



Bible Study Lesson 2

What about other Religions?

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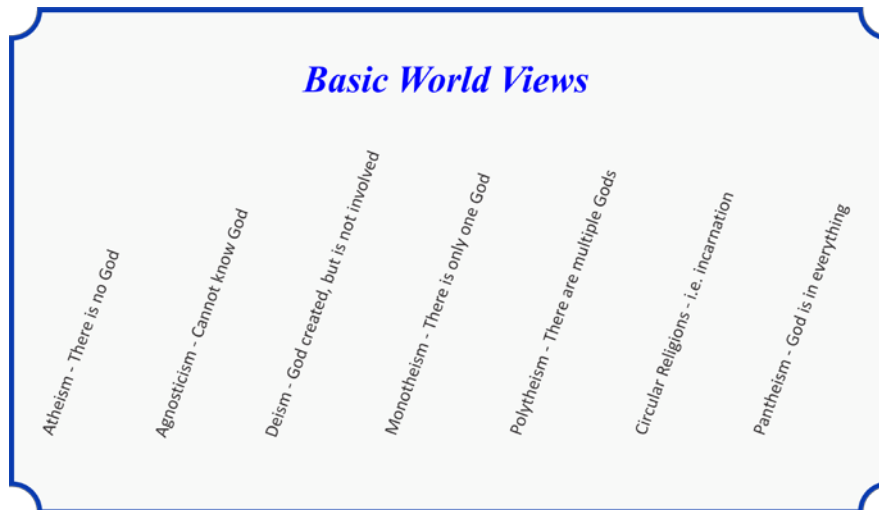
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Why look at this subject in a series on Bible Study

Just as throughout Scripture the people of God encountered various other worldviews and religions that were not true, we must also deal with them. The easiest way to deal with the majority of them is to eliminate any that are not feasible or have contradictory beliefs. Any valid worldview must have a plausible, coherent beginnings account. In the first lesson we eliminated the possibility of Atheism (no god) being true. If you are already convinced that the God of the Bible is the one and only true God, then you can proceed to lesson three.

While there are an incredible range of World Views, they can be broken down into some basic categories; though rather than distinctive views, in reality it is pretty much a continuum with branches going off in all directions. We start from one end with “there is no god” to “we do not know” to “there is only one god” to “many gods” and “everything is god”. Each will have many subcategories and variations, but for the purposes of this discussion, we will just stick with the basic categories and some very basic descriptions. The beliefs of each group are much more comprehensive than I can describe in this short study and vary within each group, but there are some very simple, basic ways to eliminate those that cannot be true. Since we have eliminated Atheism, we can now look at the rest of these worldviews and evaluate them.



Agnosticism

Agnosticism basically just says that we really cannot know anything for sure. The only “knowable” things are those which we can discern through our senses and science. Miracles are essentially denied. This has some basic problems. The first is “how do you know that you cannot know?” Agnosticism is self defeating in this way. How do you know that there are no miracles? You would need to know everything past, present and future to be able to make that claim; in other words, you would be elevating yourself to the position of God. Also, a God that would create a universe, mankind and everything else is highly unlikely not to make Himself known. Just because we cannot perform a “scientific” experiment to verify the existence of God in no way eliminates the possibility of His existence. The inability to verify God’s existence with our senses in no way precludes His existence. In fact, the existence of the universe is a miracle in

itself. Since our definition of a miracle is basically: anything that does not follow the material laws of the universe is a miracle, therefore we should not expect the creator to be bound by the laws that He established for this universe since He operates outside the confines of this universe. In fact, we see throughout the Bible that God uses miracles to verify His Word and affirms the Prophets that He has sent. This is where the apostle Paul's words come into play again.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, (Rom. 1:18-22)

Any worldview that claims that we cannot know anything for sure, logically, can never assert anything or judge any other worldview. If we cannot know if there is a God, then we cannot assert that God does not exist. We would not know if our thinking is accurate and we would not know if our senses are accurate if there is nothing to reference to. We could not know if any experiments that are performed are true if we cannot trust our senses or thinking. If someone that is an agnostic, holds to the evolutionary model, then, since everything is just random chemical processes, you would never know if your own thinking is even rational or valid. On what basis can you profess anything at all or know anything at all? This view, as most, elevates the individual to the position of God by allowing each person to define truth and morality.

Since this view is the result of human philosophy and since no human knows everything - past, present and future, it must be rejected as a valid worldview.

Deism

Deism realizes that the universe could not have come into being without a creator. It believes though, that the creator just created the universe and is not involved in it anymore. How can you know this? There is no basis for this belief. A deist just believes that god instituted laws and morality that anyone could know without direct revelation, such as the Bible. While it is true that God has written his laws on our heart and given us a conscience, He has also revealed Himself through the written Word and thus we do have an absolute reference point by which to judge different ideas. This view has many of the same problems as Agnosticism. How do we know that God has not revealed Himself? How can you know anything or assert anything? On what basis? Since we could all know God's laws, then why do we all have different ideas? Who would judge between different opinions? This worldview again wants to reject the laws that God has provided, and make up its own laws and elevate individuals to the position of God.

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Monotheism

Monotheists believe in only one god. The three monotheistic religions are Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The one God is an eternal God that created the universe and all life and is personally involved with it. God has established the laws and regulations for people and has stated what it takes to obtain eternal life, as well as the consequences of disobedience leading to eternal damnation. The Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah when He came and still do. Islam accepts the Pentateuch, Psalms and the Gospels but believe that they were corrupted. So, on what basis is this charge made? We find that the textual transmission of the text has been demonstrated to have been executed very carefully and is therefore a reliable witness to the original text. Christianity can explain the origin of the universe, all life, death, evil and also provides the path to eternal life.

Polytheism

Polytheists believe in a plurality of gods. The ancient world was generally polytheistic. These would include the Sumerian, Akkadian, Egyptian, Canaanite, Greek and Roman societies. Generally, there was a chief god with a myriad of lesser gods. These are generally easy to refute since their creation and cosmology are demonstrably false. Things like a god being split in two to make the heaven and earth, a god being stretched out over the earth as the heaven, a god holding up the earth etc. are all not a viable option. If you have multiple gods, which one decides morality? Where did they come from? Can they even be gods, since none of them would be all powerful, all knowing and eternal? On this basis, these religions can also be rejected.

Circular Religions & Moralistic Religions

These would include the religions that include re-incarnation. Everything really is circular and without a beginning. The focus here would be on doing good. Essentially, everyone is a part of the eternal being. There is a striving to get away from the pain and suffering in this world. In some sense, it is similar to Pantheism. Here, we need to see what explanation there is for the existence of the universe, life and all that we see around us. What is the basis for their beliefs? Who came up with this? If this is just something made up by a person, then that person would have to be God in order to know everything. This is an impossibility, since no human knows everything. How do they know? Can you know? If the religion teaches that everything is an illusion, then how do you know that everything is an illusion? Since god, if he exists, is not personal, how can he even communicate with people or other gods that are a manifestation of the supreme god. Who or what decides or causes someone to come back as a lower or higher being? Would this not require a personal god who is involved, has established parameters and laws and judges according to them? How could you know that there is reincarnation? Whenever a god is not a personal god who has revealed himself, then everything regarding that religion is just made up by people and can thus be rejected on this basis.

Pantheism

Pantheism goes even further than polytheism. The universe as a whole is conceived of as god, and therefore, god really is not a person. In that sense then, everything in the universe is a part of what makes up this god and the distinction between the creator and the creation is

eliminated. This has many issues. Since we are finite beings, how can we be part of an infinite being. If we are all one, why have your own possessions. It would be no problem to take from someone else since we are all one anyway. How do you reconcile different ideas, truths etc. if we are all one? This universal god would contradict itself and therefore violate the law of non-contradiction. Where does evil come from if we are all a part of god and are all one? Does this mean that mass murderers and dictators are part of god? What kind of god can be so evil and good at the same time? How could you know any of this? Again, you would need to be God in order to even know that this worldview is correct, so this worldview can also be rejected.

General Evolutionary Models

Many belief systems and religions hold to a basic evolutionary viewpoint. As pointed out in the first lesson, this is scientifically and logically false, therefore these are also false. If everything is the result of random processes then you do not know if the past was different from the present and if the future will be different from the present. Since knowledge is not a material entity, logically nothing can be asserted and there can be no right or wrong. Spiritual experience would then logically just be the result of random chemical processes in the brain. Again, if there is no absolute external reference, then there can be no valid judgements about right, wrong or the existence or non existence of God.

Another thing we are seeing more and more of, is that the only thing that matters, is what will make me feel good and give me good experiences. It seems that a rational, logical and cohesive analysis is not important anymore. People have no difficulty believing contradictory ideas, they just pick one at a time and do not compare them to other beliefs they hold to see if they are compatible. This also worldview also cannot be true.

All Religions lead to God

On the surface, this seems to be a nice, tolerant view. Everyone can just follow their own path and end up with God. Is this a plausible or logical view? The first thing to understand is that God is the one who determines how a person comes to Him and what their eternal destiny is. God must also communicate how someone comes to Him, otherwise they would not know the way. The next thing is that most of these views are actually mutually exclusive. For example, Polytheism cannot be true at the same time as Monotheism. Deism cannot be true at the same time as Monotheism because with Deism God has not revealed Himself, yet with Monotheism He has revealed Himself. Circular religions that incorporate re-incarnation cannot be true at the same time as Christianity which states *“And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment, (Heb. 9:27)”* In this view there are really no absolute truths or values. There is no way to judge right or wrong, so killing millions of people is not wrong because that person is following his way. Proclaiming that all ways lead to god is actually self-defeating. If on the one hand you say that all are valid, then how can you put down

a religion that excludes others if you have already said that all can be true? This view suffers greatly from the law of non-contradiction.

Do the books of various religions claim to be inspired and holy? Is there a personal God that has revealed Himself in these books? How did this God reveal Himself and how did He attest His revelations? If the God is not a personal God, then He could not reveal Himself. Are they just opinions of the people that wrote them? Is there a textual tradition that can be examined and are there contradictions?

When it comes down to it, the Bible presents the only coherent, plausible worldview.

So, was the Bible just written by men? The Bible tells us that *"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; (2 Tim. 3:16)"* and *"But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. (2 Pet. 1:20-21)"*

The Bible provides us with the true account of the history of the universe, life, sin, death and the path to God that was provided by the sacrificial death and resurrection of Jesus who paid for our sins so that we may have eternal life. As the apostle Paul said *"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made (Rom. 1:20)"*

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (Jn. 3:16-18)"

Science, Archeology and other historical accounts confirm the Bible.

Jesus' life, death and resurrection are attested to by the Bible and external references. Jesus affirmed the inspiration and accuracy of the Old Testament. God demonstrated His presence and power to Moses through the miracles such as the plagues on Egypt, crossing of the sea, water from the rock and mana for food while in the desert.

As we conclude this study, we can see that the Bible is the true account of the universe and life and that the other worldviews have fatal flaws.

Information on the historicity, accuracy and inspiration can be found on websites such as

<https://biblearchaeology.org/>

<https://answersingenesis.org/>

Associates for Biblical Research has a couple of videos on the doctrine of Scripture

[Doctrine of Scripture 1](#)

[Doctrine of Scripture 2](#)

More detailed information can be found in books such as the series on World Religions by Bodie Hodge and Roger Patterson published by Master Books.

<https://answersingenesis.ca/store/product/world-religions-and-cults-boxed-set/>