



Course: Awakening Wonder: Truth, Goodness, and Beauty with Dr. Stephen Turley

Lesson I: A Tale of Two Civilizations

Outline:

- The “Moral” - “Sapient” Age: Affirmed truth, goodness, and beauty as objective, that is, mind-independent
- The “Modern” - “Scientific” Age: Asserts that truth, goodness, and beauty are subjective: mind-dependent properties, grounded in our judgments and beliefs; the world is understood as simply the totality of cause-and-effect processes devoid of any meaning, value, or purpose.
- Cosmic Piety: the belief that the world is imbued with Divine meaning, value, and purpose. It is understood that every person is obligated to conform their lives to the order and harmony of the cosmos. Truth, goodness, and beauty are understood to be manifestations of the Divine reality.
- Paideia: the Ancient Greek educational project.
- Polis: the Ancient Greek city-state designed to be a “microcosm of the world.”
- Christian Civilization (4th century): its main vision is of the entire cosmos centered in harmony around Christ as the Logos; adopts a different type of polis than Greek civilization, namely, the ecclesia (Church).
- Modern “Scientific” Age (18th century): knowledge is defined without any dependence on the Divine, moral order of truth, goodness, and beauty; adopts the scientific method as the criterion for knowledge - everything that does not meet the standard of empirical verification is now understood as only person-relative. The consequence of this worldview is that meaning is no longer understood as being intrinsic to the cosmos, but rather only a result of human imposition on to reality. Consequently, all cultural systems are understood to be mere fabrications of the human mind. In the final analysis, truth, goodness, and beauty are understood to be human constructions.