

WHAT IS A BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW?

Introduction:

1. What is a Worldview?

(a) A Set of Beliefs Regarding Reality.

- A grid or lens through which we see and make sense of the world.
- We think the way we think because we have a particular worldview.
- The great Philosophical systems of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and Pythagoras, are all worldviews.
- Various worldviews can be seen in different cultures, different ideologies, different families, all manner of religions.
- Millions upon millions of people have been killed in wars because of a clash of worldviews.

A worldview is sometimes called a conceptual scheme. A pattern of thinking by which we consciously or unconsciously place or fit everything we believe and by which we interpret and judge reality.
-Ronald Nash

2. What Determines one's Worldview?

(a) Your Presuppositions About Reality.

- Presuppositions are necessary beliefs that consists of what we assume to be fact before looking at a subject. One cannot think logically without them.
- In the words of Augustine (A.D. 354-430), we must believe something before knowing anything.

"We must believe something before we can know anything."
- Augustine

- The bottom line is that whenever we think, we simply take some things for granted.
- They determine the method and goal of theoretical thought.
- In his book, *Worldviews in Conflict*, Ronald Nash states: "Presuppositions can be compared to a train running on tracks that have no stops or switches.
- Once a person commits themselves to a certain set of presuppositions, their direction and destination are determined.¹"

3. What are the Most Common Worldviews?

(a) There are Five Basic Worldviews.

- Naturalism, Pantheism, Theism, Spiritism and Polytheism and Postmodernism.
- Some of the beliefs are very similar from worldview to worldview.
- Let's break them down and look at the presuppositions each holds in five areas.

Naturalism. (e.g. Atheism, Agnosticism, Existentialism, Secularism, Humanism)

God ~ God does not exist.

Reality ~ The material universe is all that exists.

Man ~ Man is the chance product of a biological process of evolution.

Truth ~ Truth is usually understood as scientific proof.

Values ~ No objective values or morals exist.

Pantheism. (Hinduism; Taoism; Buddhism; much New Age)

God ~ God is everything and everything is God. There is no personal God.

Reality ~ Only the spiritual dimension exists, everything else is an illusion.

Man ~ Man is one with ultimate reality.

Truth ~ Truth is an experience of unity with "the oneness" of the universe.

Values ~ There is no real distinction between good and evil.

Theism (e.g. Christianity; Islam; Judaism)

God ~ God is infinite and has personal dealings with man.

Reality ~ Both spiritual and material, an infinite, personal God exists.

Man ~ Humankind is the unique creation of God, created "in the image of God."

Truth ~ Truth comes from God and God is known through revelation.

Values ~ Moral values are the objective expression of an absolute moral being.

Spiritism and Polytheism (Shamanism, Many Native American religions, Voodoo)

God ~ There are many gods.

Reality ~ The world is populated by spirit beings who govern what goes on.

Man ~ Man is a creation of the gods like the rest of the creatures on earth.

Truth ~ Truth about the natural world is discovered through the shaman figure.

Values ~ Moral values take the form of taboos, which are things that irritate or anger various spirits.

Postmodernism

God ~ God is real and personal but can change and make mistakes.

Reality ~ Reality is a "social construct."

Man ~ Humans are a product of their social setting.

Truth ~ Truths are mental constructs meaningful to individuals within a cultural paradigm.

Values ~ Values are part of our social paradigms as well.

¹ Nash H. Ronald, Worldviews in Conflict, (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan Publishing, 1992) pg. 21-23

Those are the five basic views and the presuppositions that they hold regarding God, Reality, Man, Truth, and Values. Before we look at how to cultivate a biblical worldview, I want to look closer at the worldview of naturalism. We will look at their presuppositions in these five areas and give a scriptural rebuttal as an example for us to see.

I. Naturalism Examined. (e.g. Atheism, Agnosticism, Existentialism, Secularism, Humanism)

Naturalist View of God and Reality

- (a) The material universe is all that exists. This view begins with the presupposition that evolution is a fact and that any belief in a realm outside of the physical material universe is foolish. Therefore, any notion of God or that one needs to be saved from anything in a spiritual sense is non-sense. ²

i. *Rebuttal*

- (a) First of all, the fact that the naturalist thinks that God, the spiritual realm, and the idea of salvation is foolishness is no surprise the Bible tells us they will think this.

1 Corinthians 1:18 ~ ¹⁸ For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

- (b) As far as the existence of God and the universe having a spiritual component, Scripture presupposes the existence of God and clearly teaches that the universe has both material and spiritual reality to it. It also teaches that both of these realities were brought into existence by God not through the big bang and evolution.

Genesis 1:1-2 ~ In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. ² Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

John 4:24 ~ ²⁴ God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

1 Corinthians 3:16 ~ ¹⁶ Do you not know that you are a temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you?

Ephesians 6:12 ~ ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual *forces* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

² Hoffecker, W. Andrew and Gary Scott Smith, eds. *Building a Christian World View*. 2 vols. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1986, 1988.

Naturalist View of Man

- (a) Man is the chance product of a biological process and evolution. This view believes man to be essentially a blank slate at birth. He is a creature that is neither good nor bad. His behavior will be determined by his environment. This worldview is held by those who practice psychology.

i. Rebuttal

- (a) This view of man is not compatible with the Biblical worldview. A Biblical world view sees man as a product of God's ordered divine decree not of evolutionary chance.

Psalm 139:13 ~ For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. ¹⁴I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well. ¹⁵My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; ¹⁶Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Your book were all written The days that were ordained *for me*, when as yet there was not one of them.

- (b) Concerning man's nature, the biblical worldview believes man is wicked from the moment of conception.

Psalm 51:5 ~ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.

Ephesians 2:1-3 ~ ² And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² 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. ³ 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.

Romans 3:10 ~ ¹⁰ as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; ¹¹ THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD; ¹² ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE."

- (c) Regarding the idea that one's environment determines their behavior, Scripture teaches that man's behavior is determined by the desires of his sinful heart.

Matthew 15:19 ~ For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.

- (d) The environment might facilitate the opportunity to sin, but the heart brings forth the sin. Friends, Man is totally depraved and has no good in him outside of the righteousness of Christ.

Naturalist View of Truth

- (a) Truth is usually understood as scientific proof. If something cannot be proven through the scientific method, then the naturalist will not accept it as truth. We will not spend much time on this because last week the whole class was on this.

i. Rebuttal

- (a) The biblical view of truth is based entirely on God and His Word. There is no truth outside of God. Truth about God is revealed through revelation.

John 14:6 ~ ⁶ Jesus *said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

John 13:37-38 ~ ³⁷ Therefore Pilate said to Him, “So You are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say *correctly* that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this **I have come into the world, to testify to the truth.** Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.” ³⁸ Pilate *said to Him, “What is truth?”

- (b) It is also interesting to point out one glaring problem that becomes apparent immediately. Evolution cannot be scientifically proven, yet they claim it to be true. The last area of contention from the naturalist worldview.

Naturalist View of Values

- (a) No objective values or morals exist. All values are subjective and determined by society or the individual. The only standard for good and bad is one’s feelings. whatever makes you feel good is good, and what hurts you is bad.

i. Rebuttal

- (a) In a Biblical worldview, morals are objective. They are determined by God and clearly delineated in His Word. They do not change based on societal whims or preferences. God’s standards are immovable and objective.

Matthew 5:18 ~ ¹⁸ For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

Matthew 24:35 ~ ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.

James 1:17 ~ ¹⁷ Every good thing given, and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

Hebrews 13:8 ~ ⁸ Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday and today and forever.

Now we move from looking at what a worldview is and considering the various worldviews and their prepositions, to looking at how one cultivates a Biblical worldview.

(b) Cultivating a Biblical Worldview:

(a) The Default Worldview of the Unregenerate Mind is Naturalism.

- From the fall in Genesis chapter 3 the human mind has been seriously ravaged. Several words are used in the NT to describe the condition of the unregenerate man's mind. **Rom. 1:28** "debased," **2 Cor. 3:14** "hardened," **Eph. 4:18** "darkened," **1 Tim. 6:5** "depraved."
- The unregenerate mind is unable to understand anything spiritual because they are spiritually dead.

Eph.2:1-2 ~ 2 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ²in 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.

- Because of this their world view is naturalistic and as we saw, it has no grounding in the things of God whatsoever. The way they think is secular, therefore the way they act and live is secular. Unfortunately, much of the church today consist of unregenerate individuals, therefore this worldview comes forth.
- I find it interesting that some of the greatest philosophers throughout history have recognized the importance of the mind, yet they have rejected the creator of this mind and savior of the soul. One example is Rene Descartes. He was a 17th Century mathematician who coined the phrase, "I think therefore I am."
- The actual phrase in its entirety is, "I doubt therefore I think therefore I am." You see, he came to the conclusion that there was only one thing in life that he could not doubt and that was that he doubts. We see this same kind of thinking in the post-modern mindset of the late 20th Century. The only thing we can know for sure is that we can't know anything for sure.

(b) The Solution to a non-Biblical Worldview.

- The mind must be changed; therefore, individuals must be converted. The beginning of changing a worldview is changing how one thinks. To think spiritual things, the individual must be spiritually alive.

i. Regeneration

- This is the first step. The person becomes a new creation.

2 Cor. 5:17-19 ~ ¹⁷ Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. ¹⁸ Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

- Once you are saved, the Bible tells us to “set our minds on the things that are above, not on the things that are on earth.

Col. 3:2-4 ~ ² Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. ³ For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. How does one set their minds on things above?

ii. Renewed Mind

- We are told later in the book of Colossians that we do this by renewing our mind.

Col. 3:16 ~ ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

- So, at salvation, Christians are provided with a regenerated mental ability to comprehend spiritual truth. After salvation, Christians need to readjust their thinking chiefly by mind renewal, using the Bible as a means to do so. God gives us a better understanding of His word through illumination.

iii. Illumination

- Through this ministry of the Holy Spirit, God gives light to the meaning of Scripture.

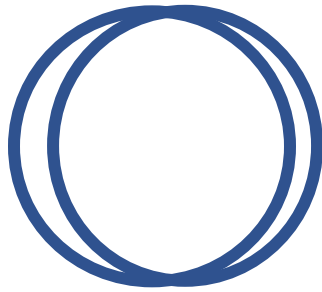
Eph. 1:18-19 ~ ¹⁸ *I pray that* the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. *These are* in accordance with the working of the strength of His might.

- He wants Christians to understand and obey. All believer's, just like the two on the road to Emmaus, require God's assistance: “Then He opened their minds to understand Scripture” **Luke 24:45**.

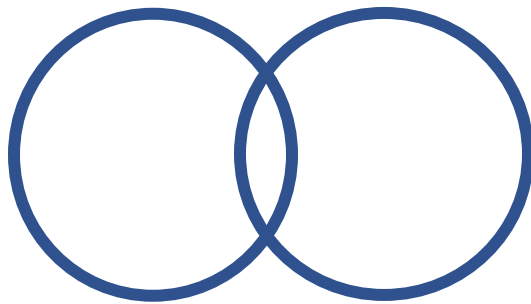
(C) The Dangers of Regression

- The battle is not over after conversion. Even after salvation, Satan continues his intellectual rampage. Paul had a great concern for the Corinthians church.
- We see that he emphasizes this very fact when he writes to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians chapter 11.

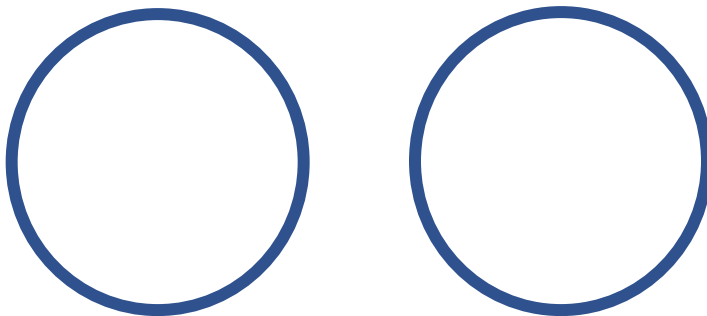
- **2 Cor.11:3** ~ ³ But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity *of devotion* to Christ.
- You see Eve had allowed Satan to do some thinking for her, then she did some of her own thinking independent of God. When her conclusions differed from God's she chose to act on her conclusions not God's commands, and that my friend is sin.



These two circles represent worldviews that are similar on most issues. They may represent two Christians from very similar beliefs on most things but differ on some, i.e. Baptism, dispensationalism etc.



These two circles represent the worldviews of two people who disagree more than they agree.



These two circles that do not overlap at all, represent the worldviews of say, Adolf Hitler and Winston Churchill. A bit of advice here, two people whose worldviews are represented by these two circles, should probably not marry each other.

