

Why Christian Worldview Matters

An Introduction to Biblical Cosmology by Jay Wegter

The Value of Teaching Biblical Worldview. *It is common for concerned Christians to look at our society and ask, “What’s going on out there?”* We are shocked to see behaviors which used to be justly condemned as immoral now being normalized and even defended. But what has caused the ‘floodgates’ of immorality to swing open so widely? The only way to answer this question with certainty is to realize that humanity has torn itself away from God’s blueprint for His creatures. That’s why there has been an unraveling of goodness and truth (Rom 1:18-28ff.).

The moral and spiritual consequences are immense. Man’s defiance against God’s blueprint is causing suffering; people are experiencing divine judgment in ‘slow motion’—the *wrath of God* is being *revealed from heaven* (Rom 18-23). An ‘explosion’ in immorality has as its underlying cause the rejection of the knowledge of God. In the place of the knowledge of God are lies about freedom and fulfillment. These lies are attractive because they ‘free up’ man’s lust; but the hidden price tag is costly—men are plunged into deeper ignorance; darkness; deception; bondage; and oppression.

Consequences such as broken homes, abused neglected kids, abortion, suicide, perversion, sexually transmitted disease, unwanted pregnancies, same sex marriage, violence, substance abuse, and pornography have not developed in a ‘vacuum’. These tragedies are accelerating because the precious things of God are being eroded; and people are taking pleasure in sin and not in the knowledge of God (Del Tackett, “Biblical Worldview,” *Focus on the Family Magazine*, July/Aug, 2004, Dec, 2005).

It is clear that America is no longer guided by Christian principles. Secular humanism now directs the public affairs of our nation. Secularism removes God’s standards and allows man to substitute his own standards instead. Without God’s Word and the Gospel, man has no reliable moral compass. People make decisions based upon they felt needs and desires. Each individual becomes a law unto himself—choosing what is ‘right’ in his own eyes without respect to God’s standards.

God’s Word says in Judges 21:25, “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” There could hardly be a more accurate assessment of our country today than the description found at the end of the book of Judges (www.wakeupamericainc.org, “God Rejected”).

How serious is the Problem we are facing today?

- 60% of professing Christians believe co-habitation outside of marriage is acceptable
- 70-88% of students from “Christian” homes deny their faith before graduation from college (barna.org)
- One symptom of Bible illiteracy is the runaway trend to reject biblical theology in favor of syncretism—professing Christians are combining views from different faith perspectives including Islam, Wicca, secular humanism, and eastern religions (“Americans draw Theological Beliefs from Diverse Points of View,” 10/8/02, barna.org)
- Only 9% of Evangelicals have a biblical worldview (“A Biblical Worldview has a Radical Effect on a Person’s Life,” 12/1/03, barna.org)
- Instead of preparing their children for life, the vast majority of parents are waiting for social institutions to train their kids (“Americans Agree: Kids are not being Prepared for Life,” 10/26/04, barna.org)
- 62 % of Americans consider themselves to be deeply spiritual, and 88% feel accepted by God (“Most Adults feel accepted by God, but Lack a Biblical Worldview,” 8/9/05, barna.org)
- Only 9% of young people under the age 24 base their moral choices on the Bible
- Only 1 in 20 Evangelical dads have ever led their families in devotions (barna.org)

- In 2006, 91% of Evangelical kids said, “There is no truth apart from myself”—that’s up from 52% in 1994 (barna.org)
- Only 33% of church youth say the church will play a part in their lives when they leave home (Josh McDowell, 2006)
- It is estimated that 1 of every 2 churchgoers is caught up with Internet pornography (World Net Daily, “Killer Culture,” 12/8/03)

Only by ‘crafting’ a full-orbed Christian worldview can we liberate Christianity from its cultural captivity. Only by the total truth set forth in the Christian worldview can we unify our fragmented lives and recover spiritual power. Christianity is not just religious truth but truth about total reality. It is total truth (Nancy Pearcey, flyleaf, Total Truth).

We are seeing more and more ministries characterized by theological minimalism and a downplaying of divine truth as the real foundation of the church. Says MacArthur, “Bible teaching, even in the best venues today, has been deliberately dumbed-down, made as broad and as shallow as possible, oversimplified, adapted to the lowest common denominator—and then tailored to people with short attention spans” (Book review by Scott Lamb, 3/22/07—The Truth War: Fighting for Certainty in an Age of Deception, by John MacArthur).

What are the immediate Advantages of studying Biblical Worldview?

Biblical worldview provides a vision for Christian education. Christian worldview helps complete the ‘scope’ of vision necessary for effective training in Christian ed., evangelism, and leadership development.

Biblical worldview offers a solid foundation for understanding the times in which we live. We will ultimately be ministering to those who live in a ‘post-Christian’ era. Our culture is characterized by a vicious civil war over values. Worldview training equips us to understand the times so we will know how to help our brethren engage our culture. By obtaining a grasp of God’s unified truth as the ‘big picture’ believers are equipped with a powerful weapon in the war against fragmented truth.

Biblical worldview brings a dynamic unity to the truth claims we preach and teach. Most Christians have received their religious training in a ‘devotional manner’. As a consequence they assume that religious truth belongs in a religious compartment. Worldview training overturns this deficiency by setting forth God’s truth as total truth. *All of God’s Word applies to all of God’s world.* God’s revelation is not merely about ‘religious’ things; it is God’s absolute truth about the cosmos, origins, history, providence, anthropology, and destiny.

Ideas have consequences; erroneous ideas bear bad fruit. In a media-saturated culture, there is a relentless reinforcement of ideas which make up erroneous worldviews.

Biblical worldview sets up an antithesis between God’s Word and the deadly lies of our culture.

Worldview training equips pastors to raise the epistemological self-consciousness of their hearers. If the church is to be ‘salt and light’ in this present age, then she must see clearly the epistemological gulf that divides believer from unbeliever. According to Colossians 2:8, every individual falls into one of two camps: he is either a captive of false philosophy, or free in Christ. Christians don’t have to be intimidated by the common ‘defeater beliefs’ that are parroted by unbelievers (“*evolution is a fact; all religions have validity; Christianity is the cause war; it is wrong to make moral judgments; etc.*”). Through worldview training, believers can learn to deconstruct commonly accepted ‘defeater beliefs’—and in so doing, overcome the charge that the Gospel is implausible (Tim Keller).

Biblical worldview provides the spiritual ‘weapons’ necessary to stand against the unrelenting tide of our culture. The false worldviews of our culture can send shockwaves through the faith of those not established in the Word of God. Biblical worldview helps strengthen and stabilize believers. The truths of biblical worldview fit together like the interlocking pieces of a puzzle: *Reality is God and His plan for His creation.*

One cannot know God, the world, or himself apart from Christian truth. Christianity is defensible in the marketplace of ideas. The fact of evil in our world is a powerful validation of God's revelation in Scripture. The doctrine of biblical creation grounds our accountability to God. Moral truth is the expression of the character of God. Idolatry is behind all other sins. Christian truth fits human experience like a key fits a lock.

Biblical worldview teaches believers how to 'take the roof off' of false worldviews as an opening for the Gospel. It is the Christian worldview alone that corresponds with reality. When armed with that confidence the evangelist exhibits a compassionate boldness because he knows that the unbeliever's worldview will not stand up under scrutiny.

Biblical worldview helps preserve the integrity of Christian life. When God's unified truth is applied to all of life it is transforming in its power. Many professing believers live a 'disconnected life'—in other words, what they say they believe is *disconnected* from how they live. Biblical worldview deals with this 'disconnect' through the power of unified truth. Believers committed to biblical worldview learn to bring every area of life under the lordship of Christ.

Instead of a unified worldview; many believers have a 'patch-work' of ideas that make up their life view or worldview. One of the greatest advantages of systematically studying Christian worldview is that believers become aware that God's unified truth is total truth. There is both joy and confidence that arises from discovering God's Word speaks to every area of life.

A dedication to study biblical worldview brings with it the confidence that God has answers to all of life's important questions. There is an answer from God's Word for everything you experience from day to day. Thus, biblical worldview is a vision *of* life and a vision *for* life. Therefore there are no compartments 'exempt' from the lordship of Christ. Biblical worldview is the basis for all of life's choices, decisions, values, beliefs, and behavior. Christians make the most God-honoring decisions when those decisions are based upon an integrated biblical worldview. Biblical worldview is the basis for all of life's choices, decisions, values, beliefs, and behavior. This knowledge is intensely practical; it helps believers form the appropriate response to the moral issues we face in our culture. God's blueprint for mankind is a unity of total truth. The pieces of God's worldview are made to fit together like pieces of a puzzle—they are interlocking and interdependent. To hold to a unified biblical worldview that incorporates every part of God's blueprint is never an accident; it is always the result of systematic training.

An Introduction to Biblical Cosmology

I. We study Christian worldview because all of life is under the lordship of Christ.

A. Christianity is grounded in cosmology (the study of the origin, order, laws, and nature of the universe)—the big picture—God's relation to the cosmos.

B. We must know why the differences between Christian truth and the false ideas of unbelievers are so crucial to life. Scripture sets up an antithesis (sharp contrast with consequences) between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the world (1 Cor 1-2).

II. Our nation's public universities are systematically indoctrinating their students with lies.

A. In our public universities, absolutists (Bible-believing Christians—those who subscribe to absolute truth) are labeled fascists and considered enemies of humanity, progress, the environment, and liberty.

B. The progressives (secular humanists) propose that unity may be achieved if we get rid of what divides us (i.e. if we abandon God-ordained distinctions: *Creator-creature, male-female, human-animal, etc.*).

C. Those who believe that the universe created itself and that material existence is all there is are designated philosophic naturalists or materialists. They believe that death, disease, war, victimization, and suffering are normal and just an aspect of natural selection (Darwinism). Scripture teaches the opposite: that evil, death and suffering are cruel intruders that resulted from man's sin (Rom 5:12).

E. Public school students are taught that man is not designed and that there is nothing outside of man which governs him or defines him. Therefore we are 'free' to create our own meaning. Question: what happens to the value of human life if people teach that people have no innate worth created by God?

F. Progressives (secular humanists) insist that absolute answers to ultimate questions are unknowable (*Where did we come from? Why are we here? What is the authoritative source of right and wrong? Is God knowable? Has He revealed Himself clearly and authoritatively? Is there universal moral truth?*) Secularists suggest that those who think they know the answers are dangerous to freedom. This false view paves the way for the heresy that each person may define right and wrong for themselves.

G. The academy (public universities) would have us believe that you have a brain, but not a mind (or soul). That means that all thought may be reduced to chemical function—to low voltage electricity. Therefore, in this worldview crime is but a neurological anomaly (prison time is only to help 'clean up the gene pool' since there is no such thing as objective evil) (Ibid, p. 228).

III. Prime reality is personal because our personal Almighty God is Lord of His creation.

A. God's transcendence and sovereignty over all means that this is an 'open universe'—in other words God is always active in it and upon it without being part of it. Pantheists believe in a 'closed universe'—a universe that made itself, upholds itself, and defines itself, and contains all reality within itself (including anything divine).

B. Reality means coming to terms with our creaturehood. "All flesh is grass" (1 Pet 1:24-25). God stamped DNA onto dust and created man as a unity of body and soul. Even one of the most vocal spokesmen for evolutionary theory now admits that the magnitude of complexity of man's anatomy argues for intelligent design (but, Dawkins suggests that the creative intelligence involved was an E.T.).

IV. Reliable knowledge (and its pursuit) begins with the reverential fear of God (Prov 1:7).

A. Secular unbelievers falsely assume that given enough time science will answer every question and will solve all mysteries of our existence (by making this claim, they deny the need of divine revelation).

B. This arrogant assumption is blind to the infinite difference between operational science (technology) and theoretical science (religious philosophy). In terms of theoretical science (also called 'junk science'), it has left a deadly legacy: *holocausts, oppression, totalitarianism, and eugenics*.

C. God commands faith in His infallible Word. Faith reflects God's reasoning. To know the truth with certainty, we must 'think God's thoughts after Him' (*Five Views of Apologetics*, pp. 216-217). The Scriptures give us the relationship between revelation, rationality, reason, and regeneration. All unbelief is defiance of God's sovereign ownership (the problem for the unbeliever is not a lack of data). All unbelief is the manifestation of a faith commitment to autonomy (absolute independence from God)—which constitutes open war upon the truth that man is the image of God.

D. You yourself cannot be the authoritative fixed point of reference for all reality. Why? 99.9999999% of all phenomena are beyond your observation. The vast majority of what you believe about God and life and the world and the cosmos is based upon the testimony of others. The real question is: whose testimony will you receive as authoritative? The Holy Scriptures is compiled by eyewitnesses and eyewitnesses of eyewitnesses.

E. Where do beliefs come from? How do people acquire faith in God? What confidence do we have that our faculties provide reliable knowledge of the world? (Note the example of the garden toad ‘programmed’ by our Creator to lick up insects. The toad will lick the screen of an I-pad all day if a crawling ant video is playing). God created our faculties of perception and reason to receive divine revelation (Rom 1:18-23).

G. Our knowledge depends upon God’s knowledge. Knowledge is ethical in nature. Knowing is predicated upon God’s relationship to the world. Why is our ability to know truly dependent upon knowing God’s relation to the world? Answer: all things from plants to planets are God’s ‘covenant servants’—they serve God by revealing God (John Frame, *The Knowledge of God*, pp. 1-13).

H. God wills to be known; all His works declare Him. God’s testimonies saturate the unbeliever’s thought processes—the natural man is suspended in a ‘sea’ of divine revelation (Ps 19). The denial of God’s ‘knowability’ stems from a personal moral situation of rebellion and enmity (Jn 3:19-21; Rom 1:28) (John Frame, p. 19).

I. Empiricism (the view that experience and senses are the only source of knowledge) provides no universals; no framework for knowledge; and no basis for the interpretation of facts. Empiricism is an attempt to find certainty apart from divine revelation. Knowledge is not an endless sea of facts; knowledge is truth. Our world is powered by the sun which has a mass so great it overcomes atomic structure in a thermonuclear process called fusion, but why are we the perfect distance from the sun—the answer is found in the truth, not in endless facts? (See Is 45:18).

J. Every natural man absolutizes (convert from relative to absolute) some aspect of the creation (in so doing, he worships and serves the creature and the creation—Romans 1:23-25). God calls all men to repentance which is first and foremost intellectual repentance—to turn from idols to God (1 Thess 1:9; Acts 17: 30-31). The size of God determines the size of everything in your experience. You are going to be a servant for all eternity—you will serve what you worship—start serving God now (Rev 7:15; 22:3).

V. There are really only two worldviews: either God is ultimate, or chance is ultimate.

A. If chance is ultimate then man is utterly determined by nature (a product of his genes in all he is and all he does) and really has no moral free agency (freedom of will).

B. If chance is ultimate then morals, ethics, meaning, dignity, good, evil, and love are illusions. And if chance is ultimate, then matter created itself, and then matter created man, and then man thought up the idea of a god (gods). But Scripture proclaims the opposite trajectory: God created matter, and then He created man from that matter, and God gives man the knowledge of Himself, and redeemed man gives his Creator the worship He is rightfully due.

C. If chance is ultimate then the impersonal (matter) is prime reality, and man is but a biological robot—a programmed survival mechanism. And if chance is ultimate then the following transcendentals have to be stolen from Christian worldview because there is no accounting of them in material worldview: *purpose, meaning, value, dignity of life, free moral agency, morality, love, rationality, logic, justice, mercy, etc.*

D. Chance is a woefully inadequate cause of: *truth, morality, logic, uniformity in nature, beauty, meaning, soul, order, law, a rational universe, and a rational mind.* The creation argues for divine causation.

E. People do not live their lives as if there are no rational laws. They get out of the way of a speeding truck, they balance the spreadsheet in their finances, they nurture their relationships, they are aware of the consequences of evil—they live life with the conviction that it is saturated with the evidence of laws and with meaning.

F. In terms of causation, the rational universe around us gives immense overwhelming evidence that it is the product of the rational mind of God. God is man's 'environment'. The world's order is not the result of chaos but of causation—it is a *causal order*. Explosions ('big bang') do not create order.

VI. What is our 'creational identity'?

A. We are created in the image and likeness of God which includes His moral image.

B. Our departure from our created purpose and our restoration in Christ are captured in this chart.

CREATION – Mankind is created in the image of God = which is our identity and purpose

FALL – Original sin produced a series of separations (from God, others, self, truth, and nature)

REDEMPTION – By His incarnation and atoning work Christ restores what Adam lost

JUDGMENT -- All those outside of Christ will face divine eternal justice for their sins

RESTORATION-- Christ's work brings a true utopia; the new heavens and the new earth

C. The above chart lays out the story of redemption. It is the most compassionate and realistic explanation of human existence and experience. Why is man so capable of nobility and cruelty?

VII. God's relation to the creation determines all other questions—His relation to the universe is ultimate reality.

A. Biblical theism teaches that God's relation to the creation is as follows, He is: *Creator, Owner, Definer, Upholder, Redeemer, and Judge.* How do we relate to God who lives outside of time and who is sovereign over all, yet allows our decisions to have lasting significance?

B. What is the connection between the character of God and His commandments? Why do the 10 Commandments provide the ideal safeguard of love to God and to neighbor?

C. Questions related to cosmology are: *What is the cosmos? Does it have a purpose or meaning? What is man? What is man's place in the cosmos? Why am I here? Where am I going? What is my ultimate purpose? Why do I have significance?* If you start or begin with self, you will never have a shred of

certainty about the answers to these questions. (Note: Calvin on the problem of starting with self. If you do you descend into self, you descend into a maze/labyrinth from which there is no escape.)

D. According to Scripture, if we reject the knowledge of our Maker, and operate from 'self' as the fixed, authoritative point of reference, we will manifest fallacious, absurd thinking (Rom 1:18-22; Eph 4:17-19).

E. Scripture reveals that in the cosmos there is a moral order as real and concrete as the physical order (Ps 19). The laws in both areas have specific effects and results/consequences. Question: Why is this a 'moral universe'? Why are moral absolutes a condition for human flourishing and true humanity?

F. We define the moon and its functions by our earth by which its orbit is controlled. So also, man is defined by his Creator who designed him and sustains and upholds him.