

WAR OF THE WORLDVIEWS – Week 1

Thinking with a Christian Worldview

I. Introduction

- a. *Question:* —What is it that everyone has, no one can live without, every important decision in life is made with, and yet most people do not even know they have?
- b. *Answer:* —_____.|| (Norman L. Geisler and William D. Watkins, *Worlds Apart: A Handbook on World Views*, 2nd ed. [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984, 1989], p. 9)

II. Definitions of Worldview

- A. A worldview is a —systematic way of looking at the world. It conditions how we interpret the meaning of daily life.|| (R. C. Sproul)
- B. A worldview is —the comprehensive framework of one's basic beliefs about things.|| (Albert Wolters)
- C. —A worldview is a set of presuppositions . . . which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic make up of our world.|| (James Sire)
- D. A worldview is.—a comprehensive life system that answers all of humanity's age-old questions: Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? Does life have any meaning and purpose?|| (Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey)
- E. —A worldview . . . is a set of beliefs and practices that shape a person's approach to the most important issues in life. Through our worldview, we determine priorities, explain our relationship to God and fellow human beings, assess the meaning of events, and justify our actions. Our worldview even speaks to the most ordinary practices in everyday life, including the types of things we read and view, the types of entertainment and leisure activities we seek, our approach to work, and much more.|| (Michael Palmer)
- F. A worldview is a —‘vision of the heart.’ I have so defined it because the Bible teaches that the heart is the center and core of every human being—the source of what we worship (whether God or an idol), and the seat of all our thinking, loving, and doing. Life, therefore, proceeds ‘kardi-optically’ (kardia =

Greek for 'heart'), that is, by a viewpoint generated out of our hearts! For this reason, Solomon offered this wise counsel in Proverbs 4:23: 'Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.' (David Naugle)

III. Worldviews Summary

A. Seven Major Worldviews -

"There are a total of seven major worldviews concerning the existence of God. No one can consistently believe in more than one of these worldviews because the central premises of each are contradicted by the others. These views are mutually exclusive. Logically only one worldview can be true. All the others must be false." Dr. David Johnson – Contend for the Faith

1. _____ – An infinite God exists beyond and in the universe. The physical universe is not all there is, but it is the creation of an infinite, **omnipotent and personal** God who created it out of nothing (ex nihilo). God also **sustains** the universe and can perform **supernatural acts** within His creation. Examples: Judaism, Christianity, Islam
2. _____ - – There is no God either beyond or in the universe. The universe is **all there is** or **ever will be**. The universe is **self-sustaining**. Atheists claim to **know**, or at least **believe**, that God does not exist. Examples: Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean-Paul Sartre
3. _____ – There is no creator beyond the universe because the **universe is God**. God is **all** and all is **God**. Creation and creator are two different ways of viewing the **same reality**. Examples: Hinduism, New Age Movement
4. _____ – God exists **in** the universe. God is **in all**. God is to the universe as a **mind** is to a **body**. The universe has both a **material** aspect and an **immaterial** aspect. God does not completely **control** the universe, he only **influences** it. This is also called **process theology**. Examples: Baha'is, Unitarian Universalists, Bishop John Spong

5. _____ – God is beyond the universe but **not in it**. Deism is basically theism without **miracles**. It says that God is **transcendent** over the universe but he is not **supernaturally** active in it. While deists say there is a creator, they hold a **naturalistic** view of the world. Examples: Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine
6. **Finite** _____ – There is a finite God who is **beyond and in** the universe, but he is **limited** in his nature and **power**. Evil exists because this God is **unable** to overcome it. Examples: William James, Rabbi Harold Kushner
7. _____ – There is **more than one** finite God in the universe. Many **personal** Gods exist and they are **active** in the universe. Each God rules a **certain domain** over which He is **supreme**. Examples: Mormons, Ancient Greeks

B. **Worldview Charts – Look at sheets**

IV. **Worldviews 101**

- A. A worldview is how a person _____ **or interprets** reality
- B. It is the _____ **of beliefs** through which or by which we understand the world around us
- C. Your worldview affects how you **think and act**
- D. It influences personal _____ and values
- E. The most important question it addresses: _____

V. **Why Study Worldviews?**

- A. The example of **Jesus** Matthew 22:23-33; 34-40
- B. The example of **Paul** Acts 17:16-34
- C. To help set **captives** free 2 Timothy 2:24-26

VI. **Worldviews: a World of Difference**

- A. View of **God**
- B. View of **origins**
- C. View of **man**

D. View of **morality**

E. View of **destiny**

VII. Three Major Worldviews

A. Atheism – there is ___ God; there is no God at all

B. Pantheism – _____ is God; there is no God but all.

C. Theism – there is _____ God; there is no God but the Lord

VIII. View of God

A. Atheism

1. No God exists in or beyond _____

2. _____ is all there is

3. **Examples:** Karl Marx Friedrich Nietzsche Jean-Paul Sartre; Carl Sagan

B. Pantheism

1. There is no God _____ the universe

2. God is _____ and the universe is **God**

3. Some will say _____ is all there is

4. **Examples:** New Age Movement Hinduism

C. Theism

1. An infinite, personal God exists _____ the universe

2. He created and sustains the universe and _____ it

3. The universe displays both _____ and **mind**

4. **Examples:** Christianity, Judaism, Islam

IX. View of Origins

A. Atheism

1. Either the universe is _____ OR

2. Matter came into existence _____ and **by nothing**

3. _____ and natural laws explain everything

B. Pantheism

1. The universe is _____

2. There is _____ between God and the universe or man

C. Theism

1. The universe is _____, but was created out of nothing by God, who **transcends** His creation
2. Matter is **created** and finite, God is uncreated and _____

X. View of Man

A. Atheism

1. Since there is no God, man is the _____.
2. Man, in effect, _____ *figuratively* since man achieves all things by his own power

B. Pantheism

1. Man **is God** _____ because everything is God
2. The biggest problem with human beings is we don't _____ we are God

C. Theism

1. Man is a _____ created by a loving, personal Creator
2. Man and God will forever be **distinct**

XI. View of Morality

A. Atheism

1. There is no _____ moral standard since there is no Moral Lawgiver
2. Morality is established by _____
3. An act is good if it brings **good results**
4. There is no such thing as _____

B. Pantheism

1. There is no absolute moral standard _____ of us since we are God
2. Morality is _____
3. Ultimately there is **neither** _____ because all is one
4. There is no such thing as _____

C. Theism

1. There are absolute moral standards given by God, the _____
2. Morality is **objective**, eternal, and **universal**

XII. View of Destiny

A. Atheism

1. Death is the _____
2. —Life is hard, and then **you die**|| David Jerrold Friedman (David Gerrold- Star Trek.)
3. There is no individual **immortality**, only the _____ is immortal
4. Life is without ultimate _____ and **meaning**

B. Pantheism

1. Death is **the end** of one life and _____ of another
2. They believe in immortality through _____
3. The purpose of life is to _____ with God and lose individual **identity**
4. We will all live forever **as God**

C. Theism

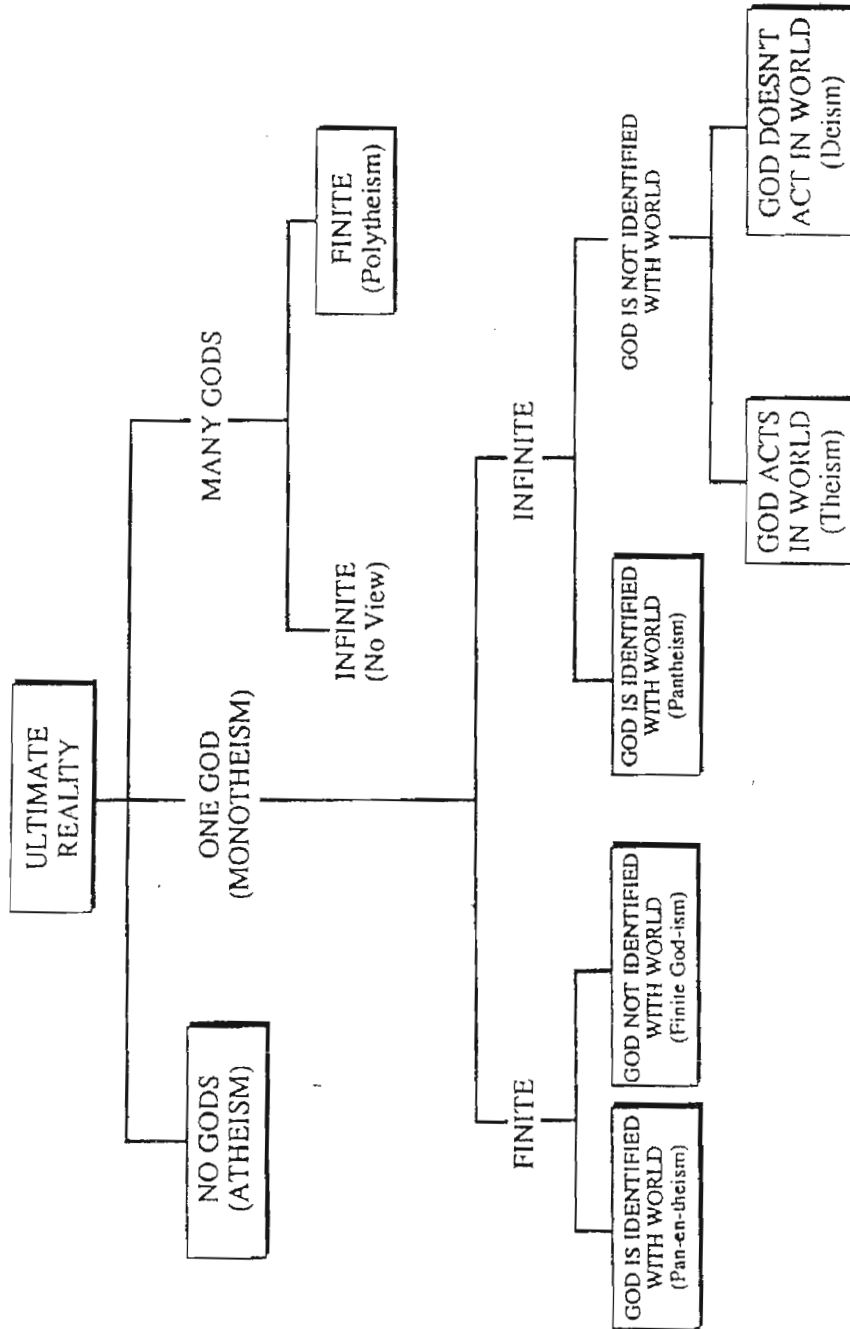
1. For Christians, death is the _____ in God's presence
2. Every individual will **exist eternally**, either with God or separated from Him
3. The purpose of life is to **worship** and eternally _____ with God
4. All who trust Christ as their Savior will live forever **with** God

Next week: Hinduism

Comparison of the Three Major Worldviews

	ATHEISM	PANTHEISM	THEISM
Examples (Acts 17)	Epicureans	Stoics	Apostle Paul
God / World	No God beyond world (world only)	No God beyond world (world is God)	God is beyond world (and in world)
World's Duration	Eternal	Eternal	Temporal
World's Origin	External Generation (ex materia)	Emanation (ex Deo)	Creation (ex nihilo)
Man's Origin	Evolution (physical, scientific)	Evolution (metaphysical, spiritual)	Creation
Man's Nature	Animal	God	Like God
Man's Destiny	No Immortality (annihilation)	No Immortality (reunification)	Immortality (resurrection)
Truth & Value	Temporal	Temporal	Eternal
Goal of History	Human Utopia	Endless Reincarnations	Divine Kingdom
Means of Salvation	By Human Effort (through education)	By Human Effort (through meditation)	By Divine Action (through redemption)
Power of Salvation	Natural (physical)	Natural (mystical)	Supernatural (spiritual)

SEVEN MAJOR WORLD VIEWS



From Norman L. Geisler and William Watkins, Perspectives: Understanding and Evaluating Today's World Views (San Bernardino: Here's Life Publishers, 1984), p. 18. See also Norman Geisler, False Gods of Our Time (Eugene: Harvest House Publishers), 1985.

SEVEN WORLD VIEWS

	GOD	UNIVERSE	MIRACLES	MAN	EVIL	ETHICS	GOAL OF HISTORY
ATHEISM	NO GOD	ETERNAL Uncreated	Impossible in principle	Material Evolved Mortal	EXISTS May be defeated	RELATIVE	Cyclical and meaningless
PANTHEISM	ONE GOD Infinite Impersonal Immanent	ETERNAL Uncreated <u>ex-deo</u>	Impossible in principle	He is GOD Uncreated Immortal (soul) (unreal body)	ILLUSION Cannot be defeated	RELATIVE	Cyclical or illusory & meaningless
PAN-EN-THEISM	BIPOLAR GOD Infinite/Finite Imperv/Personal Trans/Immanent	ETERNAL Created <u>ex-materia</u>	Impossible in principle	He is part of GOD Created Immortal(God) Mortal (man)	EXISTS Cannot be defeated	RELATIVE	Cyclical and purposeful
DEISM	ONE GOD Infinite Personal Transcendent	TEMPORAL Created <u>ex-nihilo</u>	Impossible in practice	He has image of GOD Created Immortal Soul Mortal Body	EXISTS May be defeated	RELATIVE	Linear and purposeful
FINITE GOD-ISM	ONE GOD Finite Personal Trans/Immanent	TEMPORAL Created <u>ex-nihilo</u> or <u>ex-materia</u>	Impossible in practice	He is GOD-like Theistically evolved Immortal Soul Mortal Body	EXISTS May be defeated	RELATIVE	Uncertain
POLYTHEISM	MANY GODS Finite Personal Immanent	TEMPORAL Created <u>ex-materia</u>	Possible in practice (supernatural acts)	He is GOD-like Created Immortal Spirit Mortal Body	EXISTS May be defeated	RELATIVE	Linear, cyclical, uncertain, & meaningful
THEISM	ONE GOD Infinite Personal Trans/Immanent	TEMPORAL Created <u>ex-nihilo</u>	Actual in practice (supernatural acts)	He is image of GOD Created Immortal	EXISTS Will be defeated	ABSOLUTE	Linear and purposeful

From Norman L. Geisler and William Watkins, Perspectives: Understanding and Evaluating Today's World Views (San Bernardino: Here's Life Publishers, 1984), pp. 244-45.