

Lion and Lamb Apologetics

What is a Biblical Worldview?

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1

G.K. Chesterton said, "But there are some people, nevertheless—and I am one of them—who think that the most practical and important thing about a man is still his view of the universe. We think that for a landlady considering a lodger, it is important to know his income, but still more important to know his philosophy. We think that for a general about to fight an enemy, it is important to know the enemy's numbers, but still more important to know the enemy's philosophy. We think the question is not whether the theory of the cosmos affects matters, but whether, in the long run, anything else affects them."¹



David Naugle agrees: "I submit that the most important issue in any person's life is not his or her education, career, finances, family, or friendships. Rather the most important issue in any person's life is that person's worldview because that person's worldview guides and directs everything else, including one's education, career, finances, family, and friendships. Worldview is the basic cause, all else is effect or result."²

WE ALL HAVE WORLDVIEWS

Whether or not we realize it, we all have worldviews! We each have presuppositions that influence our outlook on life. A worldview has been compared to a lens which alters the way we view life and how we perceive the world we live in. There are a variety of worldviews. What is your worldview? Is your lens altering your outlook?

First off, everybody has a worldview. One way of thinking of worldview is the analogy of a computer operating system. Worldview is the operating system for human beings. It tells us how to think and how to behave. It informs and directs the choices that we make. Our moment-to-moment decisions are shaped by the worldview that we have adopted,

¹ Chesterton, G.K. (1986). 'Heretics,' in *The Complete Works of G. K. Chesterton*, ed. David Dooley. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1:41.

² Naugle, David. 'Worldview and a Christian Worldview.' Dr. Naugle is Professor of Philosophy at Dallas Baptist University. https://www.dbu.edu/naugle/academic-papers/_pdfs/11/worldview-and-a-christian-worldview.pdf. Retrieved January 18, 2026.

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adapted, and applied over the course of time, often without realizing that we are dependent upon such a framework for decision-making.

Whenever we are about to make a decision, we unconsciously run it through a mental, spiritual and emotional filter that allows us to make choices consistent with what we believe to be true, significant and appropriate. That filter is the result of the information and experiences we have embraced to make sense of the world in which we live.

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Without a worldview, we'd be incapable of arriving at many of the hundreds of decisions we make each day because each option would seem just as appealing as every other. To make even minor choices we rely on our sense of right and wrong, good and bad, useful and useless, appropriate and inappropriate, to produce what we believe are the wisest choices.³

Naugle elaborates: "If I may speak about my own country, the USA, the most important thing facing America right now is not her politics or her economics, or her scientific, technological or educational prowess, as important as these are. Rather, the most important issue facing America right now is America's worldview future. Will it be scientific naturalism? Nihilistic postmodernism? Commercial materialism and consumerism? Will it enjoy a recovery of its Judeo-Christian heritage, or some other religious option? What fundamental view of the universe, what theory of the cosmos will guide and direct America's future, especially in the realms of politics, economics, science, technology and education?"⁴



"The Christian belief system, which the Christian knows to be grounded in divine revelation, is relevant to all of life."⁵



John Valk explains, "Worldviews are those larger pictures that inform and in turn form our perceptions of reality. They are visions of Life as well as ways of Life, are individual and personal in nature, yet bind adherents together communally. Coming to understand a worldview can serve to illuminate particular beliefs and values, and may be helpful in

³ Two key questions—What is worldview? What is the biblical worldview? (Arizona Christian University). https://www.arizonachristian.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/CRC-Brief-What-is-Worldview_Biblical-Worldview_Digital.pdf. Retrieved January 18, 2026.

⁴ Naugle, 'Worldview and a Christian Worldview.'

⁵ Henry, Carl F.H. (1990). *Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief*. Westchester, IL: Crossway, 113.

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a post-Christian, post-modern or even post-secular era filled with religious, spiritual and secular beliefs of various kinds that hold sway today in the public realm.”⁶

A person’s worldview is important because it affects his understanding of everything else. Our worldview brings about presuppositions that govern our point of view and shape how we live. The truth is everyone has a worldview; basic beliefs about who we are, where we came from, and where we’re going. We are all molded by atheism, secularism, humanism, naturalism, materialism, rationalism, etc. What we believe or don’t believe about God affects our worldview. Many other factors affect our worldview including cultural, economic, educational level, national heritage, and historical context. Even people who are unable to identify rationally their worldview are still governed by these basic beliefs. It controls how we think and it sets the parameters that affect how we live. Christian worldview is a relatively recent development in Christian thought but by no means a new way of understanding the world. It has been in existence since creation. The Shema was a foundational worldview: “Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!” (Deuteronomy 6:4). The Sermon on the Mount was merely an exposition on how to view the world and live in it; how to view the world through the Christian lens.⁷

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DEFINITIONS OF THE CONCEPT OF WORLDVIEW

G.K. Chesterton: “A view of the universe and theory of the cosmos.”

James Orr: “The whole manner of conceiving of the world and humanity’s place in it, the widest possible view which the mind can take of things.”⁸

Abraham Kuyper: “A ‘life-system,’ rooted in a fundamental principle from which was derived a whole complex of ruling ideas and conceptions about reality.”⁹

⁶ Valk, John (2012). ‘Christianity through a Worldview Lens.’ *The Journal of Adult Theological Education* 9.2, 158.

⁷ *A Christian Worldview*. Trinity Baptist Church Discipleship Training.
https://www.trinitybaptistreformed.org/uploads/1/4/0/3/140361269/christian_worldview - dt 2016.pdf
Retrieved January 18, 2026.

⁸ Orr, James (1897). *The Christian View of God and the World*. Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 111. Public Domain.

⁹ Kuyper, Abraham (1898). *Lectures on Calvinism*. Abraham Kuyper’s famous 1898 Lectures on Calvinism, delivered at Princeton, covering six areas of life, showing Calvinism to be a whole, consistent worldview, unrivaled by all others. Retrieved January 20, 2026.

<https://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/sdg/kuyper/Lectures%20on%20Calvinism%20-%20Abraham%20Kuyper.pdf>.

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James Sire: "A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true, or entirely false) that we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being."¹⁰

Francis Schaeffer: "A perspective on life, a whole system of thought that answers the questions presented by the reality of existence."¹¹

Albert Wolters: "The comprehensive framework of one's basic beliefs about things."¹²

Norman Geisler: "A world view is a way one views the whole world. And since people have vastly different views of the world, depending on the perspective from which they view the world, it is clear that one's world view makes a world of difference. A world view is a way of viewing or interpreting all of reality. It is an interpretive framework through which or by which one makes sense out of the data of life and the world."¹³

Brian Walsh and Richard Middleton "Perceptual frameworks, ways of seeing, embodied in actual ways of life."¹⁴

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"I now believe that the balance of reasoned considerations tells heavily in favour of the religious, even of the Christian view of the world...."¹⁴



¹⁰ Sire, J. W. (2020). *The Universe next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog* (Sixth Edition). Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 6.

¹¹ Wolters, A. M. (2005). *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview* (Second Edition). Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2.

¹² Geisler, N. L., & Watkins, W. D. (1989). *Worlds apart: a handbook on world views* (2nd ed.). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 11.

¹³ Walsh, Brian & Middleton, J. Richard (1984). *The Transforming Vision: Shaping a Christian World View*. Westmont: IVP Academic.

¹⁴ Joad, C.E.M. (1955). *Recovery of Belief*. London: Faber and Faber, 22.

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EXCURSUS

FOUNDATIONAL BELIEFS OF A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW¹⁵

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A Basic Biblical Worldview

1. The belief in absolute moral truths.
2. The belief that absolute moral truths are revealed in and defined by the Bible.
3. The belief that Jesus lived a sinless life.
4. The belief that God is the all-powerful and all-knowing Creator of the universe who sovereignly rules it today.
5. The belief that salvation is a gift from God and cannot be earned.
6. The belief that Satan is real.
7. The belief that a Christian has the responsibility to share his faith in Christ with others.
8. The belief that the Bible is accurate in all its teachings.
 - Only 4 % of Americans have a basic biblical worldview of thinking.
 - Only 9 % of those who claim to be born again have a biblical worldview.

Ten Foundational Beliefs of a Christian Worldview

Belief One: God

There is one true God, personal, infinite, self-revealing, all powerful, all knowing, everywhere present, self-existent, sovereign, and eternal. God is righteous, holy, loving, merciful, and redemptive. God is a trinity of three eternal persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; God is also one – a unity.¹⁶

Belief Two: Revelation

God has revealed Himself in nature and Scripture, and supremely in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible is the inerrant and infallible Word of God. It truthfully reveals to us knowledge about God, the world, and ourselves. This Word is our sole authority for faith and life.¹⁷

Belief Three: Creation

¹⁵ Akin, Daniel L. *Foundational Beliefs of a Christian Worldview*. Dr. Akin is President of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. https://www.danielakin.com/wp-content/uploads/old/Resource_479/Foundational%20Beliefs%20of%20a%20Christian%20Worldview%20Handout-Answers.pdf. Retrieved January 20, 2026.

¹⁶ Gen. 1:1; Deut. 6:4-6; Jonah 4:2; Matt. 28:18-20; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Peter 1:16-21.

¹⁷ Psalm 19; 119; Matt. 5:17-18; John 10:35; 17:17; Rom. 1:18-20; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21.

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The universe and all that exists was created by God alone through the power of His Word, and as the theater of His own glory. He oversees what He has made, exercising His holy and wise government for moral ends.¹⁸

Belief Four: Human Beings

Human beings, male and female, are created equally in the likeness and image of God; However, they are born sinners in rebellion against God. Humans are sinners by nature and sin by choice.¹⁹

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Belief Five: Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. He is perfect both in His deity and also in His humanity, two natures united in one person. He lived a perfect sinless life. He suffered and was crucified for our sins, buried, and rose again in bodily resurrection. He ascended into the heavens and will come again in glory.²⁰

Belief Six: Salvation by Grace Alone Through Faith Alone in Christ Alone

Salvation is God's work accomplished in us by His grace alone, through faith alone, in the Lord Jesus Christ alone, whose death on the cross accomplished the redemption of sinners. He died as our penal substitute and was raised victorious over death in His bodily resurrection.²¹

Belief Seven: The Family

The family is God's gracious and loving creation given for our protection, pleasure, and partnership. Sex is God's good gift and is to be enjoyed only within the covenant of marriage between a man and woman. It is intended for intimacy, pleasure and the gift of children.²²

Belief Eight: Government and Society

Human society, government, culture and nations were created by God for our good, though all societies are marred by sin and limited in authority. Christians should seek to make the will of God supreme not only in our own lives, but also in government and society.²³

¹⁸ Gen. 1-2; Psalm 19; John 1:1-5; Acts 17:22-31; Col. 1:15-17.

¹⁹ Gen. 1:26-31; 3:1-19; Psalm 51:5, 139:13-16; Rom. 3:9-20; James 3:9.

²⁰ Isa. 9:6-7; Micah 5:2; John 1:1-18; 8:58; 14:1-9; Acts 1:1-11; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 2:6-11; Col. 1:13-23; 2:9-10; Heb. 1:1-3; 4:15.

²¹ Isa. 52:13-53:12; Mark 10:45; Rom. 3:21-26; 1 Cor. 15:1-11; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Gal. 3:13-14; 1 John 2:12, 4:10.

²² Gen. 2:18-25; Exodus 20:12; Psalm 127, 128; Prov. 5:15-20, 31:10-31; 1 Cor. 6:18-20, 7:1-16; Eph. 5:21-6:4; Col. 3:18-21; Heb. 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.

²³ Exodus 20:3-17; Prov. 14:34; Matt. 22:21; Acts 5:29; Rom. 13:1-7.

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Belief Nine: Social Order

The Social Order should be permeated by Christian witness. Living out the ethics of Scripture, we are to be salt and light to a wicked and darkened world. We should oppose racism, greed, selfishness, and all forms of sexual immorality and pornography. We should help the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, and the helpless. We contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death.²⁴

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Belief Ten: Judgment

History has a goal. God will accomplish the fulfillment of all His purposes, according to the pleasure of His own will and to His own glory. On the Day of Judgment, God will judge all persons and His justice and holiness will be fully satisfied. Believers in Jesus Christ, the redeemed, will enter into everlasting life in a place called heaven. Unbelievers, the unrighteous, will go to everlasting punishment in a place called hell.²⁵



"The basic problem of the Christians in this country in the last eighty years or so, in regard to society and in regard to government, is that they have seen things in bits and pieces instead of totals."²⁶



CHRISTIANITY IS A COMPLETE WORLDVIEW

Christianity as a complete worldview offers many benefits:

1. A Christian worldview is based on a belief in the existence of God who is singular in nature and plural in person: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, also known as the trinity, the very source and mystery of the universe.
2. A Christian worldview asserts that this Trinitarian God is powerful, personal, just, loving, righteous, merciful, sovereign, wise, good, and kind, demanding our respect and reverence.

²⁴ Exodus 20:3-17; Deut. 27:18-26; Psalm 139:13-16; Micah 6:8; Matt. 5:13-16; Rom. 12:14; 1 Cor. 6:9-20; 7:21-24; Eph. 4:25-5:12; 1 Thess. 4:1-8.

²⁵ Matt. 25:31-46; John 14:1-3; Rom. 8:28-39; 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10; Eph. 1:3-14; Rev. 19:11-21; 20:11-15; 21-22.

²⁶ Schaeffer, Francis (1981). *A Christian Manifesto*. Westchester, IL: Crossway, 17.

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3. A Christian worldview teaches that this Trinitarian God is the maker of all things, that the universe/s and our world are His very good creation, filled with the beauty and glory of God.
4. A Christian worldview affirms that human beings are made as God's image and likeness and have unspeakable value, dignity and worth, and that people possess remarkable spiritual, social and cultural purposes according to God's design and will.
5. A Christian worldview is realistic in its recognition of evil as a dreadful reality that has affected all things, that human beings are exceedingly sinful and capable of heinous acts of wickedness and injustice, and are in desperate need of salvation, forgiveness, and restoration to God.
6. A Christian worldview offers a God with wounds, as the one who came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ, suffered and died to pay the penalty for sin, to defeat death, and conquer evil and set free those who believe through the forgiveness of their sins.
7. A Christian worldview offers believers fulfillment of heart and soul, new loves and desires, personal callings with a mission to fulfill in a new way of life in a challenging world.
8. A Christian worldview asserts that Christians as Jesus followers are to love God supremely, and they are to love and serve others as they love and serve themselves, even to the point of suffering and sacrifice, to be good, patriotic citizens, to do their work with excellence, to change the world for the better.
9. A Christian worldview is an advocate for peace and justice worldwide, that those who are bound should be free, those who are poor are to be fed and clothed, those who are sick are to be healed, those who are uneducated are to be taught, that genuine needs of all kinds must be met by those who know, love and serve God.
10. A Christian worldview believes that Christ will come again, judge the wicked, raise the dead, create a new heavens and earth, and bless the righteous, and condemn the wicked forever.

Christianity is a complete worldview and philosophy of life; it speaks to everything that we are concerned about as human beings and has teachings and insights not only about the matters just mentioned, but also has profound implications for areas of life as diverse as politics, economics, business, marriage and family, music and art, science and

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technology, education and knowledge, animals and the environment, sport and play, rest and recreation and so on.²⁷

EXCURSUS

UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES: THE COLLISION OF TODAY'S COMPETING WORLDVIEWS²⁸

DAVID NOEBEL

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CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY

Christian Theology – Theism

Christian theology affirms theism, the belief in the existence of a supernatural God. Christian theism rests primarily on two solid foundations: special revelation (the Bible) and general revelation (the created order). While the Bible reveals the character and personality of God page after page, the “whole workmanship of the universe,” according to John Calvin, reveals and discloses God day after day. The Psalmist says, “The heavens declare the glory of God” (Psalm 19).

James Orr explains that the theistic position is established not by any single clue or evidence, but by “the concurrent forces of many, starting from different and independent standpoints.”²⁹ Christians see evidences of God everywhere. It is the Christian position that history, theology, philosophy, science, mathematics, logic, and personal experience all point to the existence of a Creator and Redeemer.

Christian Theology – Special Revelation

Christian theology asserts that God has revealed Himself to people in a general way through creation and in a special (personal) way evidenced by His divine words and acts contained in the Bible and especially in the person of Jesus Christ. Millard Erickson defines the two forms of revelation this way: “On the one hand, general revelation is

²⁷ Naugle, ‘Worldview and a Christian Worldview.’

²⁸ Noebel, David (2006). *Understanding the Times: The Collision of Today's Competing Worldviews* (Rev. 2nd ed). Manitou Springs: Summit Press. In 1962, Noebel founded Summit Ministries, a Christian leadership training organization designed as an educational Christian ministry. It was founded on his belief that modern society is harmful to Christian youth and affects their worldview, potentially causing them to renounce their Christian faith. He directed Summit Ministries since 1964 until his retirement, when the board unanimously endorsed Jeff Myers to succeed his retirement. The ministry grew in size considerably after being mentioned on James Dobson's radio show. This Excursus is an abridgment of the ten significant areas that determine one's worldview.

²⁹ Orr, James (1897). *The Christian View of God and the World*. Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 111. Public Domain.

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God's communication of Himself to all persons, at all times, and in all places. Special revelation on the other hand, involves God's particular communications and manifestations which are available now only by consultation of certain sacred writings.”³⁰

General revelation has been viewed consistently throughout church history by a variety of Christian theists as a necessary but insufficient means for providing knowledge about the Creator and His character. It is better theology and philosophy to begin with the God of the Bible to explain the universe than to begin with the universe to explain God.

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According to Christian theology, the destiny of created humanity involves both salvation and judgment. It is not general revelation but special revelation (the Bible) that answers such questions as How can I be saved? From what must I be saved? Why will judgment occur? Special revelation, then, is “special” because it is the key that opens the door to both heaven and earth.

In studying the Bible, the reader meets God's most direct form of special revelation: the person of Jesus Christ. “In Jesus of Nazareth,” writes Carl F.H. Henry, “the divine source of revelation and the divine content of that revelation converge and coincide.”³¹ Christ's teachings, actions, and most significantly, His resurrection, as revealed in the Bible, provide the cornerstone for special revelation and a solid foundation for Christian theism.

The purpose of divine revelation lies in its communication to the Christian of the significance of Christ's teachings and actions. The third member of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, plays an important role in this dialogue. Henry explains: “Scripture itself is given so that the Holy Spirit may etch God's Word upon the hearts of his followers in ongoing sanctification that anticipates the believer's final, unerring conformity to the image of Jesus Christ, God's incarnate Word.”³² This is the ultimate reason God chose to reveal Himself and His plan for us in the Bible.

For this reason, the Christian's reliance on the Bible should be profound and constantly renewed—the Christian doesn't read the Bible once and set it aside; rather, we study it as the living Word of God and seek constantly to conform ourselves to its teachings. We spend our lives studying to understand the powerful message of the Bible.

Christian Theology – Design and General Revelation

When it comes to Christian theology then, special revelation is the linchpin, while general revelation serves as a prod that encourages us to recognize the ultimate truths set down

³⁰ Erickson, Millard J. (1983). *Christian Theology*, 3 vols. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1:153.

³¹ Henry, Carl F.H. (1976ff). *God, Revelation and Authority*, 6 vols. Waco: Word Books, 2:11.

³² Henry (1976), 15.

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in Scripture and embodied in Jesus Christ. Although God's revelation through nature, in and of itself, fails to bring us to a saving knowledge of God, it is capable of bringing us to a general knowledge of God. A great majority of intellectuals agree that the concepts of purpose and design, for example, have validity in regard to the question of the existence of God.

Anglican clergyman William Paley argued in *Natural Theology* (a book about which Charles Darwin admitted, "I do not think I hardly ever admired a book more . . ."³³) that a person chancing upon a watch in the wilderness could not conclude that the watch had simply always existed; rather, the obvious design of the watch—not only its internal makeup but also the fact that it clearly exists for a purpose—would necessarily imply the existence of its designer. Paley went on to substitute the universe for the watch and contended that a mechanism so obviously designed as the universe necessitated the existence of a grand Designer.³⁴ This is most often referred to as the argument from design and is an excellent example of the way in which the created order reveals the existence of God.

The universe forces its sense of design (and thus a Designer) on all people who are open to such a possibility. Antony Flew, the legendary British philosopher and champion of atheism, now in his eighties, describes his personal odyssey from atheism to theism and the central place the design argument had in his journey. Flew currently believes "...the most impressive arguments for God's existence are those that are supported by recent scientific discoveries." He came to this conclusion because "the findings of more than fifty years of DNA research have provided materials for a new and enormously powerful argument to design."³⁵

Many discover God through the general revelation of a structured universe; many more encounter God in the general revelation of the purposeful nature of reality. C.E.M. Joad, who was an atheist for much of his professional career, shortly before his death wrote a book entitled *The Recovery of Belief*. This book traces his gradual advance toward God and Jesus Christ. Joad was largely convinced by his observation of human nature—his realization that a moral law exists, and that we often flaunt that law.

C.S. Lewis presents still another twist on the argument for the general revelation of God's existence. Suppose there were no intelligence behind the universe, says Lewis. In that case nobody designed my brain for the purpose of thinking. Thought is merely the by-

³³ Darwin, Charles (1958). *Autobiography*. New York: Dover Publishing, 59.

³⁴ See Geoffrey Simmons (2004). *What Darwin Didn't Know*. Eugene: Harvest House, for an up-to-date argument for creation from design.

³⁵ Taken from an interview at <http://www.biola.edu/antonyflew/>.

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product of some atoms within my skull. “But if so, how can I trust my own thinking to be true?” asks Lewis. “But if I can’t trust my own thinking, of course, I can’t trust the arguments leading to atheism, and therefore have no reason to be an atheist, or anything else. Unless I believe in God, I can’t believe in thought; so I can never use thought to disbelieve in God.”³⁶

Christian Theology – Grounded in Jesus Christ

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Christian theology points to what Christians believe—that a personal God has revealed Himself through a created world, and that He has a plan and ultimate destiny for that world. Christian theology is ultimately Christ-centered. The God who “so loved the world that He gave His only Son” has allowed for a personal relationship between Himself and fallen humanity.

CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

Christian Philosophy – Introduction

What is Christian Philosophy? Because it requires faith in biblical revelation, you might assume that the Christian worldview cannot possibly have a philosophy of its own. According to the secular worldviews, naturalism and materialism are grounded firmly in modern scientific methodology and enlightened human experience. How can we as Christians, who are required to postulate existence or reality outside the material realm, ever hope to prove that our beliefs are true, reasonable, rational, and worth living and dying for?

Unfortunately, some Christians adopt just such an attitude, concluding that their faith is indefensible. They attempt to avoid the whole problem by stating that what they believe is “beyond reason.” These Christians point to Colossians 2:8, where Paul writes “See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy...” and from this they draw the conclusion that God does not want us to meddle in such a vain and deceitful discipline as philosophy. However, people who use this verse as an anti-philosophical proof-text often omit its ending, in which Paul describes the kind of philosophy he is warning against—philosophy “which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.”

Christian Philosophy – Faith and Reason

³⁶ Lewis, C.S. (1944), *Broadcast Talks*. London: G. Bles, 37–38.

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When it comes to Christian philosophy, the Bible does not ask us to abandon reason in order to accept its truth. “Come now,” records Isaiah, “and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18). The Apostle Peter encourages Christians to present logical, compelling reasons for their hope in Christ (1 Peter 3:15). But is this possible? Is Christian faith, and more specifically Christian philosophy, defensible?

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C.E.M. Joad, who lived most of his life believing that the concept of God was unacceptable, finally concludes, “It is because...the religious view of the universe seems to me to cover more of the facts of experience than any other that I have been gradually led to embrace it.”³⁷ He concluded his long personal pilgrimage by admitting “I now believe that the balance of reasonable considerations tells heavily in favor of the religious, even of the Christian view of the world.”³⁸ This is the same Joad who appeared on BBC radio with Humanist Bertrand Russell attacking Christianity.

Many who finally begin to reflect on the deeper things of life—“How did I get here? Why am I here? Where am I going?”—simply discover that Christianity answers these questions more completely than any other worldview. Those who earnestly seek truth will ultimately find themselves face-to-face with the God of the Bible. While some may enjoy debating about whether or not God exists, for the average person such debate is irrelevant—he or she is aware of His existence on a soul-deep level. Even today the vast majority of people (some polls place the figure as high as 95 percent) believe in a God, a fact Paul also found to be true in the Athens of his day (Acts 17:23).

Christian Philosophy — Rational Foundation

The basic tenets of Christian philosophy are rational because they are held by average, rational men and women. But surely Christianity must still run into an epistemological problem—how does the Christian “know” without clashing with science and experience? How can the knowledge we gain through faith in Biblical revelation compare to knowledge gained by a scientific investigation of the universe?

The answer is not as difficult as you might imagine. All knowing requires faith. Faith precedes reason or, as W.J. Neidhardt puts it, “Faith correctly viewed is that illumination by which true rationality begins.”³⁹ In other words, every worldview begins with a basic assumption about the nature of reality that cannot be proven by using the scientific

³⁷ Joad, C.E.M. (1955). *The Recovery of Belief*. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 16.

³⁸ Joad (1955), 22.

³⁹ Henry, Carl F.H. (1976). *God, Revelation and Authority*, 6 vols. Waco: Word Books, 1:169. Henry mentions W.J. Neidhardt’s work *Faith, the Unrecognized Partner of Science and Religion* as the source for his comments.

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method or logical deduction. This becomes the starting point from which to build a total view of life.

While Marxists and Humanists wish to portray science as primary knowledge and faith in biblical revelation as blind second-class epistemology or even superstition, the fact remains that all methods of knowing ultimately rely on certain assumptions. Edward T. Ramsdell writes, "The natural man is no less certainly a man of faith than the spiritual, but his faith is in the ultimacy of something other than the Word of God. The spiritual man is no less certainly a man of reason than the natural, but his reason, like that of every man, functions within the perspective of his faith."⁴⁰

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The basic problem of philosophy is not the problem of faith versus reason. "The crucial problem," says Warren C. Young, "is that some thinkers place their trust in a set of assumptions in their search for truth, while other thinkers place their trust in a quite different set of assumptions."⁴¹ That is, Humanists and Marxists place their trust in certain findings of science and experience, neither of which can be rationally demonstrated as the source of all truth.

Christians also appeal to science, history, and personal experience, but they know such avenues for discovering truth are not infallible. Christians know that scientists make mistakes and scientific journals can practice discrimination against views considered dangerous. Christians know that history can be perverted, distorted, or twisted and that personal experience is not a good source of fact or knowledge. On the other hand, Christians believe that Biblical revelation is true and that God would not mislead His children.

Christian Philosophy – All Philosophy Requires Some Faith

Christian philosophy does not reject reason or tests for truth. Christianity says the New Testament is true because its truths can be tested. Christians do not ask non-believers to put their faith in a revelation of old wives' tales or fables, but instead to consider certain historical evidences that reason itself can employ as an attorney building a case uses evidences in the law to determine questions of fact. Christian epistemology is based on special revelation, which in turn is based on history, the law of evidence, and the science of archaeology.

Philosophical naturalists also make assumptions that they, by definition, accept on faith. All naturalists agree that there is no supernatural. "This point," says Young, "is

⁴⁰ Ramsdell, Edward T. (1950). *The Christian Perspective*. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 42.

⁴¹ Young, Warren C. (1975). *A Christian Approach to Philosophy*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 37.

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emphasized by the naturalists themselves without seeming to be at all troubled by the fact that it is an emotional rather than a logical conclusion.”⁴²

Faith is critical in every philosophy. When developing a philosophy, we must be extremely careful to base our case on the most truthful assumptions—otherwise, should one of the assumptions prove to be untrue (as it appears the assumptions of the theory of evolution will be), the whole philosophy will crumble. If evolution crumbles (which is quite possible—Dr. Karl Popper believes evolution does not fit the definition of “a scientific theory”), Marxism and Humanism are intellectually dead.

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So far, we have established two things regarding Christian philosophy: many hold it to be the most rational of all worldviews, and it requires no more faith than any other philosophy. Indeed, we could argue that it takes a great deal more faith to believe in the spontaneous generation of Darwinian evolution or the randomness of all nature (i.e., that the universe happened by accident) than it does to accept the Christian doctrine of Creator/Creation.

Christian Philosophy – Conclusion

Christian philosophy represents an entire worldview, a view that is consistent with the Bible throughout. In the end, you must choose between a materialist/naturalist worldview and a supernaturalist worldview—and your choice will create repercussions throughout every aspect of your life. The Christian philosophy embraces the meaningful, purposeful life, a life in which you shape your beliefs according to a coherent, reasonable, truthful worldview. As a Christian with such a worldview, you will not be tossed to and fro by every secularist doctrine. “In the same way,” says Dr. Young, “it can be said that the Christian philosopher and theologian must be acquainted with the contending worldviews of his age. Philosophy after all is a way of life, and the Christian believes that he has the true way—the true pattern for living. It is the task of the Christian leader to understand the ideologies of his day so that he may be able to meet their challenges. The task is a never-ending one, for, although the Christian’s worldview does not change, the world about him does. Thus the task of showing the relevance of the Christian realistic philosophy to a world in process is one which requires eternal vigilance. To such a task, to such an ideal, the Christian leader must dedicate himself.”⁴³

⁴² Young (1975), 182.

⁴³ Young, *A Christian Approach to Philosophy*, 228–229. See Ronald H. Nash, *Life’s Ultimate Questions: An Introduction to Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999); J.P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, (2003). *Philosophical Foundations For A Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press; and Alvin Plantinga (2000). *Warranted Christian Belief*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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CHRISTIAN ETHICS

Christian Ethics – Introduction

Ethics is the study of good and evil, right and wrong. Biblical Christian ethics is inseparable from theology because it is grounded in the character of God. The task of Christian ethics, then, is to determine what conforms to God's character and what does not. Francis Schaeffer explains the uniqueness of Christian ethics: "One of the distinctions of the Judeo-Christian God is that not all things are the same to Him. That at first may sound rather trivial, but in reality it is one of the most profound things one can say about the Judeo-Christian God. He exists; He has a character; and not all things are the same to Him. Some things conform to His character, and some are opposed to His character."⁴⁴

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Muslims believe that moral norms are arbitrary, a product of God's decree, and therefore can change as God chooses. Marxists and Secular Humanists rely almost exclusively on their economic or naturalistic philosophy to determine ethics. Postmodernists argue for a morality based on shared "community" values and Cosmic Humanists assume that everyone acts morally by following inner truth determined on an individual basis. Christians, on the other hand, believe that moral norms come from God's nature or essence. Rather than believing in some passing fancy bound to society's ever-changing whims, as Christians we are committed to a specific moral order revealed to us through both general and special revelation.

We know that God's ethical order is the only true source of morality, and, in fact, the only possible morality; there can be no other. "The human mind," says C.S. Lewis, "has no more power of inventing a new value than of imagining a new primary color, or, indeed, of creating a new sun and a new sky for it to move in."⁴⁵ For the Christian, the moral order is as real as the physical order—some would say even more real. The Apostle Paul says the physical order is temporary, but the order "not seen" is eternal (2 Corinthians 4:18). This eternal moral order is a reflection of the character and nature of God Himself.

Christian Ethics – Our Common Moral Heritage

Christian ethics, in one sense, is simply an expansion of a moral order that is generally revealed to everyone. Despite some disagreement regarding the morality of specific actions, Calvin D. Linton comments on the consistency of the moral code within all people everywhere: "...[T]here is a basic pattern of similarity among [ethical codes]. Such

⁴⁴ Schaeffer, Francis. 'Christian Faith and Human Rights,' *Simon Greenleaf Law Review*, 2 (1982-3), 5. Cited in John Montgomery, *Human Rights and Human Dignity*. Dallas: Probe Books, 113.

⁴⁵ Lewis, C.S. (1973). *The Abolition of Man*. New York: Macmillan, 56-67.

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things as murder, lying, adultery, cowardice are, for example, almost always condemned. The universality of the ethical sense itself (the 'oughtness' of conduct), and the similarities within the codes of diverse cultures indicate a common moral heritage for all mankind which materialism or naturalism cannot explain.”⁴⁶

We may define this common moral heritage as anything from an attitude to a conscience, but however we define it, we are aware that some moral absolutes do exist outside ourselves. According to this universal moral code, whenever we pass judgment we are relying upon a yardstick that measures actions against an absolute set of standards. Without a standard, justice could not exist; without an ethical absolute, morality could not exist.

Christian Ethics – A Common Moral Standard

This objective, absolute standard is apparent throughout humanity's attitudes toward morality. According to a secular philosophy, we should treat all morals as relative—but in practice, even secular society treats some abstract values (such as justice, love, and courage) as consistently moral. Secular society also cringes at the Nazi holocaust, the Russian prison system of Siberian gulags, and the abuse of children. We cannot explain this phenomenon unless we accept the notion that certain value judgments apply universally and are somehow inherent to all mankind.

Christian morality is founded on the conviction that an absolute moral order exists outside of, and yet somehow is inscribed into, our very being. It is a morality flowing from the nature of the Creator through the nature of created things, not a construction of the human mind. It is part of God's general revelation. “At the core of every moral code,” says Walter Lippman, “there is a picture of human nature, a map of the universe, and version of history. To human nature (of the sort conceived), in a universe (of the kind imagined), after a history (so understood), the rules of the code apply.”⁴⁷

This moral light is what the Apostle John refers to as having been lit in the hearts of all men and women—“The true light that gives light to every man” (John 1:9, NIV). It is what the Apostle Paul calls “the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience” (Romans 2:15).

This morality is not arbitrarily handed down by God to create difficulties for us. God does not make up new values according to whim. Rather, God's innate character is holy and cannot tolerate evil or moral indifference—what the Bible calls sin. Therefore, if we

⁴⁶ Henry, Carl F.H. (1973) ed. *Baker's Dictionary of Christian Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 620.

⁴⁷ Lippman, Walter (1965). *Public Opinion*. New York: The Free Press, 80, quoted in Thomas Sowell (1987). *A Conflict of Visions*. New York: William Morrow and Company, 18.

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wish to please God and prevent sin from separating us from Him, we must act in accordance with His moral order. Christians are assured of these truths about God's nature and judgment as a result of special revelation. Whereas general revelation has informed all people of the existence of a moral order, special revelation—the Bible—discloses specifics regarding that order. In the final analysis, Christians rely on God and His Word for a full explanation of the moral order.

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Christian Ethics – Conclusion

Christian ethics and the Christian ethical system is both like and unlike any other system ever postulated. Every ethical system contains some grain of the truth found in the Christian code, but no other system can claim to be the whole truth, handed down as an absolute from God to humanity.

As Christians who recognize the truth of God's law, we must dedicate our lives to obeying it. This dedication is far too rare today. Bonhoeffer asks, "Who stands fast? Only the man whose final standard is not his reason, his principles, his conscience, his freedom, or his virtue, but who is ready to sacrifice all this when he is called to obedient and responsible action in faith and in exclusive allegiance to God—the responsible man, who tries to make his whole life an answer to the question and call of God. Where are these responsible people?"⁴⁸

Such Christians are those who are willing to treat God's moral order with the same respect they show His physical order; who love God with their whole body, soul, spirit, mind, and strength; who treat others as they desire to be treated. They may be in the halls of government, standing firm against tyranny and slavery, or in the mission field, sacrificing everything for the sake of the gospel. More often they are quite ordinary Christians living extraordinary lives, showing the world that Christ's truth is worth believing and living. (For biblical examples of ethically responsible men and women, see Hebrews 11:32–12:3.)

CHRISTIANITY AND SCIENCE

Christianity and Science – Introduction

When it comes to Christianity and Science, perhaps nothing has troubled believers more in the last century than the question of the origin of life.⁴⁹ Because many biologists (both

⁴⁸ Brown, Joan Winmill (1985) ed. *The Martyred Christian*. New York: Macmillan, 157.

⁴⁹ David Berlinski's article 'On the Origins of Life' in *Commentary* (February 2006) indicates that believing and unbelieving Jews are also extremely interested in the subject.

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Christian and non-Christian) treat evolution as a scientific fact, Christians have struggled to reconcile their faith in the Bible with the “facts” of science.

For example, the Bible states that God created our first parents (Adam and Eve) fully formed, yet evolutionary science claims that all living things evolved from a single speck of life. In addition, evolutionary theory posits a very old universe, somewhere between 13 and 15 billion years old. On the other hand, a straight-forward reading of Genesis 1 seems to indicate that the original creation event took place much more recently. We acknowledge that within the Christian community the age of the universe is a controversial subject, yet for the purposes of this chapter, we will focus our attention on defending the “fact” of creation, not necessarily its timing.⁵⁰

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Because the positions of creation and evolution are poles apart, it seems that reconciliation is impossible. However, some Christians have proposed a middle ground, seeking to combine elements of both sides of the debate. This middle ground is called theistic evolution.

Christianity and Science – Theistic Evolution

The belief that God created the first speck of life on earth and then directed its evolution to generate man is called theistic evolution. To hold this position, Christians must take substantial liberties in interpreting the Bible. They also face most of the same weaknesses as proponents of atheistic evolution. In truth, there is no difference between theistic and atheistic evolution, except that theistic evolutionists argue that God used evolution to generate the diversity of life throughout Earth’s history.

Theistic evolutionists interpret the Bible in accordance with their view of evolution. For example, Jesus Christ declares in Mark 10:6, “But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’” Theistic evolutionists interpret this verse and others like it (Luke 11:50; Acts 3:21) to support the evolutionary position that the term creation simply means God created the first spark of life and then continually directed His creation through the vehicle of evolution from that first spark to human beings.

⁵⁰ See Normal L. Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, 4 vols. (Minneapolis: Bethany House), 2:632f, for a good summary of the issue. Geisler says, ‘There are many scientific arguments for an old universe, some of which one may find persuasive. However, none of these is foolproof, and all of them may be wrong’ (649). Those advocating an older universe include: Hugh Ross, *Creator and the Cosmos*; Norman Geisler, *When Skeptics Ask*; Walter Kaiser, *Hard Sayings of the Bible*; Don Stoner, *A New Look at an Old Earth*; Francis A. Schaeffer, *No Final Conflict* and C.I. Scofield, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*. Presenting a younger earth: Walt Brown, *In the Beginning*; Larry Vardiman, et. al. *Radioisotopes and the Age of the Earth*; Jonathan Sarfati, *Refuting Compromise*; Henry Morris, *The Long War Against God*; Duane Gish, *Creation Scientists Answer Their Critics* and Don Batten, ed., *The Revised and Expanded Answers Book*.

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Thus, some Christians believe that the Bible can support evolutionary theory as an explanation for origins. This may be a tenable position when discussing only verses concerned strictly with the question of origins. However, when we examine the entire message of the Bible, the theory of theistic evolution severely undermines the Christian understanding of God's place and our place in His universe.

While it is true that God is all powerful—so that He could have used evolution to generate all species—we contend that He did not employ such an inefficient (and often totally ineffective) mechanism. If God designed the world to operate according to specific natural laws requiring minimal interference, why would He use an evolutionary mechanism that would require Him to constantly meddle with the development of life? Further, such a mechanism seems an especially cruel method for creating humans, since it involves a “survival of the fittest” or “destruction of the weak and unfit” mentality. As Jacques Monod notes, natural selection is the “blindest and most cruel way of evolving new species.”⁵¹

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Christianity and Science – From Adam to Christ

More important when viewing Christianity and science, if evolution is true, then we must view the story of the Garden of Eden and original sin as nothing more than allegory. This viewpoint, however, severely undermines the significance of Christ's sinless life and sacrificial death on the cross because the Bible presents Jesus as analogous to Adam. The condemnation and corruption brought on by Adam's sin are the counterparts of the justification and sanctification made possible for us by Christ's righteousness and death (Romans 5:12–19). If Adam were not a historical individual, and if his fall into sin were not literally true, then the biblical doctrines of sin and redemption collapse. This conclusion is unacceptable to Christians.

Thus, the proper Christian worldview requires a belief in the Creator as He is literally portrayed in Genesis. A thoughtful reading of Genesis 1 depicts a very literal-sounding creation story, although we often hear the caveat “you can't take Genesis literally.” Genesis 1 mentions sun, moon, and stars along with birds in the air and fish in the sea—these physical objects and living creatures are literal. The mention of day, month, and year seem literal in the context of Genesis 1. Adam and Eve are depicted as literal people whose descendants continue through the history of the biblical narrative up to the birth of Jesus. If Adam and Eve were mythical, it would be difficult to determine where myth ends and history begins in the genealogy of the human race.

⁵¹ Australian Broadcasting Co., June 10, 1976, quoted in Henry Morris (1990). *The Long War against God*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 58.

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Because evolution appears to be unassailably scientific, Christians who continue to believe in creationism seemed to be taking a radical, almost backward stance. Understandably, many Christians turn to theistic evolution as the only means of reconciling science with their Christian faith. However, more recent scientific discoveries have undermined the foundations of evolutionary theory and provided a rich soil for the development of a robust theory of creation. For example, Jonathan Wells has examined the ten most popular “proofs” for the theory of evolution (peppered moths, Darwin’s Finches, fossil record, Haeckel’s embryos, ape to human, etc.) and found that each one lacks scientific rigor.⁵² With so much new and compelling information coming to light, Christians who wish to integrate science and their Christian faith would do well to abandon evolution as a rational explanation for the origin of species and explore instead the creation model.

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Christianity and Science – Conclusion

After reviewing the Christianity and Science articles to the right, we see that the teleological argument provides the best critique of evolutionary theory and the strongest support for creationism. It is clear that God-as-Designer provides a much better explanation for the design evidenced by life than does a theory that requires transitional forms guided by natural selection.

The fossil record and the teleological nature of numerous living organisms both testify to the impossibility of gradual change. Yet gradual change is absolutely critical to traditional evolutionary theory. Darwin himself admits, “If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed, which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down.”⁵³

This is precisely what creationists have claimed for years—that Darwin’s evolutionary theory is bankrupt. Reason requires that biologists abandon evolution and embrace creation as a more rational explanation.

The belief that God created all things, including men and women, in His own image requires faith. But evolutionary theory requires more faith because evolution runs contrary to science (e.g., spontaneous generation) and history (e.g., the fossil record). Still, many evolutionists hold desperately to their theory, simply because it is the only

⁵² Wells, Jonathan (2000). *Icons of Evolution: Science Or Myth?* Washington: Regnery Publishing. Judith Hooper, in *An Evolutionary Tale of Moths and Men: The Untold Story of Science and the Peppered Moth* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002), spends a whole book on the peppered moth, the insect that has been used as scientific proof for evolution. Few could read what really happened and call this science.

⁵³ Darwin, Charles (1898). *The Origin of Species By Means of Natural Selection Or The Preservation Of Favored Races In The Struggle For Life*, 2 vols. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1:229.

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explanation of origins that begins with nature, not God. Scientists who believe that everything can be explained in natural terms cannot tolerate the concept of a supernatural Being. In fact, one scientist said, "Science must be provisionally atheistic or cease to be itself."⁵⁴ For Christian biologists, however, the world is comprehensible only in light of God's existence. As a piece of art suggests an artist, the orderly universe and every living thing suggest a Designer.

22

CHRISTIAN PSYCHOLOGY

Christian Psychology – Introduction

Christian psychology may appear at first glance to be a contradiction in terms. Especially after you have examined Marxist, Humanist, and Postmodern psychologies and touched on still other theories of secular psychology, you may be tempted to conclude that psychology is a discipline unworthy of your attention. William Kirk Kilpatrick boldly declares, "If you're talking about Christianity, it is much truer to say that psychology and religion are competing faiths. If you seriously hold to one set of values, you will logically have to reject the other."⁵⁵

What Kilpatrick says is true. But when he uses the term psychology, he is referring specifically to secular psychology. He can make this generalization because the secular schools of psychology (based on the work of Sigmund Freud,⁵⁶ B.F. Skinner, I.P. Pavlov, Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow, Erich Fromm, and Jacques Lacan) comprise virtually all of modern psychology.

Just because so many falsehoods flourish in the realm of psychology (for example, that human beings are merely physical animals with no vital essence, soul, or spirit or that mind is merely another name for the physical brain) does not mean Christians should abandon it. Instead, Christians must bring God's truth to a deceived discipline. Psychology, true to its origin (Greek "psyche"), is the study of the soul—and no worldview other than Christianity has truer insight into the spiritual realm. As Kilpatrick says, "In short, although Christianity is more than a psychology, it happens to be better psychology than psychology is."⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Pennock, Robert T. (2001). *Intelligent Design: Creationism and its Critics*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 144.

⁵⁵ Kilpatrick, William Kirk (1983). *Psychological Seduction*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 14.

⁵⁶ For a full discussion of Freud's psychology, see Armand M. Nicholi, Jr. (2002). *The Question of God: C. S. Lewis and Sigmund Freud Debate God, Love, Sex, and the Meaning of Life*. New York: The Free Press. This work is the substance of a course at Harvard University under Dr. Armand M. Nicholi, Jr. in which he contrasts the worldview of C. S. Lewis with that of Sigmund Freud.

⁵⁷ Kilpatrick (1983), 15–16.

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Christian Psychology – Compatible Terms

Christianity and psychology are compatible for the simple reason that the Biblical Christian worldview contains a psychology. As Charles L. Allen aptly points out, “The very *essence of religion* is to adjust the mind and soul of man.... Healing means bringing the person into a right relationship with the physical, mental and spiritual laws of God.”⁵⁸ Men and women created “in the image of God” (Genesis 1:27) require a worldview that recognizes the significance of the spiritual. Christianity maintains that God is a person, and that our personhood is somehow related to His person. Plantinga puts it this way: “How should we think about human persons? What sorts of things, fundamentally, are they? What is it to be a human, and what is it to be a human person, and how should we think about personhood?...The first point to note is that in the Christian scheme of things, God is the premier person, the first and chief exemplar of personhood...and the properties most important for an understanding of our personhood are properties we share with him.”⁵⁹ In other words, as Moreland and Rae say, “There is something about the way God is that is like the way we are.”⁶⁰

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It stands to reason that God’s magnificent creation required thinking, planning, artistry, and execution—all qualities that men and women share with their Creator. As God reveals more of Himself apart from the creative order (general revelation) and into the redemptive order (special revelation), we find a Person with personality, love, mercy, and grace—again, qualities that are shared in limited quantities with the human race.

Christian Psychology – The Existence of the Soul

Christianity acknowledges the existence of the supernatural, including a consciousness within us that is more than an epiphenomenon of the brain. The Bible’s statements regarding body, breath of life, soul, spirit, heart, and mind suggest a dualist ontology (or study of being),⁶¹ that is, the view that human nature consists of two fundamental kinds of reality: physical (material or natural) and spiritual (supernatural). Christ’s statement about fearing the one who could put “both soul and body” in hell (Matthew 10:28) and Paul’s statement regarding body, soul, and spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:23) enforce the

⁵⁸ Allen, Charles L. (1953). *God’s Psychiatry*. Westwood: Revell, 7 (italics added).

⁵⁹ Plantinga, Alvin (1984). ‘Advice to Christian Philosophers,’ *Faith and Philosophy* 1 (July 1984): 264–5.

Cited in J.P. Moreland and Scott B. Rae (2000). *Body & Soul: Human Nature & the Crisis in Ethics* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 24).

⁶⁰ Moreland and Rae (2000), 158.

⁶¹ Moreland, J.P. and Craig, William Lane (2003). *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 175: ‘General ontology is the most basic of metaphysics, and there are three main tasks that make up this branch of metaphysical study. First, general ontology focuses on the nature of existence itself. What is it to be or to exist? Is existence a property that something has? Etc.’

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distinction between our material and spiritual qualities. The Bible does not deny body; it simply says that we are more than just a physical body.

Sir John Eccles, one of the world's most respected neuro-physiologists, believes mind and body dualism is the only explanation for many of the phenomena of consciousness. One of the reasons Eccles reaches this conclusion is the individual's "unity of identity." Paul Weiss explains, "[E]ven though I know I am constantly changing—all molecules are changing, everything in me is being turned over substantially—there is nevertheless my identity, my consciousness of being essentially the same that I was 20 years ago. However much I may have changed, the continuity of my identity has remained undisrupted."⁶²

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The point is that because the physical substance of the brain is constantly changing, no unity of identity could exist if consciousness were a condition wholly dependent on the physical brain. Something more than the physical brain—something spiritual or supernatural—must exist.

Human memory is another facet of the unity-of-identity argument that supports the existence of a supernatural soul, heart, or mind. Arthur Custance writes, "What research has shown thus far is that there is no precise one-to-one relationship between any fragment of memory and the nerve cells in which it is supposed to be encoded."⁶³

Without any concept of soul, the Humanist, Marxist, and Postmodernist have difficulty explaining unity of identity and memory. Still another problem you will learn about in the chapters to come is how the materialist position accounts for free will. Only a worldview that postulates something other than the environment manipulating the human physical machine can account for free will. Christian dualism provides a better foundation for psychology because it defends the integrity of our mind and our free will.

Christian Psychology – Fallen Human Nature

When it comes to Christian psychology, a proper understanding of human nature does not end with affirming the existence of a spirit, soul, heart, and mind within us. The Christian position goes on to define human nature as inherently flawed because of Adam and Eve's decision to disobey God in the Garden of Eden. This understanding of our sinful bent is critical for understanding our human nature and our mental processes.

⁶² Koestler, Arthur and Smythies, J.R., eds. (1969). *Beyond Reductionism*. London: Hutchinson Publishers, 251–252. For an updated discussion of identity, see Moreland and Craig (2003), 290f.

⁶³ Custance, Arthur C. (1975). *Man in Adam and in Christ*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 256. Also see Wilder Penfield (1975). *The Mystery of the Mind*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

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Our revolt against God caused a dramatic, reality-shattering change in our relationship to the rest of existence and even to ourselves. This change has severe ramifications for all aspects of reality, including psychology. In fact, our sinful nature—our desire to rebel against God and our fellow beings—is the source of all psychological problems according to the Christian view. Francis A. Schaeffer says, “The basic psychological problem is trying to be what we are not, and trying to carry what we cannot carry. Most of all, the basic problem is not being willing to be the creatures we are before the Creator.”⁶⁴ Instead, we want to be God. Creaturehood is too confining, especially when it comes to making the rules—which to a great extent is the heart of the matter. Remember, it is the heart that says there is no God (Psalm 14:1). It is the heart that is deceitful and wicked (Jeremiah 17:9).

25

This view is crucial for Christian theology because it allows us to understand our tremendous need for Christ’s saving power. It is crucial on a lesser level, as well, for Christian psychology. In order to understand human nature properly, the psychologist must understand that we have a natural tendency to revolt against God and His laws. If the Christian view of human nature is correct, then only Christianity can develop a true, meaningful, and workable psychology because only Christianity recognizes the problem of the heart, mind, and will in relation to God. Further, only Christianity provides a framework in which we are truly held responsible for our thoughts and actions. “The great benefit of the doctrine of sin,” says Paul Vitz, “is that it reintroduces responsibility for our own behavior, responsibility for changing as well as giving meaning to our condition.”⁶⁵

Only Christian psychology perceives human nature in a way that is consistent with reality and capable of speaking to our most difficult problems—sin problems. Christian psychology sees men and women as not only physical, but also spiritual; as morally responsible before God; as created in God’s image; and as having rebelliously turned away from their Creator. Only Christianity is prepared to face the problem that necessarily arises out of our sin nature: the existence of guilt.

Christian Psychology – Conclusion

The Christian view of human nature or what it means to be a human being is complex because it includes such terms as soul, spirit, mind, heart, will, consciousness, and

⁶⁴ Schaeffer, Francis (1982). *The Complete Works of Francis Schaeffer*, 5 vols. Westchester: Crossway Books, 3:329.

⁶⁵ Vitz, Paul (1985). *Psychology as Religion*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 43.

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intuition.⁶⁶ Further, Christians who properly understand human nature might never need to seek professional counseling—they might maintain spiritual well-being by remaining in submission to Christ. Christians either believe God when He says He has dealt with the sin problem through the sacrifice of His Son, or do not.

Schaeffer outlines a simple approach to what he calls “positive psychological hygiene”— “As a Christian, instead of putting myself in practice at the center of the universe, I must do something else. This is not only right, and the failure to do so is not only sin, but it is important for me personally in this life. I must think after God, and I must will after God.”⁶⁷ To “will after God” is not to think too highly of ourselves, “but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves” (Philippians 2:3).

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Indeed, Paul’s advice in the book of Philippians is worth many a visit to the psychologist’s office: Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus; do all things without murmurings and disputing; rejoice in the Lord; beware of evil workers; let your moderation be known to all men; whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of a good report—think on these things.

The choice between Christian psychology and all other psychological schools is clear-cut. As Kilpatrick says, “Our choice...is really the same choice offered to Adam and Eve: either we trust God, or we take the serpent’s word that we can make ourselves into gods.”⁶⁸

CHRISTIAN SOCIOLOGY

Christian Sociology – Introduction

Whether Christian sociology or secular sociology, all sociologists acknowledge the existence of social institutions such as family, church, and state. They differ, however, in their description of the origin, authority, and purpose of these institutions and how each relates to the individual. These differences result from assumptions inherent in their worldview.

The Christian worldview teaches that God created men and women in His image; the atheistic worldviews, however, teach that men and women are evolving animals. The atheistic worldviews are the predominant views among modern sociologists, who

⁶⁶ For an accounting of soul, spirit, mind, heart et. al., see J.P. Moreland and Scott B. Rae (2000). *Body & Soul: Human Nature & the Crisis in Ethics*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.

⁶⁷ Schaeffer, *Complete Works*, 3:334.

⁶⁸ Kilpatrick (1983), 233.

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consider God, Adam and Eve, the Garden of Eden, and the sanctity of the family to be pre-scientific myths. Christians understand that this erroneous view is responsible for many of the failures we see in contemporary society, such as drug and alcohol abuse, crime, abortion, sexual perversion, disease, and poverty.

Christian Sociology – Free Will and Society

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Christian sociology affirms the **individual's free** will and responsibility. There is a fundamental difference between it and atheistic sociology. Atheistic approaches claim that society determines our consciousness and actions. Christianity, on the other hand, holds that we are free to choose between right and wrong, good and evil, and that we shape society in the process (rather than being shaped by it).

Christianity grants us control over our society, but it also requires us to be responsible for our choices. In the Christian worldview, we face the consequences of our actions. Adam and Eve's failure to obey God in the Garden of Eden in the opening chapters of Genesis resulted not only in their expulsion from the garden paradise, but also brought a curse on the entire human race. William Stanmeyer explains, "If man's behavior were somehow conditioned by genetic code or social externals then no just judge could blame him for the evil he commits. But the scripture teaches unequivocally that God blamed Adam and Eve for succumbing to the temptation to disobedience and punished them accordingly."⁶⁹

The Genesis account of Adam and Eve's sin not only demonstrates that we are responsible for our actions, but also teaches that we are guilty before God. One Christian author says, "The fact of guilt is one of the major realities of man's existence."⁷⁰ Christian sociology, therefore, attempts to understand society in light of our free will and the consequences of our free choice to turn away from God. The Fall has caused all societies over all time to be marked by alienation and imperfection and sin.

Some historical examples of our imperfections and state of alienation include Rousseau placing all five of his children in orphanages, the poet Shelley living in a nightmare, and the Apostle Paul calling himself chief among sinners. The history of the dark side of our human condition—a tale of degeneration and devolution rather than evolution—fills volumes. Alienation pervades all of our relationships, with God, with others, and even within ourselves. Sociologists who understand that we are alienated from God because

⁶⁹ Stanmeyer, William A. (1983). *Clear and Present Danger*. Ann Arbor: Servant Books, 161.

⁷⁰ Rushdoony, Rousas J. (1978). *Politics of Guilt and Pity*. Fairfax: Thoburn Press, 1.

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of sin will interpret data differently than those who believe we are inherently good but have been corrupted by our society and environment.

Christian Sociology – The Inherent Worth of the Individual

Christian sociology does not take a pessimistic view of society even though it seems as if we always make wrong decisions and bad choices. On the contrary, Christian sociology takes an optimistic view because it accepts the fact that God grants grace to us in spite of our failures and errors. Our freedom and responsibility before God grant us far more dignity and significance than deterministic views would grant us. Francis Schaeffer explains that we are “not a cog in a machine...not a piece of theater; [we] really can influence history. From the biblical viewpoint, [we are] lost, but great.”⁷¹ Christians such as William Carey and William Wilberforce, for example, were able to change their society and history by bringing an end to the slave trade.⁷²

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The Christian worldview sees each person as valuable and able to contribute to society. Rather than seeing the individual as helpless in the face of societal and environmental pressures, Christian sociologists view the person as more important than the social institution. C.S. Lewis explains that while atheists may think that “nations, classes, civilizations must be more important than individuals,” because “individuals live only seventy odd years each and the group may last for centuries. But to the Christian, individuals are more important, for they live eternally; and races, civilizations and the like are in comparison the creatures of a day.”⁷³

Even though Christian sociology values the individual over the social order, social order is still important in the Christian worldview. We were created as social beings (Genesis 2:20) and recognize the role society plays in history as well as in our relationship with God. S.D. Gaede stresses our inherent social nature when he says, “God designed the human being to be a relational creature. Note this point well. Humankind was created to relate to other beings. It was not an accident. It was not the result of sin. It was an intentional, creational given.”⁷⁴ Nevertheless, because of the fall we continue to

⁷¹ Schaeffer, Francis A. (1976). *Death in the City*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 21.

⁷² Thomas, Hugh (1999). *The Slave Trade: The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade: 1440–1870*. New York: Simon and Schuster. Bringing the slave trade to an end was one of the great feats of human history. It was accomplished primarily by evangelical Christians. Thomas Sowell (2005). *Black Rednecks and White Liberals* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 116: ‘Moreover, within Western civilization, the principal impetus for the abolition of slavery came first from very conservative religious activists—people who would today be called ‘the religious right.’ Clearly, this story is not ‘politically correct’ in today’s terms. Hence it is ignored, as if it never happened.’

⁷³ Lewis, C.S. (1972). *God in the Dock*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 109–110.

⁷⁴ Gaede, S.D. (1985). *Where Gods May Dwell*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 75–76.

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experience alienation, which Gaede refers to as the “relational dilemma.” Because Christians understand the cause of this dilemma, we can work to help others not only understand its cause but its solution as well.

Christian Sociology – Conclusion

Christian sociology values both individuals and social institutions. As individuals, we are free to make choices, but our choice to turn away from God alienates us from Him and others. Society as a whole is also fallen and imperfect and responsible for its choices and attitudes. Deterministic worldviews that deny the free will of individuals and institutions deny the significance of both. There can be no meaningful judgment if forces outside our control determine all individual and corporate actions. Isaiah 46:8–11 shows us God’s plan to judge our actions, as well as our ability to do what we choose.

As humans, we will face the consequences for choices we make in creating our society. God gives us the responsibility to protect and direct the societal institutions He ordains, including family, state, and church. Families are charged with reproductive responsibilities as well as training and nurturing. The state is charged with carrying out justice, primarily involving law and order. The church is charged with demonstrating Christian love within itself and in society at large.

We are answerable to God for the direction these institutions lead society. The same burden of responsibility, however, points to the blessing of having free will yet belonging to a loving and just God. Our freedom entails responsibilities, duties, and work. We are not free to wreak mayhem in the social order; but we are free to serve others in love and to serve and love God. Such is God’s call on the human race.

CHRISTIANITY AND LAW

Christianity and Law – Introduction

When it comes to Christianity and Law, Christians believe that God gave us divine laws and the means of discovering them. Carl F.H. Henry says, “God is the only Legislator. Earthly rulers and legislative bodies are alike accountable to Him from whom stems all obligation—religious, ethical and civil”⁷⁵ (2 Chronicles 20:6; Acts 17:24–31).

The truth of Henry’s summary of the Scripture passages mentioned above holds serious implications for all of us, and not just in the realm of law. We acknowledge this truth when we examine the assumptions and failings of all human-centered legal systems,

⁷⁵ Henry, Carl F.H. (1988). *Twilight of a Great Civilization*. Westchester: Crossway Books, 147.

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especially those that deny God as Lawgiver. They fail because they recognize neither our dignity as God's image-bearers nor our fallen nature. The twentieth century alone proves both our fallen condition and the failure of human-based legal systems. The reigns of Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, and Tse-tung are gruesome examples of societies in which law was twisted by the state to allow the murder of millions of human beings, more than in all previous centuries combined.⁷⁶

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Christianity and Law — Systems of Man-Centered Law

If God exists and imparts divine law, then any society that ignores His laws is risking untold consequences. People who ignore or deny the law of gravity by jumping out a ten-story window earn severe consequences. Societies that ignore or deny the prohibition against murder or theft also suffer severe consequences. A society that rejects God may pass arbitrary laws that result in a loss of respect for the law by its citizens. John Whitehead says that when fundamental principles of law are undermined, "public confidence in law and public willingness to abide by law are also sapped."⁷⁷

When we fail to consider law as sacred, we also fail to consider it binding. If in our fallen condition we create our own laws, we are likely to revise them to better suit our selfish needs. A weak foundation for law creates a weak foundation for morality. We need laws that are unchanging and worthy of our obedience, but we cannot discover a consistent moral code within ourselves. If God does not exist, all things are permissible.

The bankruptcy of the world's legal and ethical codes demonstrates the need for a legal system based outside human interests. John Warwick Montgomery writes, "The horrors of our recent history [have] forced us to recognize the puerile inadequacy of tying ultimate legal standards to the mores of a particular society, even if that society is our own."⁷⁸ Most of the horrors can be traced back to positive law. As Christians, however, we believe that the omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, loving God is the world's Lawgiver (Psalm 127:1) and provides His own character as an absolute basis for law.

Christianity and Law — An Absolute Standard

One aspect Christians find troubling about the theory of legal positivism is that it builds law on an ever-changing foundation—the whims of governmental authorities or political superiors. Legal positivists, though, view it from a different perspective. They believe a flexible system of law is desirable, since we and our laws are caught up in the process of

⁷⁶ Rummel, R.J. (1994). *Death By Government*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.

⁷⁷ Whitehead, John W. (1988). *The Second American Revolution*. Westchester: Crossway Books, 80.

⁷⁸ Montgomery, John Warwick (1975). *The Law Above the Law*. Minneapolis: Dimension Books, 26.

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evolution. Positivists believe laws are logically formulated by the state to best suit these evolving needs.

The failings of a system based on evolutionary processes are obvious, as A.E. Wilder-Smith points out: "Since humans are allegedly accidents, so are their laws."⁷⁹ Positive law is arbitrary and creates the profound danger of an all-powerful state (no matter how benevolent its purposes). Whitehead observes, "[I]f there is no fixity in law and no reference point, then law can be what a judge says it is. If, however, there is a fixity to law, there is some absolute basis upon which judgment can be made."⁸⁰

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Christians believe this *fixity* exists in the moral order in the form of divine law, which is grounded in the immutable nature of God, a firm foundation that does not flex or evolve. Whitehead explains the superiority of a fixed system of law over a flexible one: "Law has content in the eternal sense. It has a reference point. Like a ship that is anchored, law cannot stray far from its mooring."⁸¹ The Christian view of law produces a legal system that does not fluctuate according to our whims and preferences; rather, it remains constant and therefore just. This perspective provides law grounded on the absolute foundation of God as the ultimate Lawgiver.

Legal positivism cannot adequately explain the nature of law—why it is necessary and why human-determined law is not just. Christian legal theory, on the other hand, explains that law is necessary because we are universally in rebellion against God and His moral order, and we need earthly law based on His moral order to curb our rebellion. Further, our implementation of laws is always imperfect because our fallen nature prevents us from formulating and enforcing a totally just legal system. Christians believe that in spite of our corrupted, fallen nature we can, nevertheless, know God's laws through general and special revelation.

Christianity and Law – Conclusion

The notion of Christianity and Law is based on God's unchanging character as an absolute foundation rather than on a foundation that evolves and changes over time based solely on societal concerns. Christian law ensures specific, absolute human rights that other worldviews that deny God's existence cannot guarantee. Christian human rights are based on specific duties prescribed in the Bible. God assigns us specific rights, and we are responsible for obeying God and protecting our rights as well as the rights of others.

⁷⁹ Wilder-Smith, A.E. (1970). *The Creation of Life*. Costa Mesa: TWFT Publishers, ix.

⁸⁰ Whitehead (1988), 21.

⁸¹ Whitehead (1988), 73.

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The Bible provides specific instructions for establishing earthly legal systems and He requires such systems to be orderly and equitable. God expects our legal systems to hold individuals responsible for their actions and to work to restore God's order wherever possible. God does not expect legal systems to declare every sin illegal, but rather to maintain order and liberty by promoting justice.

The Bible tells us what God sees as good and what He requires of us: "to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God" (Micah 6:8). Our motivation to "do justly" comes from knowing that "the Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked" (Nahum 1:3). Our motivation to "love mercy" and to "walk humbly" comes from Jesus Christ, who said to the woman taken in adultery, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:11). We know that we are not perfect, as Christ was, but we are assured that God's grace, mercy, and love will be shown to us on the final Day of Judgment.

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CHRISTIAN POLITICS

Christian Politics – Introduction

When it comes to the idea of Christian politics, the Christian worldview sees government as an institution established by God (Genesis 9:6; Romans 13) for the primary purpose of promoting justice for its citizens—protecting the innocent from the aggressor and the lawless. Without security, every other function of government (protecting life, liberty, property, reputation, etc.) is meaningless.

As Christians we recognize government as a sacred institution whose rulers are ministers of God for good (Romans 13). God ordained the state to practice godly justice and commands us to obey its rules and laws. Peter instructs us to "submit . . . for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men, whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right" (1 Peter 2:13–14). As long as government is serving the purpose for which God created it, we must show our allegiance to God by submitting to human government.

Christian Politics – Limited Government

The extent of Christian politics is simply the following: We expect the state to accomplish limited, God-ordained tasks. Its two principle roles are to protect the innocent and punish the guilty (Romans 13:3–4). Government should adhere to the principle "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40; Exodus 18:19f) because order reflects God's character.

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We know that power tends to corrupt, so a government that disperses power is better than one that gathers power into the hands of a few. As Christians, we should welcome opportunities to participate in government with the goal of influencing the state to conform to God's will for it as a social institution (Proverbs 11:11). The Christian worldview does not single out any one form of government as acceptable, although a constitutional form is more likely to conform to biblical principles and respond to its citizens than are less democratic forms.

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One significant aspect of the United States' government that conforms to biblical ideals is the division of power into three branches—executive, legislative, and judicial—along with its system of checks and balances. The three-branch model was patterned after Isaiah 33:22: "For the Lord is our judge [judicial], the Lord is our lawgiver [legislative], the Lord is our king [executive]."

Christian Politics – Creation and Original Sin

Perhaps the Christian concept our founding fathers best understood was the Christian understanding that although we are created in God's image, we nevertheless have a fallen, sinful nature. Because they understood these opposing aspects of our nature, the founding fathers tailored a government suited to our rightful place in God's creative order.

Human government is necessary because of sin. Our evil inclinations toward sin must be kept in check by laws and a government capable of enforcing such laws. Thus, government protects us from our own sinful nature. But our founding fathers also grappled with the problem of protecting ordinary citizens from the sinful inclinations of those in authority. The result of their efforts is our system of checks and balances among the branches of government. Each branch wields unique powers that prevent the focus of governmental power and authority from falling into the hands of a select few. By broadly distributing power and responsibility, the American system of government minimizes the possibility of an abuse of power because of our fallen nature. James Madison says, "If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary."⁸²

Christian Politics – The Source of Human Rights

Christian politics within a Christian worldview understands God as the source and guarantee of our basic human rights. Because we believe we are created in the image of

⁸² Hamilton, Alexander, et al (1964). *The Federalist Papers*. New York: Pocket Books, 122n51.

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God (Genesis 1:26), we know that we are valuable. (This becomes doubly clear when we remember that Christ took upon Himself human flesh and died for humanity.) God grants all individuals the same rights based on an absolute moral standard. The Declaration of Independence proclaims, “All men are created equal... [and] endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights.” Two assumptions are inherent in this declaration: 1) we were created by a supernatural Being; and 2) this Being provides the foundation for all human rights.

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The knowledge that human rights are based on an unchanging, eternal Source is crucial in our understanding of politics. If our rights were not tied inextricably to God’s character, then they would be arbitrarily assigned according to the whims of each passing generation or political party—rights are “unalienable” only because they are based on God’s unchanging character. Therefore, human rights do not originate with human government, but with God Himself, who ordains governments to secure these rights.

Our founding fathers understood this clearly. John Adams, in a letter to Thomas Jefferson in 1813, says, “The general principles, on which the Fathers achieved Independence, were the only Principles in which that beautiful Assembly of young Gentlemen could Unite... And what were these general Principles? I answer, the general Principles of Christianity, in which all these Sects were United... Now I will avow, that I then believe, and now believe, that those general Principles of Christianity, are as eternal and immutable, as the Existence and Attributes of God.”⁸³

John Winthrop says that the best friend of liberty is one who is “most sincere and active in promoting true and undefiled religion and who sets himself with the greatest firmness to bear down on profanity and immorality of every kind. Whoever is an avowed enemy of God, I scruple not to call him an enemy of his country.”⁸⁴

Noah Webster wrote “The moral principles and precepts found in the scriptures ought to form the basis of all our civil constitutions and laws. These principles and precepts have truth, immutable truth, for their foundation.”⁸⁵

Alexis de Tocqueville says, “There is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America; and there can be no

⁸³ Cappon, Lester J. ed., (1987). *The Adams-Jefferson Letters*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 339–340.

⁸⁴ Winthrop’s speech at Princeton, May 17, 1776.

⁸⁵ Webster, Noah (1832). *History of the United States, 'Advice to the Young'*. New Haven: Durrie & Peck, 338-340.

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greater proof of its utility, and of its conformity to human nature, than that its influence is most powerfully felt over the most enlightened and free nation on the earth.”⁸⁶

George Washington, in his inaugural address as first president of the United States, referred to “the propitious smiles of Heaven” that fall only on that nation that does not “disregard the eternal rules of order and right which Heaven itself has ordained.”⁸⁷

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Christian Politics – Conclusion

According to biblical Christian politics, God ordains governments to administer His justice. When government rules within the boundaries of its role in God’s order, we submit to the state’s authority willingly because we understand that God has placed it in authority over us. However, when the state abuses its authority or claims to be sovereign, we must acknowledge God’s transcendent law rather than that of the state. Our loyalty to God may call us to political involvement in an effort to create good and just government. The involvement of righteous people can significantly influence government for the better.

Our ongoing struggle to create and maintain just government may or may not be effective. We must, however, remain obedient to God in all circumstances. Colson says, “Christians are to do their duty as best they can. But even when they feel that they are making no difference, that they are failing to bring Christian values to the public arena, success is not the criteria. Faithfulness is.”⁸⁸

CHRISTIAN ECONOMICS

Christian Economics – Introduction

When it comes to Christian Economics, Christians hold different views about which economic system is most in line with biblical teaching. Some believe the Bible encourages a system of private property and individual responsibilities and initiatives (citing Isaiah 65:21–2; Jeremiah 32:43–4; Acts 5:1–4; Ephesians 4:28). Others support a socialist economy (citing Acts 2:44–45). Still others, who are called liberation theologians, believe the Bible teaches a form of Marxism and that some form of socialism will usher in the Kingdom of God.

⁸⁶ de Tocqueville, Alexis (1990). *Democracy in America*. New York: Vintage Classics, 303.

⁸⁷ George Washington, First Inaugural Address, New York City, April 30, 1789.

<http://www.bartleby.com/124/pres13.html>.

⁸⁸ Colson, Charles (1987). *Kingdoms in Conflict*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 291.

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No economic system, however, is capable of saving us or bringing in the Kingdom of God. Nor is any single economic system perfect. Yet one is more compatible with biblical teaching and our imperfect, sinful world.

Christian Economics — Socialism or Free Enterprise?

The Christian worldview of economics must embrace either socialism (centralized control) or some form of capitalism (free enterprise or open markets). No economic system exists in its pure form in the real world—all capitalist systems contain some elements of socialism, and vice versa.

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Ronald Nash outlines the distinctions between free market capitalism and socialism: “One dominant feature of capitalism is economic freedom, the right of people to exchange things voluntarily, free from force, fraud, and theft. Capitalism is more than this, of course, but its concern with free exchange is obvious. Socialism, on the other hand, seeks to replace the freedom of the market with a group of central planners who exercise control over essential market functions.”⁸⁹

Christians who believe socialism (or communism) is a more desirable system than capitalism do so trusting that centralized control or command economy will create a more just means of sharing scarce resources. Those who call for a socialist economic system do so on the basis of Acts 2:44–45 that describes Christians in the early church sharing all things in common. They fail to consider, however, the implications of Acts 2:46–47 that describes Christians eating with others in their homes and Acts 5:1–4 that tells of their freedom to own and sell private property.

The Bible as a whole supports an economic system that respects private property and the work ethic. (See especially Proverbs 31, Isaiah 65:21–22, Jeremiah 32:43–44, Acts 5:1–4 and Ephesians 4:28.) Rodney Stark’s definition of capitalism is biblically sound: “Capitalism is an economic system wherein privately owned, relatively well-organized, and stable firms pursue complex commercial activities within a relatively free (unregulated) market, taking a systematic, long-term approach to investing and reinvesting wealth (directly or indirectly) in productive activities involving a hired workforce, and guided by anticipated and actual returns.”⁹⁰

Stark argues that capitalism centers around property rights, free markets, free labor, cash/credit, management, and a work ethic that looks upon work as a virtue, not a vice.

⁸⁹ Nash, Ronald H. (1987). *Poverty and Wealth: The Christian Debate Over Capitalism*. Westchester: Crossway Books, 63.

⁹⁰ Stark, Rodney (2005). *The Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and Western Success*. New York: Random House, 56.

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He maintains that capitalism began in the early Christian monasteries, long before the Protestant Reformation and Adam Smith.⁹¹

Christian Economics – Private Property

Those Christians who believe socialism is a more just economic system than capitalism argue that public ownership of property prevents the greed and envy that private ownership tends to create. This way of thinking, though, is incompatible with biblical teachings. Irving E. Howard says, “The commandment ‘Thou shalt not steal’ is the clearest declaration of the right to private property in the Old Testament.”⁹²

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Both the Old and New Testament teach about private property and good stewardship of property (Genesis 23:13–20; Deuteronomy 8; Ruth 2; Isaiah 65:21–22; Jeremiah 32:42–44; Psalm 112; Proverbs 31; Micah 4:1–4; Luke 12:13–15; Acts 5:1–4; Ephesians 4:28). E. Calvin Beisner asks the pointed question, “Why does Scripture require restitution, including multiple restitution, in cases of theft, even if paying the restitution requires selling oneself into slavery (Exodus 22:1ff)?”⁹³ Ownership of property is a God-given right, and stewardship is a God-given responsibility.

Our right to own property stems from our duty to work. After God thrust Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden, He decreed that they (and we) would face a lifetime of hard work (Genesis 3:17–19). However, God mercifully allows our hard work to reward us with property. The very existence of private property encourages our diligence and fruitfulness: “Lazy hands make a man poor, but diligent hands bring wealth” (Proverbs 10:4).

We are accountable to God for how we use the property He allows us to own, and we are responsible to exercise wisdom in our stewardship not only of property but also of God’s creation. Beisner says, “Biblical stewardship views God as Owner of all things (Psalm 24:1) and man—individually and collectively—as His steward. Every person is accountable to God for the use of whatever he has (Genesis 1:26–30; 2:15). Every person’s responsibility as a steward is to maximize the Owner’s return on His investment by using it to serve others (Matthew 25:14–30).”⁹⁴ We can use our property to serve others only in a society that permits private ownership.

⁹¹ Stark (2005), 55f.

⁹² Howard, Irving E. (1966). *The Christian Alternative to Socialism*. Arlington: Better Books, 4.

⁹³ Beisner, E. Calvin (1988). *Prosperity and Poverty: The Compassionate Use of Resources in a World of Scarcity*. Westchester: Crossway Books, 66.

⁹⁴ Beisner (1988), xi–xii.

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When we understand private property in the context of godly stewardship, we are better able to concentrate on our need to work and serve others rather than accumulate more and more for our selfish purposes. In this sense, private property encourages our wise use of scarce resources, whereas publicly owned property provides no such incentive.

Christian Economics – Economic Competition

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In reviewing the notion of Christian economics, the Bible teaches that workers deserve their pay, and those that work hard are rewarded, while those who are lazy remain poor (Proverbs 10:4, 14:23; Luke 10:7). These teachings imply that competition in the workplace leads to fruitfulness. However, Christians who believe a socialist economic system is more biblical than a capitalist system contend that competition is evil in that it leads to greed and envy, and competition for limited resources is counterproductive.

Competition encourages cooperation in a capitalist society when we act in accordance with the *principle of comparative advantage*. This principle states that individuals in a free market economy can produce valuable goods or services by specializing in an area where there is the least absolute disadvantage. In other words, focusing on producing goods or services through cooperation benefits society as a whole. This in turn creates more goods and services that can benefit the poor.

Christian Economics – Conclusion

In summarizing the concept of Christian economics, competition through comparative advantage also reinforces our worth and dignity in the sense that our work and diligence contribute to the welfare of society as a whole. Comparative advantage allows us the opportunity to become the best producer of a service or product. Thus, competition that leads to cooperation and the recognition of individual worth harmonizes with the Christian worldview, which sees human beings as image-bearers of God.

The Christian worldview embraces a form of democratic capitalism that allows for the peaceful and free exchange of goods and services without fraud, theft, or breach of contract as the biblical view. First, the Bible grants us the right to private property and calls us to be good stewards of our resources. Second, a free enterprise system affords the greatest opportunity to steward our resources responsibly by creating wealth and opportunity. Third, the competition in a free market system works according to the principle of comparative advantage, which affirms our inherent worth as individuals.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ 'Business and Virtue in Batman Begins,' by Ben Sikma, Advancement Associate, <http://www.acton.org/ppolicy/comment/print.php?id=273>.

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The thousands of years of experiments with socialist economic systems have resulted in nothing but failure and tragedy—Fascism, Nazism, and Communism relied on the faulty ideas of socialism and Darwinian evolution. Their catastrophic failings are documented in Igor Shafarevich's *The Socialist Phenomenon*,⁹⁶ Ludwig von Mises' *Socialism*,⁹⁷ and Joshua Muravchik's *Heaven On Earth: The Rise And Fall Of Socialism*.⁹⁸

Socialism's call for economic equality is countered by capitalism's call for the biblical requirement of equality before law. The biblical view does not cause the rich to get richer and the poor poorer as socialists contend. Rather, the biblical view encourages the rich to create more wealth, thereby aiding all of society. Policies of redistribution of wealth, including welfare systems, only multiply problems for the poor by creating needless bureaucracies and concentrating too much power in the hands of the government. Capitalism, on the other hand, encourages freedom in the political sphere, minimizing the danger of granting sovereignty to the state instead of to God.

The biblical Christian worldview supports private property and free enterprise. Christians see work as a virtue, not a vice. The Greeks and Romans, in contrast, grounded their case for slavery in the idea that work is a vice, a view endorsed by both Aristotle and Plato.⁹⁹ The Bible does not teach socialism or communism, a truth evident even to Engels, who writes, “[I]f some few passages of the Bible may be favourable to Communism, the general spirit of its doctrines is, nevertheless, totally opposed to it.”¹⁰⁰

CHRISTIANITY AND HISTORY

Christianity and History — Introduction

When it comes to Christianity and history, “Paul regarded the resurrection as an event in history supported by the strongest possible eyewitness testimony, including his own (1 Corinthians 15:5–8). For Paul, the historicity of the resurrection was a necessary condition for the truth of Christianity and the validity of Christian belief.”¹⁰¹

The basis for the Christian worldview appeared in human history about two thousand years ago in the person of Jesus Christ. While “Christ died for our sins” is solid orthodox

⁹⁶ Shafarevich, Igor (1980). *The Socialist Phenomenon*. New York: Harper and Row.

⁹⁷ von Mises, Ludwig (1981). *Socialism*. Indianapolis: Liberty Fund Classics.

⁹⁸ Muravchik, Joshua (2002). *Heaven On Earth: The Rise And Fall Of Socialism*. San Francisco: Encounter Books.

⁹⁹ Stark (2005), 26–27.

¹⁰⁰ Marx, Karl and Engels, Frederick (1976). *Collected Works*, 40 vols. New York: International Publishers, 3:399.

¹⁰¹ Nash, Ronald H. (1984). *Christian Faith and Historical Understanding* (Dallas: Probe Books, 112).

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Christian theology, “Christ died” is history. Shattering Christianity’s historical underpinnings would surely shatter its doctrine and thus the entire worldview.

Christians also believe that the Bible is God’s revealed Word in the form of a trustworthy book grounded in history. Thus, for Christians, history is supremely important. Either Christ is a historical figure, and the Bible is a historical document that describes God’s communications with humanity and records events in the life of Christ or the Christian faith is bankrupt (1 Corinthians 15:14).

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If the Christian perspective is correct, history has already revealed the worldview that fits the facts of reality. Christians believe redemption was offered to humanity two thousand years ago and that it works as powerfully today as it did then.

Christianity and History — The Bible and History

When considering the claims of Christianity and history, we must ask, “Can we trust the Bible to tell us the truth about God’s actions in history?” Most of the negative criticism of the Bible, as Norman L. Geisler says, “is pre-archaeological based on unproven philosophical presuppositions that have subsequently been antiquated by archaeology.

As with the Old Testament, the positive case for the historical reliability of the New Testament is based on two main points: the reliability of the New Testament manuscripts and the reliability of the New Testament witnesses.”¹⁰²

The first area we must explore when judging the historicity of the Bible is the question of authorship. Was the Bible written by eyewitnesses of historical events, or were some books written many years after the fact by men who had only heard vague accounts of the events they attempted to describe? For example, did one of Christ’s apostles write the book of Matthew, or did some unknown scribe with no firsthand knowledge of Christ’s life write the book to strengthen the case for Christianity?

Today’s scholars have little doubt that the books of the Bible were written largely by eyewitnesses. William F. Albright, a leading twentieth-century archaeologist, writes, “In my opinion, every book of the New Testament was written by a baptized Jew between the forties and the eighties of the first century (very probably sometime between about AD 50 and 75).”¹⁰³

¹⁰² Geisler, Norman L. (2002). *Systematic Theology*, 4 vols. Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1:461.

¹⁰³ Albright, W.F. (1963). ‘Toward a More Conservative View.’ *Christianity Today*, January 18, 1963, 4.

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Even H.G. Wells, a confirmed atheist, acknowledges that “the four gospels . . . were certainly in existence a few decades after [Christ’s] death.”¹⁰⁴ The evidence concludes that the historical accounts in the Bible were written by men living in that historical period.¹⁰⁵

However, a second objection arises. Perhaps, say the critics, the Bible was an accurate historical document as it was originally written, but inevitable mistakes made by copyists over hundreds of years have rendered it inaccurate and unreliable. At first glance, this objection seems plausible. But one archaeological discovery made nearly half a century ago shattered this theory. Gleason L. Archer, Jr. explains: “Even though the two copies of Isaiah discovered in Qumran Cave 1 near the Dead Sea in 1947 were a thousand years earlier than the oldest dated manuscript previously known (AD 980), they proved to be word for word identical with our standard Hebrew Bible in more than 95 per cent of the text. The 5 per cent of variation consisted chiefly of obvious slips of the pen and variations in spelling.”¹⁰⁶ That is, a manuscript one thousand years older than the oldest copy of the Bible previously known to exist proved the transmission over that time span to be virtually error-free.

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In fact, archaeological discoveries have consistently supported the veracity of the Bible. Nelson Gluck says, “It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a biblical reference.”¹⁰⁷ Harvard’s Simon Greenleaf (the greatest nineteenth-century authority on the law of evidence in the common law) believes “that the competence of the New Testament documents would be established in any court of law.”¹⁰⁸

Christianity and History – Purpose in History

When looking at Christianity and history, Christians view history through the concepts of creation, fall, and redemption, a progression of events beginning with God’s good creation, humanity’s rebellion against God, and God’s ultimate plan for divine intervention, redemption, and restoration. Thus, all of creation is sacred and stands under the blessing, judging, and redeeming purposes of God. This belief of creation/fall/redemption/restoration has vast ramifications for humanity. If the Christian philosophy of history is correct, then not only is the overall story of humanity invested with meaning, but every moment that we live is charged with purpose. C.S. Lewis

¹⁰⁴ Wells, H.G. (1921). *The Outline of History*. Garden City: Garden City Publishing, 497.

¹⁰⁵ For a full accounting of the historicity of both Old and New Testaments, see Norman L. Geisler, *Systematic Theology*, 1:438f. For an accounting of the Old Testament’s historicity, see K. A. Kitchen (2003). *On The Reliability Of The Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

¹⁰⁶ Archer, Jr., Gleason L. (1968). *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1.

¹⁰⁷ Glueck, Nelson (1959). *Biblical Archaeologist* (December 1959), 22:101.

¹⁰⁸ Montgomery, John Warwick (1986). *Human Rights and Human Dignity*. Dallas: Probe Books, 137.

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explains, "Where a God who is totally purposive and totally foreseeing acts upon a Nature which is totally interlocked, there can be no accidents or loose ends, nothing whatever of which we can safely use the word 'merely.' Nothing is 'merely a by-product' of anything else. All results are intended from the first."¹⁰⁹

Indeed, understanding how God works in our lives helps us understand how God directs the course of history. Butterfield explains, "[T]here are some people who bring their sins home to themselves and say that this is a chastisement from God; or they say that God is testing them, trying them in the fire, fitting them for some more important work that he has for them to do. Those who adopt this view in their individual lives will easily see that it enlarges and projects itself onto the scale of all history."¹¹⁰ Therefore, purpose and meaning saturate every aspect of a Christian's life.

In order to speak accurately about purpose, however, Christians must speak not only of God's activity throughout history but also of the ultimate goal toward which He is leading us. Purpose implies constant supervision by God, a direction for the course of human events, and an ultimate end or goal. For Christians, history is moving toward a specific climax—the Day of Judgment (Acts 17:31; Romans 2:11–16). At that point, Christ's victory over sin will become apparent to all and Christians throughout history will be allowed to share in His triumph. This is the good news of Christianity, the truth that makes all earthly trials bearable. Paul sums up this faith: "I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18; 2 Corinthians 4:11–18). The ultimate direction of history is toward a triumphant close. Even at this very moment, God is moving human history closer to that end—which, in a very real sense, is only the beginning.

Christianity and History – Conclusion

The Christian view of history centers in the reliability of the Bible. The historical foundation of the Bible, as recorded in both Testaments and substantiated by archaeology and secular writings, has stood the test of time.

Because of the biblical understanding of the fallen nature of humanity, Christians are able to form a consistent view regarding the past, the present, and the future as well as our role in history. We may freely choose to obey or disobey God, but it is only when we obey that we can affect history positively. Regardless of our choices—for good or for evil—

¹⁰⁹ Lewis, C.S. (1952). *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*. London: Geoffrey Bles, 149. Norman Geisler says of Lewis's work on miracles, 'The best overall apologetic for miracles written in this century' (*Miracles and Modern Thought* [Dallas, TX: Probe Ministries International, 1982], 167). Geisler's work is part of the Christian Free University Curriculum and self-published.

¹¹⁰ McIntire, C.T. (1977) ed. *God, History, and Historians*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 201.

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God will work through our actions to direct history toward His ultimate end: a Day of Judgment, the restoration of the heavens and earth (1 Timothy 6:13–19; 2 Peter 3:13), and the new age to come with Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. This belief in a climactic conclusion causes Christians to adopt a linear conception of history that reflects the vast meaning with which God has endowed history. Wise men still seek Him, and for good reason, for He is the only source of meaning in history and in life.

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A FINAL THOUGHT

Worldviews are comprehensive perspectives that shape how individuals perceive and interpret the world. Key concepts of worldviews include:

1. **Definition:** A worldview is a lens or framework through which people understand reality, guiding their beliefs, values, and decisions. It influences how individuals perceive life, the universe, and their role within it.
2. **Influence on Life:** A worldview impacts all aspects of life, including education, career, finances, family, and relationships. It serves as the foundation for decision-making and behavior.
3. **Presuppositions:** Worldviews are built on presuppositions—assumptions about truth, significance, and appropriateness. These presuppositions often operate unconsciously but shape our choices and actions.
4. **Variety of Worldviews:** There are diverse worldviews, including atheism, secularism, humanism, naturalism, materialism, rationalism, and religious perspectives like Christianity. Each worldview offers a unique way of understanding existence and reality.
5. **Christian Worldview:**
 - **Beliefs:** Includes belief in absolute moral truths, the Bible as the source of truth, Jesus' sinless life, God's sovereignty, salvation by grace, and the reality of Satan.
 - **Foundational Principles:** God as the Creator, the existence of a moral order, the significance of human beings as made in God's image, and the ultimate purpose of history leading to redemption and restoration.

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- **Impact:** A Christian worldview influences ethics, sociology, law, politics, economics, and history, emphasizing individual worth, free will, justice, stewardship, and the linear progression of history toward a divine purpose.

6. **Purpose and Direction:** Worldviews provide meaning and purpose to life, shaping how individuals understand their existence, their relationship with others, and their role in the broader context of history and the universe.

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In summary, worldviews are the foundational beliefs and perspectives that guide human thought, behavior, and understanding of reality, with the Christian worldview offering a comprehensive framework rooted in divine revelation and purpose.

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