

Text: Exod. 33:11-23

Title: "Moses's biblical worldview"

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Introduction: My alma matter, Bob Jones University, has an institution on campus called the Center for Biblical Worldview. James Orr defined *worldview* as "The whole manner of conceiving of the world and humanity's place in it, the widest possible view which the mind can take of things" [dbu.edu/naugle/academic-papers/_pdfs/09/worldview_defhистconceptlect.pdf]. The Center for Biblical Worldview at BJU defines a biblical worldview this way: "Biblical worldview is God's explanation of God's world through God's Word for God's image bearers."

The Bible establishes its worldview with the first four words of Genesis: "In the beginning God." That is the starting point of the biblical worldview. Whether you begin your view of the world with belief in the real existence of the God of the Bible will determine whether your worldview is a biblical worldview or some other kind.

The way we use our worldview can be compared to the way we use a mirror. The Apostle Paul talked about looking into a mirror darkly instead of face-to-face (1 Cor. 13:12). A deficient mirror causes a blurred and distorted image of reality, whereas a perfect mirror causes an accurate reflection of one's face. The completed canon of New Testament Scripture is the perfect mirror Paul spoke of, which helps us see clearly things as they truly are.

You can also think of your worldview as a pair of glasses through which you see the world. If you are wearing green-tinted sunglasses, everything you see will look green. Since the God of the Bible exists, the pair of glasses we put on when we adopt the worldview of His Word is like a pair of clear

prescription glasses, which brings into correct focus everything on which we lay our eyes.

Moses wore those glasses. He saw the world with a biblical worldview, the one informed by God's Word. He knew that the God of the Bible, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, does exist. In our passage this morning, Moses's worldview helps him understand some amazing things that were true about his life. We need that same biblical worldview to understand that these things are true about our life as well. We live in the same world Moses did. We need to see it the way He did. This morning, I want us to notice three simple things Moses knew to be true because of his biblical worldview.

I. Moses lived in a world where he could speak to the God of the Bible, and the God of the Bible could speak to Him (v. 11).

Illustration: If you have had non-English-speaking relatives visit or have traveled overseas in a country whose language is foreign to you, you know what it is like to be unable to speak to someone or to understand what someone is saying to you.

I remember the time my Swiss-German great aunt and great uncle visited us in America, Marty and Fritz. They could not speak English, but it turns out they were born-again believers. At one point in their visit, Aunt Marty became very burdened to share the gospel with my mom. At first, they had no idea what each other was saying, but finally both recognized the word *Jesus* together. The conversation ended in tears as they both realized that they were sisters in Christ.

Application: In our world today, its Creator, the God of the Bible, is treated as though He is someone with whom we cannot speak and from whom we never hear. In high school I had the chance to visit Fritz and Marty in Buchs, Switzerland. On the trip home, I read a book by Frances Schaeffer called *He Is There and He Is Not Silent*. It is a book about epistemology, the

study of how we know what we know. It explains that whether we believe that we can speak to God and that He can speak to us really depends on our starting point, whether we first believe that the God of the Bible exists. If He does not, then we cannot communicate with Him. If He does, then we can speak to Him and hear from Him, and we must.

So, this morning we need to work backwards to discover whether we have a biblical worldview with this question – do we speak to God and does He speak to us? Hebrews 1:1, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.”

God has spoken with mankind at different times and in different ways. His way with us is different than His way with Moses. God speaks to us through the prophet Moses’s writings and the rest of the Old Testament. He speaks through His Son, Jesus Christ, and through the New Testament record of His teaching and of His inspired apostles.

Do you see that you are living in this world, where it must be important to you to read your Bible and to pray, to hear from God and to speak to Him? Moses lived in this world, and we live in the same world Moses did. If you do not see the world this way, you have the wrong pair of glasses on. You are not really starting with belief in the existence of the God of the Bible, and you need to repent of your unbelief.

II. Moses lived in a world where sinners who need grace from the God of the Bible can find it (vv. 12-17).

Illustration: In his letter to the Philippian church, the Apostle Paul gave his co-laborer Timothy a tremendous compliment. He said of him, “For I have no man likeminded, who shall

naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (Phil. 2:20-21).

Application: Moses is thankful for the blessings he has received from the Lord. God knows him by name, and Moses has found grace in the eyes of the Lord. The same blessings enrich the lives of all the true people of God. Isa. 43:1, "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine." John 10:3, "To him [the Good Shepherd] the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out."

But neither Timothy nor Moses were content to possess the blessings of salvation themselves. They wanted others to have them as well. As those whose names are known to God and who have found grace in the eyes of our Lord, we need to be more like the Timothy of Philippians 2 and the Moses of Exodus 33. These men lived in a world where everyone else also needed this same grace in the eyes of the Lord, and they gave their lives, labors, and prayers to the hope that God would someday know these many others by name too.

Moses's concern here was for a nation just recovering from the great sin of the golden calf. He reminds the Lord that He had told him to lead this people, and he wanted reassurance that this was still the plan (v. 12). He wanted the Lord to reaffirm that this people was His people (v. 13). He spoke to the Lord about *us*, not just *me* (v. 15), about *I and Your people*, not just *I* (v. 16). And in the end, God grants Moses's request for mercy in response to his loving intercession for these sinful people.

Moses and Timothy are very Christlike in this way. Jesus also lived in a world where sinners needed to find grace in the eyes of the Lord. Unlike Moses and Timothy, however, it was up to Jesus Christ not to ask in faith for this grace, but rather to earn

by His work the salvation grace we need. He did so by dying on the cross, bearing the penalty for our sins, and rising from the dead as God's accepted sacrifice for our sins. Hebrews 7:24-25, "But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Moses found grace in the eyes of the Lord because Jesus's sacrifice found acceptance in the eyes of the Lord. Have you found that grace? If so, do you see that we live in a world where we must do all we can to help others find it too?

III. Moses lived in a world where the glory of the God of the Bible is the best thing he could see (vv. 18-23).

Illustration: Not long ago a solar eclipse passed through our region. There is a special glory in a solar eclipse, and it was that special glory that caused many to want to see it. Thousands jammed highways for hours to get to a place where they could look up and see the full effect of the eclipse. Shortly after it passed through, news reports surfaced of increased cases of eye injuries due to people looking at the eclipse without the proper eye protection.

Application: In our passage, Moses asks to see a glory far more brilliant than a solar eclipse. He asks for a direct view of the full glory of God. Scripture tells us that this glory is the glory of unapproachable light (1 Tim. 6:16).

It is not that Moses had never sighted the glory of God before. Exod. 16:10, "And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and, behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud." Exod. 24:9-11, "Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under

his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink." Exod. 24:16-17, "And the glory of the Lord abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel."

But Moses wanted to see more of God's glory. How much do we want to see God's glory? The Psalmist sang about what Moses desired to see: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory. Selah" (Ps. 24:7-10).

God answers Moses's request in two ways. First the Lord tells Moses that He will show him the glory of all His goodness, which is captured by His covenantal name *Yahweh*, and which is expressed by His grace and compassion to men (v. 19). This is that part of God's glory that He calls His back, and to see even this back part of God's glory, His goodness, Moses would need some eye protection (vv. 21-23).

The day did finally come when this glory of God's goodness became visible without eye protection. This happened when Yahweh God became man. John 1:14, "And the Word [God's Son] became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth [promise-keeping covenantal faithfulness]." Jesus Christ is the glory of all of God's goodness, God's saving grace, and God's saving faithfulness to His promised provision.

And then God tells Moses that Moses could not see the front of God's glory and live, that part of God's glory that is not His goodness to man in mercy and compassion. Keil and Delitzsch explain this answer to Moses's request this way:

“As our bodily eye is dazzled, and its power of vision destroyed, by looking directly at the brightness of the sun, so would our whole nature be destroyed by an unveiled sight of the brilliancy of the glory of God. So long as we are clothed with this body, which was destined, indeed, from the very first to be transformed into the glorified state of the immortality of the spirit, but has become through the fall a prey to the corruption of death, we can only walk in faith, and only see God with the eye of faith, so far as He has revealed His glory to us in His works and His word.”

It is in this sense that no man has seen God at any time, and it is in this sense that the humanity of Jesus Christ was a veil that ultimately was torn so that someday we can enter the holy of holies. We have seen the glory of His goodness in the humiliation of Jesus Christ. But we who live on this earth do not yet see the glory of His exaltation at the right hand of God.

But the day is coming “when we shall see Him.” The Apostle John tells us about that day: “When we shall see Him, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” We will see that part of God's glory that the exalted Christ displays. Heb. 1:3-4, “Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high: Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.”

Conclusion: And so, this is the world Moses lived in: a world where man hears from God and speaks to Him; a world where sinners find the grace that they need from a God who

knows their name; a world where the glory of God's saving grace and truth are seen in the humiliation of Jesus Christ; and a world where the glory of seeing Him exalted at the right hand of God is a believer's hope. God's glory is the best thing Moses could see. Moses had a biblical worldview. Do we?

Ultimately, the biblical worldview leads lost sinners to find salvation in Jesus Christ, our better Moses. The Apostle Paul warns us of one who wants to keep us from this glorious result of a biblical worldview: "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:3-4). Has your enemy hidden this good news from you?

"A man came—I think it was actually in Philadelphia—on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, 'Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.' That is the distinction—the sermon, and the 'lightning and the thunder.' To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters."

—David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

Preachers and Preaching