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The Overarching Structure of a Biblical Worldview
Can it Be True?

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Why do you think so many people in modern society mock the teachings of the Bible? They call it fantasy, impossible to believe, and anti-science. They call people who believe in the Bible ignorant, gullible, and stupid. Why do they think that?

To explore this topic, we need to take a dive into what a biblical worldview actually looks like. What are they mocking? Then, after we do that, we need to view that biblical worldview through the naturalistic lens those people look through to make their evaluation. I think you will find this comparison quite revealing.

The Structure of a Biblical Worldview

A worldview can be defined as the way a person views the structure of reality. It is these beliefs that define what a person considers to be real versus what they consider to be fantasy. A biblical worldview views reality through the lens of the teachings of the Bible. It is not the purpose of this article to give a detailed explanation of *everything* the Bible teaches about how reality is structured, as that would require at least one entire book. However, for the purpose of understanding the structure of reality based on biblical teachings, we can lay out a broad based overview. So what does the Bible say reality looks like?

Spiritual Reality

Based on a biblical worldview, there exists both spiritual and material aspects of reality. The spiritual part was the original and existed for eternity before the physical ever came to be. In fact, there has never been a time when spiritual reality did

not exist. God, Himself, has also existed from eternity past within that spiritual realm. He had no beginning and He will have no end.

God also exists as a Trinitarian being. That is, He is a single being, but within this single being exists three distinct persons – three separate centers of consciousness. As for His beingness, based on biblical teachings, He is omnipotent (all powerful), omnipresent (everywhere present), omniscient (all knowing), and omnibenevolent (all good). And as for His character, He is holy (morally perfect), just (judges sin impartially), and love (loves every person unconditionally).

The Bible also teaches that in addition to God, there are other creatures that exist in the spiritual realm. This would include seraphim, cherubim, and various levels of angels. According to Scripture, all of these creatures were created by God Himself, and serve Him in various capacities.

Satan and his demons are also creatures of the spiritual realm. These were originally angels who rebelled against God and were cast out of His presence. Since that time, they have worked to undermine and thwart God's purposes, particularly as it relates to His material creation and to mankind.

Material Reality

Based on a biblical worldview, there was a time when material reality did not exist. But God, for His own reasons and purposes, decided to create it. When He created it, He did so out of nothing, and made it perfect. One of the characteristics of this material reality was that it was established based on certain

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fixed physical laws that apply in the entirety of the natural universe. And because they are fixed, it is possible for this universe to be studied and understood.

After creating the universe, God created life and established it on the one place in His created order that was designed to support it – Earth. Then, as the crowning feature of His creation of life, He created man – a creature made in His own image. This made it possible for God to fellowship with man in a personal relationship.

It might be noted that because of the nature of the material realm, it is not possible for human beings to physically cross over into the spiritual. However, as God is its creator, He is able to affect and interact with His material creation at will. Satan also has the ability to interact with the material world.

At an early point in history, the perfection that had originally existed became corrupted. This happened when the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, disobeyed a direct command from God. This Fall broke fellowship with God and caused the created order to become corrupted.

The Fall was initiated by Satan, who entered the scene and convinced Adam and Eve to commit their disobedient act. At that point, God withdrew His hand from His created order, and Satan became its ruler. Still, God did not give up on His creation, and He initiated a plan that would ultimately result in the end of Satan's rule and the restoration of the perfection He originally created.

Man

When God created man, He did it "in His image." This does not mean that human beings physically look

like God, but are, in their essence, spiritual beings with the characteristics of personhood. Personhood characteristics include such things as the ability to have knowledge, creativity, personality, free will, gender, eternalness, dominion, and self-consciousness. It is these characteristics that enable man to have personal relationships – with God and with other humans. And while human beings can't physically cross the boundary into the spirit world where God resides, our spirits do have the ability to communicate with God across that barrier.

Man now also exists as a fallen creature. When Adam and Eve sinned, it broke fellowship with God and caused mankind's spirit to become corrupted. Before the Fall, man had no built in tendency to sin. But that act of disobedience changed the human spirit. Since that time, all humans have a propensity to be disobedient to God. This condition does not cause people to sin, and because they have a free will, they can choose not to if they wish. That said, no one is able to overcome their sinful desires, and will inevitably act in life in disobedience to God's guidance.

When a person sins, even once in life, their fellowship with God is broken, and individuals become separated from Him – unable to correct that separation by their own power.

Salvation

While man's fallenness and separation from God is humanity's default condition, God was determined not to let the fallenness stand. Thus, He created a way for that problem to be remedied. This means of salvation is revealed in Scripture as a three part process that begins at a point in time and ends in eternity.

Justification - Redemption

According to a biblical worldview, salvation cannot be earned. It is purely a free gift of God based on His grace.

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But there is a problem. Because God is a holy God, He will not fellowship with sin – and every human being is a sinner. The just punishment for sin against God is death (eternal spiritual separation from Him). The fact of humanity's sinful condition eliminates the possibility for any human to earn their own salvation. The only solution, then, is for God to forgive the sin.

But God is also just, so the penalty for sin must still be paid. It should have to be paid by the one who commits the sin. But since God is also a God of love and does not want humanity to be separated from Him, He made a provision that a worthy person, one who was totally without sin, could die as a substitute for the sinner. This worthy one could receive the judgment for sin in place of the sinner. To provide for that possibility, and since no human could ever meet the requirement, God incarnated on earth as the man Jesus Christ, lived a life without sin, and died on the cross as a substitutionary sacrifice for all sinners.

Still, God's forgiveness is not automatic. While individuals can't earn their salvation, they must still be willing to accept it. God will not force Himself on anyone. So, anyone who is willing to confess their sin before God, ask His forgiveness, and invite Christ into their life, will have their sin forgiven and enter into an eternal relationship with God. With that, God creates a new nature inside the new believer, then enters the person directly, in the person of the Holy Spirit, to enjoy a fellowship relationship with them.

Sanctification - Growth Toward Perfection

Entering into the state of salvation, though, is not the end of the story. That is only the beginning of an eternal relationship with God. This leads us to the second part of the salvation process – sanctification.

After receiving salvation (being justified), believers have a new nature that compels them to love God and live a holy life. At the same time, the old (fallen) nature is still active with its tendency to sin. The rest of one's mortal life, then, is lived with the two natures warring against one another. Sanctification is the effort believers make for the rest of their mortal lives to strangle their old nature and strengthen the new one in an effort to continually grow more like Christ.

Glorification - Perfection

The last step in the salvation process, glorification, occurs at the moment of physical death. At that point, the believer's spirit enters eternity and the old nature is eliminated. When that happens, the individual enters into direct fellowship with God without ever having to deal with the effects of sin on their relationship with Him ever again.

The Structure of a Naturalistic Worldview

The structure of reality based on a naturalistic worldview is much easier to explain because it does not have all of the layers of complexity found in a biblical worldview. Naturalism asserts that the natural universe, operating by natural laws, is all that exists – there is no god, or any kind of transcendent reality. Naturalists further believe that since everything is explainable by natural laws, science can ultimately give us the answers to everything.

The unavoidable implications of this worldview belief is that:

- The natural universe is either itself eternal, or it came into existence based on some natural event. Since the natural universe operating by natural laws is all that exists, there is no other possibility.
- Life came to exist out of non-life. Since it is evident that inorganic matter existed long before the exist-

tence of any life form, there is no possibility for the emergence of life but that it had to have somehow emerged out of that lifeless, inorganic material.

- Man is a naturally evolved animal creature. If, indeed, there is no transcendent power in existence, there is no possibility for the existence of man but that, as a highly complex animal creature, he had to have evolved to his present state from less complex life forms based on naturalistic evolutionary processes.
- Animal consciousness is a natural evolutionary development. It is evident that some life forms do not have a conscious existence, while others do. And since there is no possible supernatural explanation for this consciousness, the emergence of consciousness in animal life had to have evolved through naturalistic evolutionary processes.
- Human self-consciousness is a natural evolutionary development. Obviously, human self-consciousness is a unique characteristic of human beings, and since no supernatural origin of this characteristic is possible, it had to have also emerged based on naturalistic evolutionary processes.

So Here's the Problem

Based on naturalistic worldview assumptions, it is easy to see why Naturalists believe Christians are ignorant and superstitious. If they dismiss supernatural possibilities out of hand, then even the very idea of a transcendent God, as believed by Christians, is an absurdity.

But is that a rational conclusion? Let's do a little worldview analysis.

- The natural universe is either eternal, or came into existence based on some natural event. But is that true? Where is the science that proves either of these conclusions? There is none. It is based purely on an unproven, and unprovable, philosophical assumption.
- Life came to exist out of non-life. Is this true? Where is the science that proves this conclusion? Well, there is none here, either. It is a necessary conclusion if you begin with naturalistic assumptions, but there is no science to show that this is even possible.
- Man is a naturally evolved animal creature. Is this true? It is certainly the conclusion asserted in virtually every science book that is used in most educational institutions. But, once again, there is no actual science that has ever shown how this could even be possible.
- Animal consciousness is a natural evolutionary development. Is this true? It is, again, the conclusion of the massive majority of biological scientists and biology science books. But here, too, there is no science to back it up. It is nothing more than an unsupported assumption based on naturalistic worldview beliefs.
- Human self-consciousness is a natural evolutionary development. Is this true? Here is another place where so called "science" insists it is true, but where there is no actual science to back it up.

Naturalism is every bit as much a religious (faith) point of view as is Christian Theism. While Naturalists assert that they only believe what can be demonstrated by science, that is simply not true. There is nothing about any of their worldview beliefs that can be proven by science. It is simply not sufficient for Naturalists to assert that their worldview beliefs are true, they must prove it based on their own naturalistic beliefs – that is, they must prove it using empirical science. Unless and until they do, they are not promoting science, but religious belief.

But empirical science is not the only measure of truth that exists in the world. We must also take into account the rules of logic and human experience. When those are factored in, a Christian worldview suddenly becomes an actual viable alternative.

But at some point, the bottom line question must be asked: Does the God of the Bible exist in the way He is revealed in the Bible? If He does, then the beliefs of a Christian worldview are not only possible, they are actually quite reasonable.

So how can we know? Ultimately we can only know when we are willing to take the step of opening up our lives to Him. That is the only way that we are able to personally penetrate the veil that separates the spiritual from the material, and meet God in an objectively real personal relationship. Throughout history, millions of people have done it, and have testified to His existence because they have come to know Him in a personal relationship.

In the end, God is spirit, and our own essence is also spirit. It is only when we acknowledge the existence of spiritual reality and connect with it on a spiritual level, that actual reality can be known.

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