

# Genesis

## *Worldviews Collide*

**Intro:** 'Worldview' is an uncommon term in many churches today. And yet, the primary role of every pastor and church family is to cultivate, encourage, and pursue a biblical worldview. Use of the word itself is unimportant, but the concept it represents is essential to ordinary Christian development. What is a worldview? How is a biblical worldview different from any other? What does God say about my responsibility concerning this matter? How might I cultivate, encourage, and pursue a biblical worldview? This message begins our study of the book of Genesis, and seeks to answer questions like these. The biblical worldview trajectory is immediately distinguishable from all others.

### **Genesis 1:1**

#### **Introduction to Genesis**

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Genesis is the first book of the Bible, and it is also the first book of the *Pentateuch*. The Pentateuch is the collection of five books (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), which were all written by Moses. The fact that later editors supplemented Moses' content, giving us the final and current form of these texts, makes it all no less inspired by the Holy Spirit.

A major reason for Moses' authorship of Genesis was to counter existing myths about the origins of the universe. The ancient Near East is known to have produced accounts of creation and some sort of flood. While there are some similarities between these mythical accounts and the Genesis record, the clear purpose of Genesis (especially chapters 1-11) is to oppose these myths and not embrace them or provide just another alternative.

Moses authored the essential content of Genesis in the fifteenth century BC, and the subsequent editors are the reason that some later vocabulary and other elements are present among the text. Moses wrote this volume as a prophet of God, and as such he is offering the record of actual historical events as they occurred in real time. Of course, Moses was not a first-hand witness to these events in the Genesis record, but God sees and knows everything.

## **What is a *Worldview*?**

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Worldview is a term used to describe the lenses through which an individual or group views the world around them. A common term that captures the idea fairly well is 'perspective.' A person's perspective can change the way they view any given situation.

If you walk into a room and see a man standing over a bloody corpse and holding a knife, your perspective can have a drastic affect on how you react. You might still fall unconscious at the sight of blood, but if you knew the man was a surgeon, it would make you glad for the application of his skill.

Worldview often points to a particular philosophical or theological perspective of the world. While most people do not think of themselves as philosophers or theologians, everyone thinks, speaks, and acts according to a system of belief (philosophy and/or theology).

Is it 'good' to live in moderation? Is it 'evil' or 'bad' to murder someone? Does human life have any purpose? For what reason was humanity created? Is there a god? What is God like? All of these questions are examples of the kinds of questions everyone answers (actively or passively). Whether you know it or not, you live in line with what you *really* believe about the answers to these questions and many others.

## **Message Outline:**

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- (1) The biblical worldview begins and ends with God (contrasting worldviews)
- (2) The biblical worldview is both demanding and rewarding
- (3) It is unreasonable for a Christian to be negligent in pursuing a biblical worldview

## Exposition:

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### 1. The biblical worldview begins and ends with God.

#### A. Contrasting Worldviews:

#### i. **Naturalism** – A *Naturalistic Worldview* begins and ends with impersonal nature.

1. Summary – The universe (including humanity) “*is exclusively governed by [impersonal and purposeless] natural laws.*”<sup>1</sup>

#### 2. Underlying Suppositions<sup>2</sup>

- a. The universe is self-existent, self-explanatory, and self-operating.
- b. The universe (including earth) is void of ultimate meaning, impersonally deterministic, and has only incidentally produced humanity.
- c. Every aspect of human life (physical, mental, moral, and spiritual) is attributable to the ordinary operations of nature (biological processes).

#### 3. Examples

- a. Charles Darwin – “*Man, however well-behaved, at best is but a monkey shaved!*”<sup>3</sup>
- b. Richard Dawkins – “*The basic operating principles of the natural world appear to be impersonal and [unbreakable]; microscopic [parts] of inanimate matter obeying the laws of physics fit together in complex structures to form intelligent, emotive, conscious human beings.*”<sup>4</sup>

#### ii. **Humanism** – A *Humanistic Worldview* begins and ends with humanity.

1. Summary – “*Humanism exalts human liberty to the extreme, proclaiming that man creates himself, individually and*

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<sup>1</sup> See full article “*The Double Language of Naturalism and Humanism*”  
<http://www.tparents.org/Library/Unification/Talks/Kremlin/fam-val.htm>

<sup>2</sup> See full article “*Naturalism, Supernaturalism, and Humanism*”  
<http://philosophy.lander.edu/oriental/naturalism.html>

<sup>3</sup> Darwin, Charles. *The Origin of Species*. New York: Random House, 1993.

<sup>4</sup> <https://richarddawkins.net/2012/12/moving-naturalism-forward/>

*collectively, in function of his cultural, political and scientific choices.”<sup>5</sup>*

## 2. Underlying Suppositions

- a. Humans, both individuals and groups, are ultimate in importance and influence. God and nature are secondary, and God is often non-existent.
- b. There is nothing superior to man/humanity as a source of morality or purpose.
- c. Human Reason and ‘*Autonomy*’ (self-governing or independence) are paramount in significance.

## 3. Examples

- a. *“Humanism rejects religion. It attributes nothing to the so-called ‘supernatural.’ In this there is an awakened liberty that releases us from the shackles of the servitude mentality of old superstitions so that we may realize our full potential”* (unknown authorship).
- b. Friedrich Nietzsche – proclaimed, *“God is dead.”* He hoped for a day when there would be a new ‘self-created’ humanity, a *“superman,”* who would be *“beyond good and evil.”*

iii. **Deism** – A *Deistic Worldview* begins with God, embraces nature, and ends with humanity.

1. Summary – *“Deism is knowledge of God based on the application of our reason on the designs/laws found throughout Nature.”<sup>6</sup>*

## 2. Underlying Suppositions

- a. God is an impersonal force (though sometimes deists will still speak of God using personal pronouns, such as He and Him).
- b. The universe exhibits the characteristics of coherent design.

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<sup>5</sup> See full article *“The Double Language of Naturalism and Humanism”*  
<http://www.tparents.org/Library/Unification/Talks/Kremlin/fam-val.htm>

<sup>6</sup> See full article *“Welcome to Deism, Deism Defined, Deist Glossary and FAQ”*  
[http://www.deism.com/deism\\_defined.htm](http://www.deism.com/deism_defined.htm)

- c. There is only natural revelation; for God is mute, unknowable, and completely foreign.
- d. Human reason is the highest form of knowing, and is thus the creator of purpose and morality.

### 3. Examples

- a. Albert Einstein – *“I am a deeply religious nonbeliever. . . This is a somewhat new kind of religion.”*
- b. In my opinion, Deism is a mixture of Humanism and Naturalism with vague spirituality tossed in for flavor.
- c. Most deists are those who refuse to deny the existence of God, but they also refuse to acknowledge the existence of the God of the Bible.<sup>7</sup>

#### iv. **Christianity** – *A Biblical Worldview* begins and ends with God.

1. Summary – God is Creator, Designer, Author, Revelator, Arbiter and *THE* Ultimate Object to which all of this points.

#### 2. Underlying Suppositions

- a. God is eternally self-existent – Before the universe existed, there was/is God
- b. God created everything that was created, thus He is the origin of design, relationship, and purpose
- c. God revealed Himself to humanity through His Word (prophets, angels, and preserved in written form).
- d. God is the main character of the whole story

### 3. Examples

- a. *“In the beginning, God created...”* (Gen. 1:1).
- b. *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He [the Word] was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made”* (Jn. 1:1-3).
- c. *“By faith [faith or trust in what God has said] we understand that the universe was created by the word*

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<sup>7</sup> See this article from a man who once was a ‘Baptist deacon’ and now claims to be a deist as an example of the kind of reasoning that demonstrates this point. <http://www.deism.com/baptisttodeist.htm>

of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible” (Heb. 11:3).

- d. The prophet Nehemiah says to God, “You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you” (Neh. 9:6).
- e. The psalmist proclaims, “The heavens are yours; the earth also is yours; the world and all that is in it, you have founded them” (Ps. 89:11).
- f. And again the psalmist praises God saying, “Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, but you are the same, and your years have no end” (Ps. 102:25-27).
- g. The prophet Isaiah says, “[It is] God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out... [He] spread out the earth and what comes from it... [He] gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it” (Is. 42:5).
- h. Looking to the end of time as we know it, God Himself says, “Behold, **I am making all things new...**” (Rev. 21:5).

## 2. The biblical worldview is both demanding and rewarding.

A. The biblical worldview is demanding because we are sinful.

- i. Paul says in Ephesians 4 that we are naturally “*futile*” in our thinking, “*darkened in our understanding,*” hard-hearted, “*ignorant,*” “*callous,*” and “*greedy to practice every kind of impurity*” (Eph. 4:17-19).
- ii. Paul explains elsewhere that humanity has been “*given over*” by God to the selfish pursuits of sinful desire, and he says that man has been “*given up*” to a “*debased*” – depraved, reprobate, unfit for use – mind (Rom. 1:18-32).

B. The biblical worldview is sometimes mysterious, but always consistent and rational.

i. Mysterious

- Some doctrines taught in the Bible can be outside of our full comprehension (examples include the Trinity, the dual natures of Christ – God and man, the confluence of divine sovereignty and human responsibility, and the aseity of God).

ii. Consistent

- Though the mysterious doctrines of the Bible are beyond our solid grasp, they are not contradictory or inconsistent.
  - a. One may whine about the intellectual exercise of discussing God’s tri-unity, but one cannot reasonably argue against the soundness of the doctrine’s consistency.

iii. Rational

- The Bible teaches many things that are counterintuitive and even mysterious, but never asks the reader to believe something that is illogical or irrational (based upon the consistent biblical worldview).
  - a. Once again, the doctrine of the Trinity is not easy to discuss, and one will quickly discover the difficulty of defining the doctrine precisely and faithfully, however it is logically sound and completely coherent.

C. The *biblical worldview* (familiarity with God’s Word) is rewarding.

- i. Psalm 19 – “1 The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. 2 Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. 4 Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun, 5 which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy. 6 Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat. 7 The law of the LORD is perfect, **reviving the soul**; the testimony of the LORD is sure, **making wise the simple**; 8 the precepts of the LORD are right, **rejoicing the heart**; the commandment of the LORD is pure, **enlightening the eyes**; 9 the

fear of the LORD is clean, **enduring forever**; the rules of the LORD are **true**, and **righteous** altogether. 10 **More to be desired are they than gold**, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. 11 Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in **keeping them there is great reward**. 12 Who can discern his errors? Declare me innocent from hidden faults. 13 Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me! Then I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression. 14 Let **the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.**”

**3. It is unreasonable for a Christian to be negligent in pursuing a biblical worldview.**

- A. First, it is unreasonable because it disregards the author’s intent (both the human and the divine).
  - i. One of the main purposes of the Bible is to be a voice in opposition to the foolishness around us.
- B. Second, it is unreasonable because it demonstrates a careless attitude regarding one’s own soul.
  - i. The Bible reports that we now exist in the midst of a fierce struggle for our eternal soul.
- C. Third, it is unreasonable because it expresses an inattentive attitude towards others.
  - i. Both the Christian and the non-Christian are done a disservice by our lack of biblical precision and earnestness.
- D. Therefore, let us commit to pursue a biblical worldview, and let us pray that God would stir within us an insatiable desire for biblical truth.

## **Application**

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- What is God commanding us to BELIEVE here?
  - The Bible is God's Word.
  - God cuts through the error and speaks truth.
  - The biblical worldview is consistent and rewarding.
  - The biblical worldview is in direct opposition to all others.
- What is God commanding us to DO here?
  - Receive His Word as the divine oracle it is.
  - Pursue both a better and deeper understanding of the Bible.
  - Encourage and nurture a biblical worldview in others (especially our friends and family).

## **My Prayers**

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- May God make us to perceive the gravity of our condition and circumstances.
- May God create in us an unquenchable desire for His Word.
- May God renew our minds by the power of His Spirit and the application of His Word.