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CLEAR VISION

HOW THE BIBLE TEACHES US TO VIEW THE WORLD
ANDY DANIELL, PHD

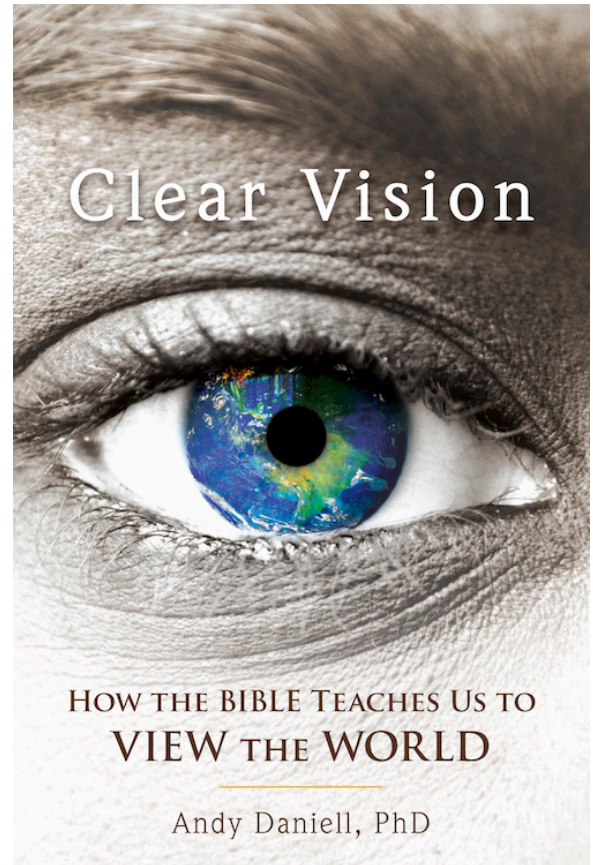
If the Bible is inspired of God, it must have some way to show itself trustworthy. And if the Bible is inspired of God, it must have applications in nearly all areas of life. In *Clear Vision*, Dr. Andy Daniell works from these two premises to explain the foundation and application of a biblical worldview. In the process, he dismantles misconceptions about the Bible and its authority and gives Christians the tools to develop their thinking on politics, economics, science, and various social challenges.

A comprehensive worldview taken from the Bible is about more than moral behavior. It explains the ultimate origin and purpose of everything while providing the framework we are to use in understanding ourselves and the world. Many Christians are unsure whether the Bible can be shown to be what it claims to be—the inspired Word of God. Others struggle to apply its directives to all areas of their lives. *Clear Vision* unravels these issues, explaining how the Bible judges itself, teaches us to examine the world, and clarifies how to view the world through the lens of the Bible’s teachings. This includes how to examine

- the Bible itself,
- political parties,
- capitalism and communism,
- science and medicine,
- church problems, and
- other issues and challenges.

Most biblical worldview books are intensely philosophical and theoretical in nature. *Clear Vision*, on the other hand, gives specific, real-world applications of the Bible’s worldview on a field-by-field basis, using examples pulled from the headlines. The result is accessible and engaging to the layman, but still retains the depth and rigorous underpinnings associated with more philosophical worldview writings. Christian readers will come away with a better understanding of what they believe and how to defend it.

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About the Author

Andy Daniell, PhD

Dr. Andy Daniell is the senior minister at a growing church near Atlanta, Georgia, and a lifelong student of the Bible. He also maintains his position as president and CEO in the analytical consulting company he founded over a decade ago. He serves on the board of trustees for Christian City—a multi-million-dollar nonprofit organization. His service on the board included a year as vice chairman, between 2008 and 2009, and as board chairman from 2010 through 2014. In the past, he has worked for Fortune 500 companies and conducted research at one of the United States' national laboratories. He earned his PhD when he was twenty-five and had his dissertation published as a book. His interests across business and theology have come through in his other writings as well, as he's been published in sources as diverse as *The American Banker* and *Christian Standard Magazine*. Andy has been married to his wife, Tina, for twenty-eight years and counting.

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Suggested Interview Questions

For Dr. Andy Daniell, author of

Clear Vision

How the Bible Teaches Us to View the World

Q: A main premise of your book is that the Bible details out how it will prove itself and how that methodology should be expanded to understanding the world around us. How does the Bible prove itself, and how does it teach us to view the world?

A: As God directs Moses in the fifth book of the Bible, we are to qualify religious texts by whether their explanations and predictions turn out to be correct. In Deuteronomy 18, God actually had Moses tell the people that He knows they will need a way to measure all the writings which will flow forth over time claiming to be God's word. God very definitely says in the Bible that He created everything and knows the end of things from the beginning. Therefore, all predictions God's true prophets make and all the explanations of nature God provides for us will prove accurate (and, of course, in the Bible, they did).

In other places in the Bible, the concept is expanded beyond just religion. Prophets such as Moses, Ezekiel, and Jesus knew that humans have a grave tendency to decide what we prefer first (based on emotion or desire or prior belief) and then seek confirmation while ignoring contradictory information. Therefore, we are to view the world in the same way that we review sacred literature: test and keep what works or what is true and dispose of that which proves false (no matter how dear we may have held the notion initially). Bible followers were the world's first truly logical and rational people. A biblical worldview requires of Christians that we continue to be logical and fact-based, ever fighting the human tendencies to base beliefs or choices off of emotions, traditions, or prejudices.

Q: You say a biblical worldview is about more than just what the Bible says is right and wrong. How so?

A: The Bible doesn't just give us a list of commandments, but provides a framework for understanding the world around us. There are absolute right and

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wrongs listed in the Bible, but also insights about human nature and the pitfalls related to our nature that we need to be aware of and watch out for. And we are instructed to make many non-religious decisions based on the actual outcome and efficacy of the proposed or competing solutions. Having this information as part of our worldview helps us choose the best political and economic options, for example, even if no particular option is supported or opposed in the Bible per se. There are proverbs about the best way to structure our financial life and assistance with maintaining not just a healthy spiritual life but healthy emotional and relational lives as well. We are taught in the Scriptures about the source of human evil and sins, and having these elements instruct our worldview helps us build the best social and justice policies, along with influencing our thoughts on psychology and many other things.

When we understand the reasons the Bible gives for why we often align ourselves with theories, philosophies, and systems which can be proven false or harmful (because we are seeking power, approval, validation, righteousness), it helps us to avoid that all-too-familiar human tragedy of standing against what is truly beneficial.

Q: Is the Bible to be taken literally?

A: Words such as literalism and fundamentalism have been so distorted they have little use anymore. But yes, there are portions of the Bible which are literal history and are absolutely meant to be taken as such—the books Genesis through Nehemiah in the Old Testament, for example. But there is also poetic language in the Bible, the heavy use of symbolism, and some obvious hyperbole. The stanzas in the Song of Solomon and the symbols in Revelation are not meant to be taken literally.

Q: Does a biblical worldview compel one to vote Republican or Democrat?

A: The familiar phrase “Religious Right” has many people thinking that those with a biblical worldview only vote or are only supposed to vote for Republicans. There has certainly been a strong association between Evangelicals and the Republican Party, starting at the party’s creation. The Republican Party was founded to stop

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the spread of slavery in America and quickly changed its platform to eliminating slavery altogether. Of course, that fight had originally been led, in both Europe and America, by Bible-based Christians. Decades later we were pushed away from certain elements of the Democratic Party as it implemented and maintained what are known as the Jim Crow Laws in the southern United States, restricting the rights of blacks. Today, of course, abortion is the issue that slavery and segregation used to be. However, a strictly biblical worldview does not call for us to be exclusively for either party. Because of how the Bible defines human nature, Christians have concerns about one group holding unanimous, unchecked power. The ideal political mix for us would actually be 50% of the government being Republican and 50% being under the control of the Democrats.

Q: Give us an example or two of how a biblical worldview influences your thinking about social policy.

A: A main theme of the Bible in both the Old and New Testaments is that God's people must look out for and defend those who simply cannot defend themselves, even when it is socially unpopular to do so and we gain nothing personally from it. Therefore, just as Bible-believing Christians established the first orphanages, led the attack on slavery, worked to reform prisons, and helped women secure their right to vote, today we feel the need to stand firm against abortion. The attacks on us are not as vigorous and hateful as they were over the slavery issue, but there is still resistance. As my book details out, a biblical worldview inspires views on issues as far reaching as immigration (to which we are favorably inclined) and a stand on the mortgage deduction in the U.S. tax code (to which we are opposed because of its structural unfairness). Understanding what the Bible teaches us about human nature and how the world works also makes us strong supporters of both democracy and capitalism.

Q: You list in the book what would be the Bible's view of some of America's challenges today. What is the basis for what you see as our challenges here in this country?

A: All of America's specific challenges that I mention in the book center around our treatment of those who can't vote and/or can't contribute money to the political

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process. Though America is a noble country, some of these individuals are simply being left behind as politicians pander for money and votes and non-government, non-secular options remain restricted. As a few examples, Christians must lead the charge of all Americans in standing up for the rights of the unborn, the educational opportunities of minority students in failing schools, and the opportunities available for cognitively challenged adults.

Q: You list in the book what would be the Bible's view of the church today as well. What are some issues about which the Bible would warn the modern church?

A: Jesus warned people very sternly while He was teaching and preaching on the earth that we must obey God's word rather than the traditions of man. I list out in the book a few practices that I believe should be reexamined along those criteria. In the last few hours of His life, Jesus spent a considerable amount of time praying for the unity of His people and His church. Unity seemed a great deal more important to Him then than it does to us now, and church leaders need to be challenged to aggressively address it. A final example would be the current infatuation with end-times prophecy. I'm afraid it has become too economically profitable for church leaders to focus on the issue. The Apostle Peter explains to us in the Bible, however, that because we know the world will end we should be more concerned about the lives we live now than about when it will end or who will be involved.

Q: Were there some misunderstandings you wanted to clear up in writing this book?

A: The biggest misunderstanding that has developed in the secular world over the past few decades is that Christianity is at odds with science and technology. The Bible spawned science and technology; it actually requires Christians to engage in science and technology. In Genesis, God tells Adam that he is to subdue the earth (meaning, among other things, engage in scientific inquiries) and have dominion over the earth (meaning, in part, create and deploy technology). To make these things possible, God assures us in a couple of different ways in that first book of the Bible that His creation will operate in a systematic way, in a way which could

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be discovered and documented. It was a deeply committed Christian after all (Francis Bacon) who was intimately familiar with the Bible who established the process that we today call the Scientific Method. Those who didn't base their worldview on the Bible had never hit upon the idea of accumulating knowledge by testing to see what proved true and what proved false. Science and technology didn't replace religion in man's life. They were given birth by biblical religion because they were and are required by the Bible. Those with a biblical worldview support scientific research, modern medical advancements, and things such as genetically modified plants.

We are not at all concerned that new discoveries will invalidate anything contained in the Bible. While we can't support macroevolution because there has never been a natural occurrence or successful experiment where one type of species changed into a different species, we do hold to the empirically documented micro-evolutionary concept of survival of the fittest, which was implied to a degree early in the Bible thousands of years ago.

Q: What are some facts in your book that you think people will find surprising?

A: For many it might be the fact that the Bible was the first document to state that the earth was round or that it floats in space. Too many people don't understand that the Bible was the first to mention what science later discovered as the First Law of Thermodynamics, the Second Law of Thermodynamics, and the hydrologic cycle.

For some it would be the fact that those with a biblical worldview should be more concerned when the government actively supports religion than atheists are. Many people don't understand today that the phrase "separation of church and state" is in none of America's founding documents and that the First Amendment to the Constitution was written to protect churches from the government, not to prevent churches from being involved in the public square. Some are surprised to learn that Christians are not asking that a law be created to prohibit everything the Bible teaches is a sin. Our worldview teaches that the purpose of the government is to prevent people from harming one another (physically, financially, etc.) and

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those are really the only types of laws which we support the government implementing.

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