

# THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS AND WORLDVIEWS

## THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF APOLOGETICS

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- Many doctrines are critical to apologetics; theology must drive apologetics
- If one's apologetic is not correctly derived from theology, it will make an ineffective and more seriously unbiblical witness
- We seek to build a defense upon the Word of God rather than follow a defense that "works"

### Scripture is the Foundation

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- The Bible is our belief which must be defended
  - The Bible is the foundation upon which our defense is built
  - Scripture contains a system of truth and apologetics is the defense of this system of truth
  - The world's view of truth is SUBJECTIVE - Man is feeling his way, learning on his own.
  - The Christian view of truth is OBJECTIVE - Truth known only because God knows it & gives it to us
  - Thus, the problem is not intellectual; it's one of rebellion vs. submission.
  - The Bible provides the ground of our enterprise; the Word of God is our authority.
- 📖 **Psalm 19:7-9** ~ The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether.
- 📖 **Hebrews 4:12** ~ For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
- 📖 **2 Timothy 3:16-17** ~ All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.
- Christianity announces objective truth - truth that exists apart from subjective feelings and beliefs
  - Truth is objective because it is truth both to God and to humans
  - When we proclaim the gospel we must make it clear that we are communicating truth that is absolute and objective not just some psychological religious idea.
  - God in His revelation is our first principle in theology
  - If we can know and proclaim anything at all about God it is because He is real and true and has revealed Himself to us.

### God is Sovereign and Creator

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- The fact that God "is" is of fundamental importance in apologetics
- God was first and therefore any attempt to evaluate anything in this world must begin with Him first
- Apologetics must begin with God; there is nothing beyond God; He came "first" and has always been

📖 **Genesis 1:1** ~ In the beginning God created the heavens and earth

📖 **Isaiah 40:12-14** ~ Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, And marked off the heavens by the span, And calculated the dust of the earth by the measure, And weighed the mountains in a balance And the hills in a pair of scales? Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, Or as His counselor has informed Him? With whom did He consult and who gave Him understanding? And who taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge And informed Him of the way of understanding?

📖 **Romans 11:33-36** ~ Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? Or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again? For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.

📖 **Acts 17:25** ~ nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all people life and breath and all things

- The Bible begins with a clear statement of God as Creator and Sustainer of all things
- God does not need anything that can be filled by the creation; however, the opposite is true: All the needs of the creation are filled by God...He is independent
- When we consider Genesis 1:1, we recognize that the act of creation forms a basic division
- On the one hand, there is a Creator; on the other hand, there is that which He created
- IMPORTANT: This “Creator-creature distinction” must never be forgotten nor set aside even for a moment for it is indispensable to the goal of biblical apologetics

## Man is Created by and Dependent on God

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- The creation is completely and totally dependent on God
- Creation cannot for a moment exist apart from God’s sustaining power
- All of creation’s existence is from and through God

📖 **Acts 17:28** ~ for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, ‘For we also are His children.’

📖 **Colossians 1:17** ~ He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

- Creation can only be understood in light of the creator; man can only understand the world around him as he recognizes the Creator-creature distinction

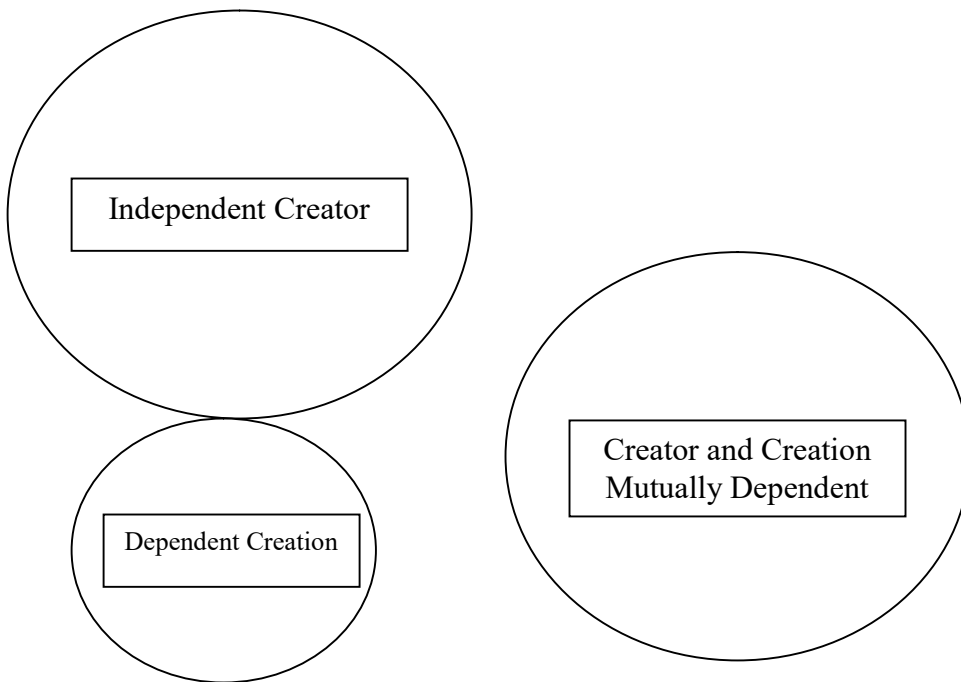
📖 **Psalms 8:1-5** ~ O Lord, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth, Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens! From the mouth of infants and nursing babes You have established strength Because of Your adversaries, To make the enemy and the revengeful cease. When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained; What is man that You take thought of him, And the son of man that You care for him? Yet You have made him a little lower than God, And You crown him with glory and majesty!

- God made mankind and is sustained by Him
- Though mankind is the crown of God’s creative work, he is still a creature and all that man has has been give to him by God
- If God were to remove His hand from man, we could not even continue to exist

📖 **Psalms 100:3** ~ It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves

- Thus, man is entirely dependent on God for knowledge of himself, the world around him, and God

- True knowledge about anything in the universe is dependent on and derived from God's knowledge as it has been revealed by God to man
- This is true regarding morality also; God is the true and supreme judge
- That which God declares concerning morality is binding on all men and if we wish to know good and evil, we must remember our creaturely dependence on Him
- The Christian, therefore, acknowledges an independent Creator and a dependent creation
- Unbelievers, however, do not account for this distinction and put God and His creation in mutual dependence and ascribe independence to the creation
- Unbelievers say that the Creator and the creature are on the same plane and therefore the creature is not dependent on the Creator (they are co-equals)
- The job of apologetics then is to turn the creature-worshipper to a Creator-worshipper...it is to bring man down and show him his rightful place as dependent upon the Creator



## **Man is Fallen**

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- Prior to the Fall, man's nature obeyed the law of God; Man interpreted the universe under the direction of God
- Man was created in the image of God and before sin, man was the perfectly creaturely image of God

📖 **Ecclesiastes 7:29** ~ Behold, I have found only this, that God made men upright...

- Adam and Eve never forgot the Creator-creature distinction
- They were consciously aware of their need to listen to and heed God's instructions in every circumstance
- At the Fall, however, he attempted life without God; He sought to interpret the universe without reference to God
- Adam and Eve sinned, everything changed
- Man is no longer the perfect image of God; he does not live or think as Adam and Eve did before the fall
- Sin has so affected man that he actually denies his total dependence on God

- Man is fallen and in desperate need of a Savior because he serves the creature rather than the Creator
  - 📖 **Jeremiah 17:9** ~ The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?
  - 📖 **1 Corinthians 2:14** ~ But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.
  - 📖 **2 Corinthians 4:3-4** ~ And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
  - 📖 **Ephesians 2:1-3** ~ And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.
  - 📖 **Colossians 1:21** ~ And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds,
  - 📖 **Romans 1:18-32**
- What does this mean for the person in Africa who has never heard of Christ?
- How does understanding the condition of man fallen in sin and remaining in unbelief important when it comes to the defense of Christianity?

### **Christ is a Savior Who Reverses the Effects of the Fall**

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- Christ came to bring about reconciliation of man to God through His death and resurrection
- Christ was offered up as a sacrifice to satisfy God's justice
- In essence then, Christ reverses the effects of the fall and regenerates man making him a new creature
- Man's spiritual eyes are opened and he finds in Christ the source of all wisdom
  - 📖 **1 Corinthians 1:30** ~ But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption
  - 📖 **Colossians 2:3** ~ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

## **WORLDVIEWS**

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- What is a worldview?
  - How we look at all aspects of our world
  - "A world view is a set of presuppositions (or assumptions) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously) about the basic makeup of our world." ~ James Sire
  - The "grid" for thinking and believing that God built into every human being.
  - It is a set of basic beliefs--about God, the world, human beings, history, death, knowing, as well as much more mundane things--that make up what a person assumes to be true.
  - Out of one's worldview, a person evaluates, makes decisions, and makes meaning and sense of his or her life.
  - In a worldview you answer the basic questions of life

## Non-Christian Worldview

- There are two kinds of people living in the world today, holding opposite views of God, the world, and themselves
- These two competing perspectives are the Christian and non-Christian worldviews
- Non-Christians still remain under the curse of sin; denying the Creator-creature distinction and committing themselves to independence from God, they live in futility
- All worldviews that don't include God and His Word are contrary to God's design

📖 **Colossians 2:8** ~ See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

- In this verse, Paul says that any worldview that is not "according to Christ" is ultimately only "empty deception" based on worldly principles
- "Commitment to independence is so fundamental to non-Christian philosophy that no matter how much the unbeliever may claim otherwise, every reason he may give to support his commitment is actually resting on it. If a non-Christian is challenged to give a reason for his religious commitment he may respond in a number of ways, but he will always respond with a reason that is supposedly valid according to his principle of independence. He may argue that his experience has in some way informed him of his independence, but his trust in experience as a criterion for truth is itself founded on that allegiance. Essentially, non-Christians try to lift themselves by their own boot straps, supporting their commitment to independence by arguments founded on their commitment to independence" ~ Pratt 46

## Primary Non-Christian Worldview

- There are more than six thousand distinct religions in the world today.
- However, the world's religions and philosophies tend to break down into a few major categories; in fact, five worldviews summarize all the dominant outlooks in the world today.
- Understanding that people have different worldviews is a big help in evangelism, because you will realize that focusing on questions of details is not nearly as important as focusing on presuppositions.

	REALITY	TRUTH	MAN	VALUES
<b>Christian Theism</b>	An infinite, personal God exists. Reality is both material and spiritual. The universe as we know it had a beginning and will have an end.	Truth about God is known through revelation. Truth about the material world is gained via revelation and the five senses in conjunction with rational thought.	Humankind is the unique creation of God. People were created "in the image of God," which means that we are personal, eternal, spiritual, and biological.	Moral values are the objective expression of an absolute moral being and are found in His revelation.
<b>Deism</b> Founders of America	God created the universe, but then left it to run on its own. No miracle is possible because He has no interest in the universe.	Truth is understood through the universe. God has not communicate with man. No special revelation is needed or has occurred.	Human beings, though personal, are part of the clockwork of the universe.	There is no basis for ethics Whatever is, is right and there is therefore no true evil.
<b>Naturalism</b> Atheism; Agnosticism; Existentialism	The material universe is all that exists. Reality is "one-dimensional." There is no such thing as a soul or a spirit. Everything can be explained on the	Truth is usually understood as scientific proof. Only that which can be observed with the five senses is accepted as real or true.	Man is the chance product of a biological process of evolution. Man is entirely material. The human species will one day pass out of existence.	No objective values or morals exist. Morals are individual preferences or socially useful behaviors. Even social morals are subject to evolution and change.

	basis of natural law.			
<b>Pantheism</b> Hinduism; Taoism; Buddhism; much New Age Consciousness	Only the spiritual dimension exists. All else is illusion, Spiritual reality is eternal, impersonal, and unknowable. Everything is a part of God, or God is in everything and everyone.	Truth is an experience of unity with "the oneness" of the universe. Truth is beyond all rational description. Rational thought as it is understood in the West cannot show us reality.	Man is one with ultimate reality. Thus man is spiritual, eternal, and impersonal. Man's belief that he is an individual is illusion.	There is no real distinction between good and evil. Instead, "unenlightened" behavior is that which fails to understand essential unity.
<b>Spiritism and Polytheism</b> Thousands of Religions	The world is populated by spirit beings who govern what goes on. Material things are real, but they have spirits associated with them and, therefore, can be interpreted spiritually.	Truth about the natural world is discovered through the shaman figure who has visions telling him what the gods and demons are doing and how they feel.	Man is a creation of the gods like the rest of the creatures on earth. Often, tribes or races have a special relationship with some gods who protect them and can punish them.	Moral values take the form of taboos, which are things that irritate or anger various spirits. These taboos are different from the idea of "good and evil" because it is just as important to avoid irritating evil spirits as it is good ones.

## Addressing Different Worldviews

- So we have seen the different worldviews—the question is how do we address them.

### 1. Focus on presuppositional issues

- It can be very easy to get caught up in dealing with the complex details of their belief system.
- Rather, we must focus on the presuppositional issues: what is reality?, the existence of God, what is truth, what is man, how do we know right from wrong?
- Sometimes the conversations will be very short
- If we cannot come to terms on the presuppositions then to talk about details of their religion or worldview is rather worthless.

### 2. Don't be intimidated by their worldview and its complexity

- The farther you get away from the truth the more complicated things become.
- Some of the worldviews and their accompanying religions are extremely complex and difficult to understand.
- The key is to know the truth and to be able to share that effectively.
- Although it is helpful to have some basic understanding about worldviews, you do not need to be an expert on every single aspect of them in order to "give an answer for the hope that lies within you."
- It is helpful to ask appropriate questions and learn what they believe.
- Many people's beliefs are not totally consistent with what they claim to be their worldview.

### 3. Use Scripture to answer the presuppositional issues

- This is the most critical issue—you must share the truths of the Word of God.
- You may say, wait a minute, none of the other worldviews believe in special revelation from God or that it has any authority.
- That's right. But God's Word is powerful whether or not an individual acknowledges its authority...God still uses it
- The Word of God must be the starting point...Do not feel as if you must or can rationally argue someone into the kingdom.
- Just share the truth over and over with them and keep coming back to that...God will use His Word.

#### 4. Emphasize Prayer

*2 Corinthians 4:4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

- Ultimately, all the false worldviews are a lie of Satan to confuse and blind the minds of the unbelieving.
- You are in a spiritual battle for the souls of men, thus you must use the weapons of spiritual warfare and your prayers are a critical part of that battle.
- Never fall into the error of thinking that you can rationally win this person into the kingdom—even with the Word of God.
- Only the Spirit of God can do that. Certainly He can use you, but you are dependent on Him rather than Him being dependent on you!