

The Church is Starving for Cosmology

Jay Wegter

Recently, I was challenged by a Christian brother to define my terms a little further and illustrate my points with stories and word pictures. In keeping with that recommendation, I was reminded of a particular line of questions that Peter Jones utilizes to truly identify any truth claim we make. And I'm adding a couple more questions to his list. He said, *in order to know what something truly is, we must know what it is not. We must know where it came from. We must know what its purpose is, and we must know how its proper use as well as the recognition of its origin honors its Designer, God himself.*

As Christian leaders, we think about how paganism and naturalism became the reigning worldview of the West, but also how these philosophies became the rationale or excuse for the unhindered expression of carnal desires (Rom 1). Truly, the devil has a cosmology first whispered in Eden. His cosmology of autonomous men in an autonomous cosmos is a cover for sin. But his lie did not produce a new reality; for we live in a moral universe. The evil one's lie acted upon introduced the reign of sin and death according to Romans chapter five. And because this is a moral universe, what you practice will inevitably deepen your cosmology, whether it's a theistic or non-theistic world and life view. For what you practice is 'functionally' the content of your faith. You cannot practice sin and hold truth in the same hand and heart. Therefore, belief is an act of the whole man.

Today's neo-Gnostic dualism attempts to sever the mind, body, soul, heart—unity. It gives the illusion that those things can be successfully torn apart, in essence, operate independently of the other. But it'll always prove unsuccessful at destroying the unity that God has created in a human being. Case in point, the worldling bribes his conscience with the devil's cosmology. Lucifer's cosmology entails a non-teleological man, a man not designed—a man purposeless, a mere coincidence of nature, and not the image of God. But when Judgment Day takes place, and the reprobate appears before God, man's teleology of moral glory will permeate every thought, every nerve, and every sensibility of every person. No one will be debating whether or not man is the moral image and likeness of God

Think about the incalculable weight of carrying the moral image of God, for on judgment Day, our creational identity will hit with all of its weight. But in the meantime, the devil is using his demented cosmology of a non-teleological man to mangle the image of God and to foist atrocities on that only

order of creatures created in the likeness of God. And what is the evil one's strategy for mutilating the image of God? Answer, idols—for idols are false integration points, and rather than producing joyful integration, idols dis-integrate the human unity. For those who die impenitent, the result will be ultimate dis-integration in what Scripture describes as the second death.

Fallen man does not enter this world in infancy as a pure, innocent, clean slate spirit, but rather, as a being already alienated from his Creator and attracted to idols. According to Colossians chapter two the natural man is a captive of false philosophies that justify an idolatrous worldview. Every unregenerate person is cut off from his Maker, dead to the God, who is the source of all life, light, love, and purpose. Therefore, it's impossible for the unregenerated sinner by his own efforts to experience wholeness and completeness before God.

In view of man's ruinous dilemma, consider what the cross reveals about the heart of God. It is something truly wonderful. The cross reveals that God desires communion with broken rebellious, polluted sinners. Man cannot fill the void nor repair the breach that sin has produced. For the idolatrous service of the flesh in slavery to sin can only produce greater disintegration. And so, in God's giving of His Son, wholeness and completeness are found only in Christ. For our Savior is our shield, our rock, our favor, our covenant, our robe of righteousness, our high priest, and our advocate.

Christ Jesus grants everything necessary for life and godliness. But there's an immense cosmological dimension belonging to our Lord's identity and to His redemptive work that is being neglected. And in the Christ hymn of Colossians chapter one, we see a very clear cosmology that turns the world's cosmology on its head. For in our salvation is the meeting and the merging of Christ as Savior with Christ's role as Creator, Designer, Upholder, Focal point, and Goal of reality. For the omnipotent Architect of our teleology is the Son of God Himself. And He is the Architect of our renewed teleology—the 'new man' described in Colossians chapter three. But this vastness of Christ is a dimension that's gone missing in the church today. According to Peter Jones, this has allowed for the return of a neo-Gnostic worldview. It has slipped in the back door of the church—as Jones has expressed in his book, *The Gnostic Empire Strikes Back*

The natural man hastens to view the cosmos and its contents as merely raw material from which the non-teleological man may craft his own identity. Those who are the church may say, "well, that's only descriptive of an unbeliever." Not so. This may also be descriptive of a believer that has not been trained in biblical cosmology. Religion becomes an inner perspective—a matter

solely of the heart, detached from man's body-soul bi-unity.

There are numerous symptoms of this gross deficiency in biblical cosmology. First, that absence of cosmology contributes to a disconnect between faith and life. There's also an antinomian neo-Gnostic expression, which places a very low level of significance upon our embodied-ness—so that only the matters of the heart have importance. This tends to sever personal behavior from God's standard of truth, beauty, honor, and morality. In addition, in Evangelicalism, there's a tendency to accommodate a two-level view of reality. This pushes redemption into an upper story. Sadly, this means Christians are living with a state of detente, or ‘peace treaty’ with an open gash of dualism. Truth and life become increasingly pulled apart in the process.

To grow up without instruction in biblical cosmology can yield a Christian that is essentially metaphysically lost. In other words, that ‘lostness’ describes a person that has a weak grasp of the nature of reality. Without instruction in cosmology, the rising generation hears biblical theology and the dogmatics of doctrine as merely disassociated pieces of moral advice. By contrast, a foundation in biblical cosmology lets us see that creation structures are the bedrock foundation of reality. For God's relationship to the cosmos revealed in the ‘furniture of creation’ welds together creation structures that are material with creation structures which are immaterial. Note: marriage, family, male, female, parent, child, God governing by His moral law, God utilizing the creation to communicate his wisdom, His power, his goodness, and His control, etc.

Another symptom of an absence of cosmology is the human body tends to be viewed as a kind of shell or commuter vehicle of the soul, and not necessarily the locus or center of personality and moral volition. Today's spirituality tends to misunderstand the role of the body, and that misconception either views the body as debased and valueless, or as separated from personality, rather than what the body really is, the locus of moral decisions. And so, concurrent with this error, comes additional symptoms of an absence of cosmology, especially devaluing the human body as a spiritual resource. As numerous authors have said, including Randy Alcorn, that devaluation of the body is a symptom of Christo-platonism. That's the perspective that the soul merely occupies the body like a hermit crab occupies a seashell. This is an oblique attack on the biunity of body and soul.

This disconnect between body and soul tends to open a breach in the protective wall around the inner man, lowering the drawbridge so to speak, producing an unguarded entryway to pornography. For pornography is a

demonic worldview of the body. We see this vulnerability in the disengagement between faith and life, widened and being broadened by techno consumer culture. So, we could accurately say that in concert with this sad mechanism of starvation for biblical cosmology is a weak grasp of God's vision for male and female. This makes the biblical distinction between gender roles into something viewed as emerging from a former age of prejudice—as if borne of medieval Christianity and dripping with misogynistic discrimination. But, that attitude, that feminist attitude, is actually a symptom of an absence of biblical cosmology and teleology.

The self-absorbed rising generations operating with a paralyzing deficiency in cosmology tend to ask the wrong questions about knowing God. They ask, “where does God fit into my life?” Rather than asking, “where do I fit into God's great, all-consuming story and mission?” My wife and I spoke with a woman today at church. This young woman was a full-time staff member with Campus Crusade for Christ. And I shared with her the four questions that I ask an unbeliever to obtain access for a gospel conversation. Then she talked about the questions she uses in evangelism. In some ways, her queries appealed to pragmatism. She asks unbelievers questions like, “well, why does a Savior who was crucified and risen, why is that better than your worldview?” Thus, I was quite amazed that in her evangelism, she was not proclaiming the truth of the gospel by biblical authority and history; but that it’s a better worldview. I thought that maybe her approach is an accommodation to the unbeliever’s test of pragmatism, ‘does it work?’ being the reigning metric in a postmodern world.

In summary, the divine purpose of the human body is central to biblical worldview and biblical cosmology, and biblical teleology. Because we, according to Scripture, ought to regard the body as a great spiritual resource. Holistically, the body is an incredible resource for its service to the corporate body of Christ. There are tremendous social dimensions to the use of our body, for Christian fellowship, and for serving our brethren. What is the solution to this disconnect between: *faith and life, sacred and secular, body and soul, material and immaterial reality?* Answer, we need to instruct our disciples in biblical cosmology. As disciplers we must be conversant with how the incarnation of Christ and Logos doctrine fuses together actual history with pure rationality—for God in the flesh as Logos brings total holistic unity—ending the fragmentation produced by a neo-Gnostic or dualistic worldview.

This is of critical importance because Christians are falling into a trap in which obedience is viewed as a narrow bandwidth of one’s life. In that view obedience never rises above a kind of courtesy toward God, and not as Holy

Scripture describes it, as a whole-life living sacrifice. Biblically, obedience is an expression of one's heart affections—a holistic response to God's absolute and total claim upon us. This holistic or biblical perspective blasts us out of the sacred-secular dichotomy produced by a lack of teleology and cosmology. For the Lord claims absolutely every square foot of life and human experience for Himself. By contrast, the devil's teleology is the exact opposite of true freedom. The devil's teleology says that liberty is freedom from design, whereas the Word of God is very clear, liberty is found only within divine design, that is within the teleology and cosmology ordained by our Triune God—for our good and for His glory.