



One God, One Story

SESSION FOUR

The Power of Story



Narrative and Worldview

Why Story is Powerful

Worldview Defined



- Briefly put – one’s worldview is the framework through which an individual or a group of people view all of life.

Worldview Defined



- “...the foundational cognitive, affective, and evaluative assumptions and frameworks a group of people make about the nature of reality which they use to order their lives.”
- Paul G. Hiebert. *Transforming Worldviews* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 25-26.

Worldview Defined



- “A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true, or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being.”

James W. Sire. *The Universe Next Door* 4th Edition (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 17.

Worldview FAQs



- Every worldview asks and answers questions such as:
 - What is reality?
 - Who are we?
 - Why are we here?
 - What's wrong?
 - What's the remedy?

Worldview FAQs



- As humans seek to answer important questions regarding the nature, meaning, and purpose of life, they find answers to those questions through the stories that they are told.



Transformative Nature of Narrative

Ways in Which Story is Powerful

Narrative is
disarming.



Persuasive Character of Narrative



- Narrative is an exercise in ethics.
- Narrative influences values.
- Narrative invites participation.
- Stories translate abstract principles and propositions into concrete examples.

Persuasive Character of Narrative



- Narrative invites reflection, and in so doing, it either confirms or subverts our previously held beliefs.
- Narrative is basic to human communication...and enculturation.
- We gain our sense of meaning and purpose through the narratives that we embrace.



Stories as the Basis of Worldview



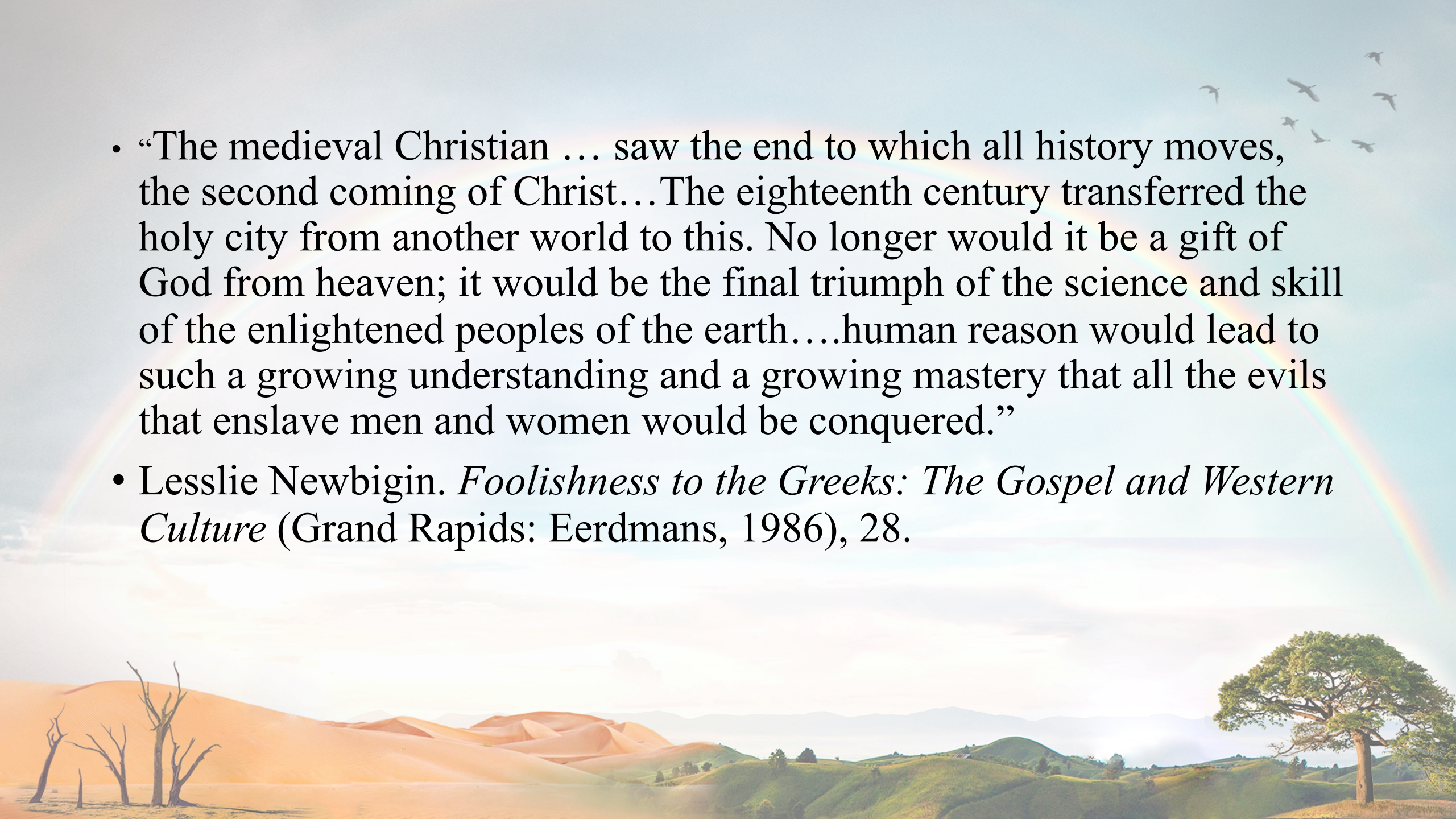
- The biblical story is the one true metanarrative that stands in authority over all other rival narratives.
- Michael Matthews. *Is There a Reader of This Text* (Unpublished Dissertation, Canterbury Christ Church University & Trinity Theological Seminary, 2016), 85-86.

Stories as the Basis of Worldview



- Rival narratives are, “...overarching stories that give each member of a group of people the communally shared perception of reality. One’s cultural metanarrative is the collectively held grand system of stories, which is learned and shared through social interaction and which serves as the foundation for interpreting all reality.”
- Michael Matthews. *Is There a Reader of This Text* (Unpublished Dissertation, Canterbury Christ Church University & Trinity Theological Seminary, 2016), 86.

<i>The Universe Next Door,</i> by James Sire	Christianity	Naturalism	Pantheism	Post-Modernism
Reality	God is	The cosmos exists as a uniformity of cause/effect	Some things are more than others (reality levels of appearance)	The truth about the reality itself is forever hidden from us
Human Being	Created in the image of God	Complex machines (chemical and physical)	Pass beyond personality by realizing oneness with cosmos	We make ourselves by languages constructed
At death...	Gate to life with God or separation in hell	Extinction of personality and individuality	All roads lead to the one – end of personal existence	
Morality	Ethics based on character of God	Social constructs	Cosmos is perfect at every moment	A linguistic and social construct
Meaning of history	History is meaningful sequence leading to God's purposes	Cause and effect with no purpose	Time is unreal; history is cyclical	

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- “The medieval Christian ... saw the end to which all history moves, the second coming of Christ...The eighteenth century transferred the holy city from another world to this. No longer would it be a gift of God from heaven; it would be the final triumph of the science and skill of the enlightened peoples of the earth...human reason would lead to such a growing understanding and a growing mastery that all the evils that enslave men and women would be conquered.”
 - Lesslie Newbigin. *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 28.

Stories as the Basis of Worldview



- Scripture is filled with examples of people being brought to a place where they must choose which narrative they will believe and live out (e.g., Ruth, the contrasts in wisdom literature, the parables of Christ, etc.).

Primary Ways that Story Calls for Participation



- By highlighting trajectory.
- By providing identity.
- By providing a sense of final expectation.

Biblical Story and the Nature and Character of God



- God always keeps His promises.
- God is at work in history to accomplish His purposes.
- God is the main actor on the stage of time.
- God is accomplishing His purposes through people just like us.
- Not only is God at work on a grand scale, He is also at work on a personal level.
- The coming of the Savior into the world was an act of God; salvation is of the LORD.
- God alone is God. He is filled with glory, sovereign over history, and worthy of all worship.

Metanarrative and Personal Life Impact



- Life is not about us and our program.
- We have no reason to be proud.
- We must keep our eyes on the big picture and not get distracted by the small things.
- When we find our place in the biblical story, our lives can count for eternity.
- We are motivated to be faithful stewards of God's Word.
- We are reminded that the end is in sight even if we can't see the end.