

## **The Christian and worldviews**

Everyone has a worldview. A worldview is everything you believe about what is real and what really matters in life. It is the comprehensive framework of basic beliefs that we hold, whether we realize it or not, which shapes our view of the world.

Our worldview forms the basis of how we interpret reality; a lens through which we look at the world. It explains why we see the world as we do, and why we think and act as we do. It shapes our moral opinions.

Our worldview has huge significance. It affects what we believe about God, marriage, politics, morality, social structures, the raising of children, etc. Everything is interpreted and understood in light of our worldview.

### **A Christian Worldview**

There are many young adults today who have had a Christian upbringing, many having trusted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, who have abandoned some of the moral precepts of the Bible, and who challenge the church's stance in a number of areas. A significant cause for this paradigm shift has been the powerful influence of secular education, the media, and society in general, in infusing a secular worldview into their minds. Being continually subjected to this influence, they have adopted a secular view of creation, morality and truth. Alongside and part of this influence is the added pressure to conform to the predominant worldview or be labeled old-fashioned, simple, and, with certain moral issues, bigoted and phobeistic!

This transition often occurs during college years, and involves a growing realization that those things taught them at home and in church do not fit their (adopted) worldview. The temptation to jettison those beliefs that are not aligned with their new frame of reference is very strong, and only a few are willing to stand up and affirm what the Bible teaches as the truth.

Thus, the development of a biblical worldview is an imperative that should be a vital part of family and church instruction through the childhood and teenage years of a person's life.

### **Developing a Christian (biblical) worldview**

Developing a Christian world view involves asking the most basic questions of human existence and answering them from a biblical perspective. Specifically, how would the Bible answer the following questions?

1. Does God exist? If so, what is He like?
2. Who am I? Where did I come from?
3. Why is there such a mess in the world? What went wrong?
4. What hope do I have?
5. How can I know right from wrong?
6. What is my purpose in life?
7. What happens when I die?

## **A Christian worldview is based on the belief that:**

- An absolute God exists.
- The Bible is the inerrant, inspired Word of God, and is a trustworthy source of truth.
- God created the universe and everything in it.
- Humans are created in God's image.
- Humans were given dominion over creation by God.
- God is a personal Being who has revealed Himself to man (through creation, the Bible, and Jesus the Son of God).
- Humanity is fallen (sinful from birth, having turned from God and become corrupt in heart, mind and will).
- Jesus is humanity's only hope for redemption. The relationship between sinful humans and a holy God is only restored through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ (through His death and resurrection), and is given as a gift from God by His grace.
- God Provides for His creation.

## **Jesus' worldview**

Following Jesus as a disciple calls for us to not only do as Jesus would *do*, but equally think as Jesus would *think*. Since our thinking shapes our living (Proverbs 23:7 *"As a man thinks in his heart, so is he"*) we need to understand how Jesus *thought* so that we can both *think* like Him and *live* like Him.

Jesus saw the world through Bible eyes. Therefore, we must be about the task of forming a **Biblically-based worldview** just like He had.

*"He who with his whole heart believes in Jesus as the Son of God is thereby committed to much else besides. He is committed to a view of God, to a view of man, to a view of sin, to a view of redemption, to a view of the purpose of God in creation and history, to a view of human destiny, found only in Christianity. This forms a ... "Christian view of the world," which stands in marked contrast with theories [of life] wrought out from a purely philosophical or scientific standpoint."*

— James Orr, *The Christian View of God and the World*

The gospels reveal Jesus' mind and beliefs, showing that He held a deeply biblical view of the world!

- Jesus Christ believed in a literal creation - *"But from the beginning of the creation, male and female made he them."* (Mark 10:6) Humans were 'made', and their distinctive genders 'male and female' existed "from the beginning of the creation." He believed that God sovereignly rules over His creation (Luke 9:23-25, 12:6-7, Mark 13:19).
- Jesus believed human beings are uniquely valuable to God, and that their ultimate fulfillment in life is found exclusively in a relationship with Him (Luke 12:6-7, 13-34).
- Jesus held that all people are sinful, lost, and in need of salvation (Mark 7:20-23; Luke 15; 19:10).

- Jesus believed in the existence of Satan and the demons and knew that their goal was to oppose the works of God in creation and redemption (Mark 3:23-26; Luke 4:1-13, 8:12, 26-39).
- Jesus believed that the Old Testament was divinely inspired. He called it the Word of God (Mark 7:13), and He treated it with complete trust (John 10:35). He referred to OT Scripture as *“the commandment of God”* (Matthew 15:3) and said: *“Until Heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the law, until all is accomplished”* (Matthew 5:18).
- Jesus understood that His mission was to fulfill the Old Testament, proclaim the Good News or Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and bring salvation to humanity and all the earth through His own death, resurrection, and ascension (Luke 17:20-21; 24:44).

Jesus believed and taught the OT stories and miracles, not as myth, but as historical events. One example is the story of Jonah – *“as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”* (Matthew 12:40).

The flood of Noah and the fire from heaven destroying ancient Sodom were believed by Jesus to be literal, historic events *“And as it came to pass in the days of Noah, even so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise even as it came to pass in the days of Lot; they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but in the day that Lot went out from Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all: after the same manner shall it be in the day that the Son of man is revealed”* (Luke 17:26-30).

Jesus constantly quoted or referred to the Old Testament, and gave authority to His actions and teaching by saying *“It is written...”* (*“Have you not read that which was spoken to you by God?”* (Matthew 22:31).

### **Making Jesus fit our view**

One of the easiest and most subtle temptations can be to airbrush Jesus to fit a secular worldview. Even unwittingly we can create an image of Christ that fits with what we want Him to be. We can take the counter-cultural words of Jesus and reinterpret them or find a way to dismiss them (EG. By saying: "that was in that cultural setting").

We can be taught Christian morals without being taught why those morals are true. When moral values are not grounded in truths that transcend the context, they can be dismissed or changed when the context differs (situational ethics).

The Bible bases morality in God Himself. The Biblical worldview begins with a Creator, and moral standards flow from His character.

### **A Biblical worldview is Biblically grounded.**

Jewish Rabbi Abraham Heschel once made the following comment about Christians: *“It seems puzzling to me how greatly attached to the Bible you seem to be and yet how much like pagans you handle it. The great challenge to those of us who wish to take the Bible*

*seriously is to let it teach us its own essential categories; and then for us to think with them, instead of just about them.”*

A Biblical worldview is not merely based on being informed about what the Bible says, but where the biblical view determines one’s views about everything. Our frame of reference that we live by should be biblical, and should be determinative in how we approach theology, politics, science, technology, the arts, behavioral sciences, literature, justice, etc.

### **Love not war**

When a Christian bases their life on a biblical worldview, their will inevitably be flash points and even major confrontational situations that arise with unbelievers as well as those in the Christian community who have adopted a secular worldview. Our stand on truth is not meant to be a judgmental and critical opposition to false views, but to be a loving, yet uncompromising, stand. Jesus is our perfect example – never compromising, but ever loving and calling people to the truth of the gospel.