

A Biblical Worldview – Lesson 3

Review

Our minds require transformation from the earthly to Biblical. ...be transformed by the renewing of your mind
Rom. 12:2

The transformed and renewed **mind** is the mind saturated with and controlled by the Word of God. ... Whether good or bad, when anything happens in our lives, our immediate, almost reflexive response should be biblical. ...
MacArthur's New Testament Commentary: Romans 9-16

A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true, or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being. James Sire, "The Universe Next Door", page 17.

Non-biblical worldview ideas bombard us constantly from television, film, music, newspapers, magazines, books, and academia.

4% of Americans hold a Biblical worldview [Defined as believing that absolute moral truths exist; that such truth is defined by the Bible; and firm belief in six specific religious views: 1) Jesus Christ lived a sinless life; 2) God is the all-powerful and all-knowing Creator of the universe and He stills rules it today; 3) salvation is a gift from God and cannot be earned; 4) Satan is real; 5) a Christian has a responsibility to share their faith in Christ with other people; and 6) the Bible is accurate in all of its teachings.

Less than 0.5% of Catholics, 2% of mainline Protestant churches, 8% of Baptist churches, 10% of Pentecostal churches, and 13% of non-denominational Protestant churches hold to a Biblical worldview.

At the beginning of a Biblical worldview is the Scripture. In our study we assume: The Bible is God's only written revelation to man. It is the inspired, verbal (extending to the very words), plenary (including all of the words, inspired in equal parts), infallible (trustworthy), inerrant in the original manuscripts Word of God.

The basics of a Biblical worldview answer six basic questions:

1. Is there a God and what is He like?

There is one God who is revealed in His creation and Scripture. He is (limited list) infinite, personal, omniscient, omnipotent, sovereign, immutable, and good (all of His character).

2. What is the origin and nature of the universe?

God perfectly created the universe out of nothing. It is totally subject to and dependant on Him. God created space and time orderly and to operate within His natural laws. Yet God is not contained in either space and time. All that has been made is continually held together and upheld by God. God is continually at work in His creation by direct hand, angelic servants, or His children.

3. What is the origin and nature of man?

Man was created in God's image and endowed with unique dignity. Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. However, man has fallen into sin and has been separated from His creator. God has revealed Himself through general revelation so that all men are without excuse at judgement.

4. What happens to a person at death?

Humans are unidirectional immortal. Death is a door to perfect fellowship with God in heaven or to absolute tormented separation from Him in hell. Once the door is entered the path is set.

5. How do we know what is right and wrong (the basics of ethics and morality)?

Ethics are transcendent and is based on the nature and character of God as good (holy and loving). Truth is revealed by God in His word.

6. What is the meaning of human history?

History is linear, a meaningful sequence of events beginning with God and leading to the fulfillment of His purposes for humanity – ultimately the judgement of sin and ushering in of eternity.

²⁹ Remove the false way from me, And graciously grant me Your law.

³⁰ I have chosen the faithful way; I have placed Your ordinances *before me*. Psa. 119:29-30

⁹⁷ O how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.

⁹⁸ Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies, For they are ever mine.

⁹⁹ I have more insight than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation.

¹⁰⁰ I understand more than the aged, Because I have observed Your precepts.

¹⁰¹ I have restrained my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word.

¹⁰² I have not turned aside from Your ordinances, For You Yourself have taught me.

¹⁰³ How sweet are Your words to my taste! *Yes, sweeter* than honey to my mouth!

¹⁰⁴ From Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way. Psa. 119:97-104

¹²⁷ Because I love your commands more than gold, more than pure gold,

¹²⁸ and because I consider all your precepts right, I hate every wrong path. Psa 119:127-128 (NIV)

Every worldview is based upon faith – assumptions or presuppositions that probably have never been proven.

A basic categorization of worldviews is theistic or God-centered and a naturalistic or nature-centered.

	Theistic	Naturalistic
God	Infinite, personal, omniscient, omnipotent, sovereign, immutable, good Creator	Nature is all there is; universe is a closed system and God is irrelevant
Origin and nature of universe	Created out of nothing and intimately involved	Came into existence through chance and has evolved to its present state
Origin and nature of man	Created in God's image, but fallen	Result of chance – simply a biological machine
Death	One directional immortal – death is a gate	Merely the end of life
Morality	Based on God's nature and character as revealed in His Word	Standards of right and wrong are relative
History	Meaningful sequence of events leading to the fulfillment of God's purposes	Series of random, chance events without a purpose or meaning.

World Views in Western Culture

	Christian Theism	Deism	Naturalism	Existentialism	Eastern Pantheism	New Age
How Can we Know Truth?	God has spoken! He communicates with man through both general and special revelation.	Empiricism (observation of creation); general revelation	Empiricism and man's reason (rationalism), but we can never grasp reality.	The objective world is absurd. We can know only by authenticating our existence	We know by becoming, moving toward the one.	Occult, psychedelic, conceptual, relativist approaches to cosmic consciousness
God and Universe	God and His Creation (Open universe)	God and creation (clockwork, closed abandoned universe)	Matter exists eternally. There is no God. Cosmos is primary.	Reality is objective (natural and material law) and subjective (internal mind).	Atman (soul of man) is Brahman (soul of Universe). We are all moving toward the "one."	The self (the soul, the integrated central essence of man) is the prime reality.
Who is Man?	Created in God's Image, thus possessing personality, self-transcendence, intelligence, morality	Man is personal but subject to clockwork universe, a puppet	Man is matter and only matter; a complex machine.	Existence precedes essence- man makes himself who he is.	To realize one's "oneness" with universe is to pass beyond personality.	The unifying center of the cosmos.
What happens at Death?	Either the gate to life with God or to eternal separation from Him.	God is not concerned about man, man merely ceases to exist.	Extinction of personality and individuality- disorganization of matter	Man is totally free as regards his nature and destiny (even at death)	Reincarnation or realization of oneness.	Physical death is not the end of the self
What kind of Ethics?	Based on the character of God as good. He sets absolute standards of morality.	Natural and general moral law	All existence relational and so human action can be significant (relativism)	Morality is rooted in human choice (relativistic situational) we create our own values.	To realize oneness is to pass beyond good/evil Cosmos= perfection.	Rooted in the satisfaction of the Self
Meaning of History?	Linear-meaningful sequence of events leading to the fulfillment of God's purposes for man.	Basically determined - man is part of mechanistic universe.	Linear stream of events linked by cause and effect but without purpose	History is meaningless Life = absurdity	History is cyclical	Ordinary categories of time, space, morality tend to disappear.

Christian Theism, Naturalism, and New Age Pantheism are the most influential worldviews presently in the United States.

Naturalism

What are the basic tenets? First, God is irrelevant. This tenet helps us better understand the term Naturalism; it is in direct contrast to Christian Theism, which is based on *supernaturalism*. Second, progress and evolutionary change are inevitable. Third, man is autonomous, self-centered, and will save himself. Fourth, education is the guide to life; intelligence and freedom guarantee full human potential. Fifth, science is the ultimate provider both for knowledge and morals. These tenets have permeated our lives. They are apparent, for example, in the media, government, and education.

After World War II "Postmodernism" began to replace the confidence of Naturalism. With it came the conclusion that truth, in any real sense, doesn't exist. This may be the next major worldview, or anti-worldview, that will infect the culture. It is presently the rage on many of our college campuses.

New Age Pantheism

Various forms of Pantheism have been prominent in Eastern cultures for thousands of years. But it began to have an effect on our culture in the 1950s. There had been various attempts to introduce its teachings before then, but those attempts did not arouse the interest that was stirred in that decade. It is now most readily observed in what is called the New Age Movement.

What are the basic tenets of this worldview? First, all is one. There are no ultimate distinctions between humans, animals, or the rest of creation. Second, since all is one, all is god. All of life has a spark of divinity. Third, if all is one and all is god, then each of us is god. Fourth, humans must discover their own divinity by experiencing a change in consciousness. We suffer from a collective form of metaphysical amnesia. Fifth, humans travel through indefinite cycles of birth, death, and reincarnation in order to work off what is called "bad karma." Sixth, New Age disciples think in terms of gray, not black and white. Thus they believe that two conflicting statements can both be true.

On the popular level these tenets are presently asserted through various media, such as books, magazines, television, and movies. Perhaps the most visible teacher is Shirley MacLaine. But these beliefs are also found increasingly among intellectuals in fields such as medicine, psychology, sociology, and education.

1. Is there a God and what is He like?
2. What is the origin and nature of the universe?
3. What is the origin and nature of man?
4. What happens to a person at death?
5. How do we know what is right and wrong (the basics of ethics and morality)?
6. What is the meaning of human history?

	Christianity	Naturalism	New Age
God	Personal	Non-existent	Impersonal
World	Creation	Physical	Spiritual
Human Nature	Like God	Like Animals	Is God
Body/Soul	Unity	Body Only	Soul Only
Immortality	Resurrection	Annihilation	Reincarnation or realization of oneness.
Destiny	Glorification	Extinction	Absorption
Source of Authority	Divine Revelation	Human Reason	Spiritual
Truth	Absolute	Relative	Personal
Jesus Christ	Son of God	Good Man	Enlightenment
Salvation	Redemption	Education	Meditation
Evil	Rebellion	Ignorance	Illusion
Ethics	God-centered	Man-centered	World -centered
History	Linear	Chaotic	Cyclical
Culture	God ordained/ Man's stewardship	Man-centered	World-centered

	Religion	Christianity	Irreligion
Moral inclination	Moralistic-legalistic	Moral-gracious	Hedonistic-relative
Righteousness	Self-righteousness	Christ-righteousness	Unrighteous
Truth and Grace	Truth without grace	Full of Grace with truth	Grace without truth
Acceptance w/God	Through attainment	Through Christ	Human nature good
Divine attribute	Justice	Holiness & Love	God is all loving
Relation to Christ	Rejects the Savior	Accepts the Savior	Rejects the Savior
Lordship	Self in control	Jesus is Lord	Self in control
Takes pride in	Religion	Christ	Worldly pride
Relation to Jesus	Misuses Jesus	Understand-accept	Rejects Jesus
Holy and gracious	Misses God's grace	Affirms both	Miss God's holiness
Grace and sin	Rejects grace	Affirms both	Rejects sin
Seeking God	Seek God wrongly	Seek God rightly	Don't seek God
Values	Not based on grace	Biblical values	Only relative values