

Main principles of biblical world view

Life



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A Biblical Worldview

What is a worldview? Simply stated, a worldview is, literally, the way a person views the world. Like a filing cabinet, a person's worldview is a mental model of the world that contains a slot for every concept we encounter. Like a giant map, a person's worldview, if accurate, can give directions to what is truly there or, if inaccurate, can be extremely misleading. Like colored glasses, a person's worldview invisibly colors everything that is perceived and every experience that is interpreted. Every person has a worldview. Whether we realize it or not, our view of life and reality is affected by our presuppositions and biases. Formed by our education, upbringing, interactions, culture, and other influences, our worldview also is strongly impacted by what we watch, listen to, and read. In the end, our worldview will determine our attitudes, beliefs, and, ultimately, our actions. As Christians, we must ensure that our worldview aligns with the Bible's perspective and that we know the answers to key issues such as the heart of God, the nature of man, the nature of the universe, and the basis for morality and ethics. Knowing the Bible's answers to these four big issues will enable us to fully possess a more complete, accurate, biblical worldview.

Our God is an infinite God, —unlimited in every way—but he is also a personal God who desires a close relationship with us. An example of God being infinite is shown in Jeremiah 32: 17, where the author exclaims: “ Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.” This verse shows that nothing is beyond God's power. Additionally, in 1 Chronicles, David admonishes his son by telling him to “ serve him [the LORD] with

wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every desire and every thought” (1 Chronicles 28: 9). David is referring to God’s ability to know and understand everything. While two aspects of God’s infinitude are his omnipotence and his omniscience, God is also omnipresent, immanent, transcendent, unchangeable, and eternal. He is beyond our comprehension. Besides being infinite, God is also personal—He has intellect, feelings, and will. One often overlooked aspect of perhaps the most widely memorized verse, John 3: 16, is God’s great love for mankind: “ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” Our God is not a far-off God who does not have feelings for his creation; he not only thinks and acts for man’s benefit, but he also feels. God is love. In fact, God even desires a relationship with man: “ Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you” (James 4: 8). If God, being so infinite and so beyond our understanding, so desires an intimate relationship with his creation, what a privilege that is!

According to the Bible, God created man in his own image, but because of the Fall, man has an innate sin nature. As Genesis 1: 27 states, “ God created mankind in his image, in the image of God he created them.” Additionally, 1 Corinthians 11: 7 reveals that “ he [man] is the image and glory of God.” Being created in God’s image and likeness means that our human personalities and moral and spiritual qualities are from God. Like God, man is able to reason, communicate with God, and choose freely. At Creation, man was holy and inclined towards God—he was capable of being tempted but was not compelled nor impelled to sin. However, at the Fall,

Adam deliberately chose sin as a free act, and thus his guilt and corruption passed to all men. Mankind's inherent sin nature can be seen in Genesis 13: 13, where the author writes that " the people were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord." Man is sinful from birth, as King David admits, " Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me" (Psalm 51: 5). Because of the Fall, sin entered the world and the image of God was extremely corrupted in its moral and natural dimensions. Man now experiences pain and stress, is separated and dependent on God, and, instead of being inclined towards God, is drawn towards evil. Man's sin is the basis of history and was the reason why Jesus came to earth for our salvation. The fact that man was created in God's image but inherited a sinful nature can be observed throughout history and is apparent even today.

In the beginning, God created a perfect universe, but it was corrupted by the fall of man. As Nehemiah declared to God, " You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you" (Nehemiah 9: 6). By his word and will, God spoke and created the uncorrupted universe out of nothing. Unlike theories based on evolution, the Bible clearly states that the universe was not formed by chance but by God for a unique purpose.

Furthermore, God is not only our Creator but also our Sustainer, as Psalm 104: 10-14 reveals: " He [God] makes springs pour water into the ravines; it flows between the mountains. They give water to all the beasts of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. The birds of the sky nest by the waters;

they sing among the branches. He waters the mountains from his upper chambers; the land is satisfied by the fruit of his work. He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for people to cultivate—bringing forth food from the earth.” The earth cannot exist on its own but continues to be sustained by God—only because of God did the universe come into being; only because of God does the universe continue to function and exist. God is infinite and loves us beyond comprehension. Thus, we can have confidence that he will continue to protect, support, and provide for us. Although God created the universe without blemish, the universe is nevertheless adversely affected by the fall of man. This can be seen in Genesis 3: 17, where God told Adam: “ Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘ You must not eat from it,’ cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life.” Death, disease, pain, suffering, sin, and exhaustion entered the world because of man’s fall. Man now has to work in order to survive and experiences negative emotions such as anxiety, fear, anger, frustration, depression, rejection, and shame. However, believers in Christ can look forward to a day when the universe will be freed from the curses of sin. As Paul explains, “ For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God” (Romans 8: 20-21). Because of Jesus’ sacrifice, believers can look forward to a day when there will be no more pain and suffering in God’s presence, when the universe, which was created perfect but corrupted by the fall of man, will be released from its slavery to sin.

What should be a Christian's basis for morality and ethics? According to the Bible, Christians should base their judgments of right and wrong on God's Word and their conscience. As Joshua 1: 8 proclaims, "The LORD your God commands you this day to follow these decrees and laws; carefully observe them with all your heart and with all your soul." God's Word should be our ultimate standard of right and wrong. Sadly, in today's world, it is a widespread belief that people should be free to do whatever they want or whatever they feel is right, without having to adhere to a set of laws or regulations. However, complete freedom would mean a loss of freedom to be secure, since people will not have protection from evil people and vandals. On the other hand, history has repeatedly shown that living under a set of man-made laws based on majority vote or on a ruler's desires, a culture's preferences, or a government's conveniences can also be disastrous because the rules can be potentially harmful to society. God created his Law for our freedom, protection, and benefit. His Word is completely reliable since it has not changed over the centuries, as Jesus once asserted: "For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished" (Matthew 5: 18). Unlike man-made laws, God's Word is perfect and trustworthy and should be our firm foundation for our standard of right and wrong. Besides giving us his Word, God, when creating us in his image, also gave us a conscience to protect us. Because He created us with a moral nature, we have an inborn sense of right and wrong. Romans 2: 14-15 states: "Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the requirements of the

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law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them (Italics added).” As we can see from this verse, even without God’s Law, man still has a sense of right and wrong. Contrary to modern beliefs that man is born without a conscience, it is an observable fact that man is born with a sense of right and wrong and a sense of justice and injustice. For example, man feels shocked when criminals show no remorse for their wicked deeds and makes laws to punish them. Man feels guilty when he sins and feels something nudging him to do what is right. A Biblical example is when “ David was conscience-stricken after he had counted the fighting men, [which he had been commanded not to do] and said to the LORD, ‘ I have sinned greatly in what I have done. Now, LORD, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing’” (2 Samuel 24: 10). Our sense of right and wrong testifies to our good and just Creator, who not only gave us his perfect Word but also created in us a conscience, so that we can have a clear basis for our morals and ethics.

Being Christians, clearly understanding what we believe about the heart of God, the nature of man, the nature of the universe, and the basis for morality and ethics is fundamental to acquiring a thorough, undistorted, biblical worldview. Undoubtedly, the Bible tells us that God is infinite yet personal at the same time, unlimited in every way and desiring an intimate relationship with us. He created man in his own image, but man, in choosing sin, turned away from good and inclined towards evil. Because of sin’s damaging effects, the universe, though it was created by God without blemish, was corrupted. Also, sin contaminated man’s conscience so that

man's reasoning is now faulty. Because of this, man has to rely on God's Word for the absolute standard of right and wrong. In modern culture, many people oppose God's laws of right and wrong. Arguing, they contend that man should have the complete freedom to do whatever he wishes without having to obey laws. Right and wrong should not be based on absolutes but on what one feels is right. Looking back in history, however, one can see that when man does not live under laws but has the ability to do as he pleases, the result is a chaotic, upside-down world. Because of the absence of security and justice, people would be living in constant fear and helplessness against evil. Based on history, we also can observe that laws based on the preferences and conveniences of society and its rulers can be dangerous because man has a tendency to make rules for his own good and not for the benefit of the society as a whole. Ultimately, then, man needs to live under reliable laws—God's Word—to have true freedom. Knowing the truth and basing our worldview on reality is what will give us true freedom. As Jesus said, " Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8: 32).