

SIN AND SALVATION IN THE THREE CULTURES OF MAN

Introduction – From ancient times until the present, there are three basic cultural perspectives. Societies are built on fear-based, shame-based, and guilt-based worldviews.

A. The three elements of future cultural development are there from our first sin.

Genesis 2:25-3:10

1. The Law/command of God was clear to the original couple, but they chose to violate it. This resulted in their being guilty before God.
2. They were not only innocent to begin with but felt no shame. Their rebellion led to their attempt to hide from God because of their shame.
3. Because of their sin they moved from a trusting relationship to one of fear.
4. The rest of the story of the Bible is how God intends to bring salvation to cultures built on these three reactions to sin.

B. Guilt-based societies are organized around the rule of Law.

1. We are either innocent or guilty according to our interpretation of the Law.
2. We desire to be right/righteous before the Law and not guilty and worthy of punishment.
3. Christ's substitutionary death on our behalf allows us to be forgiven of our guilt.

Romans 3:21-26

C. Shame-based societies are organized around conformity to community values.

1. We are either acting honorably or shamefully according to a specific group's expectations.
2. One seeks to be honorable and not bring shame on oneself or one's identity group. Shame results in humiliation and exclusion.
3. Christ came to save us from our shameful situation and give us honor and glory as adopted children of God.

Galatians 4:3-7

- D. Fear-based societies are organized around appeasing the unseen spiritual realm.
1. We seek to be blessed by the unseen controlling powers and not to be cursed.
 2. The goal is to gain power to overcome unseen forces which seek to do us harm.
 3. Christ in his life, death, and resurrection defeated Satan and his demonic dominion to set us free from its control.

Hebrews 2:14-15

Conclusion – Every culture of mankind, whether ancient or modern, is a mixture of these three principles of guilt, shame or fear. Usually one of the three is the dominant theme in a specific culture. God has addressed the need for salvation from sin in specific ways that relate differently to each culture.

Discussion Questions

1. Which is the most influential worldview in America? (guilt, fear, or a shame-based culture)
2. How do you see these three perspectives affecting us?
3. How does Jesus address our fear, shame, and guilt?