

Read Through the Bible This Year and Properly Interpret It

Sat, 1/8 8:53AM • 54:00

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

christian worldview, bible, scripture, read, believer, god, canada, book, gospel, written, soundbite, interpreting, paul, people, christian, original languages, hermeneutic, translation, website, life

SPEAKERS

Sponsor: Samaritan Ministries, Host: David Wheaton, Program Director, Audio Sound bite: The Pilgrims, Paul Twiss

Host: David Wheaton

Read Through The Bible This Year And Properly Understand It.

That is the topic we'll discuss today, right here on The Christian Worldview Radio Program, where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host, and our website is TheChristianWorldview.org.

Just before we begin today, I just want to thank so many of you for your encouragement and support at the end of 2021. The letters, the donations, the resource purchases, you're keeping us busy, and you're keeping us very encouraged. Also of special note, I want to thank the letters we get from prisoners. We want to thank you for listening to this program and writing to us. We wish we could do a better job responding. And hopefully we can get some part time help to be able to do that. But just know in the meantime that we read and appreciate every one of your letters and we consider you a special part of this ministry.

Also a thank you to Samaritan Ministries for continuing to sponsor the ministry of The Christian Worldview. They provide a biblical solution to healthcare and we would encourage you to look into them if you have a need for an alternative to mainstream health care. Just go to our website, TheChristianWorldview.org.

Right after the apostle Paul wrote about the Armor of God for the believer in Ephesians, chapter six, he ended that portion by writing this; "with all prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit. And with this in view be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints. And pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness, the mystery of the gospel, for which I'm an ambassador in chains. That in proclaiming it, [the gospel] I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak". For every believer, this needs to be our objective this year. We need to have a clear and bold proclamation of biblical truth and the Gospel. And by God's grace, The Christian Worldview is going to stand firm.

The truth of God's Word is the only thing that changes people and by extent it changes their family, and even society as well. There's no political solution to what is going on in the world. A conservative president will only be a respite for a short time. The only solution is a spiritual one. When unbelievers are saved, when believers are sanctified, set apart for God's use and God enacts revival in a nation. God did this many times in the nation of Israel. When they turned away from Him, He brought them back. And he's done it other times throughout history, and He can certainly do it again now. So let's pray that God would move his Holy Spirit in the hearts of people, and that we would speak the truth and engage our deeds to honor him.

Now to the preview for today's program: many Christians begin a new year with the goal of reading through the entire Bible. It is an excellent and attainable endeavor, one that will help the believer better understand God and His purposes. Since all scripture is inspired by God, according to II Timothy 3:16, the one who reads through the Bible is hearing directly from God on a daily basis. That being said, the Bible is a big book written by 40 authors on three continents in three languages, Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic, over a span of 1500 years.

Grasping how the history, culture, narratives, poetry, and prophecy of the Old Testament form one cohesive revelation with the Gospels, history, culture, letters and prophecy of the New Testament, that can be challenging. This is why we have asked Paul Twiss, pastor and instructor of Bible Exposition at the Masters Seminary to join us on The Christian Worldview. Paul has created a handful of very helpful short videos entitled, Everyday Theologian, to help Christians accurately interpret the various parts of Scripture. We have those videos linked on TheChristianWorldview.org.

We're also going to discuss the recent call for pastors to preach on biblical sexual morality on Sunday, January 16. That's next weekend. In light of the new law in Canada, that will criminalize those who preach or speak about God's clear design for sex and gender. So let's jump right in with Paul Twiss, Instructor of Bible Exposition at the Masters Seminary in California.

Host: David Wheaton

Paul, it's great to have you on the program for the first time today. I often ask first time guests, tell us about your background, how and why you came to saving faith in Jesus Christ. And I was interested to read just from your bio that it says you did not grow up in a Christian home, the Lord saved you through the influence of Christian roommates at university. And then you served seven years with the British Royal Navy. And you began to lead a Bible study during that time after you were saved. So tell us about your background and how and why you came to saving faith in Christ.

Paul Twiss

It's great to be with you this morning, David. You're right, I did not grow up in a Christian home. I had virtually zero gospel influence in my life until around about the age of 21. I left home to go to university. And it was while I was studying at university that in the Lord's providence, I ended up living in a house with about six other guys and two of those were believers. And it was really through their sharing of the gospel to me, their faithfulness to do that, that I came to discover for the first time what the claims of Christianity are and to begin to explore those claims. And I would say after about a year of searching, of reading the Bible with those two believers, starting to go to church and learn more, that the Lord put an end to my resistance and saved me.

Now, as you said, the next step was me in the Royal Navy. I'd already signed up, I was committed. I signed up as an unbeliever. And then the Lord saved me at university. And now I was headed into the military and really no way out. And I just trusted the Lord in that. I figured he knew this would be the case. So I went into the Navy as a one year old Christian. My first year of service was on top of the water on an aircraft carrier. And then they didn't have enough volunteers that year for the submarine service. So I was drafted under the water and the next six years, I served as an engineer on a submarine and we would go away for months at a time under the water and often I was the only believer on board.

Something that the Lord was doing in my heart at that time, I led church services on board the submarine, being the only believer. I really didn't know what I was doing. But I was trying to just share the gospel with the other guys on that submarine. And I really enjoyed it. It was something that I felt I could do as a way of honoring the Lord in that dark environment. And so I began to explore the possibility of moving towards vocational ministry. I think by that stage I knew that I wasn't going to be in the Navy for my whole career, that at some point, I would leave. And I shared with my pastor back home that I'd been leading these church services and was beginning to think about the possibility of maybe moving towards vocational ministry. And that is kind of the short story of how I got to where I am today.

Host: David Wheaton

Let me just follow up with a question because being in the military, whether the British military, I'm assuming it's probably fairly similar to the American military, it's a pretty rough environment, a lot of ungodliness, a lot of push back against believers and so forth. And you went to Cambridge. You got a master's degree in mechanical engineering, went into as a nuclear engineering in the British submarine service, you know, being even that, just being underwater for I don't know, four, six months at a time, that's an unusual situation and being so intimately quartered with others. You said there was not one other believer on board. I think it would be helpful for you to explain that...and as a new Christian, by the way, how you were able to navigate just the cultural pressure, the resistance to your beliefs. I'm sure there was that, because it might be helpful to someone listening today, who's maybe in the military, maybe in prison, maybe going off to college and maybe they grew up in a Christian home, or maybe they truly are a believer, but they're just all alone. Give some advice for how you navigated that.

Paul Twiss

It's a difficult thing to be a Christian without any fellowship. That was one thing that I learned quite quickly in the submarine service when I was the only believer on board. It's very hard to be flourishing in your relationship with the Lord when there's no one around you that believes the same things that you do. And so one thing I always say to folks now in hindsight, with experience of looking back on that time, I just encourage people, you got to be in a local church, and you got to be fully committed and be present with other believers because that is one of the primary means that the Lord uses to keep up us on the straight and narrow is fellowship with the saints. I didn't have that on the submarine and we would be away for three to four months at a time. So I knew that my Bible reading and prayer was absolutely crucial.

I mean, it's always important in the Christian life, but I tried to make it as best I could have a regular practice everyday to be in the Word and in prayer, because I was lacking that fellowship aspect. And then as it relates to interactions with other people, I would just say it's important to state up front who you are and what you believe. The advice given to me when I went into the military was, as early as

you can make it known that you're a believer, don't hold it back, don't hide it. And that serves really two purposes. One, if you don't tell people early on, you know, I'm a Christian, this is what I believe and they were to find out months down the road, Oh, this guy's a believer, their conclusion is going to be well, his faith can't be that important to him because we've only found out now. It's a testimony to the power of the gospel and the significance of Christ in your life when you stand up on day one, as it were, and say, I'm a Christian.

And then secondly, it actually holds you accountable. You've made it known that this is who you are. And now I guarantee people are watching you, they're listening to what you say. And there's a level of accountability as it were built into that, in terms of how you conduct yourself. People know what to expect to some degree from a Christian. And it's important to just make it plain. You just say, This is who I am and this is what I believe.

Host: David Wheaton

That's very good advice. And I was just thinking, it may lessen some of the peer pressure. They may not think that "Oh, Paul's not going to go along with us to do the things that we want to do", so that may help in that regard, too. So thanks for explaining. I think it'd be helpful to people in a similar situation where they feel all alone in a godless environment.

[Paul Twiss is with us today on The Christian Worldview. He is an instructor of Bible Exposition at the Masters Seminary.] So there was a big transition there in your life, going from military service into seminary and beyond. And then now, teaching at a seminary. And this is why we wanted you on the program, you do a lot of preaching as well. You have, I think it's an eight or nine episode video series, on the grace media app and we have this linked at our website TheChristianWorldview.org. We just highly recommend listeners go there to watch these. They're just short sessions. They're about 9 to 15 minutes in length, on different aspects of interpreting the Bible, from basic hermeneutics interpretation to the storyline of Scripture, starting in the first five books, the Pentateuch, to the history of Israel, the prophets, the New Testament, how to deal with the different genres of Scripture, the narrative, the prophets, epistles, that kind of thing. They're all linked there.

We're not going to be able to cover the whole thing today. But Christians at this time of year, early in the year, are starting to get onto Bible reading plans. And maybe they've committed to read through the Bible an entire year. And we've just been in the middle of a series on the Bible and why it's the foundation for our worldview. And so we thought it'd be really good to have you on to explain just a few things up front to help Christians as they're starting to read through the Bible this year, so they can understand it, they can come to correct interpretations of it, so they don't go down the wrong roads.

So I pulled a couple of soundbites from especially one of your early episodes on basic hermeneutics. It's episode two, actually, where you talk about the Bible, the inspiration of the Bible is inspired by God. It's God breathed, therefore, it's inerrant, therefore it's sufficient, and therefore it's authoritative, those four points. So let me play this soundbite and then follow up with a question for you.

Sound bite: Paul Twiss

"God has given us in this book all that we need to live a life that honors Him. That of course begins with the gospel. We find in this book God's message of salvation by which we are redeemed and brought into a right relationship with Him. And thereafter, we find in this book, all that we need to live a life that honors Him. The Bible is sufficient.

Now, some years ago, I was thinking with my kids about how to teach them these truths, and we actually came up with a song. I'm not going to sing it to you now, but I'll tell you the words. We sang together: 'The Bible is inspired, therefore it is inerrant, therefore it is sufficient and it is authoritative'. The other thing I tried to labor is the connection between each truth because they're really really important. 'The Bible is inspired... therefore it is inerrant... therefore it is sufficient... and it is authoritative'. They all follow on from the previous".

Program Director

The Christian Worldview with David Wheaton returns in just a moment.

Resource Offer: The Pilgrims

The original stalwart souls who created a colony in the howling New England winter, just so they can worship according to the dictates of conscience, had far more influence on world history than they could have ever imagined.

You see the seeds of liberty, both religious liberty and civil liberty, the idea of self government and rule from within, all these are within that body of Pilgrims.

The preceding is from The Pilgrims, a 57 minute documentary of the inspiring story and faith of these Christians who greatly impacted our nation. You can order the DVD for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. Go to TheChristianWorldview.org, or call 1-888-646-2233, or write to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. That's 1-888-646-2233 or TheChristianWorldview.org.

Host: David Wheaton

David Wheaton here, volunteer host of The Christian Worldview Radio Program. Listeners are often surprised to learn that we as a ministry pay for airtime on the radio station, website, or app on which you hear the program. The primary way this expense is recouped is through listeners like you donating to the ministry or becoming a monthly partner. Our aim is to have each broadcast outlet fully supported by the listeners to that outlet. If you are a regular listener, we will be grateful if you made a donation or became a monthly partner of any amount. To do so go to TheChristianWorldview.org and click on Donate. You can also call 1-888-646-2233. That's 1-888-646-2233 or TheChristianWorldview.org. And be sure to specify on which station, website, or app you listen as that helps us decide whether to continue on a given outlet. Thank you for your support.

Program Director

Welcome back to The Christian Worldview. Be sure to visit our website, TheChristianWorldview.org where you can subscribe to our free weekly email and annual print newsletter, order resources for adults and children, and support the ministry. Now back to today's program with host, David Wheaton.

Host: David Wheaton

I think, Paul, most Christians would hear that and would agree that, especially conservative Christians would say, yep, we believe in the inspiration of Scripture, point one. Yes, therefore it's inerrant, without error, God inspired and therefore it's without error, point two. Point 3 its sufficient and then point four authoritative. That's where I think we can get a little wobbly. The Bible is sufficient for all matters of life and faith and it's authoritative over every area of our life? I think that's where the pads can diverge a little bit. So speak more, Paul, as to reading and interpreting the Bible, within the structure of those four points you just made.

Paul Twiss

That chain of doctrines is crucial to hold onto, especially as it gets to the last few if we really do want to live our lives in submission to the Scriptures. It begins with an embracing of the doctrine of inspiration. This is the Word of God, it is breathed out by Him and it comes ultimately from a divine author, which means there are no mistakes, it's inerrant. And then we get to the sufficiency and the authority part of it. It is sufficient to save and to sanctify. The scriptures are sufficient. In fact, they are God's means by which he saves us the Word of God. And thereafter the scriptures are sufficient to keep us going towards Christ's likeness, and to ensure that we don't make shipwreck of our faith, that we don't turn our back on God, the scriptures keep us on the straight and narrow.

And the scriptures therefore should also be authoritative. If they come from God, and they're without error, and they're this sufficient guide for both salvation and sanctification, then we need to acknowledge them as authoritative. And I think perhaps what you're referring to is what I see today is there are so many voices that find a way into the Christians life, and can often times be on a par with the Scriptures. Voices, the paths we don't even recognize we're attributing authority to, and yet they have sway over us, they have influence over us. And what the Christian needs to do as a habit, develop as a mindset, is to keep returning back to the fact that this book sits above all other truth claims, all other claims to authority or influence. If the Bible says it, it needs to be my authority. And it cannot be on a par with something else.

As I say that, I think it's important to acknowledge in Christ, we have an awful lot of freedom. You know, when I teach The Book of Proverbs to the students in the seminary, I say proverbs deals with the gray areas of life, that the Torah, the law, in the Old Testament, dealt with the black and white, this is what you are to do, this is what you are not to do. But that leaves an awful lot of life, not touched upon. And that's what Proverbs probes, the gray area. And then I say, and honestly, guys, that's where we live, probably 90% of our lives.

Okay, so assuming as a Christian, that you are not pursuing in a flagrant, high handed manner, something that you know to be sin, presuming that that's not your your way of living, and you're doing your best to honor the Lord and live a Christian life, most of what you do day to day is in that gray area where we have freedom in Christ. Do I take this job or do I take this job? Do I shop at this store or this store? Neither is necessarily right or wrong, but it becomes a wisdom issue. And so the authority of the Bible is that which speaks to what is right and wrong, which is that which is sin, and not sin, and then it gives us wisdom for living in that middle ground where we have liberty in Christ.

Host: David Wheaton

That's well said. Thank you for that. Paul Twiss with us today on The Christian Worldview, talking about understanding and interpreting scripture. He's an instructor of Bible Exposition at the Masters Seminary. We have these videos linked that we're talking about at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org. Let's go from those four points you just made, inspiration, inerrancy, sufficiency, and then the authority of Scripture, kind of the facts about it, to getting in where the rubber meets the road. Advice on interpreting it or making wrong conclusions. You talk about in these videos that the way, the proper way to interpret Scripture is a historical, grammatical, interpretive method or hermeneutic. So you look at the historical context. And then you look at the the grammatical structure of it, you pay attention to the grammar of the lag language, and that leads to a literal interpretation of the Bible. So I'm going to play this next soundbite from this episode, and then follow up with a question.

Sound bite: Paul Twiss

"Now we're very well served, we have good English translations in our hands. And they do represent as best we can, in the act of translation, what was written in the original languages. So you don't have to learn Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, to understand the Bible. And you can follow in the English text, the grammar of the text. And when we say the historical, grammatical hermeneutic, we're simply saying, let the words and the sentences and the phrases mean what they would originally mean, what they do mean, in normal use of language. We don't do funny things with language. Now, if we put those two things together, historical and grammatical, that's our hermeneutic. And what that's gonna lead us towards more times than not is a literal interpretation of the text. Historical, grammatical hermeneutic is a literal reading of the Bible.

Maybe you've heard it said a different way. A phrase that I sometimes hear that I quite like, if the plain sense of the text makes sense, seek no other sense. That's a phrase that sums up exactly what the historical, grammatical hermeneutic does for you. It leads you to a sound interpretation that is anchored in the historical context and the grammar of the text. What it does is it stops you from spiritualizing the text, from making the words mean something they weren't intended to mean.

Host: David Wheaton

Okay, there was a lot in that little short audio bite there. You talked about the translations we have in English. First of all that most of them are good. Be more specific with that, though, because not all of them are as good as others. So maybe you could recommend a few of the English translations that give a more literal sense of what the original languages had. And then you talked about the literal trying to come to a literal understanding of the Bible. Some people will see that and think, literal, you don't take the Bible literally all the time. You know, Jesus isn't a door, you use that example and so forth. And then you said the plain sense should make sense. But as we all know, people have different sensibilities, they come to big, different conclusions. What makes sense to one person doesn't make sense to another. So speak to that soundbite more on the hermeneutic or the interpretation of Scripture.

Paul Twiss

So beginning then with the first point you raised about translations, we have so many translations in the English language, far more than many other languages have. And a lot of them are good. And I would, with confidence recommended a number of translations out there as an accurate representation of what was recorded in the original language. The question comes down to how dynamic is the translation, how close to the original language is it? I would just say, the NASB is a very good translation, the ESV is a good translation. More recently, The Legacy Standard Bible. That was something that I had the privilege of working on. And they're going to serve you very well in terms of being translations that you can read and understand and yet are also anchored and tightly knit to what was written in those original languages.

Now, assuming you've got a good translation before you, perhaps it's an ESV, or NASB, or a Legacy Standard Bible, if you have that translation before you, now comes the difficulty of you reading the text and interpreting it correctly. So translation is the first step, you now have to interpret the text as you read it. One of the pieces of advice that I give, perhaps more than any other when it comes to Bible reading, is to read with someone else. Now, let me just qualify that. Let me explain it. I don't mean necessarily that every single time you open the Bible, somebody needs to be sat beside you physically. No, there is much value in studying the Bible with other people, certainly. What I mean is you need help

from others as you read the Bible. God designed his word to be received by his people corporately. Think about the Old Testament saints in Israel. Think about the New Testament Church. The epistles were written to churches. God designed His Word to be received corporately. And I think it's a particular failing of the age in which we live, that we're so individualistic in our approach to the text. Don't get me wrong, a daily quiet time is a good thing. I commend you to read your Bible each and every day and meet with the Lord. But we're very individualistic and that bleeds into not only the manner in which we open the Bible, but in our interpretive efforts. We start to think as you just mentioned, David, we start to think along the lines of this is what the Bible means to me. Well, that should never be something that we're thinking when we're reading the text. It should always be what did God intend by this? Not what does the Bible mean to me? But what did God intend by this? And that's where it helps to read with other people. We all have blind spots, we will have certain proclivities, if you read with others, then that can often be a means by which we arrive at a sound interpretation.

And I would include, when I say read with others, I would include, for example, sitting down and reading a study Bible. When I read my MacArthur Study Bible, or whatever one it might be and I read the introduction and when I read the footnotes, I know those parts aren't inspired. But they're really helpful. And somebody has labored to write those notes to guide me in my reading. So in that, in essence, I am reading with somebody else there. Or maybe I sit down and read and I've got a commentary beside me, a good commentary that's been recommended to me by a trusted pastor or elder, and they say this books really going to help you. I am reading with somebody else. I'm reading with the author of that commentary. And they're helping me to write a sound interpretation of the text. It's difficult to overstate the importance of this, again, because we're so prone to go down in our thinking along the lines of, but what does this mean for me?

Just a few comments then on that, on that last point, you mentioned the historical grammatical hermeneutic. And that phrase that was in the soundbite, I like to say that because it kind of encapsulates the historical, grammatical hermeneutic. If the plain sense makes sense, seek no other sense. That really is what I mean by the historical, grammatical hermeneutic. You study the historical context in which the book was written, you allow the language to do the things that language normally does, and it is going to lead you to a literal interpretation of the text. If you read the text and the literal interpretation is bizarre, it doesn't make sense, then that might be one of the times in Scripture where it is a metaphor being employed. So when Jesus says I am the door, we know intuitively He doesn't mean that He's a huge block of wood. He's not making that claim. He's employing a metaphor. That is self evident.

But most of the time for most of Scripture, what we're reading is the plain sense, the sense that was intended by the original author that would have made sense in historical context and in accordance with the language that he's using. And that's going to lead us to a proper sound interpretation of the Bible.

Program Director

The Christian Worldview with David Wheaton returns in just a moment.

Resource Offer: Foundation for Biblical Economics

Recent guest, Cal Beisner, defines economics as moral philosophy applied to marketplace relationships. So it makes sense that as our nation's judgment of what is right and wrong has moved away from biblical morality, our economic policies have gone the same wrong direction. So what is the Christian worldview on economics? Cal Beisner has written an insightful 56 Page softcover booklet

titled, Biblical Foundations for Economics that shows how economic principles and policies need to be based on the Bible to achieve the greatest human flourishing. For a limited time, we are offering Biblical Foundations for Economics for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. To order go to TheChristianWorldview.org, or call 1-888-646-2233, or write to Box 401, Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. Again, the website is TheChristianWorldview.org.

Sponsor: Samaritan Ministries

When it comes to your health care provider, what are some words you would use to describe your experience with them? Comfort, peace, confidence? Well at Samaritan Ministries, those are just some of the words our members use frequently, like Samaritan member, former longtime board member and now staff member Jamie Pyles uses to describe his 24 year relationship with Samaritan Ministries. It's hard to put words into the comfort and the relief and the peace that you have as you come to terms that Samaritan Ministries is real, it's viable and it's working and is there. We just thank God that he's allowed us to have that kind of peace to be in a situation where I can focus on things that are far more important than, What are we going to do about health care? Want to be part of a growing, caring community of Christians who faithfully share each other's medical needs each month, all without the use of insurance? Find out more at Samaritanministries.org/tcw. That's Samaritan ministries.org/tcw.

Program Director

Thanks for joining us on The Christian Worldview. Just a reminder that today's program and past programs are archived at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org. Short Takes are also available. And be sure to share with others. Now, back to today's program with host David Wheaton.

Host: David Wheaton

You're listening to Paul Twiss today on The Christian Worldview Radio Program. He's an instructor of Bible Exposition at the Masters Seminary in California. You can find out more about him and you can also watch, how they encourage you to watch these handful of videos that they have done, Paul has done, hosted, called Everyday Theologian Videos on Hermeneutics. Another was Interpreting the Bible, The Storyline in the Bible, in about eight episodes. You can go to our website, TheChristianWorldview.org to get a link to watch those. It would be great thing to do to watch with your family or your home Bible study group or your church, Sunday school class at church. Very helpful, especially as we discussed this the beginning of the year, starting off on the right foot so you're not going down the wrong roads. I want to get to one more soundbite before we change gears here on the program today. And this has to do with the overall storyline of the Bible. It's not some disconnected 66 books that don't really link to each other. There's a driving message, driving theme. The books are where they are on purpose in Scripture. So let's get to that soundbite and then follow up with a question.

Sound bite: Paul Twiss

"Where does this book sit in redemptive history? Where does it sit within God's redemptive plan? Where is it in the Bible? And how does that help us understand it? God has a plan from Genesis to Revelation that we can follow. And to know where each book sits, is helpful as you read that book. So let's think together then about the storyline of the Bible from Genesis all the way through to Revelation. Chapter one of our Bibles; In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. That first chapter is not simply there to give us a theology of creation, though it does do that. It gives us the theology of God. That first line is an emphatic declaration of who God is. He's the authority, He's all powerful, He doesn't have an equal. There is even a subtle polemical nature to what Moses is doing here responding to other creation narratives that would have God on a par with other gods and the biblical narrative tells

us the truth and says there is no equal to God. He is the author of life, He's the creator. And what you see in that first chapter is that the pinnacle of his created order is mankind. We sit in a very privileged position. He makes all things and then as the pinnacle, He makes us and He sets on us His image, we are his image bearers."

Host: David Wheaton

Okay, so there's a lot you said there in that. Why is the first several chapters or Genesis, let's say, as a whole, the early part of Scripture so important to understanding the rest of Scripture? And then part two of the question is oftentimes, when we start our Bible reading plans in the beginning of the year Genesis is exciting, it's amazing narratives and history and who God is and who we are, and the fall of man and the introduction of the gospel there. But sometimes when we get to Exodus, it's really good. And then you know, the exodus from from Egypt and so forth. But then you get into the more of the law, the Leviticus, Numbers. You can get bogged down, I think, for anyone. So talk about the early part of Scripture, and then avoiding some of the areas that are more difficult to read, and maybe even repetitive, where you just think, can I just kind of skim through this?

Paul Twiss

Yeah, so the the early chapters of Genesis are so so important to shaping our understanding of the rest of Scripture, but also the world, I mean, that they're making worldview claims. So if you spend time in those first few chapters, there are claims being made, as I just said, in that soundbite, as to the nature of God Himself, creation, mankind, sin, I mean, the list goes on and on and on, and the claims being made, influence just about everything you can thereafter consider.

So the doctrine of image bearing, that lays a claim as to who we are and what we're supposed to be doing. Any question that you might have thereafter about mankind about humanity, is informed by a proper understanding of that single doctrine of image bearing as it's given in Genesis chapter one. And we could say that of any of those key doctrines, it all begins in the early part of the Bible. And as I prepare sermons, and I think about application of the text, and I try and look around and see what are the prevalent lines of thought in society today, week by week, I find that the thoughts we see that are prevalent in society today, are most often some deviation away from some misappropriation of one of those key doctrines that are found early in the scriptures.

Just about every Sunday, you can go back to those first few chapters and say, if we had thought about this doctrine correctly, it would have led to a better result in this area of society or this area of society. You know, I don't want to overstate the case. But I often think with our relationships on a societal level, so many issues that we see would be correctly addressed if we just understood what it was to be an image bearer, that informs our understanding of ourselves our understanding of one another, our understanding of what it is we're to be about. And by missing that, by not having a correct understanding of image bearing, it leads to a whole host of problems. And they just keep playing off one another. And you know, sin breeds more sin, and on and on it goes.

So those first few chapters, and indeed the book of Genesis, but especially those first few chapters, are so important for forming a Christian worldview. Now, when you get beyond those first few chapters, and you get into books like Leviticus and Numbers and Deuteronomy, I appreciate the question, How do you keep going? How do you not get deflated, grow despondent? They can be very, very difficult books to read. And I would just encourage folks that the more you can locate the book and the chapter and

the passage you're in, the more you can locate it within the glory of redemptive history, the more it's going to be meaningful and life giving for you.

So if you were to read a chapter in Leviticus, in complete isolation from anything that's going on around it, and you don't think about the Book of Leviticus and why it is where it is, in the Bible, you don't think about the relationship of Leviticus to Exodus and, and you're just not aware of God's redemptive plan from Genesis through to Revelation and how this book fits in, if those things are not on your radar, then I fully understand why when you read that chapter in your quiet time that morning, you're not pumped, you're not that excited, I get that.

By contrast, if you're able to grasp something of the glory of redemptive history of God's plan of salvation and what He was doing in the Book of Leviticus, as it relates to the book of Exodus, as it relates to the book of Hebrews, and on and on we go, when you start to see the bigger picture, now, this chapter is incredible. I just want to dwell on this chapter more, because I can see its significance in the bigger picture. So it certainly takes some work. But the kind of Bible reading that I'm commending certainly takes some work. There are great resources out there. And I would just encourage you as best you can, to orient yourself to the bigger picture, the plan of redemption, from beginning to end. And when you do that, and you keep holding it in view, that's when those more tricky portions of Scripture start to come to life and have real significance even for the believer today.

Host: David Wheaton

Very good advice. Paul Twiss with us today on The Christian Worldview Radio Program, Instructor of Bible Exposition at the Masters Seminary. And again, we commend these videos to you, The Everyday Theologian Videos. We have them linked at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org. Just a handful of videos, short videos about how to approach scripture, how to interpret it, the different parts of genres of Scripture and portions and so forth. It will be very helpful for you and your Bible study group or family to watch these.

Host: David Wheaton

Okay, now let's make a transition here. I think there actually is a connection as we'll find out between the interpretation of Scripture and how society is now completely rejecting Scripture. The pastor of the church where you are also I think, an elder and where you preach and lead a group and also the head of the Seminary where you teach, John MacArthur, recently has written a letter to pastors. And I'm just going to read a couple of paragraphs from that because there's a significant situation that's taking place in Canada right now. And he says,

"Dear minister of the gospel, I write to you this Christmas season to call your attention to an urgent matter in which the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ is under attack. On December 22nd, I received an email from Pastor James Coates of Grace Live Church of Edmonton in Alberta, Canada." He says you will remember that he, we are covering this on the program here too, so listeners will remember this, "he was recently imprisoned for keeping his church open during the COVID-19 lockdowns". MacArthur goes on to say, "James recent email gave me insight into the Canadian government's decision to pass Bill C-4, it's the name of the bill, which, "Directly comes against parents and counselors who would seek to offer biblical counsel with respect to sexual immorality and gender." Pastor James indicates that it could be used to, "Criminalize evangelism." And then MacArthur goes on to quote from an email from another pastor named Andrew Debartolo, saying Bill C-4 passed through the House and Senate in Canada without opposition. Not a single dissenting vote was cast by any member of the Conservative

Party in Canada. It received Royal Assent on December 8, which means it will come into law after January 8, 2022. The bill will amend the Criminal Code in Canada to ban, "Conversion therapy." It will criminalize among other things, "Causing another person to undergo conversion therapy, promoting or advertising conversion therapy." In the preamble to the bill, "Heterosexuality or cisgender gender identity, that's the gender you were born with, and gender expression that conforms to the sex assigned to a person at birth, or to be preferred." In other words, that's not to be taught that you'd prefer that over other sexual orientations, gender identities and gender expressions. That's a myth according to Canadian laws of January 8, 2022. The belief in God's design for marriage and sexuality will now be seen as a myth.

So then there's much more to this and we have this letter linked at TheChristianWorldview.org for listeners to read. So my question for you, Paul, is this. You don't hear any government at least at this point trying to silence preachers or churches on the issue of adultery, extra marital heterosexual, immorality or pornography, or premarital sex, things the Bible clearly forbids. Why is the issue of homosexuality and transgenderism, Paul, the lynchpin for these reductions or these eliminations of freedom of speech and freedom of religion?

Paul Twiss

Yeah, I think the answer is because our age is one of the sexual revolution. A lot of people have written on this. When history looks back at the time in which we are now they'll mark this down as the age of the sexual revolution. And that's where these issues are being tested. So the issue of freedom of speech and freedom of religion, I mean, that's going to intersect with just about anything in life, but we're finding it to be intersecting with or overlapping with issues of sexuality. And I think that's only going to increase the intersection or the means by which these these freedoms are being tested. More and more is gonna find its way into the discussion of sexual identity. And even what it is to be a person to be a male or a female.

Host: David Wheaton

John MacArthur is calling for preachers on Sunday, January 16, to preach on biblical sexual morality. Why is that an important thing to do for people listening, who are pastors, who may not know about this, or just people who are listening who go to church? Why should they urge their pastor to join in and take this Sunday, this January 16, 2022, to preach on biblical sexual morality, whether in Canada or in America?

Paul Twiss

Two reasons. One, to show our unity with our brothers in Canada. They're feeling the heat more than we are, at least right now. And it's important for us to link arms with them and show that we are with them in this. And preaching on that Sunday is one way of doing that. And then, additionally, as much as this is maybe not, we're not feeling the heat as much right now in America, you can believe that this is an issue in your congregation. This is out there, it's in society. And it is a wise thing to address this issue to your congregation. And just to reaffirm the biblical teaching on sexuality, and marriage and all of the topics that surround this issue.

Host: David Wheaton

In Canada, as we just mentioned, they're cracking down on this idea of preaching against homosexuality. Already in Canada, programs like Race to You and others aren't allowed to have sermons that have biblical teaching on against homosexuality in that country. So that's going on there.

We've talked about Canada. We hear about things going on in England. That street evangelism in many cases, they're constrained and sometimes arrested in England for preaching on the street about government forbidden topics, like homosexuality and otherwise. We've seen what's taking place in Australia, another colony or part of the British Empire in the past. The authoritarianism with regards to COVID. You go to quarantine camps and so forth. It's just over the top.

So the question is having grown up in Britain and understanding that culture and so forth, why are countries with British ties like Canada, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, they seem more willing to overrun individual liberties and freedoms of speech and religion. Even you know the liberty to put in your body what you want to put in your body or not. I'm not saying this isn't taking place in America, because we know there's an element here that very strongly would agree with Canada and do the exact same things that are going on in these British areas, formerly British Empire areas? What is the difference in the mindset there, if there is one, that you would compare it with? At least still remaining in some sense in America?

Paul Twiss

Yeah, it's a good question and there's so much to say in response. And I'm by no means an expert, but it has been interesting living as a Brit in America for the last nine and a half years just to see the differences in the way people think. And I can't speak necessarily for Canadians or Australians, but the UK has been a socialist state for a very long time now. And one of the implications of that is there are areas of life that come under government control, far more than they would here. You see it in the American mindset, there's this resorting to the founding document of America is one that champions Liberty, the notion of freedom. And the American can always go back to that, and hold that forth when issues like this come to the surface.

COVID, you know, was an issue that I think revealed a lot of the problems that have been dormant in honestly, both countries for a long time in different ways. The response has been so markedly different, in large part because the American can go back to the founding documents, which lay out the case for the individual's freedom, whereas the UK doesn't have that, and for a long time has been living under a system, wherein the government just has more control over certain areas of life. And so the natural response over there is when something like a pandemic happens, powers is defaulted to the government, and the average citizen will follow what's going on there. Again, there's more to say, and I'm not, I'm trying to boil this down into a nutshell. And there's so many moving parts to this.

Host: David Wheaton

Yes, there are. And the reaction, the response from all of these western civilization nations, has been very interesting to say the least, to watch over the last couple years with COVID and what this portends going forward. I want to thank you for coming on the program here early in the year to talk about interpreting scripture and helping us to be able to read our Bibles this year so we better understand them. And can live them as you mentioned in these videos, so we can live lives to the glory of God. Paul Twiss, thank you so much for coming on The Christian Worldview.

Paul Twiss

My pleasure. Great to be with you, David.

Host: David Wheaton

Okay, one last reminder that you can watch these short videos entitled, Everyday Theologian, hosted by Paul Twiss, our guest today here on the program, by going to our website, TheChristianWorldview.org.

While you're there, if you have never repented of your sin, and put your faith in the person and the work of Jesus Christ, I would encourage you to go to the page on our website, What must I do to be saved? That is the most important question that every person needs to answer during their lifetime. Go there and read about who God is, who you are, who Jesus Christ is, and what you must do to be saved. Jesus said, "You must be born again."

Thank you for listening to The Christian Worldview today. Please forward the link in the preview for today's program to your pastor to preach on biblical sexual morality on Sunday, January 16. Because we know that Jesus Christ and His word are the same yesterday, and today and forever. So until next time, "Think biblically, live accordingly," and stand firm!

Program Director

The mission of The Christian Worldview is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. We hope today's broadcast encouraged you toward that end. To hear a replay of today's program or to sign up for our free weekly email or to find out "What must I do to be saved?" Go to our website, TheChristianWorldview.org or call us toll free at 1-888-646-2233. The Christian Worldview is a listener supported ministry and furnished by the Overcomer Foundation, a nonprofit organization. You can find out more, order resources, make a donation, become a monthly partner and contact us by visiting TheChristianWorldview.org, calling toll free 1-888-646-2233, or writing to Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. That's Box 401 Excelsior, Minnesota 55331. Thanks for listening to The Christian Worldview. Until next time, "Think biblically and live accordingly."