

## Sermon 3: The Danger of False Views

In this third session of our seven-week study, we consider the lies and false views about God's redemptive plan that can take us captive. If we accept the world's view of what Christianity is, we are wrapping up the good news of Jesus Christ and hiding it. That is what Satan would have us to do. True Christianity has no place for false views such as: naturalism, legalism, mysticism or pluralism.

### Fast Facts

In our book, *Cultural Captives*, we report several statistical facts providing insight into this week's study. These statistics represent the average result from four national surveys of American religious thought and behavior.

- How many emerging adults believe in religious pluralism, i.e. there are many ways to get to heaven. Of those who are not born-again, over 90% believe in religious pluralism. Of those who claim to be born-again, over 75% believe in religious pluralism.
- When we add in other questions related to their religious beliefs, e.g. possibility of miracles, not picking and choosing your religious beliefs, the coming of a judgment day, the number of born-again, emerging adults with a biblical worldview and a set of distinctly Christian religious beliefs drops down from 30% to 19%.

Based on their extensive survey and interview results, Christian Smith, author of *Souls in Transition: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of Emerging Adults*, claims that liberal Protestant theology has become the defacto belief system for the majority of emerging adults whether their backgrounds are Catholic, Jewish, black Protestant or evangelical Protestant. He states, "Many emerging adults would be quite comfortable with the kind of liberal faith described by Niebuhr as being about 'a God without wrath [who] brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment through the ministrations of a Christ without a cross.'"

### Sermon Video:

Spiritual Growth Hormone

[vimeo.com/probe/sgh](https://vimeo.com/probe/sgh)



One of the ways Satan attempts to deceive us is by taking us captive to the philosophies of men. We should not be taken captive by the false views of the current age, particularly pluralism and naturalism.



## Suggested Sermon Ideas

### The Danger of False Views

#### I. Introduction

##### A. Biblical Mind

1. You might remember the famous slogan: “A mind is a terrible thing to waste.”
2. Many scholars believe that Christians no longer engage the mind.
3. Harry Blamires: “There is no longer a Christian Mind.”
4. He stated back in the 1960s. Even more true today

##### B. Non-biblical mindset

1. Christians often retreat to the sacred/secular dichotomy.
2. Nancy Pearcey says we have a personal, private set of values divorced from the secular, public sector.
3. She calls it “cultural captivity.”

##### C. Custom faith – Probe-Barna survey

1. Extensive survey of born-again adults between ages of 18 and 40.
2. Found that of these born-again Christians, one third (32%) had a biblical worldview.
3. That means they had orthodox views on six questions about God, Jesus, salvation, morality, Satan, and the Bible.
4. However, when you asked this group of born-again Christians (with a biblical worldview additional questions), the number dropped again.
5. Only half answered could answer questions about Jesus, science, world religions, and biblical accuracy in way that was consistent with the Bible.
6. The numbers dropped again when we asked about whether they lived their lives in a consistent manner with biblical principles.
7. When you extrapolate these percentages over a few decades, you can see the ominous implications for the future.

#### II. Four False Worldviews

##### A. Naturalism

“See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.” Colossians 2:8

1. Naturalism is the belief that only natural laws and forces operate in the world.
2. The scientific basis for naturalism is Darwinism, although naturalism as a philosophy existed before Darwin.
3. No Divine intervention, say evolutionists, was necessary to give us the world. Naturalism is the belief that only natural laws and forces operate in the world.
4. The scientific basis for naturalism is Darwinism, although naturalism as a

philosophy existed before Darwin.

5. A naturalistic view of knowledge assumes that religious ideas and moral absolutes are not true.
6. Concepts like truth, honesty, integrity, and morality are fraudulent ideas and concepts. They are merely symbolic but not true in any real sense.
7. One atheist refers to Darwinism as a “universal acid.” This is an allusion to a children’s riddle about an acid so corrosive that it eats through everything including the flask. Darwinism eats through every academic field of study and destroys ethics.
8. We shouldn’t put Christianity beneath the elementary principles of evolution or beneath the philosophy of naturalism.
9. In the end, we would deny absolute truth, human dignity and purpose.
10. George Gaylord Simpson - “Man is the result of a purposeless and natural process that did not have him in mind.”
11. Psalm 139 reminds us that God knit us in our mother’s womb. God says He has a purpose for us.
12. He determined so many aspects of your life: birth, death, days ordained for you. The Bible says that God “appointed times and boundaries” (Acts 17:26).

## B. Legalism

“Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.” Colossians 2:16-17

1. Legalism is any system of morality, religion, or philosophy that imposes God’s righteousness in the form of rules and regulations.
2. It is an attempt to produce righteousness apart from God.
3. When we give people an ever expanding “to-do list” that is uncoupled from God’s power, we wear people down and ultimately drive them away from the gospel.
4. Legalism in the Church: be righteous, be a good witness, dress modestly, avoid addictions.
5. Legalism in the World: be green, end hunger, help the poor, be a good citizen.
6. Danger of legalism - belief that we can do all of this in the flesh and yet be righteous.
7. Isaiah 64:6 - “we are all like an unclean thing. And all our righteousness are like filthy rags.”
8. Legalism also drives people away from the gospel. Implies you must be a particular type of person in order to be a Christian.
9. Another form of legalism is the practice of picking and choosing only parts of God’s truth that you feel is applicable to you.
10. Our survey found that a majority (51%) of them said: “it is okay to pick and choose their religious beliefs but to follow biblical precepts and principles, neither adding nor subtracting to them.”

### C. Mysticism

“Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.” Colossians 2:18-19

1. Mysticism rejects rational thought as a means of understanding revelation.
2. There were mystery religions that existed at the time Paul was writing to them.
3. He was writing to a church with both Jews and Gentiles. Many young Christians brought pagan ideas into the church.
4. Mysticism is quite prevalent outside the church and can have a strong cultural influence on Christians.
5. Many best-selling books promote Eastern philosophy or the New Age Movement. Promote that there are many paths to God.
6. Probe-Barna survey found that over 70 percent of born-again young adults (18-40) rejected the idea that only one religion is true.
7. Less than half believe Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven.
8. Mysticism is a growing threat to the orthodox teachings of biblical Christianity.

### D. Asceticism

“If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations—“Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch”—according to human precepts and teachings? These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.” Colossians 2:20-23

1. Asceticism is the belief that we need to live a life of extreme self-denial or self-abasement in order to release our soul from bondage in our body.
2. The philosophy was found among the Jews (Essenes) and the Greeks (Stoics) at the time Paul was writing to the Colossians.
3. The false teachers of that day promoted the idea that since humans are material, they cannot approach God because He is spiritual.
4. So they taught that you go through spiritual entities that move you from the human plane to the Divine plane of existence.
5. They saw angels as intermediaries. That also explains why many of them worshipped angels.
6. It also explains why they denied the Incarnation (that Jesus was also a man).
7. Is it wrong to deny yourself? No.
8. Jesus told His disciples: “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it” (Luke 9:23-24).

### III. Three Views of Truth

#### A. Changing views of truth

1. Not so long ago, people tended to believe in truth with a capital “T” based upon a belief in God or at least based upon a belief in moral absolutes.
2. Today more people believe in truth with a small “t” - you have your own personal truth.

#### B. Premodernism

1. This is a God-centered view of the universe that believes in divine revelation.
2. Most of the ancient world had this view of truth and believed that truth is absolute.
3. Remember the TV program slogan: “The truth is out there.”

#### C. Modernism

1. This is a God-centered view of the universe that believes in divine revelation
2. By the time of the Enlightenment, Western culture was moving to modernism. It was influenced by the scientific revolution and began to reject a belief in God.
3. People are less likely to see truth as absolute but believe it is relative.

#### D. Postmodernism

1. A prominent view of truth today is what many call postmodernism.
2. There is a complete loss of hope for truth.
3. Truth is not discovered; truth is created.
4. Truth doesn't exist except as the individuals wants it to exist.
5. Truth is a social construct: there is no absolute truth.
6. Postmodernist reject claims from anyone who believes there is something that is true for everyone.
7. They are skeptical about being able to even arrive at an absolute truth.

#### E. Jesus and truth

1. John 14:6 - “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.”
2. Matthew 7:28 - “But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. ‘Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?’”
3. Paul reminded Christians (Ephesians 4:21) that “truth is in Jesus.”
4. Our confidence does not rest in modernism or postmodernism.
5. Our confidence is in the person of Jesus Christ who was and is truth.