

WORLDVIEWS, CONFLICT AND THE CLARITY OF SCRIPTURE (VARIOUS)
SYLVANIA SUNDAY NIGHTS (4/7/2013)

There are disagreements on these things.

How are we to understand this? We are all pulling from the same Book. How can there be disagreement? Should this disagreement cause us to abandon our study of the end altogether?

1. Nobody is neutral.

From the time of the Fall, hostility against God is the controlling principle separating believer and unbeliever.

Everyone has a worldview, a grid through which we try to make sense of the world.

2. Christians aren't neutral either.

You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is *enmity with God*? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself *an enemy of God*.
(James 4:4)

Disagreements between Christians do not undermine the clarity and reliability of Scripture.

Nor should they dampen our desire to discuss and test our understandings against the authority of God's Word.

3. Scripture is unique.

Unlike a textbook, Scripture is unique in that it contains everything we need God to tell us for salvation, for trusting Him perfectly, and for obeying Him perfectly.

But not everything is given to us by spoon. We have to struggle through them.

“All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all; yet those things which are **necessary to be known, believed and observed for salvation**, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of Scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, **in a due use of ordinary means**, may attain to a sufficient understanding of them.” 2nd LBC, Ch. 1, ¶7.

If I love Scripture, it should also affect my view of my brother with whom I may disagree.

We can never fully understand any single thing about God. But, we can know something about God’s love, power, wisdom, His plans for the end, etc.

We’re not going to run out of things to learn about Him. We not going to plumb the depths of meaning in what He’s done in time and space.

He’s infinitely great, and for all eternity, we will be learning more about Him.

4. Pan-millennialism is not pleasing to God

Given that we all have biases imported from our past, teaching we have received, emotionally based, etc.; and, given that the clear things in Scripture are what is necessary for salvation; and, given that disagreements over doctrinal matters that are not of first importance tempt us to treat each other in an un-Christ-like manner; and, given that we will never understand God’s plan for the end fully anyway, isn’t it more prudent to punt on thinking through what we believe about the end?

Even though we’ll never get to the end of God, it pleases Him for us to increase in our knowledge of Him and what He has revealed to us.

Does my eschatological worldview line up with what I understand Scripture to teach through the use of ordinary means? Have I used ordinary means to understand Scripture in this area or have I decided to be unpleasing to God?

Do I trust the illuminating power of the Holy Spirit enough to begin assessing what I truly believe about these things and give me grace to submit to the authority of His Word if I need to in kindness and humility with my brothers and sisters who may not agree with me on all the secondary things? (Eph. 4:11-16)