human beings but against the wicked spiritual forces in the heavenly world, the rulers, authorities, and cosmic powers of this dark age.—*Good News Bible*.\*

**Mark 13:7:** “And don't be troubled when you hear the noise of battles close by and news of battles far away. Such things must happen, but they do not mean that the end has come.”—*Good News Bible*.\*

**Romans 5:8:** But God has shown us how much he loves us—it was while we were still sinners that Christ died for us!—*Good News Bible*.\*

**Romans 8:28:** We know that in all things God works for good with those who love him, those whom he has called according to his purpose.—*Good News Bible*.\*

**Ecclesiastes 9:5:** Yes, the living know they are going to die, but the dead know nothing. They have no further reward; they are completely forgotten.—*Good News Bible*.\*

**Revelation 20:5-6:** <sup>5</sup>(The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were over.) This is the first raising of the dead. <sup>6</sup>Happy and greatly blessed are those who are included in this first raising of the dead. The second death has no power over them; they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and they will rule with him for a thousand years.—*Good News Bible*.\*

16. Think of the reasons why our biblical worldview is very important to us. How many things would we know nothing about if we did not have the Bible? They include: (1) Creation, (2) Heaven, (3) God, (4) The plan of salvation, (5) The second coming of Christ, and (6) The third

coming of Christ, just to mention a few. More than that, there are many teachings in the Bible that are in direct contradiction with current thinking in our world: (1) Sabbath versus Sunday, (2) Creation versus evolution, (3) The nature of man (the state of the dead), and (4) God's judgment versus Satan's lies.

17. But, we need to recognize that all of Scripture is tied together. Our beliefs about creation, especially as presented in the New Testament, are coupled with the doctrine of redemption. Incredible as it may seem, we realize from the Bible that the One who created us actually came down, lived as a Human Being, and died for us. But, that same Individual rose from the dead by His own power, returned to heaven, and will be our Judge in the last day.

**Revelation 14:6-7:** Then I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, “Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.”—*The New King James Version*.\* (1982). (Revelation 14:6–7). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

18. If we get to know the truth about God's character and His love, is it any surprise that we would want to worship Him?
19. And as incredible as that first coming was and is important in our understanding of God, there was no reason for Christ to come the first time if He is not coming back!
20. But, as we know, the law of God is being attacked from every side.

Years ago, in France, the nation was debating the question of capital punishment: Should it be abolished? Advocates for its abolishment contacted a famous French writer and philosopher named Michel Foucault and asked him to pen an editorial on their behalf. What he did, however, was advocate, not for abolishing just the death penalty—but for abolishing the whole prison system entirely and letting all the prisoners go free.

Why? Because for Michel Foucault all systems of morality were merely human constructs, human ideas put in place by those in power in order to control the masses. Hence, these moral codes had no real legitimacy.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Thursday, October 22.

21. In light of that, what could happen to our world if everyone as individuals or even as nations decided to do whatever they wanted to do? Consider the following verses.

**Deuteronomy 12:8:** “When that time comes, you must not do as you have been doing. Until now you have all been worshipping as you please.”—*Good News Bible*.\*

**Judges 17:6:** There was no king in Israel at that time; all the people did just as they pleased.—*Good News Bible*.\*

**Judges 21:25:** There was no king in Israel at that time. All the people did just as they pleased.—*Good News Bible*.\*

**Proverbs 12:15:** Stupid people always think they are right. Wise people listen to advice.—*Good News Bible*.\*

22. So, how should we regard God's law? Is it a restriction on our freedom? What does it say to us about moral conduct in our own lives?

**Deuteronomy 6:5:** “Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.”—*Good News Bible*.\*

**Mark 12:29-31:** <sup>29</sup> Jesus replied, “The most important one is this: ‘Listen, Israel! The Lord our God is the only Lord. <sup>30</sup>Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ <sup>31</sup>The second most important commandment is this: ‘Love your neighbour as you love yourself.’ There is no other commandment more important than these two.”—*Good News Bible*.\*

**Revelation 14:12:** This calls for endurance on the part of God’s people, those who obey God’s commandments and are faithful to Jesus.—*Good News Bible*.\*

23. So, God has given us His law; it gives us directions about how we should relate to Him.

**Romans 3:20:** For no one is put right in God’s sight by doing what the Law requires; what the Law does is to make people know that they have sinned.—*Good News Bible*.\*†

24. So, Seventh-day Adventist education must be based on our understanding of God’s law. In fact, Ellen White talked about “the perpetuity of the law” which, of course, includes the teaching about the Sabbath. And what happens to people when they reject God’s law?

In rejecting the truth, men reject its Author. In trampling upon the law of God, they deny the authority of the Law-giver. **It is as easy to make an idol of false doctrines and theories as to fashion an idol of wood or stone. By misrepresenting the attributes of God, Satan leads men to conceive of Him in a false character. With many, a philosophical idol is enthroned in the place of Jehovah; while the living God, as He is revealed in His word, in Christ, and in the works of creation, is worshiped by but few.** Thousands deify nature while they deny the God of nature. Though in a different form, **idolatry exists in the Christian world today as verily as it existed among ancient Israel in the days of Elijah.** The god [Note that the electronic version incorrectly says *God* with a capital letter.] of many professedly wise men, of philosophers, poets, politicians, journalists—the god [Note that the electronic version again incorrectly says *God* with a capital letter.] of polished fashionable circles, of many colleges and universities, even of some theological institutions—is little better than Baal, the sun-god of Phoenicia.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* 583.1.††

**Multitudes have a wrong conception of God and His attributes, and are as truly serving a false god as were the worshipers of Baal.** Many even of those who claim to be Christians have allied themselves with influences that are unalterably opposed to God and [178] His truth. Thus they are led to turn away from the divine and to exalt the human.—Ellen G. White, *Prophets and Kings*\* 177.1-178.0.†

But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was **to vindicate the character of God before the universe.** To this result of His great sacrifice—its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man—the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: “Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto [69] Me.” John 12:31, 32. **The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but**

**before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin.**—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*\* 68.2-69.0.<sup>†</sup>

**The true object of education is to restore the image of God in the soul.**—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*\* 595.2.<sup>†</sup>

25. So, look at Seventh-day Adventist education. Are we following God's guidelines by making our classes in science, history, morality, even cultural ideas, fully based on our biblical worldview? What are our young people being taught today?
26. Can you think of any example when an entire educational systems has turned out to be very destructive by departing from God's law? Think of the French Revolution, Naziism and the Holocaust, as well as communism and the millions who died under Stalin and Lenin. Think also of the evolutionary theory. In some places they want to do away with studying history!
27. Wouldn't it be all right if we could get every person just to do what s/he believes is right according to his own conscience? A philosopher from the 18th-century once wrote:

“O conscience! Conscience! Thou divine instinct, thou certain guide of an ignorant and confined, though intelligent and free being—thou infallible judge of good and evil, who makes man to resemble the Deity.” What's right, or wrong, with that position?—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Friday, October 23.

28. **Are all men's and women's consciences safe guides?** Are there people walking our streets even in what are regarded as civilized nations who believe that it is all right to kill others and take what belongs to them?
29. Every day as you go about your business, do you often think about your paradigm or worldview? Does your worldview really matter? A survivor of Buchenwald and Auschwitz, the Nazi extermination camps which were dedicated to eliminating Jews, political dissidents, gypsies, and other “undesirables,” said these words.

“If we present a man with a concept of man which is not true, we may well corrupt him. . . . I became acquainted with the last stage of that corruption in my second concentration camp, Auschwitz. The gas chambers of Auschwitz were the ultimate consequence of the theory that man is nothing but the product of heredity and environment—or, as the Nazi liked to say, of ‘Blood and Soil.’ I am absolutely convinced that the gas chambers of Auschwitz, Treblinka, and Maidanek were ultimately prepared not in some Ministry [department] or other in Berlin, but rather at the desks and in the lecture halls of nihilistic scientists and philosophers.”—Viktor Frankl, *The Doctor and the Soul: From Psychotherapy to Logotherapy* (New York: Random House, 1986), p. xxvii.—[as quoted in *Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 52-53 including the word in brackets].<sup>‡§</sup>

30. Could something like the Holocaust ever happen again?

The dignitaries of church and state will unite to bribe, persuade, or compel all classes to honor the Sunday. The lack of divine authority will be supplied by oppressive enactments. Political corruption is destroying love of justice and regard for truth; and even in free America, rulers and legislators, in order to secure public favor, will yield to the popular demand for a law enforcing Sunday observance. Liberty of conscience, which has cost so great a sacrifice, will no longer be respected. In the soon-coming conflict we shall see exemplified the prophet's words: “The dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war

with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 12:17.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*\* 592.3.

**Conscientious obedience to the word of God will be treated as rebellion.**

Blinded by Satan, the parent will exercise harshness and severity toward the believing child; the master or mistress will oppress the commandment-keeping servant. Affection will be alienated; children will be disinherited and driven from home. The words of Paul will be literally fulfilled: “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” 2 Timothy 3:12. As the defenders of truth refuse to honor the Sunday-sabbath, some of them will be thrust into prison, some will be exiled, some will be treated as slaves. To human wisdom all this now seems impossible; but as the restraining Spirit of God shall be withdrawn from men, and they shall be under the control of Satan, who hates the divine precepts, there will be strange developments. The heart can be very cruel when God’s fear and love are removed.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*\* 608.1.†

Persecution in its varied forms is the development of a principle which will exist as long as Satan exists and Christianity has vital power. No man can serve God without enlisting against himself the opposition of the hosts of darkness. Evil angels will assail him, alarmed that his influence is taking the prey from their hands. Evil men, rebuked by his example, will unite with them in seeking to separate him from God by alluring temptations. When these do not succeed, then a compelling power is employed to force the conscience.—Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*\* 610.2.

This is why worldviews matter. They can shape a reality in which light becomes darkness, and darkness light, where evil is good, and good is evil (*Isa. 5:20*). It is intellectually naïve and narrow-minded to explain atrocities simply by calling the perpetrators “monsters” or some other dehumanizing epithet without getting to the core of why people do what they do. Many “monsters” of history showed love to their wives and children, cracked jokes with friends, bounced their giggling grandchildren on their knees, and proceeded to get up each morning to perform the day’s atrocities. This is why worldviews matter. And this is why the answer to the psalmist’s question, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him?” (*Ps. 8:4*) must always begin with “in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (*Gen. 1:27*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 53.§

31. Is there any other religious or philosophical system that places a higher premium on human life than Christianity does? If we truly believe that we are all sons and daughters of God, could we have any higher worldview than that?
32. There was once a famous debate between a Christian apologist Greg Bahnsen and an atheist Gordon Stein, who said:

Someone asked from the floor why “Hitler’s Germany” was wrong. Stein, representing the atheist position, could come up with no better answer than to say that what Hitler did went against Western civilization’s moral “consensus.” Basically, it was wrong because Western civilization had previously decided that behaviors of that nature (for example, genocide) were wrong. Within this moral worldview, if the decision had gone the opposite direction for some reason, then all that was done by the Nazis could just have easily been deemed moral. Remember, Gordon Stein is not some Nazi propagandist in the 1930s. He is a *Jewish-American* scholar having a debate at the University of California,

33. Notice carefully that Stein's view which was based on atheism and the Nazi view based on the superiority of certain races does not recognize the intrinsic value inherent in every human being.
34. Most people would admit that they subscribe to some kind of law-keeping. But, the moral law given to us by God is not the same as other laws.
35. In light of what we have studied here, is it not essential that we pass along to our children the necessity of strict adherence to God's law? This is not to scare them into obedience since that never works anyway. Any foolish tyrant can make up some law and try to force those under him—even on pain of death—to do what he wants them to do. Look at communist regimes today. But, God's law inherently has many blessings connected to it.

Dr. Joel Hoffman brings out a rarely mentioned difference between the Ten Commandments and other legal codes. He offers an illustration of a conniving teenager who reflects on securing his financial future by marrying a wealthy older woman, killing her, and facing seven to twelve years of prison. He weighs the consequences; he would get out of prison at about thirty years old but would be wealthy for the rest of his life. He decides it's worth it. Hoffman then says that there is nothing in the entire body of American law that says you are not entitled to make that calculus. Nowhere does American law state that if you are willing to do the time, you still shouldn't do the crime.

This is where the Ten Commandments stand out in contrast, precisely because they don't state specific consequences for disobedience. They are *moral* law, not *legal* law. Of course, later these commandments also make up the legal code of the nation of Israel. But the commandments tell us what to do and what not to do, not in order to avoid certain specific consequences but because God is communicating what is morally right and what is morally wrong, something American law (America is likely representative of other countries in this respect) doesn't do. Perhaps this also is why the Ten Commandments are not introduced as "commandments" (*mitsvot*), but instead as "words" (*debarim*) (*Exod. 20:1*). (See Joel M. Hoffman, "Interpreting Language," n.p. [cited 22 Dec. 2018]. Online: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ek\\_q0qvfbqE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ek_q0qvfbqE).)—[as quoted in *Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 54-55 including the portion in brackets].<sup>†§</sup>

36. So, what should we conclude? There are at least two reasons why the Christian worldview is higher than any other worldview:
  - a. We are creatures who are sons and daughters of God. Therefore, we should follow His guidance and not someone else's.
  - b. We have not only been created by God but also He has a plan to redeem us and restore us to Edenic living, first in heaven, then, back on this earth. Is that not a good enough reason to follow His plan for our lives?

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