

The Biblical Worldview (Outlined in Genesis)

The Old Testament and Genesis, in particular, lays the foundations for a biblical worldview. Through Old Testament history God prepared a people to receive his revelation, and a worldview in which it could be understood. A few central themes are:

1. The Existence of God: God is the beginning of all things. In Scripture his existence is assumed, not proved, and his nature is operationally defined. Through his activity we see his character.

1.1 **The Essence of God:**

1.11 **Personality**: God is always seen as a person, not as an impersonal force. He has:

1) self-consciousness, 2) self-determination, 3) self-analysis, and 4) self-realization.

1.12 **Spirituality**: There is an eternal and essential difference between God and creation--the "Otherness" of God.

1.13 **Unity**: The unity of God is clearly presented, but in the wording the concept of the Trinity is revealed.

1.14 **Self-sufficiency**: God is self-existent and independent of all things. He is the uncaused cause.

1.15 **Infinity**: God is presented as the infinite reality, before and beyond all else.

1.2 **The Attributes of God**: God is characterized by omnipotence, wisdom, benevolence, omniscience, perfection, goodness and love.

1.3 **Knowledge of God**: Human understandings of an infinite God are always limited to their own thought categories and reasoning, which, in turn, are molded by culture. We must never lose sight of the fact of the partial and culturally shaped understandings of our perceptions of God. Part of our problem as modern western people is that we have grown up in a culture which has for all practical purposes "demythologized" life--has denied the reality of supernatural realities in everyday life. We have few culturally approved ways of experiencing God or spirits.

2. This Universe is God's Creation:

2.1 **The universe has a definite beginning.**

2.2 **The universe is a creation separate from God**, not as a pantheistic projection of God. This leads us to a contingent dualism of an Eternal God and a finite creation constantly dependent on the ongoing creative activity of God for its existence.

2.3 **The universe is governed by "laws"** that find their source in God.

2.4 **The universe is perfect in its design.**

2.5 **The universe exists for a definite purpose.**

2.6 **Humans were created by a special act** and for a special purpose.

2.7 **This universe is to be cared for** [literally "gardened"] by humans.

2.8 **The universe is governed by underlying principles:**

- The principle of harmonious, gradual progression is seen in: 1) material world (1:1-10),
2) vegetable life (1:11-19), 3) animal life (1:20-25), and 4) human life (1:26-31).

- The principle of separation is shown: God divided light from darkness (1:4-5), water

- from water (1:6), and water from earth (1:9-10).
- The principle of production and reproduction.
 - The principle of completion: “and it was so. God carries a work to completion.
 - The principle of consistency: “after its kind”.
 - The principle of immensity: vastness of creation.
 - The principle of diversity and abundance: vast variety of creation. God does not create just the minimum requirements for maintenance.

3. Humans are a Unique Creation with a Divine Nature and Purpose:

- 3.1 **Humans are a special creation of God.** This does not mean that they are different from nature. They share much with the rest of creation, but they are a result of a special act of creation in which God united both body and spirit, the realm of nature and the realm of the spirit.
- 3.2 **Humans are unique, God-related creatures.** They are created in the “image of God.” As such they are endowed with personality which include the natural attributes of God, namely: self-consciousness, self-determination, self-analysis, and self-realization, and the moral and spiritual attributes of holiness, righteousness, love and wisdom.
- 3.3 **All humans have a common origin** and are genetically linked organic beings. The world “adam” means “human” in the generic sense of humankind in its totality. Adam may also be a proper name. Because of this unity, by one person sin came to all, and by one person redemption is possible for all.
- 3.4 **Humans are a purposive creation.** They are created in the image of God and it is God’s purpose that they grow in maturity into the “likeness” of God. When humans fell into sin, God did not change his purpose for them, only his method.
- 3.5 **Humans are creatures with eternal, god-like destinies.** Sin did not change this--rather through sin God by salvation raised humans to an even higher position, that of children of God (Rom. 5:20).
- 3.6 **Humans are ever part of creation, and dependent on God.** They are never self-sufficient.
- 3.7 **Humans are moral beings and remain responsible to God.** They have a consciousness of right and wrong, justice and injustice.

4. Sin Entered the World:

- 4.1 **The philosophical problem of evil** has to do with its origins. If there is one God, the problem is, “How did sin begin?” If there are two eternal beings, one good and one evil, the questions are, “Who will ultimately triumph?” and “Will sin ever end?”
- 4.2 **The theological potentiality** for sin lies in its opposition to the righteousness which is found in the very nature of god. With the existence of the principle of righteousness, there is a potential for unrighteousness.
- 4.3 **The first practice** or realization of sin is thought to have occurred in the angel Lucifer with his followers who, through creation, sought to be come “gods.” There is no salvation for these for the source of evil was internal, nor do they desire it for they acted with the foreknowledge of the consequences. They were not tempted or deceived into it,

not knowing the fullest implications. They would rather be ‘gods’ of their own domains rather than serve under Jehovah. Possibly, as separate creatures no single death could have sufficed for their salvation.

- 4.4 **The root of human sin** lies in the misuse of the god given “image of God.” Humans sought to become gods. The God given attributes of self-consciousness, self-determination, self-analysis and self-realization were used to exalt the self into the position of God and the consequential rejection and disobedience of God Himself.
- 4.5 **Sin in the life of humans came from without**, by way of temptation of a being who stands for sin and who is opposed to all the purposes of God.
- 4.6 **Humans are free willed beings** who were led into sin by temptation, not forced into it. Satan used good psychological techniques. He began by asking questions and thereby questioned the judgment of God, raising doubt. This was calculated to create the sense of restrictions on liberty and will, and to cast an aspersion on the goodness of God. All the questions demand an affirmative answer leading to any easy acceptance of the final appeal. The final challenge was against the Word of God.
- The strength of the test lay in the promise that God had given. Satan accepted the God-given goal, that humans become “like unto God.” But he offered an easy, quick, instantaneous method to achieve this. Sin always offers a positive goal. Humans would not sin if they did not feel that they would stand to gain thereby. But Satan failed to tell humans the whole story, that they would be like gods in hell, not heaven.
- 4.7 **The immediate consequences of sin were a sense of shame, of fear and placing the blame on others.** The immediate judgment was on the serpent (bodily), the woman (sorrow and dependence on men), and on man (toil and physical death).
- 4.8 **The ultimate consequences of sin were spiritual death** and the beginning of physical decay and death. The natural attributes, human’s relationships to themselves, replaced the moral attributes, and human relationships to God as the dominant factor. Self replaced God as the center of life. Humans did not fully lose the image of God, but the God-like qualities were subjected for selfish use by fallen humans. The image, though, ruined, remained a point of contact between God and humans. Humans retained a consciousness of God, of their own uniqueness, of sin and guilt, of incompleteness, of the impossibility of self-salvation, of eternity and a sense of responsibility. These remain points of contact whereby God can communicate to humans.
- 4.9 **God would not need to create a hell**, and light an eternal fire. If he set apart those who reject his rule so that they would not interfere in his kingdom, they, each being his/her own god, would make the place a hell. Where humans are left without government and each does what is right in their eyes, there is anarchy.
- 4.10 **Natural humans project their gods from their own personalities**--their gods are the projection of the ideal human blown big on the cosmic screen. The problem is that humans project their fallen self-image on God. The basic distortions in the concept of God are: 1) Baal: deification of nature ending up in fertility cults--this is the search of the intellect for God; 2) Moloch: satisfaction of the appetites ending in cruelty and child sacrifice--the search of emotions for God; and 3) Mammon: the deification of power and wealth to serve human will and self--this is the search of the will for God.

On the other hand, God can reveal himself to humans because they have his image

and so can understand him in part. This is seen in the incarnation.

4.11 **The basic patterns of sin** are revealed in chapters 3 - 11.

- sin of human-devised religion: Cain's offering
- sin of brutality and murder: Cain
- sin of blood revenge: Lamech
- sin of immorality: chapter 6
- sin of immodesty: Ham
- sin of presumption: chapter 11
- sin of self-glorification and self deification: Babel

4.12 **The spread of sin:** Its introduction (chapter 3); its growth (4-5); culmination (6); judgment (7); revival (9-10); retardation until the Savior could come (11).

- development of fallen social institutions: government and political systems.
- exaltation of humans: cities named after them.
- decline of moral standards:
- rise of material progress
- increasing violence.

4.13 **The growth of a godless civilization** (Cainitic):

- development of cities, government and political power structures.
- exaltation of humans: cities named after humans.
- decline of moral standards: great civilizations have not been characterized by high moral standards.
- material progress: improved farming, culture, industry, arts and music.
- increased violence (v. 23-24).

5. The Revelation of Grace:

5.1 **At the instance when sin entered the world, grace is also evident.** This is clearly seen in the process of physical death which began as a process when sin came, but allows humans time to accept the provision of new life that God provides. Had physical death been instantaneous, no humans could be saved.

5.2 **The grace of God is seen in the immediate provision of salvation** through the promise of a coming redeemer. This salvation by the death of the promised "seed" is made possible by the organic unity of humans. By this unity sin came into the race through the sin of one, and by this unity it is possible for all the redemption of all through the death of Christ, the second Adam.

5.3 **Satan's aim (chapter 4-6) was to destroy the human remnant** of the godly so that the incarnation would be impossible. Humans would lose total contact with God. The judgment of the flood preserved a remnant and God gave humans a second chance to prove their ability to be righteous, this time with the aid of government to restrain sin.

5.4 **The symbolism of sacrifice appears as a picture of grace:**

- the accepted offering brought about reproachment with God. It also brought on the envy of the self-centered worshiper.
- the unaccepted offering was based on a wrong motive and resulted in antagonism against God and open rebellion, leading to a final break of relationship between humans

and God.

5.5 **The divine remnant** (chapter 5): Sometimes called God's burial ground. Humans begin in the image of God were characterized by longevity and fruitfulness. Through the bible, God preserves for himself a remnant that remains the point of contact with humankind.

6. Babel: the Unity and Diversity of Humankind:

6.1 **Unity of humankind:** The genealogies in Genesis 1- 12 show the genetic unity of humankind. This meant that the sin of Adam and Even had its effect on the whole race. It also made the redemption of humans possible through the death of one, Jesus Christ.

6.2 The unity of humans is also the basis for the principle of the equality of humans. The curse of Canaan is not justification for discrimination. Its fulfillment is the task of God not humans.

6.3 **Babel:** In his covenant with Noah, God laid the foundation for government which was to be a restraint upon sin. No government can openly justify gross sin for long and continue. Justice before the flood was based on revenge and tribal sanctions. With the establishment of government, justice is to be administered by the state. The sin of Babel is the sin of misuse of the God-given principle of government in order to unite humans against God as a nation and as a race. Before the flood, opposition seems to have been more individual. Humans raised humans to the position of God. Now they raised society to the position of God (we see this later in atheistic Communism).

6. 4 **God punished humans,** not by abolishing government, which even today is a powerful restraint on sin, but by breaking up the unity so that humans fought against humans, instead of uniting against God. Warfare has characterized history and splits prevent humans from joining together against God. In the end time it appears that humans will reunite under the Anti-Christ to oppose God. The world government set up against God will lead to the fullest expression and administration of sin. God will triumph by sending his Son the second time to set up a Kingdom characterized by absolute righteousness and justice, fulfilling the original intention of God for government.

6.5 **Corporate human systems:** Babel points to the corporate nature of human societies. It shows both corporate power and corporate sin. It raises the question of how should we look at the governments of the world because they belong to this age, and are fallen. Yet they do good by restraining evil.

- centralization of power in governments is used for good and evil.

7. God is a God of Relationship, and the Basis of His Relationships are Covenants:

Covenants in the Old Testament are of two types: 1) conditional covenants require both parties to perform specific actions, if either party fails, the covenant is nullified; 2) the unconditional covenant is a declaration of intention by one party and does not require any action by the second party, it can not be broken by the second party.

7.1 **Edemic Covenant:** Conditional. The promise of divine blessing on humans depended on human obedience to the command of God. Human failure led to the fall and judgment. Humans in effect now wanted to earn their own salvation. Much of subsequent history is human attempts to use various means;;theocracies, monarchies,

democracies, communism--to achieve a state in which humans can save themselves. All eventually fail.

7.2 **Ademic Covenant:** Conditional.

- when humans sinned, they entered into the era of conscience. God permitted them to seek to work out their salvation, but gave them a conscience to be their guide. The divine blessings was conditioned upon humans living pure lives on their own, guided by conscience. They failed.

7.3 **Noahic Covenant:** A double covenant.

- one unconditional. God promised to withhold racial judgment for sin and confirmed the order of nature. This permitted the outworking of the divine plan culminating in the Savior. Repeated racial judgment would have made it impossible for God to prepare humankind for the coming of the Savior.
- the second covenant was conditional. In addition to conscience, God gave human governments to help them live righteously. Divine blessing is provisional on obedience to government and conscience. Most governments do act as a restraint upon sin. Governments cannot openly advocate gross sin and continue to operate.
- the universal commandments given to Noah were:
 - = prohibition of idol worship
 - = prohibits curses and desecration of God, his name and his nature.
 - = prohibits bloodshedding
 - = prohibits incest
 - = prohibits theft
 - = prohibits the eating of blood
 - = commands the administration of justice.