

A Biblical Worldview

I. Biblical Theism

A. Definition

1. "Biblical" theism has its foundation in biblical revelation
2. The nature of God, man, and the universe are found in scripture, especially in Genesis and in the Gospel

B. Theology - The study of God and his relationship to the world. This forms the intellectual and emotional commitments concerning God, man, & the world, and daily life. Traditional areas of theology include:

1. Theology proper - God
2. Pneumatology - Holy Spirit
3. Christology - The person and work of Christ
4. Anthropology - Man
5. Hamartiology - Sin
6. Soteriology - Salvation
7. Ecclesiology - The Church
8. Eschatology - The culmination of God's plans
9. Angelology - Angels (Satan)
10. Apologetics - Articulation and defense of the Christian Faith

C. Elements of Biblical Theism

1. God

a. Beginning of a biblical worldview is God

- 1) Naturalism builds on assumption - Matter is all that exists
- 2) Transcendentalism builds on assumption - Reality is spiritual
- 3) Biblical theism begins with the assumption - God exists
 - a) Classical "proofs" of God's existence
 - 1] Cosmological #1

- a] For every effect, there is a cause
 - b] Something had to have caused the existence of the universe
 - c] There had to have been a first cause, and that first cause is God
- 2] Cosmological #2
 - a] God is the only thing must exist
 - b] Everything else is contingent, it does not have to exist, depending on something else for existence, God
- 3] Teleological
 - a] Universe has intricate design
 - b] Evidence of an intelligent designer
 - c] Example - DNA
 - Human DNA, would take several volumes of encyclopedia to hold the information
 - d] Irreducible complexity
 - a] Take away one piece of the puzzle, and it no longer works
 - b] Example, take away the rotor on engine, car no longer works
 - c] Debunks the idea of evolutionary change
- 4] Moral
 - a] Humans are moral beings
 - b] Many similarities in many cultures
 - c] Evidence of a moral lawgiver
- 5] Religious
 - a] Millions of humans have religion
 - b] Humans seem to be hardwired for it
 - c] Evidence of God
- b) Note on the idea of "proof" of God
 - 1] "Proof" usually means scientific, demonstrable proof
 - a] Prove I have white car -show it to you
 - b] Prove I can cook - Cook for you
 - 2] God is beyond material world, he created it
 - 3] God left "evidence" for his existence

- 4] These are not solid proof for God's existence
- 5] "Proof" is more like searching for the artist in a painting, or a score of music
- 6] What these proofs do...
 - a] Demonstrate that belief in God is not foolhardy
 - b] Shows that when God desires "faith," it is not a foolish blind leap of faith
- b. Character of God - What is God like? (His character determines how we are to be)
 - 1) Personality - He is personal, has emotions, can relate to man
 - 2) Trinity - God is a triunity. $1 \times 1 \times 1 = 1$ (three personalities)
 - a) God, the Father, Son, and Spirit are often used interchangeably in scripture
 - b) God does not "need" us for God to be love
 - c) God is a self contained microcosm of love
 - 3) Holy (1 Sam 2:2; 1 Pet 1:15-16)
 - 4) Love (1 Jn 4:7-8)
 - 5) Righteous (Rom 3:25; 1 Jn 3:10)
 - 6) Faithful, loyal & true (Ps 136; Heb 6:18; 10:23)
 - 7) Beautiful, glorious (Ps 27:4; 104:1-2; 1 Pet 3:3-4; Mt 5:14)
 - 8) God condescends to us (Gen 3:8; Ex 3:8; Ps 116:2; Phil 2:3-9; Jn 1:14; Heb 2:14; 1 Cor 12:26)
 - 9) God is involved in history (1 Sam 2:6-10; Lk 1:52-53; Ps 139:16; Eph 1:11)
 - 10) God is merciful (Ps 86:15; 103:10-18; Lk 6:36)
 - 11) Wise (1 Cor 1:25-30; James 1:5; Prov 1:7; 9:10)
 - 12) Creator (Gen 1-2)

- 13) Other attributes: Eternal, independent, all knowing, all present, spiritual, all powerful, good, merciful, jealous, wrath, perfect, etc.
- 14) God revealed his character not through dictation, but through action and experience. What has been recorded about God has been in the form of narrative

2. Humanity

a. Created by God

- 1) Original state - God saw that it was good
- 2) When created male and female, it was "very" good

b. Creature (*nephesh hayah* - living soul/being/creature)

- 1) (Gen 2:7) - Man became a "living soul"
- 2) "*Nephesh*" (soul, being) also applied to other creatures
 - a) (Gen 2:19) - Whatever the man called a living creature (*nephesh hayah*), that was its name
 - b) (Gen 9:10) - Every living creature (*nephesh hayah*)
- 3) In this sense, man shares creatureliness with the rest of the creatures in God's creation

c. In the image of God (*imago dei*)

- 1) (Gen 1:26-27) Male and female were created in God's image
- 2) This is something man does not share with other creatures
- 3) Various views of what this means:
 - a) Substantive
 - 1] The likeness is physical (Mormons)
 - 2] Some psychological or spiritual quality
 - b) Relational
 - 1] Man is a relational being - The "image" is

- in man's relationship to God
 - 2] It is paralleled by relationship to others
 - 3] It is paralleled in marriage relationship
 - c) Functional
 - 1] Image is in what man does
 - 2] Man has dominion over the earth
 - d) Note: With the exception of a)-1], there is truth in each of these. Being "godly" represents God's image
- d. Affected by Sin (the fall)
- 1) Sin was initially rebellion against God, desire to be autonomous and independent (Gen 3:5-6)
 - 2) Results of Sin
 - a) Alienation from God (Is 59:2)
 - b) Death (James 1:15)
 - c) Moral and intellectual decay (Eph 2:1-3; Rom 1:21)
 - d) Our will is weakened (Phil 2:23)
 - e) Apparently, sin has affected us physically, morally, and even intellectually
 - 3) All have sinned (Rom 3:23)
 - a) Implications of this are far reaching
 - b) It means that all people have been affected morally, intellectually, physically, and in their will
 - c) (Jer 17:9) Seems to indicate this
 - 4) All people still bear the image of God (Jas 3:9)
 - a) The ideal man was the "radiance of His glory" and the "exact representation of God's nature" (Heb 1:3)
 - b) Due to sin, humans no longer reflected the image of God with fidelity.
 - c) The image of God was distorted and twisted
 - d) Yet the image is still there, making humans precious and worthy of dignity and honor

3. Nature

- a. Created as good with order (Gen 1)
- b. Man's role in relation to creation

- 1) Originally was to keep and cultivate the garden (Gen 2:15)
 - 2) Given dominion, to rule over it (Gen 1:26-28)
 - a) Implication - They needed to rule justly, to care for the creation, not abuse it
 - b) Mankind is a "partner" with God in caring for, building, overseeing, etc. the creation
 - c) God's character and his specific instructions form the foundation for how man is to have dominion
 - d) (Gen 4:16-24; 6:1-6) - Demonstrates what sin did to man as he built culture and society.
 - 3) By extension, this includes activities associated with creating culture, harnessing energies, creating government and society, maintaining justice, etc. in a godly way.
- c. Sin seems to have affected nature as well
- 1) Ground was cursed (Gen 3:17)
 - 2) Whole creation groans alongside humans (Rom 8:18-23)
 - 3) In addition to man, creation seems to also be a subject of redemption
- d. Biblical view of work
- 1) God himself works
 - a) (Gen 2:2) - God worked for seven days and rested
 - b) (Col 1:17) - The Lord sustains the world
 - c) (Jn 5:17) - God has been working for redemption
 - d) Since work is an activity of God, this indicates that work is inherently good and godly
 - 2) God ordained man to both work and rest
 - a) (Gen 2:15) - Adam was to tend the garden
 - b) Instructions concerning work
 - 1] (Prov 6:6-11; 10:4-5; 13:4) - Work is good
 - 2] (2 Thess 3:7-12) - Work is instructed

3] (Lev 19:9-10) - Even the poor were to work

c) Work is not a bad activity, but is sanctified by God

3) The rest after this life is from labor, not work

a) (Rev 7:15) - The martyrs who died serve God even after they have died

1] This indicates that life after death is not just sitting on clouds doing nothing

2] God originally created mankind to work

3] It wasn't until sin came that work became laborious and hard

b) (Rev 14:13) - They will rest from their "labors"

1] The word used here is *kopos*, which means labor, hardship, trouble, etc.

2] Does not use the word, *ergon*, which means work, task, occupation, etc.

3] These two passages suggest that work will be restored to its original design. It will be without the hardship that came as a result of the curse. (Rev 22:3)

4) In Heaven, will work without the effects of sin

a) May create & build things beneficial and beautiful

b) May use the raw materials of God's renewed creation

c) Man may still be a "partner" with God, building, overseeing, caring for, etc. the new creation

d) May mean that every valid vocation on this earth might have a counterpart in the New Heavens and the New Earth

4. Answers to overarching questions

a. What went wrong? Answer: Sin (see above)

b. What will it take to make it right?

1) Restored image of God (Rom 8:29; 2 Cor 3:18; 1 Cor 15:9)

2) Everything else will follow - Intellectual restoration,

moral restoration, physical restoration

3) Images of this restoration

- a) (Isa 11:1-9) - Peace, no danger in the presence of God
- b) (Isa 65:17-25) - God will create, it will be new, peace
- c) (Rev 22:3-5) - Will reign forever in peace (dominion the way God intends it)

II. Final Notes:

A. Places where these world views and philosophies are common

- 1. Naturalism is common in the intellectual and institutional spheres of life
- 2. Transcendentalism is common in the emotive spheres of life - media, art, movies, etc.

B. Naturalism and transcendentalism fit with the American way of thinking:

- 1. I am in command of my own destiny.
- 2. I am free to live each moment as it happens.
- 3. The focus of control lies within self.
- 4. There is no help beyond ourselves.

C. Theism endangers freedom, according to these worldviews

- 1. It claims we must submit our will to his
- 2. It claims that we belong to him

D. However, we believe theism is true, and can be demonstrated as the only worldview that works, which makes sense since it comes from the creator of our universe.