

We seemed to have gotten a little off track in my attempt to present the concept of a world view last week. Evidently I didn't explain the premise of it very clearly, so, in honor of Super Bowl Sunday, I'm going to back up and punt and to present it better.

Consider the following:

All of us have some type of a god that receives our time and attention; that guides our thoughts, actions and view of the world; that gives us a certain set of expectations and guidelines; and that we look to give us an idea of who and what we are and what gives our lives their definition or significance, if any. By defining ourselves by our god's standards and following their expectations and guidelines we establish our world view and our conduct.

The god may or not be seen as a god in the traditional sense. Our god can be God, Allah, the Force, nature, a book, a TV show, ourselves, our education, a person, an ideology, the universe, even a habit or an addiction. Atheists have their own gods.

The basic world view questions whose importance or insignificance bogged us down last week are important because how we answer the first three helps define who our god actually is and who our god actually is determines the answers of the last two.

Where we got side tracked last week is when we looked at the questions from too broad a view. The questions are ones that we must each answer for ourselves, not for the rest of the populations of the world or for the ancient civilizations or for the young earth creationists or for the skeptics or for anyone else. When I asked "you," I meant exactly that, how do each of you individually and personally look at those questions and to what god do they lead you?

If they lead you to the Almighty God, maker of heaven and earth, who has chosen to reveal Himself through His Word, both written and incarnate, then we're ready to consider in more depth the questions in your

handouts. If they lead you to some other god, then you've got more important questions to answer than the ones we're going to examine.

Before we proceed, let us also establish that we will not get a consensus or unanimous choice and that's all right. These matters have been debated for thousands of years before we were born and will be debated for thousands of years after we're dead, if the Lord tarries.

Let us also consider why we're even tackling these questions:

1) How we answer the questions we'll be asking is how we'll make sense and meaning out of the problems and calamities that will befall us and everyone we know as we go through life.

2) Just like a fire escape or emergency plan, the time to think about these things is before we're in the middle of something that raises the questions.

3) How we answer the questions now when it's just an intellectual or academic exercise will determine what sort of ministry and comfort we provide to others when calamity strikes.

4) The proper place to discuss this question of pain and suffering and misfortune is here in the privacy of our class, not when we're with someone who is undergoing a trial and tribulation, because much of our debate really isn't helpful to a person living through suffering and they probably don't want to hear it. Often their questions aren't really questions.