

Cosmology Observations 1.16.14

By Jay Wegter

Millennial believers are experiencing a **crisis of faith**. In essence, in their university experience, they find themselves on the very frontlines of the culture war, yet for the most part are unarmed (therefore are easily made ‘casualties’ of our culture). They are being daily hammered by the fact-value split. They haven’t been taught how to think through the source of reliable convictions. And they **lack the worldview categories** necessary to exercise discernment and deconstruct the lies of erroneous worldview. As a consequence, they tend to view the Bible as a collection of moral advice and information for one’s private spiritual journey; but not as the depository of total truth. **Many of these young believers have never seen the ‘big picture’ which biblical cosmology provides.** We could call cosmology, ‘*cause-mology*’.

The big picture sacred canopy (biblical cosmology) is missing today in much of the instruction which takes place in Christian churches and institutions. Biblical truth has been imparted *devotionally*—and not as total truth (Nancy Pearcey). And when theology goes, the big picture goes with it. Without the divine perspective given to us by cosmology/theology, we are left bobbing on a relativistic sea of particulars (with the idea of ‘Kantian self’ it is the individual himself who supplies the categories and makes sense of the world and ourselves).

On utopianism: Thomas Sowell and a *restrained vs. unrestrained* vision of freedom. It all depends upon your worldview—is man complicit in the cosmic rebellion? **How much of a disaster is sin?** How far did Adam fall? The whole of depraved man ‘locks out’ the knowledge of God, but man is surrounded inside and out by ‘pesky’ reminders of who God is and who he is. **The faithful teaching of divine redemption requires the backdrop of man’s part in the cosmic rebellion.** Only then is the value of God’s grace infinite—that He made our enemies His enemies and then brought that purpose into a covenant by/through the blood of His Son.

‘Gotcha questions’: **“Do you oppose marriage equality?”** I see a major problem, when one attempts to define equality, while rejecting God’s definition of a human being you get a creature without a soul who tries to define good and evil apart from a transcendent moral code. Without moral truth, what keeps a society from outlawing certain virtues and legislating vices? In Scripture, both race and sexuality are sacred (set apart by God). **We must make men painfully aware of their epistemology** (there is nothing in man’s environment or experience which gives conclusive evidence that chance is ultimate or that man does not have an eternal soul).

Equality as a value is a biblical concept; you can find it in the history of civilizations that do not have the Bible (note societal classes, divine right of kings, oppression, harems, etc.). You can’t find equality in a philosophical naturalistic worldview of Darwinism—for in that view the less fit are dominated by, or eliminated in order to make room for the fit. The incarnation of Christ, His atoning work, and the gospel offer without partiality is basis for equality. But the Bible is very careful where it places an equal sign. Idols are not equal to God. Sin is not equal to righteousness. Man is not equivalent

to woman. Emotion/passion is not equivalent to moral truth. Freedom is not equivalent to license. Feelings and natural passions are not equivalent to righteousness.

Hinduistic pantheism is a position of hardened unbelief—it does not demand a direct correspondence between the creation and self-evident truth planted in man and the creation by his Creator. **‘One box’ cosmology is pantheistic. It suggests that matter and energy created man, and man then creates the concept of the soul, and then man creates the idea of a God. Biblical theism is God creating matter and energy and creating man from matter.**

EVOLUTION: Stephen Jay Gould says that if you want to defend the theory of evolution, you can’t argue from gradualism; it just isn’t there (proposes *punctuated equilibrium*—that evolution is too slow to see now, but in the fossil record it was too fast to see). In the sciences, biology replaced physics—only in 1950 did science become part of the university in a worldview, philosophic, theoretical way.

Operational science was what was studied (the role of science in all of the technical arts). Scientism (philosophic naturalism as a metanarrative) replaced divine revelation as the explanation of man and the cosmos. Biology is where the greatest antagonism toward Christianity takes place. Modern science is a philosophy-laden zone.

Your worldview determines what you choose for evidence (“why should I prefer your circle over mine?” Oliphant). People do not become atheists because of science. 51% of scientists believe in God and know that natural forces are not enough to account for order, design, complexity, variety, information, etc. (Pew Foundation). **There is no scientific formula for truth**—‘true truth’ expressed logically is what makes an argument sound. Anthony Flew began to understand that the vast coding of information in DNA (for building countless different living things) could not come from non-intelligent, blind, uncaused, material forces.

Scientific revolutions are brought about by a revolution of conception, not a revolution of facts.

The Soul of Science continued: **God imposed laws upon the creation. Math is an incredibly useful way to read those laws. What a testament to God’s almighty rational, infinite wisdom.** Why does math correspond to, and explain phenomena so well? Laws are not the volition behind the events. Laws allow for uniformity and prediction. **If man were totally determined by nature, he could not transcend nature and do science. But he can, which argues that as the image of God he has the equipment necessary to reflect, interpret and subdue.** (Note: the toad and the ants video on an iPad.)

How do men declare war upon God? ANSWER: moral rebellion begins by intellectual rebellion—by the suppression of the truth of God which He has clearly revealed in His works—works which clearly reveal the character and attributes of the Creator. **Philosophic naturalism (the WV of the academy) attacks God by attacking the self-evident messages in His creation structures.**

Herman Bavinck: the cosmos is scientifically explorable—we can express relationships in the creation mathematically. **The fact that there is uniformity, predictability, and rationality argues for an adequate first cause outside of time, space and mass. But it must be an ‘adequate’ cause to account for the cosmos.** God as the great uncaused first cause (His transcendence) is foundational to understanding His relation to the cosmos. All knowledge is ‘servant knowledge’. We are to use the

knowledge of facts ‘ethically’. We are constantly surrounded by revelation and are constantly receiving revelation.

Bavinck: Why is the rule of law the only true freedom? Law guards (love, dignity, humanness, liberty); grace delivers and transforms. The creation is designed to have us know, trust, rely upon God. **This only happens when we worshipfully acknowledge the Creator-creature distinction.** Deny that distinction and we lose—by robbing the creation of its revelatory character (sentence yourself to irrationality and absence of meaning. **God created time when He created the world. The Creator-creature distinction is the foundation for understanding everything** (us, God, man’s place in the cosmos, the cosmos). Why God is definer of the cosmological purpose of His creation (pp. 180-181).

God reveals His will in the act of originating all things—God creates with the creation having a purpose—He brings into existence a cosmological purpose (Bavinck, pp. 168-171). Man must be regenerate in order to comprehend providence in the world as **the revelatory works of God** (p. 183). (Note book of Job and what would happen to creation if God withdrew His Spirit.)

There is no morality without authority; there is no authority without reverential fear; there is no reverential fear without accountability; and there is no accountability without consequences (moral cause and effect) (Walt Hendrickson). (Add whatever a man sows that will he also reap—Gal 6.)

Bavinck: on the woeful reductionism of determinism. If man is a coincidence of nature, and has no eternal soul; then man is the same essence as an animal (p. 197). The life of the soul is equally real as the life of the physical body. This is seen clearly in the area of morality. **Moral laws are just as ineffable as physical laws.** There is a perfect correspondence between the origin of man and the essence of man. Darwinism relegates man’s nature to animal essence. Biblical creation endows man with an eternal soul and an essence known as the image of God. We are unique creatures with our own essence—having received the breath of life from above (pp. 198-199).

‘Junk science’ is used to deny moral cause and effect, the moral government of God, the moral structures in creation—all in the name of ‘science’. **Determinism reduces man to a machine.** “Criminals are not so much wicked as they are insane.” Man is not a free rational moral being—his deeds cannot be held against him in real guilt; he simply is what he has to be (determinism). Determinism robs sin of its gravity and robs man of his moral free agency (pp. 254-255).

All false philosophy and all false religion denies the transcendence of God. (Note: the question I ask college/university students: “How can you relate to, or know God who lives outside of time, space and mass?”) **Because God is transcendent; He must build the bridge to us—anything less is Eros spirituality.** Why? Answer: God’s essential nature is holy; God cannot be equated with anything in His creation; we are utterly dependent upon **His initiative in self-revelation**; and we are alienated from Him by reason of sin and rebellion and darkened understanding (Eph 4:17-19). Will worship denies God’s transcendence and denies our utter dependency upon His divine revelation (pp. 264-265).

Oliphant, Covenantal Apologetics: Artists such as “Picasso and Mondrian depicted a world without any kind of trustworthy transcendent meaning.” We could say that non-representational art, as well as ‘evil’ and pessimistic art (term a la Schaeffer) **suggests a world into which God has not spoken—thus meaning is relative and is determined by the individual. Only LOGOS provides transcendent,**

trustworthy meaning (see p. 25—bow before *Logos* in order to abandon one's preference for irrationality) (p. 11).

Excellent on the relation between faith and reason. **Argument (all) from reason requires an appeal to final authority—a foundational assumption or grid of understanding which is regarded as authoritative.** Thus reasoning is necessarily circular because it is based upon faith that the founding assumption is authoritative. The question for the skeptic, says Oliphant, is “On what basis should I accept your circle over mine?”

The only way to think properly about faith and reason (and their relationship to one another) is to ‘take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ’ (2 Cor 10:5). The beauty of this apologetic approach is that it is naturally and **centrally focused on the reality of God’s revelation in Christ** and of course the gospel (pp. 24-25).

Oliphant: Here is the useful illustration of the distance between God and the creature likened/analogous to the distance between a man and a snail. **The snail cannot transcend his own character to converse with the man—the ontological difference is prohibitive.** If there is to be communication it must come from the **condescension of the superior being.** We think about the disparity between God’s character and ours—and this represents **an unbridgeable chasm from our side.** These thoughts are essential to our understanding of the voluntary ‘covenant condescension’ of God. Because God is *totally other*, communion and communication with Him (and knowledge of Him) can only take place with us by His initiative. We were created in His image to show off His character—this has sweeping implications for apologetics. Our relationship with Him is properly designated a covenant. We owe obedience to Him as our Creator (pp. 40-41).

The nature of our rebellion: *hide, fight, deny, run, thwart, misappropriate, defy, and break.* The gift of Christ is given to covenant breakers. To be created in the image of God includes knowing that the one true God exists—as Creator, Owner, Ruler, Judge (Rom 1). The knowledge of God comes through created things (Rom 1). **True self-knowledge depends upon the knowledge of God—He is the ‘original’, we are the ‘reflection’ (image).** **The nature of our rebellion: as a covenant creature, man takes his covenant relationship graciously initiated by God’s condescension, and attempts to hold down that truth and the implications of that truth—fabricating idols in place of God whom he knows and to whom he owes worship.** Our rebellion is summarized in what we do with our eradicable knowledge of God (i.e. “knowing while suppressing” p. 44) (pp. 42-43).

Irrationality: **The unbeliever willfully chooses irrationality—he convinces himself that what he knows about the world as actually true** (by reason of general revelation) is not true. He distorts both who we are (image of God) and who God is. We are at war with our true identity. Though surrounded with facts which speak of his covenant identity; we seek the impossible and unattainable, absolute autonomy. **Man’s refusal to acknowledge God is not done in ignorance; it is culpable rebellion** (no excuse, Rom 1). This is irrational because it militates against the world as it really is. A tactic to use with the unbeliever who has convinced himself of autonomy: Ask him, “How can it be (knowing that you believe you are utterly determined) that you think that you are worthy of complete trust so that you are the origin of truth itself?” (Oliphant, p. 45).

Oliphant: By virtue of our creation in the image of God we never transcend our covenant relation to God whether we reside in heaven or in eternal hell. **Man is always *coram Deo*. Our Christian testimony/truth claim is that the way reality is set forth in God's revelation is the way things really are in the world.** In other words, what God says about the world is the way the world really is. The unbeliever's position cannot be made to 'fit' with the way the world really is (pp. 50-51).

Either we bow the knee to Christ and affirm the truth of what God says, or we oppose Him and attempt to 'create' a world of our own making. Our confidence in Christian apologetics is tied to the fact that the unbeliever cannot make sense of things by means of the illusory world of his imagining—that position self-destructs, for it does not match the way the world is.

All of God's facts in the world are servant facts. Unsaved men will answer for how they handled these facts—even 'two plus two' will condemn the unbeliever on judgment day, for facts glorify God. The unbeliever distorts and perverts the meaning of facts. (Note the testimony of Psalm 19; and the finely tuned parameters making life possible, also note the testimony of God in the Wisdom literature: God designing and feeding His creatures, etc.) (pp. 52-53).

Oliphant: God's free decision to condescend (in order to deliver) is both *cosmic* and *redemptive*. *LOGOS* is the true light who comes into a sin-darkened world. The Word (as the cosmic light of the world) continues to enlighten. Geerhardus Vos notes that the *LOGOS* is life-giving and light-giving. As such He reveals the light of the knowledge of God to all people. **History can be properly defined ONLY of what the second Person of the Trinity has condescended to do—both in creation and for His people.** Thus *Logos* is our philosophy of history (pp. 62-64).

Oliphant: **God is man's ultimate environment, but fallen man construes the world in such a way that he will not have to face God.** (As the image of God, man is responsible to God in all of his thinking, living, and doing.) The image of God revealed in male and female in the Garden prior to sin became a source of shame after the fall. Fig leaf clothes could not hide their real guilt.

Mankind now attempts **to hide and cover up whatever remains of that fractured and broken image of God. We pretend that access to God by way of His revelation is impossible. In our suppression we might even come to think that our environment or context is a barrier to sure and certain knowledge of God (as if our problem is metaphysical and not ethical). This issue of pretended barriers is what Paul is exposing in Acts 17 (p. 97).**

Paul's point in Acts 17 is that **our rescue can only come from something outside of us.** Beginning in Romans 1 and 2, Paul describes just what the image of God looks like even while we remain in our sins (in Adam).

The truth that we suppress is not primarily truth about nature or aspects of the world. **The truth we suppress is the "clearly perceived" (v. 20) and "understood" (v. 20) "knowledge of God."** The truth of God that Paul intends to delineate is His divine perfections: a Spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth (Hodge Commentary in Oliphant). They (His character and attributes) are given to us, revealed to us, and implanted in us by the creative power and providence of Almighty God the Creator (pp. 98-100).

Oliphant: **the great crux of Christianity is how the infinite comes in contact with the finite and in so doing makes Himself known.** The incarnation of the second Person of the Godhead is the work of

covenant condescension. **This voluntary condescension on the part of God Almighty is the foundation for the saving knowledge of God (Jn 1:18)**—it is God’s interaction with His creation within human history (pp. 118-119).

A. E. Wilder-Smith: pagan cosmology (the creation receives praise and worship—note Hinduism), rather than praising the Creator as designer, upholder, and definer. **In pagan cosmology, there is no will, Person, purpose, wisdom, goodness, and power behind the universe, just dead law—no person who willed me into existence—chance is ultimate, I am a coincidence.** Jacques Monod tried to **explain the cosmos and all in it without volition—only chance.** But he is faced with a huge problem: **the vastly complex molecular metabolic motor in the cell is not a disordered chemical bath, it is massively detailed set of cooperating factories which translate code into building instructions, and building instructions** into structures (but you can’t translate coded language by chance). Baby turtles and Monarch butterflies created with a mechanism/instrumentation to navigate by the earth’s magnetic field—incredible functional order. Argues for, presupposes design, intelligence, volition. God’s testimony in the creation is binding upon all men.