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Q&A#49 Appeals to Natural Law and Scripture and the Effectiveness of Jordan Peterson

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Today's question:

"I guess I'm intrigued about a couple of things.

First, do you really think it's the case that there is actually any kind of moral consensus in principle among people? The kind of thing that lets pro-Natural Law folk say, "Everyone knows that murder is wrong" when, actually, a glance at our history raises at least some questions about this.

I guess this is prompted in part by the fact that what passes for sexual ethics in the public square is now moving so fast that even I feel old-fashioned, and (more to the point) I can remember a day not so long ago when "Everyone would have thought" that things now accepted as normal would have been described as abhorrent and unnatural.

Doesn't this ethical slide raise at least some questions about the stability of any kind of NL ethic?

And second, a question from the other side of the coin. Shouldn't Jordan Peterson's remarkable success in making arguments in the public square in part on the basis of an unashamed appeal to the Christian Scriptures give us rather greater optimism that some seem to have about the credibility of making such an appeal to people who aren't themselves Bible-believing Christians?

Might it not be possible to make a kind of (presuppositionally?) self-validating appeal to an unacknowledged source of religious authority like the Bible, in a way that doesn't rely on a prior commitment to its authority, but rather generates precisely that commitment by the cogency of the appeal and the argument as a whole?"

The video on biblicism that is referenced can be seen here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LrTyM29XRNU>.

If you have any questions, you can leave them on my Curious Cat account:
<https://curiouscat.me/zugzwanged>.

If you have enjoyed these videos, please tell your friends and consider supporting me on Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/zugzwanged>.

My new Soundcloud account is here: <https://soundcloud.com/alastairadversaria>. You can also listen to the audio of these episodes on iTunes:
<https://itunes.apple.com/gb/podcast/alastairs-adversaria/id1416351035?mt=2>.

Transcript

Welcome back. Today I'm responding to a question that a friend sent me by email in response to a video that I recorded with the Davenant Institute a while back on the subject of Biblicism. I'll link that video in the notes.

I guess I'm intrigued about a couple of things. First, do you really think it's the case that there is any kind of moral consensus in principle among people? The kind of thing that lets pro-natural law folks say everyone knows that murder is wrong, when actually a glance at our history raises at least some questions about this. I guess this is prompted in part by the fact that what passes for sexual ethics in the public square is now moving so fast that even I feel old-fashioned, and more to the point I can remember a day not so long ago when everyone would have thought that things now accepted as normal would have been described as abhorrent and unnatural.

Doesn't this ethical slide raise at least some questions about the stability of any kind of natural law ethic? And second, a question from the other side of the coin, shouldn't Jordan Peterson's remarkable success in making arguments in the public square in part on the basis of an unashamed appeal to the Christian scriptures give us rather greater optimism than some seem to have about the credibility of making such an appeal to people who aren't themselves Bible-believing Christians? Might it not be possible to make a kind of presuppositionally self-validating appeal to an unacknowledged source of religious authority like the Bible, in a way that doesn't rely on a prior commitment to its authority but rather generates precisely that commitment by the cogency of the appeal and the argument as a whole? Some good questions. At the outset we should talk about what is meant by natural law. Natural law isn't a matter of speculative reason.

It's not a set of principles that are rationally derived from reflection upon the creation. That's not what natural law really is. Natural law is more a matter of practical reason.

It's a matter of skillful living. It's a matter of acting well. It's the wisdom to live effectively and well within the world.

Natural law is about the grain of human nature, what direction that grain runs in. It's

about the natural order that God has placed us within and how we live within that in a way that is effective and good and enables us to rise to our full stature. Natural law is not primarily a set of arguments.

It's not primarily a set of rationally devised principles. Rather, it is an order that exists within reality that is operative within us as a sort of natural form of directivity of human nature. As human nature naturally flows in this direction, it's diverted in certain respects, but it naturally moves in this direction when it is operating right.

There is a knowledge of that that can develop as we learn to live well, as we develop in wisdom over the course of our lives, and as we engage in the sort of feedback loop of reflection upon action, upon the world and the objects within it, and upon other human beings. Wisdom is the thing that corresponds to natural law. We need to think about natural law not primarily as a set of arguments then.

Natural law is more about a certain set of facts that exist within the world, and that can inform our arguments in certain respects. It can be something that enables us to have more confidence in our ability to make appeal to people because we know that this is the grain of their nature too. That if you believe in human nature as a thing, you can make appeal to human nature.

You can look at things from across human cultures and you can say, we all have the same human nature. And on the basis of that shared human nature, you can speak effectively to people. You can bring the insights of the Greeks.

You can bring the insights of people of all sorts of different cultures to bear upon our current situation. It's one of the premises of the humanities that there is such a thing as human nature. And as we study great literature, as we study history, as we study the arts, we can come to a knowledge of that human nature that is relevant to our particular situation.

There is a grain of human nature. There is a reality to human nature. And there is an art of living well.

And we can learn that art of living well as we engage with philosophers, as we engage with the literature of scriptures, we engage with wise counsellors. And as we engage in the arts and the skills of life, we can develop what it means to live well, to live with the grain of human nature. Now, everyone has some sort of inkling of this, but many people fail to rise to their full stature.

Most people, everyone to some extent, fails to do that. But many others, many people live in a deeply stunted way. They resist the natural law, the law of their natures and struggle against it.

And natural law is talking first and foremost about the fact of human nature, the fact of

the order of the world. And this order is not just a mute and an impotent reality. It's a reality that is operative within us.

It's part of the natural directivity of human nature, that human nature naturally moves in this direction. Now, sometimes it can be diverted or it can be distorted, but it naturally moves in this direction. So, for instance, when it comes to procreation, there's a natural ordering of the human body to male and female bodies to each other.

And there's a natural ordering of the spirits of male and female to each other as well. And that can be distorted and lost in certain cases. It can be damaged in certain respects and disordered.

But fundamentally, there is this order and we can come to an acquaintance and a knowledge of it. And we can come to a knowledge of the art of living well in this context. Now, when we're reading something like the book of Proverbs, the book of Proverbs is very much about getting into an acquaintance with the order of the world, with the order of human action, with what it means to live effectively and skillfully within the world and to live a life that is good in which you rise to your full stature.

Now, there's a different question when we come to the question of the effectiveness of natural law as a source of persuasion. If someone is resisting their nature, then it's very hard to persuade them of their nature. It's very hard to present arguments.

People can resist these arguments very easily in certain cases if they're stubborn enough. But yet what natural law does tell us is that there is that nature there. And if people are open to it, if people are willing to listen and open their ears, it will have a resonance with them.

When we speak these truths about human nature, it will resonate with people. And often the very reason people have to resist so hard is because these truths do resonate with them. They know that there's something true about the fact that homosexuality isn't natural, that it's not part of the natural order, that there's something of the, there's something dysfunctional about it, something that's gone awry, that is disordered.

Now, even if they can think of it very much as an exception to the rule that isn't necessarily sinful, they should know that there's something that is different about it, something that is a departure from the norm, that's a departure from the rule, that something natural has gone awry. And in many ways, this is something that's seen in the attempts to obliterate categories of the natural. And so we'll talk, I recently discussed, or a year or so ago, I wrote a piece in response to Bill Nye's discussion of sex and sexuality, pointing out that almost all these realities, whether it's our sex, whether it's sexuality, whether it's sexual intercourse, whether it is something like the institution of marriage, all of these things have as their very heart, the reality around which they're oriented, is the fact that humanity is a sexually reproducing species.

The fact that we are male and female and that that is ordered towards the bearing of children, that sexual acts, each one may not necessarily lead to the bearing of children, but the sexual practice will generally lead to the bearing of children. And that's its natural end. And once that is recognised, we have this big fact in the middle of the room, this big fact of procreation and the fact that sex is ordered towards that, that being male and female is ordered to that, that being joined together in marriage is ordered towards that, that having sexuality is ordered towards that.

And once that is recognised, so many of these things that are dislodged from that reality and just treated as detached facts in themselves, it becomes obvious that they are oriented towards something, that there's a grain of humanity and that grain of humanity has a telos, it has a purpose, it has an end. And this is something that most of us have a deep sense of, a natural sense of. Some of us are resisting this fact, but it has a resonance with each one of us.

And there are ways of recognising the power and the grip that the natural fact of human nature has upon people and to speak to that, to speak to people in a way that gets a grip upon who they really are. Now, one of the dangers of a certain sort of presuppositionalist apologetics is that it treats ontology, it treats our nature, it treats reality as if it were sort of neutral. Now, presuppositionalists will naturally object to this.

They'll say that's far from the case. That's precisely what we're resisting. That's precisely what we're not doing.

It's other people that are treating creation and other things like that as neutral. But the problem is that what they do is they render creation itself impotent. Creation itself is mute.

So our beings do not have a voice, do not have a natural inclination, do not have a natural tendency, do not have an ordering and a directivity that is God given. And so what you end up with is God is, maybe this is just because of the coming in of sin, or maybe it's just because of nature itself is really tractable to whatever we want to, construction we want to put upon it. But what you end up with is ultimately what gives order to reality is God's word because reality has no ordering, true ordering of itself.

Natural law is an insistence that God in his creation gives that creation an ordering and that when we come to God's word, what we see within God's word is an attunement of the human being to reality. And so when we engage with reality in the light of God's word, we can see things that we could not see otherwise. But what we are seeing is reality.

The content of that is not primarily something that's given by revelation, but it's given by reality itself. So when Solomon is given wisdom, what he is given is the capacity to understand reality, to be rightly attuned to reality, something that begins with the fear of

the Lord. And when he can be rightly attuned to reality, he can see things within reality itself.

And people who care about wisdom, who are open to wisdom on any level, can recognise that Solomon has perception, has an ability to see the way that reality works, that he knows the art of living well. And they come to him for counsel. It is not a matter of revelation that's detached from the natural ordering of the world.

Rather, God is giving Solomon the wisdom with which to perceive and come to grips with that natural ordering. So this is a different sort of thing from presuppositionalism. Presuppositionalism very much focuses upon your starting point.

The presupposition in terms of which everything else will either make sense or be completely inconsistent. That's very much a coherentist epistemology where everything kind of hangs together. If you get one thing wrong, everything else collapses.

But yeah, that's not the way things are in the world. People can have a genuine knowledge of reality in certain of its aspects without having a true knowledge of the whole. People can have certain forms of wisdom without having it properly related to God's truth.

And then there are many Christians who are quite foolish in many respects. They do not have the art of living well. So what we need to do is recognise that there is this knowledge that's found in engagement with reality.

And that knowledge is gained in part through reflecting upon God's law. Now, reflecting upon God's law, not because this is a special sort of secret content that explains the ordering of reality, the proper way that reality should be ordered in a way that imposes an order upon a reality that does not have its inherent order. Rather, it's a way of attuning the human being to reality in a way that recognises reality has an order to it and then enables the human being to see that order more fully and rightly than someone who is not being given the gift of the law.

So what we see in Scripture is that natural law is a premise for so much of what exists within Scripture. The whole concept of wisdom rests upon this. If there is not some sort of natural law, then wisdom starts to... it doesn't make sense in the same way.

Wisdom makes sense because there is this natural law order that can be pointed to that we can recognise human nature, for instance. And we can speak of human nature in a way that will resonate with people who are open to learning about nature, learning about the world, who want to be attuned to the world. They will recognise in what the person who has been rightly attuned to reality, they will recognise something that's true.

And then the Christian should be able to recognise in much secular wisdom that they are working with a reality that isn't neutral. They're working in God's world and to the extent

that they are open to that reality, they are wise within it and have learned the art of living well, they'll be able to teach us a lot. There are certain things that they will always fall short of because they are not directed towards the primary end.

They are not directed to the fear of the Lord. And for that reason, there is a way in which they'll always be in some sense out of tune with reality, but they will have many inclinations and aspects of wisdom that we can learn from nonetheless. And I think the case of Jordan Peterson actually illustrates this point.

Jordan Peterson is not appealing to the authority of scripture. Not appealing to the authority of scripture at all. Rather, what he's appealing to is the wisdom of scripture.

And the wisdom of scripture is seen in the fact that here is the world and we know that it has this order. We can look at all these different cultures and these cultures can teach us things about the world. So he goes to Greek mythology and he goes to other forms of Native American mythology and all these other forms of mythology and they teach us something true about the world.

But then when you come to scripture, there's something particularly insightful about scripture. Scripture is also engaging in this work of wisdom, teaching us about the world, but it attunes us to reality in a deeper way. And what he's recognizing there is not some authority that tells us how to order the world.

But rather he's telling us that there is this, within this book, we see something that is descriptive of the way that the world is ordered. And this is something that we see often within places like Genesis that Peterson gives a lot of attention to. Genesis does not tell us, for instance, what men and women should do primarily.

Rather, it gives us a descriptive account of the way the world is. And when Christ appeals to this order, what he does not say, in the beginning, God said that they should be male and female and that a man should leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. Rather, he appeals to the fact that God created the world that way, that this is the order that God created.

That is not the same thing as the divine command, a divine imposition of an order upon reality. Rather, it's the reality itself. And if you reflect upon that reality well, if you're attentive to that reality, then you will gain the art of living well within it.

And so the art of living well is one that will, in which we'll be attuned to that, that we'll recognize, for instance, that reality is male and female in the way that scripture describes it. And Peterson's appeal is powerful precisely because it resonates with people, because people have, natural law is operative within people, because people have this natural directivity to their nature. Human nature is a thing.

And because human nature is a thing, when you speak the truth about the order of the

world, it will resonate with people. It will resonate with people who are open to it, who are not resisting it, who are not trying to suppress it. Now, how do we understand the fact that so many things that have been virtually a human consensus before this point, particularly in the area of sexuality, are no longer the case, are no longer that consensus has collapsed? Well, again, we need to think about human nature and we need to think about the feedback loop of living within the world.

There are a number of things that have fallen away that have changed about our situation that mean that our nature has increasingly become opaque to us. We do not understand our nature and we struggle with that. I mean, so much of human society, of Western society now is struggling with the fact that men and women are different in their tendencies, different in their very being, that we are ordered in different ways.

That what it means to be fathers and mothers, that these are different things, that it matters, that the different parts that are played in procreation and in parenting. All these sorts of things are strange to people, that there is a symbolic difference between male and female. Now, most societies, this is second nature to them.

They know this. This is actually first nature. They know that this is the reality.

They know that this is normal, that this is what human nature is. And we struggle with that for various reasons. We struggle with it in part because we have normalised sterility.

We have normalised the use of contraception. Now, contraception is not necessarily wrong in itself, I don't believe. I don't believe the Catholic position is right here.

But the Catholic position focuses very much upon discrete acts of sexual intercourse and the fact that they are ordered towards procreation. And I don't think that's quite right. Rather, it's the point that the practice of sexual relations are ordered towards procreation.

And that practice is one that we have increasingly made it normal that that should be sterile. And it's only as a matter of choice, a discrete act that breaks with that norm, that it should be procreative. We've also changed the reality of the human being.

We no longer think about the human being as male and female. Rather, we think in terms of the abstract, deracinated, universal human subject. The human subject that doesn't really have father and mother, that isn't male or female, but is an actor within the world.

Someone who's a consumer, someone who's a worker, someone who is engaged in these various activities of self-expression and self-realisation. And that is what the human person is. And this androgynous being is one that is ill-fitting for both men and women.

But we try and force both men and women into that mould and try to create a unisex

society around that. So then marriage becomes seen as a matter of it's not so much male and female coming together. And that representing the wholeness of humanity is the two halves of humanity come together.

Nor is it seen as being naturally ordered towards the end of procreation because sex is primarily just for pleasure. And if we choose, we can have children through it. But that's a secondary act.

That is a choice. It's a project more than something that's natural to the relationship between a man and a woman. So that's a significant change.

So we've got the abstract, detached, androgynous human being, the liberal individual, who's very much about self-realisation, self-expression. And then we have, and is a law to itself, a god to itself. And then we have alongside that, we have sex being detached from procreation from any end apart from those which the parties engaged in it want to impose upon it.

And even in that case, both parties have discrete ends and those align contractually almost for a period of time. If there's consent there, that's all that matters. But there's no sense of a deep joining of two parties towards an end that is greater than either of them.

And so that is a key series of changes that have occurred through the rise of a certain sort of modern mindset. A modern mindset that is very much about society ruled by technique, by abstraction, by efficiency, by these sorts of things that we see, particularly within the modern forms of economy, whether those are socialist or capitalist. Both of them tend to work according to this abstraction logic.

Both of them tend to abstract us from our natures and present human nature as fundamentally androgynous and beyond male or female. So that's one problem. And then we have the collapse of human society.

So human society is collapsed from being a gendered society where we have male and female very much distinct and having distinct parts to play, where we have a collapsed sociality, where male and female spend most of their time socializing with other, with mixed groups. And that is a radical change from most societies. And it makes it very hard for us to distinguish between friendship and companionship and marriage.

Those are very different things. But for us, they have become increasingly collapsed into each other because this is the way that we experience the world. And so people talk a lot about marrying their best friend or something like that.

But your spouse is not your best friend. They may be someone who's a lifelong faithful companion, but this is not the same as friendship. Nor is it normal in society for men to spend most of their time around in mixed groups or women to spend most of their time in mixed groups.

What is normal is for men and women to spend most of their time in far more in male groups or female groups and then to join together at certain points. And when that is lost, there's less a sense of charged relationship between the sexes. Rather, there's a sort of mushing together of sexuality and sociality.

So people hook up and have casual relationships as friends with benefits, lots of blurring of the lines between friendship and sexuality. And it's very difficult to understand what marriage truly means in a society that has collapsed sociality in this way. It's less obvious to us.

Also, that we think of marriage increasingly in terms of companionship and in terms of companionship. When we're moving around so much, when our communities are so broken up, your spouse may be your only lifelong friend. So marriage starts to mean very different things.

It starts to stand for very different things. And the reality of being male and female and having that order directed towards the bearing of children and the welcoming of children into the world in stable homes, that is alien to us. It's not necessarily completely alien to us, but strange to us now in a way that it never was before.

Because in the past, sterility wasn't the norm. Rather, the practice of sexual relations was seen as naturally ordered to the bearing of children. Men and women were seen as quite distinct and obviously distinct.

There wasn't the same attempt to order society around the abstract, detached individual who tries to self-realise. And that individuality and the denial of any law beyond the individual and their self-realisation makes it very hard for us to resist the logic of same-sex marriage. It's interesting to consider the logic of same-sex marriage.

The logic of same-sex marriage isn't the logic of marriage as an institution. It's not marriage as lifelong faithful bond and sexually exclusive. Rather, it's marriage as a means of self-expression and marriage deprived of its norms.

So the people who are arguing for same-sex marriage are almost without fail not arguing for strong principles against divorce. They're not arguing for strong norms that you should be sexually abstinent outside of marriage. They're not arguing for that at all.

Rather, marriage is seen as a means of self-expression in a society where there are no marital laws that apply across society. There are no institutional norms. Rather, each marriage can be bespoke.

You make of it what you want. And so what we have is a situation where through certain technological developments, certain strange social developments, we have a weird situation as the Western educated, industrial, rich and democratic society. That means that a lot of things that would come naturally to most people, that would be obvious to

most people by the art of living well and reflecting upon reality is no longer apparent.

The other thing that's worth paying attention to is that wisdom is something that very much works according to a generational pattern. That wisdom develops as we live in tune with the world and as we grow in that knowledge, we pass it on to others. We pass on to others the example of our lives and we pass on our teaching that goes with that.

A teaching that is given weight by the example of our lives. Now, we've broken the relationship between the generations in a great many respects. What we now have increasingly is not a strong relationship between the generations, but a youth oriented culture and a culture that's based upon radical adaptation to rapidly changing social and economic conditions.

That we increasingly, for instance, have to live in the context of the internet, which is a weird disembodied context. And the people who are best able to function in a sort of society like ours that's changing so quickly are the most adaptable, the young. Whereas in a society that is about more stable forms of living and wise forms of living, it is a matter of those who have had most experience, who've developed most wisdom through living with a stable pattern and developing the art of living well and working according to the grain of their nature.

And they pass it on to the next generation. But within our society, that dynamic has been unraveled in various respects. And so what I think we see is an alienation of humanity from their nature.

And C.S. Lewis and others talk about this. C.S. Lewis and the abolition of man, our attempt to subdue our nature by technique. That's what a lot of what we have today, the ability to subdue the natural orientations of our nature by technique.

And that increasingly leaves us alienated from our nature. So we're no longer cultivating our nature. Rather, we're trying to control our nature.

But we're controlling our nature in service of another part of our nature, which is our lusts and our desires and our instincts. And things are not cultivated at all. So we increasingly become creatures of instinct and creatures of passions and uncultivated aspects of ourselves.

Because we are having greater power to master other aspects of our nature. So to become people that can have sexual reassignment surgery or to be people that can have children through means of artificial reproductive processes of reproduction through IVF and other forms of reproduction that are quite unnatural and inappropriate and unethical. We need to consider the way that we have been alienated from our natures in the process.

And what has happened as a result is that certain things that would be natural to us, that

would be commonsensical to us, are no longer the case. That's no longer the case. And so we struggle to understand them.

Now the success that someone like Jordan Peterson has should be instructive to us. Because people still have a sense of this. Deep down people know this in many cases.

Deep down many people know, most people know, that there's something deeply abnormal and unhealthy about someone identifying with the other sex when they are and believing that they are trapped in the wrong body. There's something deeply unhealthy and unnatural about that. Now there may be some sort of dysfunction, biological dysfunction that's taking place there.

But that's still saying that this is an unnatural situation. And people know that. This is not something to be normalized.

This is not something that we should build our theories and understandings of sex and gender around. Rather this is a tragic anomaly. Same with intersex conditions, that these are tragic anomalies.

And when we have a sense of nature, we can recognize that. Now one of the reasons why people like Jordan Peterson have resonance is because they will say that. Things that are obvious to people but which our society increasingly does not allow us to say.

Because our society is based upon individual self-realization. And upon systems of equality and these sorts of notions that are very much about the abstract, androgynous, detached human being self-realizing. It makes it very hard for us to understand things but we still retain this instinct.

And when someone speaks directly to that and says you know this already. When they speak and they speak common sense or sense that's not so common anymore but should be common. It resonates and people respond to it instinctively at a deep level.

They can respond in anger often because there's something about it that resonates and they resist that. But often they will respond with a sense of hunger. They want this.

They want truth. They've been fed on lies for so long. For a shallow film of obfuscation that's been laid over the surface of reality.

That when someone pierces through that and says look at reality. Reality itself is out there. It's not just something that all these social constructions that this film that you can't actually engage with reality.

It's all just social construction. It's all just power games. There is human nature.

There is nature. And these things exist and you know it. And if you are prepared to open your eyes it is there.

That is something that Jordan Peterson continually says. He's pushing beyond the nihilism of someone like Nietzsche and saying with Jung that there is such a thing as human nature. There are these archetypes that we know ourselves to be male and female and we recognize that there is a difference between male and female.

And this is deep within us. It's not something that's going to be weeded out by social construction or by social engineering. These are things that are deeply part of us.

And when we read the classics when we engage in the humanities we are engaging with our nature. We are discovering things that are true about us. Things that are perennially true.

Things that were true five hundred years before Christ and are still true today. And so this is a particular way of approaching the world that recognizes for instance that reality shines forth. Reality is meaningful.

It's not just meaning being imposed upon the world but reality has meaning itself. And if you're prepared to pay attention, if you're prepared to live in terms of that, you can gain wisdom. And that is a way that Christians should be speaking.

And so I think Christians should very much be learning from people like Jordan Peterson. We are attuned to reality in a far deeper way than he is. As we begin with the fear of the Lord we will have a far greater attunement and understanding of what the world is.

And then we can speak from that vantage point that we're looking from and we can look at the world and we can see things that others can't see from their vantage points. The vantage point analogy is one I find helpful. We're all looking at the world and we can all learn things from the world.

But when you get to the vantage point that scripture offers us, scripture gives us an itinerary in its training in wisdom. It gives us an itinerary that rightly positions us so that we can see the world far more clearly. And when you get to that vantage point, that larger terrain of human nature, the world, reality opens itself up to you.

And you can speak about it far more clearly in ways that people will recognise to be true but which they could not have seen from their vantage points. And so as Christians what we should do is present the powerful truth of the world from a vantage point that scripture has led us into. What we're doing there is not giving the content of scripture, some teachings that scripture has given us.

Rather we are being formed by the scripture and as we are formed by the scripture we are attuned to reality. We're placed in a vantage point from which we can see and talk truthfully about reality. And so it's a difference from looking at scripture and scripture teaching us truth about the world that could not be gained in any way from looking at the world.

To scripture placing us in a position from which we can see the world in a proper way, in a more truthful way. And so I believe that's how we fit together natural law and biblical revelation. That biblical revelation leads us to a position from which we can see the world aright.

But when we see the world aright we'll be able to say things about the world that will resonate with anyone who has their eyes open to reality. We'll be able to live in ways that manifest the art of living well. In ways that will be attractive and compelling to people.

They will see that there's something appropriate about this. That there's something right about the way these people are living that is quite in contrast to the dysfunctionality of other people's lives who are resisting natural law. And societies that are breaking with that order.

And so as Christians that example of someone like Jordan Peterson is not to be found in appealing to the authority of scripture. But in speaking from the vantage point of scripture in a way that manifests the truth of that vantage point. And when that vantage point is seen to be a particularly powerful one from which to view the world.

We can call people to come to that vantage point. To recognise what truth underlies that vantage point. And from that transcendent point to see everything else.

And to give value and meaning and understanding to that. It's one of the things I discussed in my recent video on John Hughes' book *The End of Work*. Where he uses in some sense this sort of argument.

Where he points to all the different people who have been looking for a transcendent value by which to assess and judge work. And they need that transcendent value because otherwise things collapse into power games. But then he shows that there are different people who have some sense of this transcendent value.

Have this sense of nature and its reality. But as Christians we can push further and we can have an even more revealing vantage point. That vantage point is a vantage point upon reality that tells us truth about reality itself.

And enables us to see reality more clearly. And it's a true vision of reality. But it is one that is grounded upon biblical revelation.

Now that is not something that is saying that this knowledge of the world, wisdom about the world. That natural law didn't exist and that wisdom about the world is only found as we base things upon biblical principles. Rather this world, this terrain, this reality is out there to be seen by anyone.

Anyone who's looking. You can blind yourself to it. You can obscure your vision of it.

But it's there for anyone who wants to look at it. And if you're prepared to look at it, it will be revealed to you. And the challenge is to get to a vantage point where you will see it more clearly.

And so as Christians I see our potential as inviting people to a vantage point that has manifested its power and its practical authority. The weight of its counsel and the weight of its insight. By virtue of what it has said about the world.

And said about human nature. In a way that so resonates with people that they are compelled by its truth. And then from there I think we can move to a fuller understanding of what biblical authority means.

If you have any further questions please leave them in my Curious Cat account. If you would like to support this and other videos please do so using my Patreon account. And I'll leave the links for both of those below.

Thank you very much for listening. And Lord willing I'll be back again tomorrow with another video. God bless.