

THE BIG PICTURE

By Paul M Curtas

What is a worldview?... How does it work?... Does everyone have one?

Everyone operates from a worldview, whether consciously or not! A worldview is how you look and interpret the world around you, how you see yourself participating in the game of life. Whether you can express it or not, you have formed ways of thinking you use to interpret your world.

A worldview would answer some basic questions:

1. Where did we originate? (Answers the questions of meaning and purpose!)
2. What is our problem? (Explains what went wrong and the extent of it)
3. What is the solution? (Provides a solution that can be explained)
4. What is our destiny? (Tells how all of history is moving toward a final conclusion)

THE ORIGIN:

GIVES US THE DESIGN, PURPOSE, AND RELATIONSHIP

We have one of two basic choices, either...

- 1- **Impersonal force!** It is a matter of time + chance= fate or what?
 - a. A random mixture of chemicals form people and personalities.
 - b. The purpose and meaning of life is up for grabs... the FIT (crafty and strong) creates the rules to survive.
- 2- **Personal Creator - who by an act of HIS will created all things with design & purpose**
 - a. All that God created came from nothing, not pre-existing material (Psalm 33:6-9; 148:5; Hebrews 11:3).
 - b. God directed the process of creation and laws that govern it... not time + chance (Job 38:33). It was not created as a wasteland (Isaiah 45:18 *Heb.-tohu: confusion, empty place, wasteland*).
 - c. Because God is the source of creation, things small and great, simple and complex... everything, including humans... all things are absolutely dependent on Him for their existence and meaning.
 - d. He subjected all things to His governing ordinances (Psalm 119:89-91). He designed the relationships between entities (E.g. oxygen & nitrogen), but He also designed ordinances that govern human relationships. Through God alone we find purpose, significance, enjoyment, and fulfillment. (Story: Kurt using his guitar to paddle a canoe down a river.)

Being Personal ... (Read- Acts 17:24-28)

- **A special creation** of man and woman (Adam & Eve) bearing God's personal image (Genesis 1:26-27). God's image in humans refers to what we are by design, not what we do to achieve and possess. This image gives us choice, distinct personality, self-consciousness, and creativity (Genesis 9:6; James 3:9,10).
- **Self-evident, woven in our makeup ...** Example: when someone is kind and **personal** to you, it's refreshing. But when they are selfish and spiteful toward you, we see them as **impersonal** and disturbing, we can feel hurt and anger.

Think about it: How can understanding our origin help us interpret and respond to people in our world?

THE PROBLEM

TELL US WHAT'S WRONG, AND WHY?

("...God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes." Ecclesiastes 7:29)

In comparison to other religions and philosophies, only Christianity declares that humans and this world are in a fallen or **abnormal state**, not a normal one.

Discussion: Describe how this inborn problem in humans manifest itself at your workplace?

We all agree the human race has a PROBLEM, but **where did it originate?** God defines the condition of people in relationship to Himself first and not just compare them with one another.

1. When God created humans, our first parents Adam & Eve, He gave them freedom to make their own decisions. However, they were accountable and dependent on God. They chose to become independent from their creator. This resulted in their **fall from God**. This act of disobedience was defined as "**sin**" which means to fall short or miss the mark of an intended goal.
2. Their decision resulted thereafter that everyone from birth is marked by sin. (Psalm 51:5-6; Romans 5:12-14), a natural desire for **independence** from God and getting our own way.
3. The human condition of "sin" is played out in all kinds of ways. There are no respectable sins. Humans may feel they are free to choose whatever they want. However, God controls the effects and results of their sin (Romans 1:18-21; Ephesians 4:18-19).
4. God subjected the physical world to decay (2nd Law of Thermodynamics). This will serve to remind us of our need for God. He also subjected all humans to the condition of death, both physically and spiritually, and which would be experienced by all. This condition can only be overcome through God alone (Romans 8:19-21).
5. Jesus described humans as lost and broken people, needing help, which they themselves cannot provide. He felt compassion for people and described them as "*downcast, distraught, like sheep with no shepherd*" (Matthew 9:36-38). Understanding people's most basic need for God should help us look at them in a different way.

Think about it: How can understanding the basic problem give us a basis in our response to people?

THE SOLUTION

A GIFT FROM GOD, NOT A HUMAN ENDEAVOR

Reconciliation is **God's** solution for solving the human problem! Humans often see the solution in changing and improving educational, economical, environmental, and medical conditions. God starts by changing the heart of humans, which in turn can bring changes for the better in these other areas.

Real change starts when people humbly receive God's saving work which was accomplished through the finished work of Jesus Christ for us. His work removes hostility between God and humanity (Romans 5:10-11).

God's saving work is in three tenses:

1. **Past Tense** - We have **been saved** from judgment of sin. *Justification* means that upon belief in Christ, the shame, guilt and penalty of our sins have been removed from us (Romans 3:23-26; Titus 3:5).
2. **Present Tense** - We are **being saved** from the power of sin. *Sanctification* is the process of our being set apart for God's purpose through the transforming power of God's Spirit and through His Word (1Corinthians 1:18; 1Thessalonians 5:23-24; Romans 6:22; John 17:17-19; 2Cor. 3:18).
3. **Future Tense** - In the future we **will be saved** from the presence of sin. *Glorification* is when we pass on from this life into the presence of God, we will no longer be affected by sin (Romans 8:19-21; 1Corinthians 15:52-56; 1John 3:2-3).

Think about it: How should our being recipients of God's saving work affect the way we deal with problems and difficult people in our world?

Read: 2 Corinthians 5:19-20... How could God use you to make this appeal?

THE OUTCOME:

THE JOURNEY WE'RE ON TOWARD THE DESTINATION

Anyone who is heading toward a destination must be in progress on a journey to get there. So, why didn't God tell us more about our destination after this life? I think if He did, we would not want to stay a minute longer in this world, and maybe do some crazy things to get there.

So if it's all that wonderful, why didn't He just take us to this destination when he saved us? Jesus once told his disciples that He was going to prepare a place for us. It's all in only two verses (John 14:2,3), and it drew one of the disciples to ask, "Where are you going?" Jesus did say much more about that destination, but He emphatically said He was the Way to get there. God is not simply transporting us to a destination, He is leading us there, and to Him the process of going there is as important as the outcome when we arrive.

1. The process in getting there can only be achieved as we humble ourselves under His mighty hand (1 Peter 5:9), and allow Him to lead us in His will and way.
2. But on a bigger scale, God is moving history toward a climax, where the people of this world will be met by the presence of God. It will happen when Christ returns a second time to earth and seemingly disrupt history. He will establish justice on the earth by executing judgment. Through His reign, He will bring peace on the earth. For some this will be a welcome sight, but for others this will be dreadful.
3. Then ultimately all who have humbly asked for mercy and forgiveness will enter eternity in the presence of the Lord. It is at this point where He will wipe away all of our tears, pain and suffering. Our greatest joy that we now can only imagine will be fulfilled only as we enjoy being in His presence.
4. How all things will be restored and complete can only be fully realized when we are in the presence of Christ (1 John 3:2). But for now, as we are on His journey, He is showing the world His redemptive and restoring work through His people. God's presence is represented through the presence of His people in every place; we are called to fill it with the knowledge of God and the aroma of Christ (2 Corinthians 2:14).

So there is great hope and a sure future as we journey with Our Great Shepherd in this world. And we have much to look forward to when our journey ends here, and begins in eternity.

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