**Worldviews**

* Definition of worldview
	+ It is a collection of beliefs about philosophy on life, moral values, cultural norms (permitted behaviors and emotions, ethics), economical and political views
	+ During our lives, we build a worldview from long-established ideas and philosophies of our family and culture and society.
	+ Our worldview “colors” our perspective on life
	+ There are great benefits to having a Christian worldview
* The Christian worldview was *revealed* to believers (not just thought up by smart humans)
	+ It has a document (the Bible)
	+ It has witnesses to its helpfulness.
	+ It has a 2000+ year history of searching for and living an objective Truth
* There are two main worldviews: a supernatural and a naturalistic worldview
* The supernatural worldview: there is an invisible realm that exists in addition to the physical world that we can see, hear, touch, taste, and smell.
	+ A realm with a Creator God, good angels, fallen angels, demons, ghosts, spirits (Holy, and otherwise).
	+ The worldview held by believers of religions
* Under the category of supernatural worldviews:
	+ - Judeo-Christianity
		- Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism
		- Animism
		- Paganism
			* Ancient
			* Modern
		- New Age
* The naturalistic worldview: the world is explainable through purely natural and scientific means—what we experience through our physical senses.
	+ Scientific laws account for everything including creation
	+ Creation was spontaneous
	+ There is nothing more to the biological, mental, and social processes than an arrangements of atoms
	+ There is no need for a transcend God, gods, or spirits.
* The naturalistic worldview is held by atheists, agnostics, and secular humanists
	+ This view is also called “scientific materialism”
* Ancient men and women of all cultures all held supernatural worldviews
* They were convinced that gods and spirits controlled the material world and exercised power over it
* They experienced gods and spirits more than we do (as we see in the stories in the Bible; and in mythology)
* The ancient pagan fallen angel gods convinced the ancients that their lives on earth would be miserable if these gods were not kept happy
	+ And their *afterlives* less traumatic as well
		- Consider the Egyptian pyramids and mummies and provisions
* All such false religions need prophets, priests, and adepts to help contact and figure out how to appease their false pagan gods
* The gods of mythology revealed themselves to these “believers” in god-forms and hidden-as-human-but-god forms; and as sons-of-gods forms
* Famous “gods” included:
	+ Molech, Baal, Chemosh in the Old Testament
	+ Greek gods: the Titans (Kronos, Atlas, Prometheus, others) then the Olympians (Zeus, Hades, Hermes, Aphrodite, Ares, Artemis, Athena, Poseidon)
	+ Norse gods: Odin, Loki
	+ Egyptian gods: Set, Osiris, Isis, Horus
* The offspring of these “sons and daughters” and humans
	+ Jewish/Christian: the Nephilim (the giants)
	+ The Demigods
	+ Greek/Roman: Heracles, Perseus, Orpheus, Orion, Helen
	+ Norse: Thor
	+ Egyptian: Imhotep
	+ Polynesian: Māui
	+ Mesopotamian/Sumerian: Gilgamesh (Nimrod)
* Demi-gods ruled ancient man, taught him, and helped him build the wonders of the ancient world (the pyramids, Machu Pichu, the temples)
* Pagan gods were not *good* entities: they were “rascals” – mischievous, immoral, cruel, war-causing
* They were not simply “myths” or make-believe – they were fallen angels and their offspring were the demons who tempt mankind to this day
* The Christian worldview is a *supernatural* worldview with faith in a Creator, and in good and bad angels
	+ And it promotes historical Judeo-Christian morality (heterosexual, husband-wife-family: not pagan morality)
* Modern attempts to bring naturalistic and purely scientific explanations of creation into the church, as well as pagan immorality, are not Christian and not consistent with a Christian worldview
* Percentage of Americans Who Believe in God
	+ 1940's: 96%
	+ 1950’s: 98%
	+ 2017: 87%
	+ 2021: 81%
* College professors
	+ 35% believe in God with no doubts
	+ 17% believe in God but are not sure
	+ 19% believe in a “higher power”
	+ 13% agnostic
	+ 10% atheists
* 84% of the world's population believes in God or gods or spirits
	+ Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, animism
* Christianity is growing rapidly in China, sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America
* Our Christian supernatural worldview is not as rejected as we are led to believe in media and secular education
* Naturalism believes *Matter Came Before Mind*
	+ The universe was created spontaneously from nothing
	+ Matter, energy, space and time were created in the Big Bang
	+ Plants, animals and humans (and their consciousness) evolved from simple atoms then molecules
* The correct (supernatural) order:
	+ The Mind (and creativity of God); then matter; then the mind of man
		- Human minds with God-image intelligence, emotion, will, creativity and imagination
* Our physical brain and its cells do not generate our human consciousness, spirit, and creativity
	+ Our human consciousness and creativity were placed in our brains by God (Gen.2:7) and use our brains to function
* The innovations and “triumphs” of humans over plants, animals, and the earth are the result of a Mind (God) granting His creativity and genius to humans, and overseeing their development
* The God-created human consciousness best accounts for human innovations such as: musical instruments, art, architecture, communication, transportation (autos, ships, planes), electricity, navigation, printing, drama, motion pictures, computers, combustion engines, space travel, nuclear energy
* Darwinian evolution and natural selection cannot explain the need for this advanced a brain in any species on earth
	+ That is, to have an advantage over other similar species like the apes, human would only need to be slightly more efficient in feeding, fighting, fleeing, and fertility
* Life is:
	+ Not random, purposeless, spontaneous
	+ But meticulously planned and deliberate
	+ Full of purpose: an expression of love and commitment from God to bless and interact with man
* The universe was intentionally created by a pre-creation, eternal Mind with humankind in mind
* To believe otherwise is philosophically and metaphysically foolish
* Ps. 14:1
* The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.”
* Rom. 1:22
* Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools
* Atheism and agnosticism are relatively rare, new phenomena
* Ironically, virtually every Western scientist in history who contributed to the modern naturalistic viewpoint believed in God and the supernatural
	+ Albert Einstein
	+ Blaise Pascal
	+ Francis Collins
	+ Galileo Galilei
	+ Gregor Mendel
	+ Isaac Newton
	+ Johannes Kepler
	+ Louis Pasteur
	+ Nicholas Copernicus
* Fallen angels and deceived men have challenged the existence of God and His role in creation for the last two centuries with highly speculative philosophies and mathematically discredited science
* Christians do not need to have an inferiority complex re: our understanding of philosophy, history, science, the universe, mythology, government and culture
* Belief in God and powers that transcend humans-as-simply-animals offers explanations for good vs. evil, right vs. wrong, justice vs. injustice, and forgiveness vs. revenge that we see in life
* The Christian worldview promotes the teaching of Jesus and the apostles, and advocates:
	+ Love, kindness, selflessness, helpfulness, faithfulness
	+ Virtues that are helpful and have good consequences
	+ Trust in God gives us “discovered,” eternal meaning to life
	+ Trust in “man-created” meaning gives temporary, ultimately disappointing meaning to life
* The Reality of a Worldview without God
* If there is no God to whom we must answer, then the expected behavior of humans in natural selection and the survival of the fittest is selfishness and potentially lethal competition with others
* Choosing to be selfless and loving in not “natural”
	+ Altruism is not helpful to individual survival
* Secular humanism (with its choice to be benevolent) does not logically follow from a scientific materialistic worldview
* Kind humanists, atheists, and agnostics have stolen their decisions to do good to other humans from religions that promote law and benevolence
* The Western ideals of individual freedoms, of conscience, human rights and justice have come primarily from Judeo-Christian teaching
* Democracy and logic is attributed to the ways of ancient Greece, but their culture was seriously pagan

* The Christian worldview overthrew the pagan worldview of Greece and Rome in the West
	+ With its cruel mythical gods who demanded human allegiance
	+ Gods who interfered with human life in negative ways:
		- Promoting war; raping women; punishing heroes who approached the gods’ abilities and status
* Pagan religious practices included child sacrifice and prisoner sacrifice; temple prostitution of young men and women; and leaving the disabled and unwanted babies to die
* In 1487 AD, the great Templo Mayor was dedicated in the main Aztec city of Tenochtitlan with a four-day celebration.
	+ How many were sacrificed during that time is a subject of scholarly speculation: some put the figure as low as 10,000 or 20,000, several others put it as high as 80,000 people sacrificed (by the number of skulls found)
* Jer. 32:3
* They have built the high places of Baal in the Valley of Hinnom to make their sons and daughters pass through the fire to Molech—something I never commanded them, *nor had it ever entered My mind*, that they should commit such an abomination...
* Child sacrifice is the most gruesome and pagan of acts, practiced by ancients in:
	+ Egypt
	+ Polynesia
	+ Mesopotamia
	+ Teutonic tribes of Europe
	+ West Africa
	+ The Aztecs and Mayans
	+ The Romans practiced infanticide and abortion
* "They commit murder before they bring forth. And these things assuredly come down from the teaching of your gods."

 *Christian apologist Marcus Minucius Felix*

* The Carthaginians viewed child sacrifice as "holy"
* The Phoenicians sacrificed children in times of war or disaster for the "public good."
* Children were sacrificed if they had disabilities; or just for the convenience of the parents; or as ceremonial sacrifice to a god
* The rich bought or kidnapped poor folk's children for the required sacrifices
* It was a very dangerous thing to be a child, a woman, a disabled person, or a prisoner in a pagan culture
* In stark contrast, the Jewish and Christian cultures viewed children as blessings and gifts from God to be nurtured
* Psalm 127:3-5
* Children are indeed a *heritage* from the LORD, and the fruit of the womb is His *reward*. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are children born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. He will not be put to shame when he confronts the enemies at the gate
* As the Judeo-Christian worldview of children was established as the norm in the West, and infanticide and abortion were banned and pushed to the fringes
	+ Countless children, prisoners, slaves and disabled folk were rescued from pagan gods’ appetite for human sacrifice
* But the rejection of pagan gods and their religions would last only as long as cultures kept Jehovah God as their object of faith and worship
* As Christianity became the predominant world view of the West *(and wherever it succeeded internationally in missions)*
	+ Culturally accepted immorality was replaced with a promotion and respect for faithful marriage, family and celibacy
	+ Prostitution and immorality was marginalized
* Pagan societies had an enforced, accepted hierarchy with rich males being in charge
	+ Christian teaching that men and women were made in the image of God radically changed perception of women, children and the less advantaged
	+ Value was placed on every person including the weak and disenfranchised
* Roman writers were astonished that Christians tried to care for the poor and the sick
* Early Christians under persecution could not preach openly, so it is thought that what helped them grow from small numbers in the early church to such large numbers that in by the fourth century Rome accepted the Faith as the state religion was their kindness and hidden care for the hurting in Roman society
* The first hospitals were monasteries dispensing care to the sick and poor
* Indeed, many hospital today still bear church names
	+ Riverside Methodist
	+ St. Joseph
	+ St. Anne’s
* Personal Freedom
* There is an unchallenged Western assumption that personal freedom is the most important value
* Complete freedom is an impossible illusion
	+ No one can do whatever they want
	+ Most every activity has consequences that take away some freedom
		- Eating; drinking
		- Accumulating things
		- Getting an education to pursue a career
		- Getting in a relationship
* There is no such thing as total freedom – it is just a matter of choosing the “freedom” that is more important to us
* Unrestrained individual freedom is corrosive to community
* Is there harm if there is no victim?
	+ Yes: society must care for those who are injured by their activities and develop preventable health issues
	+ There may be harm to others by not being helpful to them
* Identity
* Trying to find personal identity apart from God will take us where we will not be who we were made to be
* Who we want to be, who we wish we were, usually conflicts with who we were made to be
* Finding self is only fulfilling if it is tied to God’s plan and destiny for us
	+ An identity in Christ: a new Trevor; a transformed Trevor
		- New motivations, new goals
* Meaning
* Because there is a God, there is meaning in this life and potential eternal benefits from living it by God’s precepts
	+ There are reasons to do good and not evil
* Matt. 10:42
* “And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.”
* John 14:2-3
* “In My Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and welcome you into My presence, so that you also may be where I am.”
* The conclusion by philosophers like Nietzsche, Derrida, Sartre, and Camus that life ultimately is meaningless is a very logical one, if there is no God
	+ Everything we put our hand to; every cause we fight for will end
	+ Everything we accumulate we will leave behind
	+ Everyone we love will die
* Eccl.1:1
* “Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.” (vanity, vanity; futility, futility)
* Eccl. 2:1-11; 18; 20
* I said to myself, “Come now, I will test you with pleasure; enjoy what is good!..
* I tried laughter, wine, folly…
* I built houses and planted vineyards, gardens and parks, reservoirs
* I acquired servants, herds and flocks…
* I accumulated silver, gold, treasures of kings…
* I gathered singers, and concubines…
* Yet when I considered all the works that my hands had accomplished and what I had toiled to achieve, I found everything to be futile…
* I hated all for which I had toiled under the sun…
* My heart began to despair over all the labor that I had done under the sun…”
* Greek Stoic philosophers taught us to put up with the meaninglessness
* Epicureans recommended that we live it up in light of the meaninglessness
* How do secular moderns deal with meaninglessness? By being:
	+ Hopeful (that meaning and happiness is “still out there somewhere”)
	+ Resentful
	+ Driven
	+ Despondent and depressed
	+ Detached
* Suffering
* The avoidance of suffering at all costs is an unchallenged assumption in Western culture
	+ We take drugs for pain, anxiety, everything
	+ We seek 24-7 entertainment
	+ We avoid challenges and associating with folks that make us uncomfortable
	+ Suffering can be redemptive and even helpful from a Christian and eternal perspective
	+ Where there is a God and a pleasant afterlife
	+ Where our lost loved ones await us in that afterlife
* The “benefits” of suffering as a Christian
	+ 1) Free will and freedom demand personal responsibility, which includes sacrifice and suffering (selflessness)
		- The reason powerful leaders develop a cult-of-personality and rabid followers (Popes, cult leaders, Hitlers, Stalins):
			* The leaders promise (falsely) to take away our burdens and obligations and solve our problems for us
	+ 2) Love and relationships always involves sacrifice and suffering
	+ 3) Suffering gives us the opportunity to empathize with others who are suffering
	+ The “benefits” of suffering as a Christian *(continued)*
	+ 4) Suffering can train us to overcome adversity
	+ 5) There are eternal rewards awaiting the overcomer
* II Cor. 4:17
* For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.
	+ 6) God suffers with us (Christ on the cross; the Holy Spirited grieving and feeling our pain in the present)
* Rom. 5:3-4
* We glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope.

* John 15:13
* Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends
* II Cor. 1:3-4
* Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.
* Morality
* Revealed morality and law can be comforting when constant and unchanging (at least we know where we stand)
	+ In contrast to the “flavor of the month” morality
* There are real consequences to all immorality and crime—not just “guilty consciences”
	+ Broken covenants, agreements, relationships (betrayal) – subsequent isolation
	+ Physically harming of others
	+ Impoverishing others
	+ STDs and health issues
* Transcendent Experiences
* Everyone in life experiences an occasion sense of the transcendent; cosmic wonder
	+ Then either pursues the experience or shoves it out of their thoughts and rationalizes them
* Science by its very nature is completely unfit to investigate whether there is more to reality than the natural world
* A healthy balance of reason/logic with faith is necessary to live in both the natural and a supernatural world
* Justice
* True Christian living produces righteous, helpful living that does not create new oppressors
* The Sermon on the Mount advocates love for your enemies; turning the other cheek; walking the second mile.
* I Cor. 6:7:
* Indeed, it is already altogether a defeat for you that you have lawsuits among one another. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded?
* Matt. 12:36-37
* But I tell you that men will give an account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words, you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.
* Heb. 10:30
* For we know Him who said, “Vengeance is Mine; I will repay.”
* Rev. 20:11-12
* Then I saw a great white throne and the One seated on it. Earth and heaven fled from His presence, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne. And there were open books, and one of them was the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their deeds, as recorded in the books
* The only good philosophical reason for not embracing Christianity as a worldview is *if it is not true*
* I Cor. 15:16-19
* For if the dead are not raised, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If our hope in Christ is for this life alone, we are to be pitied more than all men
* “The problem with Christianity is not that it has been tried and found wanting, but that it has been found difficult and left untried.”

 G.K. Chesterton

* “The problem with Christianity is not that it has been tried and found wanting, but that it has been tried poorly, mixing its divine, life-giving principles with secular and pagan ones, and giving it a bad name in the philosophical marketplace.” Trevor Craig
* We can no more fault Christianity as a worldview and guide to life because it has not been done *perfectly,* any more than we can stop drinking water because it is sometimes contaminated.
* Both the water and the Faith are essential for life: for physical life and and eternal life.
* John 4:13-14
* Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a fount of water springing up to eternal life.”
* Not only is Christianity a more satisfactory worldview with respect to meaning, justice, personal freedom, morality, identity, explaining transcendent experiences, suffering, human innovation, art:
	+ The Faith has a much better explanation for creation than science does
	+ Science and secular scientists are not as purely objective as they makes out
		- They have an anti-God agenda
* We must respect others’ opinions and worldviews:
	+ Without despising and judging them
	+ Without becoming oppressors and bullies *(like when Christians were in bed with secular powers in the past)*
	+ But also, without adopting their views or approving of them
	+ This is easier to do if we are *confident* in what we believe and not ashamed
* II Tim. 2:24-26
* A servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.
* Finally, everyone comes to know the Creator God and His Son, Jesus Christ, and their Holy Spirit *by faith*, not by intellect.
* II Cor. 5:7
* For we walk by faith, not by sight.
* Why? It is all about relationship and trust--not mere intellectual consent.
	+ Like good family and friendships