

Preface

“How Firm a Foundation” has long been a popular hymn, especially in the North American church. Charles Hodge, the great Princeton theologian, was so overwhelmed by the fourth verse that he could only gesture the words.¹ It speaks of the unshakeable nature of our faith in Jesus Christ. In an increasingly secular age, the church needs to be reminded of this sure foundation.

The truths surveyed in this short book are not exhaustive of the Christian faith, but certainly foundational. My goal was not only to provide scriptural support for our beliefs but also to show the uniqueness of Christianity and the counter-cultural nature of the biblical worldview. Living in a society hostile to Christ should not cause us to fear, but instead cause us to respond with a humble confidence, knowing that the truth will always prevail.

I want to express my appreciation to the congregation of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church. It is a joy and honor to serve them as their pastor. I am also thankful for my

1 Tim Challies, Hymn Stories: How Firm a Foundation, Challies, March 17, 2013, <https://www.challies.com/articles/hymn-stories-how-firm-a-foundation-free-download/>.

good friend, Dr. Rita Cefalu. Her editing and proofreading of this book have been invaluable. We are grateful for her contributions as Scholar in Residence and Senior Fellow at the Institute for Faith and Culture. Likewise, many thanks to Dr. Laura Groves for serving as copy editor. She has been helping me to be a better writer ever since high school English.

May God embolden us to live out a faith that will not be swept away by the cultural winds. This will not be done according to our power, but according to the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. My prayer is that you will be encouraged to build your life on the one thing that is immovable—the infallible Word of God. It is our only firm foundation.

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

INTRODUCTION

A Biblical Worldview

The essential starting point for building a firm foundation is to develop a truly biblical worldview: a worldview based upon the Word of God. Some might be asking, What is a worldview? Simply stated, a worldview is the framework or set of core beliefs and values by which a person views and interprets reality. You may have heard it said that everyone is a theologian, and everyone has a theology. But the question arises, Is their theology biblically sound or not? The same applies to worldview.

Having a biblical worldview means that our core beliefs and values are informed by the infallible Word of God. God's Word isn't something we just read and study, nor is it something we just hear expounded on Sunday mornings. The Word of God is the foundation for all of life, the lens through which we view the world, enabling us to answer life's hardest questions, such as: Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going?

Thank God that our lives can be rooted in the objective, authoritative truth of His Word as we stand amid the

howling cultural winds of our own day. So, in seeking to cultivate a biblically sound worldview, we must be rooted and grounded in God's Word, established in the faith, just as we've been taught.

The Trouble with the Church

George Barna has conducted extensive research regarding worldview and the North American church. His findings are deeply troubling. His research has discovered that only nine percent of American Christians possess a biblical worldview.¹ That is not nine percent of Americans; that is nine percent of Americans inside the church. Lacking that filter, most Christians make important decisions based on instinct, emotion, assumptions, past experiences, external pressure, or chance.

What this means is that the majority of Western Christians are walking aimlessly through life with a worldview that is informed by cultural ideologies and worldly philosophies, rather than the Word of God. So, where do we begin to address this very serious problem? God's Word not only has the answer—God's Word *is* the answer. It's the only tried and true foundation for all of faith and life.

Foundations Matter

A firm foundation makes all the difference in the world. Indeed, Jesus spoke to this very issue at the conclusion of His Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 7:24-27). He said that there are two kinds of builders and two kinds of foundations: the wise person who builds a house on the rock and the foolish person who builds a house on sand. When the winds of the

¹ arizonachristian.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/CRC-AWVI-2020-Release-02_Faith-and-Worldview-1.pdf

world come crashing in, the only house left standing is the one that was built upon the rock. That rock is God's Word, and the wise builder is the person who both hears the Word of God and puts it into practice. That person's house is built on a firm foundation that is immovable.

We're currently living in a time of great upheaval, when the winds of culture are blowing fiercely. Many of us who've experienced this in significant ways are crying out for stability. Perhaps you're crying out from that firm foundation; but for others, perhaps the storms and winds have been so severe that you're becoming disillusioned by life—you're wondering whether a firm foundation is even possible. I want to remind you of Jesus' enduring words, that no matter how bad the storms may be, and no matter how strong the winds may blow—if you've built your house on the rock of God's Word, that firm foundation cannot be shaken. If you've been building your life upon the sinking sand, it's not too late to change. In fact, it's critical for you to do so.

Creation

The introduction laid the foundation for establishing a biblical worldview that is rooted and grounded in the Word of God. As a reminder, a worldview is the framework or set of core beliefs and values by which a person views and interprets reality. As we continue, we'll be looking at two primary texts that address the subject of origins (Gen. 1:1-5; John 1:1-5). We begin with the opening chapter of Genesis.

The Creation Account in Genesis 1:1-5

The Bible's opening salvo reveals God's "work" of creating something from nothing, and then shaping that something into the world we now experience.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

This passage will go on to show that God created the heavens and earth in six days, but on the seventh day He rested, setting it apart as special (Gen. 1:6-2:3). This would have been creation's first Sabbath rest. Later texts reveal that even animals were to participate in the Sabbath established by God at creation (cf. Exod. 20:8-11).

When we think of rest, we shouldn't think that God needed to rest in the same way we do. God's work in creation, rather, serves as the pattern for us to model as we engage in the cultural mandate of Genesis 1:28. We are to conduct our work over a six-day period, and to rest on the seventh day.¹

Perhaps you think that the idea of God creating the world and everything in it in such a short period of time is difficult to believe. In fact, the same thing could be said about the resurrection—and this is why we need Scripture. We wouldn't know these truths unless God revealed them to us. And this brings us to our second primary text concerning the Bible's teaching on origins.

The Creation Account in John 1:1-5

In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

The Gospel of John opens with a prologue introducing us to the very person about whom it was written: Jesus Christ

¹ These Scriptures testify strongly to the view that understands God's work in creation as having been conducted over a period of six consecutive twenty-four-hour periods, with the seventh day set apart for rest.

(John 1:1-18). And what we learn from these verses is astounding! The opening phrase, “In the beginning,” takes us back to Genesis 1:1, where we’ve already read about God creating the heavens and the earth. But here, John tells us something more. He tells us that there was another person there in that beginning. A person who is called “the Word.”

Not only was the Word with God in the beginning—the beginning before the world was created—but the Word was God! Two persons in the presence of one another, both of whom are called “God” (singular), and both of whom were pre-existent before they began their creative work. And we must not forget that there was another person there in that beginning. The Holy Spirit was present, brooding over the deep, ready to bring forth light and life to the world through the eternal Word that was spoken by the Father (Gen. 1:2). Moreover, we discover that everything owes its existence to that eternal Word, which is none other than the second person of the Holy Trinity, the only begotten Son of the Father (John 1:14, 18).²

The Conceptual Background for the Word (*Logos*)

The biblical teaching on the Trinity clearly points to the Son as the eternal *Logos* through whom all things were created. Many have sought to wrap their minds around this concept. How can a person be called the *Logos*? What does it mean? What is the background for such a concept? Of the three primary views (Greek philosophy, personified Wisdom,

2 The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three persons sharing the one divine nature we call “God.” For an excellent introduction to the biblical teaching on the Trinity, see Scott R. Swain, *The Trinity: An Introduction*. Short Studies in Systematic Theology. Eds. Graham A. Cole and Oren R. Martin (Wheaton: Crossway, 2020).